



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

Stages on the Way: Experiencing Easter

If you don't experience Good Friday, can you experience Easter? Stages on the Way, a Lenten series adapted from the Iona Community in Scotland, explores how Jesus, his disciples, and his critics felt, thought, and acted during the events leading to Jesus' crucifixion. The Lenten season offers "the greatest possibility of understanding exactly what belonging to Jesus' kingdom and being recipients of his love might really mean. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, it is also the time which offers the greatest possibility of discovering what his followers can do and be for him, in their lives, today."

Please join us for this interactive worship experience each Wednesday evening during Lent. While the Ash Wednesday service on February 25 will follow our traditional format, each subsequent week will utilize prayers, songs, meditations, and dramatic interpretations from the Iona Community. As always, we will meet for soup supper at 5:45 p.m., followed by worship for adults and church musical practice for children at 6:30 p.m.

Orientation for Church Leaders

ALL officers and board and committee members (new and continuing) are invited to an

Orientation session on Wednesday evening, February 4.

We'll start with a pot luck supper at 5:30 p.m. (joined by the Knitters in the new group!), followed by some community building time and some tips for keeping the church running smoothly for the next year.

Printed material will be available for your use or to update your committee's white notebook (if you have one from last year).

We'll be done by 7:00 p.m. – in time for the Church Council to meet! See you there!

Evensong February 8, 4:00 p.m.

All are invited to this Service of Words and Music in our Sanctuary.

Our Senior Choir will be joined by the Hannah Sacred Ensemble, a choir from Stillwater, for this stirring service of music, readings, and prayer.



February 25 Ash Wednesday

Our Lenten season will begin on Ash Wednesday, at 5:45 p.m. We will share supper together, then move to the sanctuary for our

traditional service, which includes the option of receiving the mark of ashes on forehead or hand. This is an intergenerational service; the children of the church participate with the rest of us.

5:45 p.m. Soup Supper
6:30 p.m. Worship (adults)
6:30 p.m. Church Musical Practice (children)



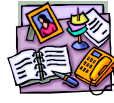
Mystery Pledge

The church office received a 2009 pledge card with no name/address label on it. The total pledge amount is \$1000 (\$900 Local + \$100 OCWM). If this could be yours, please contact Elaine or Andrea at 507-645-7532.



In our Prayers

Mary Hakes, in treatment for breast cancer
 Ed and Lois Langerak, accompanying students on a Middle Eastern trip
 Rev Barbara Martin, recently installed as pastor at First Congregational UCC in Cannon Falls
 Elise Eslinger's mother, Stephanie, continuing her long recovery from illness
 All those who are facing multiple challenges, often made more difficult by financial concerns
 Linda and Gary Wagenbach, traveling in Burma
 Don Perkins and Elise Eslinger, expecting twins in July
 David Maitland, recovery from a fall and subsequent surgery
 Mary Savina's aunts Lou and Rita, in poor health
 Mark Fisher's father Robert, recovering from a stroke in Michigan
 Kevin Peterson, being treating for mild depression and anxiety
 Karen Achberger, accompanying students on a trip to Vienna
 Victims of violence in Gaza, both Palestinian and Israeli
 President Barack Obama as he begins his term of office amid many national problems
 Daisy and Mike Christopherson, celebrating the birth of their daughter Bella Rain
 Pat and Doug Krisel welcoming a new grandson, Ian
 All of those in our community who are unemployed, underemployed, or in jeopardy of job loss
 All those for whom the cold weather is a hardship, and not just an inconvenience
 All of those in recovery, as they live one day at a time...



Help Wanted

The Church Council is looking for someone to coordinate the production of our next photo directory.

This project requires good organizational skills, good people skills, and the commitment to making this important resource available to all the members of the church.

The person who leads the project may choose to continue our practice of using a commercial photographer (with all of its pluses and minuses) or may opt to experiment with software that would let us produce our own directory (which means taking responsibility for the photography ourselves).

Co-coordinating the photo directory can be a great experience – an opportunity to connect with all the members of the church, and to create something that is useful for everyone! If this sounds like something you would like to do – or if you and a friend would like to take it on together – please be in touch with Pastor Sandy.

Accolades to the congregation!

We surpassed our 2008 OCWM pledge goal for the Minnesota Conference by \$4,093.92, and were able to send them a total of \$63,569.92.

