



FIRST UNITED
CHURCH of CHRIST
Northfield · Minnesota


The Chronicle

A monthly newsletter of The First United Church of Christ, Congregational
300 Union Street, Northfield, Minnesota 55057
An Open and Affirming, Just Peace Church

Church Office Summer Hours

7:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Monday - Thursday

Sunday, June 1 Third Sunday after Pentecost

- 9:50-11:15 a.m. Childcare for infants through age 2
- 10:00 a.m. Worship & Communion 
- Scripture: Psalm 46
Matthew 7:21-29
- Sermon: "Storms"
- 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour (sponsored by Garda Kahn and Bob Kahn, Jami and Randy Reister)
- 5:00 p.m. Church Softball game vs. Methodist White at Sechlar #2

Sunday, June 8 Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

- 9:50-11:15 a.m. Childcare for infants through age 2
- 10:00 a.m. Worship (Guest Preacher)
- 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour sponsored by the Arts Committee in appreciation of our church choirs
- 11:15 a.m. Leader's Training
- 6:10 p.m. Church Softball game vs. Methodist Maroon at Sechlar #1

Sunday, June 15 Fifth Sunday after Pentecost Father's Day

- 9:50-11:15 a.m. Childcare for infants through age 2
- 10:00 a.m. Worship
- Scripture: Genesis 18:1-15 (21:1-7)
Psalm 16:1-2, 12-19
- Sermon: "Laughing Our Thanks"
- 10:15 a.m. Summer Sunday School (age 3-grade 3, grades 4 & 5 welcome as Big Buddy Helpers)
- 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour sponsored by Nancy Johnson-Maloney and Pat Hanauer
- 7:20 p.m. Church Softball game vs. Trinity Blue at Babcock Park

Sunday, June 22 Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

- 9:50-11:15 a.m. Childcare for infants through age 2
- 10:00 a.m. Worship
- Scripture: Genesis 21:8-21
Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17
- Sermon: "Family Feud"
- 10:15 a.m. Summer Sunday School (age 3-grade 3, grades 4 & 5 welcome as Big Buddy Helpers)
- 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour
- 5:00 p.m. Church Softball game vs. Little Prairie at Sechlar 1

Sunday, June 29 Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

- 9:50-11:15 a.m. Childcare for infants through age 2
- 10:00 a.m. Worship
- Scripture: Genesis 22:1-14
Psalm 13
- Sermon: "My Least Favorite Story"
- 10:15 a.m. Summer Sunday School (age 3-grade 3, grades 4 & 5 welcome as Big Buddy Helpers)
- 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour sponsored by Phil and Jean Parsons, Patte Rhodes
- 7:20 p.m. Church Softball game vs. New Covenant at Babcock Park

Strawberry Festival



The Congregational Care Council will host the annual Strawberry Festival on Tuesday afternoon, June 24, from 2:30-4:00. Please call the church office by noon on Thursday, June 19, to RSVP. We invite all members of First UCC and their guests. Come enjoy an afternoon of delicious berries and cake, delightful music, and the chance to meet friends, old and new.

Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve at the annual Strawberry Festival on June 24. Please call Cathy at 645-7532, if you want to help with this fun event.

Church Office Hours

June through August
Monday through Thursday
7:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

September through May
Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Phones

