



FIRST UNITED  
CHURCH of CHRIST  
Northfield · Minnesota

# The Chronicle

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



## A New Look for the Chronicle

We want this newsletter to be more useful to you – by being briefer and having more information about what is new and changing (rather than repeating ongoing information every month).

We also want to encourage you to look to our church's website, [www.firstucc.org](http://www.firstucc.org), when you have questions or need basic information. Look across the top of the home page or down the left side to find what you need.

In the center of the page, you'll find what's new. That's where to look for recent sermons, the Chronicle, the church calendar, plus "Sandy's Musings," UCC resources, notices about funerals and program changes, and stories and photos of church activities. You can even write comments back about any of these things!

If you know what an RSS Feed is, please add [www.firstucc.org](http://www.firstucc.org) to your reading list. If you don't use RSS Feeds, consider making us your home page. At the very least, check the website a couple

of times a week just to see what's going on.

Meanwhile, back at the *Chronicle*, you'll notice some changes:

- Information about the Sunday service will appear in the calendar, rather than on the front page
- The scripture readings for each week will be listed on a later page, too
- The education page will focus on what is new, and the basic information (class times and schedules) will be posted on the church's website
- Some articles will be shorter, and will refer you to the website for more information

And a quick reminder: If you like having the paper version of the *Chronicle* come in the mail, we'll be glad to keep sending it to you. But if most of your reading is online, or if you just want to help the church save paper and postage, subscribe to the newsletter via email. Just send a message to [church@firstucc.org](mailto:church@firstucc.org), and Elaine will put your name on the email list. You may also ask Elaine not to send you an email or regular paper Chronicle if choose to just look on our

website where you will always be able to see the most updated copy of the Chronicle.



**2008 Holiday Wreaths - A Senior High Fundraiser**

Thanks to all who ordered wreaths. Please remember that all wreaths ordered must be picked up by Sunday, December 7. Sorry but wreaths not picked up by Sunday, December 7 will be resold or donated. Happy Holidays!

## Feeling stressed?

Yoga, Movement to Meditation, focusing on holiday stress reduction, will be held in the assembly room, 8:45-10:00 a.m. on the three Saturday mornings before Christmas, Dec. 6, 13, and 20. All are welcome, no experience necessary; free-will donations to cover Church costs. We will do some centering, some intentional breath work, some warm-up stretches, some asanas or postures, and take time for relaxation and meditation. Questions? Call Bob Bruce, 645-9279. Namaste.

## 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  
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### Staff

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Night Security: Mark Fischer

### Officer

Moderator: Kathy Kasten



## In our Prayers

Marcus Bates, recovering from  
pneumonia

John Beckman, recovering from a  
kitchen injury

Burt Fleming, continuing his  
recovery from back surgery

Bernice Schendel, recovering  
from back surgery

Phi LaMarche, whose grandson  
Cal Danielson is battling  
cancer

Stephen and Ingrid Henry,  
recovering from a car accident

Pastor Sandy's mother, Maryn  
Johnson, home again after a  
recent hospitalization

Larry Fowler, recovering after a  
recent hospitalization

Lois and Charles Messner,  
adjusting to new living  
arrangements

Those seeking reconciliation after  
family disputes

Mary Ellen Ross, adjusting to  
new living arrangements after  
a recent hospital stay

Those dealing with a family  
member in trouble with the  
law

Children (and their parents) who  
struggle in school

Cathleen Carr's mother Mary,  
recently hospitalized in  
Kansas

Penny Cupp, rehabilitating after a  
car accident

Matt Forster's mother Helen,  
recovering from recent surgery

Nancy Johnson-Maloney,  
celebrating her new home in  
Northfield

Carol Rutz, recovering after  
surgery

Julia Savina, recently hospitalized

Those whose conscience leads  
them to protest against the  
School of the Americas  
Those who have been elected to  
office

Doug Wornson and his family,  
mourning the death of his  
mother Lilly

Dillon Nuebel, facing new  
medical challenges

All those who will be traveling  
during the Holiday Season

## Scripture Readings

November 30

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Sermon: Clay

December 7

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11

Mark 1:1-8

Sermon: Sandpaper

December 14

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Sermon: Garlands and Jewels

December 21

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Luke 1:26-38

Luke 1:46-55

Sermon: Roses

December 24

Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Psalm 96

Luke 2:1-20

Sermon: A New Song

December 28

First Sunday of Christmas

Isaiah 61:1-62:3

Luke 2:22-40

Sermon: Carols and Stories



## Friends,

While I was in seminary, I had an evergreen wreath (artificial, of course!) on my wall all year round. It was a going-away gift from a dear friend in Seattle, a woman who had urged me to follow my call and seek ordination. With the wreath came a sign that said "It's always Advent."