(507) 645-7532, 645-4694

Fax (507) 645-0930

Websites

www.firstucc.org
www.confirmationucc.blogspot.com
www.uccjrhigh.blogspot.com

Staff

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Custodian: Ron Olson

Childcare Coordinator: Tammy Rischmiller

Night Security: Mark Fischer

Officer

Moderator: Kathy Kasten



In our Prayers

- § Tina Schlottan's daycare provider who has been diagnosed with terminal cancer
- § Bernice Schendel's friend, Vie, who died of a stroke. And joy for Bernice's other friend, Judy, who was recently married.
- § Wayne Grism celebrating his two daughters' birthdays.
- § Prayers for the families of those who were recently killed in car accidents in Northfield.
- § Julie Maxson celebrates 11 years of sobriety.
- § Sue Mieska who mourns the death of her friend, Nancy.
- § Peter Duys' brother who has had bladder surgery.
- § Charlotte Smith expresses relief for the survival of her daughter-in-law who was in a serious car accident.
- § Jan Shoger expressed joy that she and Ross have moved back into their home.
- § Mary Easter's friend who has recently entered Hospice.
- § Joy for the good turnout for First UCC's showing of the documentary, *For the Bible Tells Me So*
- § Bill and Penny Cupp, who recently celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary
- § All of those celebrating graduations and commencements this spring
- § Jonathan Een, who injured his foot while spending the year on a Rotary exchange to Brazil
- § Elizabeth Olson, mourning the death of her mother, Lawraine Beery
- § Family and friends mourning the death of Frank Cerney
- § Celebrating with Scott Richardson, upon his selection for the 2008 Heywood Award
- § Members who participated in the Race for the Cure, raising money for Breast Cancer research

- § The people of Burma (Myanmar) in the face of civil violence
- § The people of China, victims of the earthquake there
- § Those working to be sober and drug-free, and their families and colleagues
- § Our Special Olympian Tanya Nuebel
- § Damen Heitmann, our 2007-08 seminary intern, who said good-bye to us in May
- § Sam Dunnewold, recently hospitalized
- § Phyllis Clifford-Albers, undergoing cancer treatment
- § The family and friends mourning the death of Michael Frame
- § Jean Boardman, undergoing cancer treatment

Congratulations to our 2008 High School Graduates



Erik Burton, Claire Carlson, Phoebe Currier, Sam Dunnewold, Gerrit Duys, Anna Fure-Slocum, Anders Hanson, Kellen Kirchberg, Maggie Kruse, Daniel Mueller, Daniel Sanderson, Karl Stromley, James Wilson, Dave Wornson.

Watch the Website

If you visit our congregation's website (www.firstucc.org) you will find news about many of the activities at the church, plus links to other UCC news and events. Pastor Sandy is regularly adding "Sandy's Musings" to the mix.

Shawl Knitting Group

The Shawl Knitting Group will meet at 10:00 a.m. at the church on Thursday, June 5.

After June 5, the Shawl Knitting Group will not meet again until they meet at the church at 10:00 a.m. on September 4.



July in the Country

On Sunday, July 6, we will travel to the historic Valley Grove church in rural Nerstrand for our Sunday morning worship service. Local preservation groups lovingly care for the sanctuary and cemetery, and a portion of the surrounding prairie is also being restored.

Directions to Valley Grove Church:

1. Go South on 246 (Division Street) past the High School.
2. Continue on 246 for approximately 10 miles. Don't forget to turn South (right) on 246 where it turns just before you get to Dennison.
3. Turn West (right) on County 29. The church is on the South (left) side of the road – about one mile.

Or take the scenic route:

1. Go South on County 246 (Division Street) past the High School.
2. At the sign for Valley Grove Road (Route 30, also Hall Avenue), turn South (right).
3. At the stop sign turn left on to 135th Street.
4. At the next stop sign, turn right on Ibsen.
5. At the following stop sign, turn left on Route 29 (Johnson Trail).
6. Valley Grove Church is on the right side of the road about 0.9 mile from the stop sign.



As we have done in the past, all worshipers are invited to stay in this peaceful setting for a picnic lunch.

Each family is asked to bring:

- § Their own picnic meal and dishes.
- § A desert to share with others.
- § A blanket or folding lawn chair if you are uncomfortable sitting directly on the grass.

Lemonade will be provided.

We look forward to seeing you.



Dear Friends,

I almost didn't pick up Paul Nixon's book *I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church!* because First UCC is so clearly *not* in any mortal danger. As soon as I looked at the table of contents, though, I knew that I had found a resource that would help me serve our lively and robust congregation with more clarity and energy.

Here are the six choices that Nixon puts before us:

1. Choosing life over death
2. Choosing community over isolation
3. Choosing fun over drudgery
4. Choosing bold over mild
5. Choosing frontier over fortress
6. Choosing now rather than later.

I was so taken by these six choices that I typed up a summary of them and put it in the front of my calendar, where I will see them almost every day.

Now when I get an idea or start a project, I am reminded to think about ways to make it a lively community event (not a solitary one), to make it fun and bold, to be thinking of new ways of doing things – and of doing them now.

I invite you to use these six options to think about your own ideas and projects – and not just at the church. Think about ways your work, your family life, and your avocations might be transformed if these were your commitments.

As Christians, we are people of the Good News, and I found Paul Nixon's choices to be a helpful and healthy way of keeping myself focused on both the "good" and the "new."

Grace and peace, *Sandy*

PS There is a free study guide for this book online at www.epicentergroup.org.

Help wanted

We are still looking for people who have skills using Word Press or Live Writer, to help keep the website fresh and beautiful. If you are adept at either of these, please contact Pastor Sandy or Andrea Pegram (our new bookkeeper).

Annual Meeting coming up

The Minnesota Conference Annual meeting is coming up June 6-8 at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph.

The featured speaker this year is UCC President and General Minister, the Rev. John Thomas.

Our congregation's delegates are Ed Lufkin, Sue Mieska, and Julie Maxson. If you are interested in what goes on at the annual meeting, you can check the conference website (www.uccmn.org), or ask Pastor Sandy or any of the delegates.

Festival of What?

I spent the week of May 19-23 with 2100 other clergy at the annual Festival of Homiletics, held this year in Minneapolis.

I suppose it takes either a preacher or a "church geek" (as my daughter used to say) to think of five days of sermons as a "Festival." But the folks we heard were among the finest preachers in America. Church members sometimes forget that pastors rarely get to hear other people's preaching – so this really was a whole year's worth of listening for me!

I learned more about the gospel of Matthew (our preaching text for this year), and got lots of new ideas that you will hear over the next few months (though I may not always remember to thank the people who gave me the ideas!)



Pastoral Ponderings

Summer is the time that I get together with several of my friends from Wisconsin. In June I have three different trips planned with friends from high school and college and am looking forward to renewing these long-time friendships.

It has been a busy winter and spring for me. A major reason for this is that I just completed a six month CPE—Clinical Pastoral Education. This class was offered through the Fairview Hospital system and Northfield Retirement Community. It consisted of one hundred hours of class time, three hundred hours of clinical, much reading and many papers. I will forever be grateful that I did this. I learned so much and met seven people with whom I grew to be very close.

The CPE experience, as well as the upcoming trips I have planned, reminds me of the variety of friendships we have in our lives. A long time ago I came across a reading that talked about friends for “a reason, a season, or a lifetime”. There are friends with whom we come together for a shared reason or cause. There are also friends with whom we come together for a specific time in our lives. Sometimes, when that time in our lives ends or the reason for the friendship is no longer vital, the friendship may change or, sometimes, end. It is through no one’s fault. The relationship just was not strong enough or meant to continue beyond that initial bond. But, then, there are friends who remain in our lives for a lifetime.

The friends I made in the CPE class are friends for a reason. We came together for a six-month period of intense study. We shared closely with one another and grew to care very much about each other. While we may remain colleagues or acquaintances, it is unlikely these friendships have the potential to be

life long. Does that take away from what we did share? No. We learned from and helped one another through an intense period of study. If all or some of us continue the relationships we started during this time, it will be a gift.

The friends with whom I will gather this summer are my lifetime friends. We knew each other as girls, as young wives and mothers, and now as middle aged women. We’ve helped pick out prom dresses, and we’ve helped bury one another’s parents.

Take some time to look at the friends who have been in your life. I’m sure you can think of intense friendships that may now only connect with holiday cards, and others who have seen and will see you through all the ups and downs of your life. Each friend, no matter how long or how short the relationship, comes into our life to deliver a blessing. They teach us to see the world with new eyes. And, just as God renews the face of the earth each spring and summer, perhaps, in the same way, God brings us renewal in the face of a friend.