Well, the wreath is long gone (even artificial evergreens get tired eventually), but the sentiment remains – it is always Advent. It is always Advent because we are always waiting, in one manner or another, for God to appear in our lives.

This is most obvious in December, when we are waiting for the birth of Jesus, the Christ Child. But think how often during the rest of the year we find ourselves waiting and watching for God's presence: visiting with a sick friend, encouraging a young person's ambitions, planting a garden, or just dreaming of the future.

In Christian tradition, the season of Advent is about waiting for the birth of Jesus and waiting for the return of Christ. It is a time of looking backward and of looking forward. I hope that during your holiday preparations, you will honor this "and": look back at the ways God has been present in your life this year, and forward to the ways God might surprise you in the year ahead. It's always Advent.

Grace and peace, *Sandy*



## Welcome to our new members

Ashley Beckman & Marcus Bates  
John Beckman & Todd Lundell  
James Fergerson  
Jean & Bill Haslett  
Jan & Loy Jeffrey  
Benjamin & Debra Miller  
Matt Rohn & Charlotte Melin  
Bart and Shari Sneary

## PS With Pastor Sandy

Join Pastor Sandy for PS (Post Service with Pastor Sandy) on Sunday, December 14, after the service. Bring a question and your cup of coffee and get better acquainted!

## Help Wanted

There are always projects in the church – see if you might fit one of these jobs:

- Someone with expertise in office technology to help us use our technology more effectively
- Someone with experience using WordPress and/or Live Writer, to give some training to the staff
- Someone to clip pictures and articles out of the local paper about our members – and especially about our children and youth
- Someone to organize our collection of digital photos, so more people can enjoy them
- Someone to help produce a short video about the church (young people welcome!)
- Someone to organize a fun event for the dark days of January – a treasure hunt or a movie night or a taffy pull or ...?

- Someone to keep track of the children's birthdays and send them cards
- Someone to develop a ministry for all the families with babies and toddlers – fun gatherings, mutual support, and some spiritual nurture
- Someone to ... well, what would you like to do?



## Stewardship 2009

Please remember to turn in your pledges. Both the Stewardship Committee and the Trustees, who are trying to set a budget for 2008, are interested in receiving back your cards even if you are unable to pledge at this time.

## Nursing Home Ministry

Pastor Sandy, organist Theo Wee, and members of the Board of Deacons will be leading worship at the Northfield Hospital Long Term Care center during December. These are brief (20-30 minute) services held in the hospital chapel.

If you would like to come along for one or more of these services, check with Pastor Sandy for schedule and details.



## Shawl Knitting Group

The Shawl Knitting Group that meets at First UCC on the first Thursday of each month will meet again at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 4. Bring your shawls to knit, your questions, and yourselves to learn.



## Pastoral Ponderings

There's a little reminder I have taped to my office desk. It simply states, "We must care for one another". Yesterday, I was able to see that idea in motion.

I was buying my groceries for the upcoming holiday, and as I shopped, I heard this high-pitched crying and screaming from a toddler. I thought nothing of it at first; however, it continued for the thirty minutes I shopped. Other shoppers were making comments; one woman came by me and said, "That child needs a good swat on her seat." When I came to the check-out line, I saw the mother two lanes to my left. She had a four year old clinging to her leg and her younger, screaming child in her arms. Her cart was piled high with groceries....the supplies for her holiday meal.

People were glaring at her, making comments, and shaking their heads. I remembered shopping with my young children many years ago. It was always a necessary, but not usually enjoyable experience. That prompted me to take my cart over to her lane. Of course, there was no one behind her. I just asked if I could put her groceries up on the belt for her so she could comfort her child. Her eyes watered, and she could just nod her head. At that point, something amazing happened. Just as I was finished unloading her cart, another woman came over and offered to hold the child while the mother paid her bill. Two other women came to bag

her groceries. A gentleman walked over and said he would take her groceries to the car. The mother kept saying, "Thank you, thank you, as she left the store.

One small act generated several acts of kindness. Instead of joining the ranks of those who condemned this woman, we all began to remember how difficult those early parenting times were. We became united in an effort to find a solution.