Peace always, dear friends, *Cathy*

Introducing a New Feature: Brought to you by the joint efforts of the MCRC (Minister, Congregation Relations Committee) and the Personnel Committee

Behind the many ministries of our congregation are staff members who provide support, resources, and expertise. Many of their activities are “behind the scenes” and not as visible to our members and yet still every bit as important. Over the next few months, we’d like you to meet those staff members, learn more about their backgrounds, and hear about their duties and responsibilities within the church. We will be publishing a series of interviews that have been

conducted with each staff member. These stories will be printed in the Chronicle each month and posted on the church web site (www.firstucc.org) We begin this month with our minister, the Rev. Sandy Johnson. . . .

On a recent Saturday afternoon in the church lounge, Sandy Johnson was talking about her childhood when she had to excuse herself in order to discuss a church matter. “I’m sorry, she said, “Can we stop here?” After chatting briefly with a parishioner, she returned and sat down calmly, placing her hands in her lap, raising her hazel eyes and resuming her usual steady, calm demeanor. “OK, I’m back,” she said.

The morning offers a glimpse of the life of a busy minister in an active congregation. After spending an hour with Johnson, you get the feeling that the delicate balance she manages took a lifetime of practice. That fact becomes evident after reading her six-page resume and 17-page ministerial profile that illustrates a life of education, motherhood, instruction, leadership, ministry and a passion for sewing and quilting.

“(Quilting and sewing) is the place I go where things get done and all the corners match,” she said. “You start and finish and you have something. In ministry, nothing is very precise. You don’t know where it starts and it never ends and you don’t actually have a product when you’re done.”

An only child, Johnson was born in Albany, Georgia, where her father was the business manager of the St. Louis Cardinals’ minor league baseball team; Johnson’s birth was announced in the local newspaper in an article about the game.

“My father took my mother to the hospital in a team bus because they didn’t have a car yet,” she said. Her family then settled outside Chicago, in Arlington Heights, where Johnson graduated from high school. Following high school, Johnson

attended Denison University in Granville, Ohio, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. From there, she attended the University of Illinois, completing two years of graduate study in psychology. She married, moved to Seattle, where she completed a doctorate in developmental psychology from the University of Washington.

Johnson was raised a Presbyterian; however, she said her parents were not active members. "My parents sent me to Sunday school about the same way they sent me to Girl Scouts and dancing classes. . .they were not active members," she said.

While married, raising two daughters, and working part-time as an associate professor of psychology in the nursing school at the University of Washington, Johnson and her family visited a UCC congregation after her husband suffered a back injury. The family joined and Johnson made friends quickly. Just as rapidly, Johnson became active in the church.

"If you go into a church and you have two children and you are a child psychologist, you get to be a Sunday school teacher right away," she said.

Joining illustrated Johnson's propensity for leadership. From teaching Sunday school, she became a member of the Christian Education Board, chair of the board, and then vice moderator. Of her rapid rise, she said: "I sort of moved up the ranks fast."

After years of church leadership and activism, Johnson began to seriously consider the ministry following her divorce in 1986. "I had to start thinking of the long term and supporting myself," she said. Shortly thereafter, Johnson moved to Berkeley, California to attend the Pacific School of Religion. In 1991, she graduated from the seminary and the same year her eldest daughter, Amanda, graduated from high school.

Sandy's favorites

Bible passages:

§ Matthew 15:21-28

§ A story about a Canaanite woman who challenges Jesus

§ The Book of Esther, in which a young woman risks all for the sake of justice

Books:

§ "*Blink*" by Malcolm Gladwell

Poem:

§ The Irrational Season by Madeleine L'Engle

§ Song of Hiawatha-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

She then moved back to Washington State where she became minister of a small church in the town of Chewelah. Like many healthy congregations in small towns, Johnson called it a "liberal outpost." Although Johnson loved the small town of 2,000, she considered herself an urbanite by nature and missed the city landscape. Therefore, after six years in Chewelah, Johnson began actively seeking a new congregation. In 1997, with three cats in tow, Johnson moved to Northfield. "I actually moved to Northfield and Minnesota came with it," she said. Northfield has been a good match for Johnson and it allows her to be closer to her daughters Amanda Plemmons and Colleen Mitchell, and her only granddaughter, Renee. Johnson also makes regular visits to see her mother, Maryn, who lives in a retirement community in Arlington Heights.

As it turned out, the earlier interruption illustrated a great deal about Johnson. Attending local and regional church meetings, writing sermons, counseling parishioners, caring for a 84-year-old mother in

another state, offering support to grown daughters (and a special four-year-old granddaughter), spending time with her partner, Jean Chagnon, and finding time for her passion, quilting, is all part of Johnson's daily dance of life.

Carol Roeklein

Women's Spirituality Group

The Women's Spirituality group will meet on Saturday, June 7, at 9:30 a.m. The topic will be "The Women Who Influenced Our Lives".

This group is open to all women of UCC and their friends.

Please let Cathy know by noon on Thursday, June 5, if you plan to attend.

If you have any questions, please call Cathy at 507-645-7532.

Men's Group

The Men's Group will meet again at 4:15 p.m. on Monday, June 9, at the First UCC.



Prayer Chain

Call Cathy at church if you have a prayer need for the prayer chain or if you want to join the prayer chain. This requires no meetings, no contributions---just your agreement to hold the needs of others in your personal prayer intentions.



We promise to love, support and care . . .

Each time our congregation celebrates the sacrament of baptism, we members of the congregation promise to love, support and care for the child as s/he lives and grows in Christ. Do you ever find yourself (as I do) wondering just how to fulfill that promise?

First of all, our congregation fulfills that promise by providing many programs and paid leadership in those programs of music and youth ministry.

It also takes many volunteers to give time to many programs for those programs to run smoothly. Recently the Christian Education committee has arranged adult volunteers to accompany the youth to Colorado on the summer mission trip. We appreciate those volunteers and look forward to hearing of their experiences.

Now the Christian Education committee will move on to recruit volunteers to complete the rosters for summer and fall Sunday School.

But, you say, that requires skills and/or time you don't have? Read on! Here are some opportunities that require no preparation and can be completed on Sunday morning:

nursery helper, Sunday School helper, first Sunday multi-age class helper.

If you prefer to help during the week, you may want to volunteer for organizing/maintaining the children's library, the worship activity bags, the Sunday school resource room or bulletin boards, or be an assistant for the children's choir.

So, you see, there are a variety of needs and we need a variety of volunteers to meet these needs. Which one will you choose to fulfill that promise that we make together at each baptism? Phone or e-mail Cher to let her know!

Kathy Kasten, Moderator



2008 Childcare Volunteer schedule

Please contact Tammy at rischmtk@LL.net to volunteer.

Date	Adult	Youth	Youth
June 8, 2008	Sarah Carlsen		
June 15, 2008	Muth's	Kyra Duys	
June 22, 2008	Beth Kallestad		
June 29, 2008	Kristin Kasten		
July 6, 2008	Elise Eslinger		
July 13, 2008			
July 20, 2008			
July 27, 2008			
August 3, 2008			
August 10, 2008			
August 17, 2008	Elise Eslinger		
August 24, 2008	Kristin Kasten		
August 31, 2008			

Christian Education



Children

10:15 a.m. Sundays
on Sunday School level.

Missed the May parents meeting? Parent resource packets and green volunteer cards available on church bulletin board or on parent resource table across from nursery.

Sunday, June 8: Leaders training after worship

Sunday, June 15-August 24:
Summer Sunday School – God Calls Us Around the World: The Wonderful World of Mission.

10:15 a.m. for age three through grade 3; grades 4 and 5 are welcome as “Big Buddy Helpers.”