These are difficult days. Our country is at war, and many people are in danger of losing their homes because of the failing economy. So, for this Christmas season, let us remember, "We must care for one another."

Peace always, *Cathy*



## Longest Night

The holidays can be a time of sadness, disconnection, and loneliness for many people. This service provides sacred space to those for whom the frivolity of the holiday season feels incongruent with the deep pain in their own world.

Please join us for this evening of beautiful music, prayer, and Scripture.



## 2008 Christmas Offering

Each year, we have a special offering at the Christmas Eve service. The Service and Social Responsibility Committee recommend the destination for this important fund. The offering

will be divided between three organizations: Northfield Community Action Center, Alliance for the Streets and the 2008 Christmas Fund.

The faltering economy is making lives even more challenging for many of our neighbors, near and far. A recent article in the Northfield News reported that while requests for aid at the Community Action Center are markedly up, Executive Director Jim Blaha said as donors tighten their belts, the CAC donations are down. As winter intensifies, the housing and services provided by the Alliance of the Streets for the Minneapolis homeless population become even more crucial. Money contributed to the Christmas Fund Offering provides support to low income active and retired clergy in financial crisis for supplements to annuities and health benefits as well as emergency grants.

Many of us are also touched by the economic downturn, but the SSR Committee hopes we will take time between now and Christmas to remember people whose lives are even more challenged. We hope that we will all set aside some of our holiday budget to provide relief for others.

## 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.

## 2008 Tax Year Contributions

All contributions that may be claimed for the 2008 tax year, including 2008 and pre-paid 2009 contributions, must be in the church office no later than 3:00 p.m. on December 31, 2008 or mailed in a letter that is postmarked by December 31, 2008. Final contribution statements will be mailed to donors during January 2009. Questions? Please email the bookkeeper, Andrea, at [andreapegam@firstucc.org](mailto:andreapegam@firstucc.org)), or call the church office at 645-7532.

## Income or savings for First UCC at no cost to you!

**Purchase gift cards "Scrip" for local and national retailers** through the church at face value, and the church (who purchases the cards at a discount) keeps the difference - up to 15% of the card's face value! You can order these after worship on Sundays and get the full value of the gift card.



### Save postage, etc. for the church (and get the

**Chronicle earlier)** by signing up for the e-mail version of the UCC Chronicle. Just contact Elaine at 645-7532 or [church@firstucc.org](mailto:church@firstucc.org) and she will take you off the regular Chronicle mailing list and place you on the email list. Remember to give her an updated email address if you change yours. If you would rather just check the First UCC web-site and not get an e-mail or paper copy let her know and she will take you which ever list you are on.



**Vintage jewelry and sewing notions** for the First UCC DJJ Days 2<sup>nd</sup> annual

sale. Call Jan Stevens or the church office for more information.



**Computer and fax cartridges** (empty or unused). Place in donation

box in the church office. The cartridges will be refilled and the church office will receive credit to use towards computer and fax cartridges.

## Concert date

First UCC will be hosting its second annual "First UCC Presents" concert Saturday, Jan. 31, featuring highly-acclaimed Twin Cities musician Dan Chouinard and "Prairie Home Companion" regular, singer Prudence Johnson.

Dan, an accomplished pianist and accordionist, is known for his blend of music and storytelling. He creates special programs for Minnesota Public Radio. Two recent shows, "Café Europa" (2005) and "Mambo Italiano" (2006), have been aired on Twin Cities public television. Prudence, a frequent guest on Garrison Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion," launched her career with the jazz group Rio Nido and has recorded three solo albums.

Tickets will go on sale after Christmas, but save this date.

## Christian Education

### Children sharing and caring:

- \$25 collected during trick or treat for UNICEF
- \$400 from summer Sunday school and past children's offerings, sent to UCC Global Ministries for two Guatemalan stoves

### Youth sharing and caring:

- Junior high's raked leaves for one of our church family elders
- Senior high's to serve at food shelf in December

### Youth News:

The 2009 Senior High Mission Trip Habitat for Humanity and LaPuente Home in Alamosa, Colorado will be from July 24-August 3. Interested Youth or Adult leaders may contact Cher Duys at [cherduys@firstucc.org](mailto:cherduys@firstucc.org). Youth registration forms will be available in January.