- Children will learn about mission sites and our friends around the world by exploring customs and cultures of countries through music, food, crafts, language, and more. Hear Bible stories and read missionary letters that will help them understand the special call to mission and focus on missions in the Philippines, Guatemala, Malawi, Pakistan, and Peru.
- Adults can support this time of faith formation by volunteering to lead one Sunday; bringing in items from the countries we will be exploring; sharing stories of their time as a missionary or on a mission trip. For more information please contact Cher Duys or Ruth Anne Rasmusson

§ **Sunday, September 14:** School Year Sunday School resumes. Check our Seasons of the Spirit curriculum we will use in the fall at www.spiritseasons.com/. Interested in being on a fall teach team? Contact Cher Duys or a children’s committee member: Sarah Carlsen,

Ruth Anne Rasmusson, Tracy Fossum, or Kathy Clark.

Nursery available for infants–two years of age.

Pockets magazines and board books in name tag kiosk.

The children’s worship bags are now hanging up outside the south-east Sanctuary door.

The children’s books are now in the children’s library on the Sunday School level along with videos, cd’s and more.



Junior High Youth

Please check your emails for more information.

Grades 7 & 8



Check out Pilgrim Point summer camps!

www.pilgrimpoint.org

(brochures are on the church bulletin board).

Youth Group to resume at 11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on September 14.

Senior High Youth (please check email for updates)



Mission trip youth

Please continue to

pray for us as we prepare for living out our mission as we serve folks in Alamosa.

§ **Thanks to all who supported us through our fundraisers.** If you were unable to participate in the fundraisers and would like to share your financial support, donations are gratefully accepted.

§ **Mission Trip commissioning will be on July 13, during worship**

§ **The Mission Trip youth will lead worship** on August 31.

Confirmation Class – Next class starts fall of 2009.

PCY’s resume meetings in September.



Adults/ Intergenerational



Check out www.pilgrimpoint.com for camp details i.e.

Falls Women’s retreat. Camping on beautiful Lake Ida in Alexandria. Reservations needed prior to arrival.

Thank you

§ for the contribution to the Community Action Center of Northfield for both the purpose of contributions toward utility bills, and also for your donation designated for Thursday’s Table.

§ for your generous contribution of \$3,265.92 and 200 pounds of food to the Northfield Community Action Center Food Shelf during the 2008 March FoodShare Drive.

§ for your donation to the Community Action Center of Northfield designated for Thursday’s Table. Your gift strengthens our work in the community – giving hope back to people in poverty, giving voice and action to neighbors like you who care about them. It’s important during these hard economic times.

CALENDAR



First United Church of Christ
300 Union Street
Northfield MN 55057

Non-Profit Organization
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Change Service Requested



MCRC to sponsor "Cottage" gatherings

The Minister Congregation Relations Committee, as result of last fall's evaluation, and the expressed desire to have more opportunity to be informally with our minister other than when there is a crisis or special need in a family, decided to sponsor a series of what we are calling "cottage" gatherings (perhaps evoking being "up at the lake?").

When Sandy Johnson arrived here ten years ago, we held a number of gatherings to become acquainted with her. Since half of today's congregation has joined since then we decided there was an additional

reason to hold a series of informal, social gatherings during June and July when we are all more relaxed (supposedly!) and there is less church activity.

We are seeking hosts for these events to provide a setting and refreshments. Not only Sandy, but a member of the MCRC committee will be there to help with the getting acquainted process.

You will find the dates of the gatherings in Sunday bulletins and on the website (www.firstucc.org). We are asking you to select a date and "sign up" with the response information given.

Do join us for a casual summer visit!

MCRC, a subcommittee of the Church Council, is charged with keeping communication open between the congregation and the minister and addressing any concerns that arise. We are mandated periodically to do an evaluation of the minister and report to the council and congregation.

Please feel free to call us if you have any questions or concerns.

The members of MCRC are
*Bill Bruhler, Ann Vohs,
Kathy Kasten* (as moderator),
*Mary Hakes, Sue Mieska,
Mike Garlitz, Ed Langrak*
and *Molly Woehrlin*, chair