### Wednesday Evening Intergenerational Advent Gatherings

Step away from the hectic pace of the advent season and join your church family for an evening of supper, crafts, seasonal stories and songs on December 3, 11, 18 from 5:30-7:00 p.m. in the Assembly room. Donations welcome for soup, bread, fruit or if you'd like to help with set-up or clean-up. For more information contact Cher Duys at [cherduys@firstucc.org](mailto:cherduys@firstucc.org).

### Wednesday, December 3

The green group starts our weekly, intergenerational Advent Evenings with a meal and events to help us enjoy a less materialistic wait for the Christ child than culture at large will promote. Young and old together will make ornaments from recycled ads to decorate the church's tree. Learn about gift ideas that do the world, and not just our economy, good. Make merry with one another.



## Sunday Forums for December

December 7: "From an Enfeebled Soviet Union to a Resurgent Russia", Bill Woehrlin, Professor of History, Carleton

December 14: "St. Stephen's: The Journey of a Catholic Community from Hierarchy to Empowered Community", Ed Flahavan, former priest and pastor of St. Stephen's

December 21: "The Economic Mess: Why? What to Do?" David Emery, Professor of Business and Economics, St. Olaf

December 28: No Sunday Forum



## Thursday's Table

Thursday's Table is a program of the Northfield Community Action Center that provides healthy meals to people in Northfield area. The CAC, Northfield School District, and the City of Northfield are working together to serve free meals every Thursday evening from 5:00 to 6:30. The meal is served in the Northfield Community Resource Center dining room, down the hall from the Clothes Closet. The Northfield School District will provide children's activity each week through their Community Services Division. Here is the current schedule:

Twenty-nine volunteers are needed each week to help prepare the meal, serve guests and clean-up afterwards. Individuals and/or

small groups are welcome to volunteer. To find out what days and time slots are available please contact the Thursday's Table volunteer coordinator at 507.664.3555 or [thursdaystable@northfieldcac.org](mailto:thursdaystable@northfieldcac.org).

You can help once, a few times each year, regularly or as fits your schedule. The shifts are as follows:

3:00-5:00 p.m.  
Food preparation (4)

3:30-5:00 p.m.  
Room Set-Up (3)

4:45-6:30 p.m.  
Food Server In Kitchen (4)

4:45-6:30 p.m.  
Beverage & Dessert Servers (4)

5:00-6:45 p.m.  
Table Cleaners/Table Reset (4)

5:00-6:30 p.m.  
Kitchen Cleaners (3)

6:15-8:00 p.m.  
Dining Room Clean Up (4)

6:15-8:00 p.m.  
Kitchen Cleaners (4)



## Thank you

- The PLF Committee would like to thank all the friends of the church who have prepared coffee hours for us this year. It is a big commitment but it certainly is one of our primary hospitality gestures to each other and our visitors.

There has been some difficulty in finding enough volunteers so

we are suggesting that you ask someone to partner with you, either a friend or a new member. January is completely open to signups on the sheet in the kitchen!

*PLF Committee*

- Thank you for your contribution of CFL light bulbs to the Community Action Center Food Shelf. People in these hard times are relying more on the Food Shelf to feed themselves and their families. Your generosity will ensure that the CAC has the supply to share with them.

*Northfield CAC*

- Thank you for your gift to the coalition. Your support means a great deal to us and moves us toward God's day of Justice. God Bless you.

*UCC Coalition*



## Christmas Bird Count

Are you interested in taking part in the annual bird census on Saturday, December 20th? You don't have to be an expert - you can work with more experienced observers outdoors, or just notice the traffic at your bird feeder. Call Jan Mitchell (645-6734) for more information.

Merry  
Christmas!



First United Church of Christ  
 300 Union Street  
 Northfield MN 55057

Non-Profit Organization  
 U. S. Postage PAID  
 Northfield MN

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Permit No. 119


## Flower Power


This year the flower power fund will be used to purchase flowers or plants on certain Sundays and occasions when needed. If you would like to designate a Sunday or specify that you are giving in honor or memory of someone, please fill out this form. Thank you for your generosity.

Please make your check payable to First UCC and return with this form to: First UCC,  
 300 Union Street, Northfield, Minnesota 55057 or place them in the Sunday offering plate.

I have enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help purchase plants/greens (at \$15.00 each) to decorate the church.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be purchased when needed 

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be used at Christmas 

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be used at Easter 

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Given by *(your name as it should be printed in the bulletin)* \_\_\_\_\_

Your phone \_\_\_\_\_ Your E-mail \_\_\_\_\_