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.uccjrhigh.blogspot.com

Staff

Minister: Rev. Sandra Johnson
sandyjohnson@firstucc.org

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 Cathy Cammack
cathycammack@firstucc.org

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cherduys@firstucc.org

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chrisbrunelle@firstucc.org

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 Lewis Muth, janetmuth@firstucc.org

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bobgregory@firstucc.org

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Childcare Coordinator: Tammy Rischmiller
tammyrischmiller@firstucc.org

Night Security: Mark Fischer

Officer

Moderator: Kathy Kasten



Sunday Lectionary & Sermon

February 1: 4th Sunday after the Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Mark 1:21-28

“Powerful Words”

February 8: 5th Sunday after the Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31

Mark 1:29-39

Seminary Intern: Val Veo

“Almighty House Calls”

February 15: 6th Sunday after the Epiphany

2 Kings 5:1-14

Mark 1:40-45

“Healing Community”

February 22: Transfiguration

Psalms 50:1-6

Mark 9:2-9

“Shadow and Substance”



Dear Friends

There was some wonderful public praying during the Presidential Inauguration festivities last month. Bishop Eugene Robinson offered a challenging prayer on Sunday at the concert at the Lincoln Memorial (which, alas, was not widely seen, though you can find it on the internet); Pastor Rick Warren was more inclusive than many expected at the beginning of the Swearing-In Ceremony; and the benediction by Rev. Joseph E. Lowery was rich with imagery from scripture, spirituals, and jazz.

Offering prayers at civic occasions is an interesting exercise, as I rediscovered when I was asked to give the invocation at the Minnesota House of Representatives last month. The prayer needs to be inclusive in several ways: people of

different faiths, different political beliefs, different genders, and different ages will be listening. It needs to address the spiritual aspects of the civic work that is being blessed in a general way, but not in a way that advocates particular positions or actions.

And perhaps most challenging of all, it has to be specific enough to really be a prayer for this particular occasion – this time, this place, this set of tasks or challenges.

I like to think that members of the United Church of Christ are particularly well suited for offering prayers in public settings. We are accustomed to inclusivity in our language and theology, and we are experienced at identifying values that we share in common. And at our best, we do those things without “watering down” our theology – our conviction that God is alive and active in the world, and that we are called to be likewise.

Grace and peace, *Sandy*



Shawl Knitting Group

The Shawl Knitting Group will meet on Thursday, February 5 at 10:00 a.m. in the Assembly Room or the Parlor.



Intergenerational Knit (and Crochet!) Night

Whether you've been knitting and crocheting for years, or have been meaning to learn for years, come and join us for a night of yarn and fellowship Wednesdays during February from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Young and young at heart, women and men (yes, men!): all are invited!

Our first meeting will be Wednesday, February 4th, in the Assembly Room, and we'll have needles, hooks and yarn on hand for those who'd like to learn.

Please bring a dish to pass. For more information or to sign up, contact Valerie Veo (valveo@firstucc.org) or Janet Lewis Muth (janetmuth@firstucc.org).



Movement to Meditation

Are you interested in trying Yoga as your spiritual discipline for Lent this year? Bob Bruce will focus on that from the Saturday before Ash Wednesday, February 25th, through the Saturday before Palm Sunday. All are welcome as we bring our thoughts and energies to this devotional practice. 8:45-10:00 a.m. in the Assembly Room. Questions? call Bob at 645-9279; sponsored by Deacons; free-will contribution to help defray Church expenses.



Check the Website

Do you have a question about the church calendar? Want to know our policies about weddings? Looking for a copy of last week's sermon?

All of these things (and many more!) are to be found on our congregation's website: www.firstucc.org. Check often to keep up with the news.

And while you are at it, take a moment to look at the national UCC website: www.ucc.org. Read the sermon from the Washington prayer service on January 21 that began the new administration, see who will be speaking at General Synod this summer, and read a devotional message for the day.

Then click over to the Minnesota Conference site: www.uccmn.org – and learn what's going on in our state.



Pastoral Ponderings

We are at that point in winter where the novelty of snow and brisk temps has begun to recede. With these gray days, it's sometimes hard to remember that, in two to three months, tulips will be pushing their way to the surface, and snow boots may find their way to the back of the closet. However, for now, the gray days remain with us.

You are probably wondering what a weather report has to do with pastoral care. The weather affects people in many ways. Some people are troubled with Seasonal Affective Disorder. SAD (what a great acronym!) results in a depression that is often related to lack of sunlight. If you find yourself experiencing depression, please talk to your doctor about some helpful

therapies to get you through these darker months.

Another thing to keep in mind is that neighbors, family, and friends may be experiencing other difficulties during these cold months. The threat of falling keeps many elders from venturing from their homes. Sick children may keep a young mother or father from being able to buy groceries or run errands. An offer of help or a visit may make all the difference to someone unable to leave the house. If there is an older or disabled neighbor, perhaps you can offer to take the garbage out to the curb and back for them, or you can offer to pick up their mail. Just be aware that for those who are healthy, these months offer many joys and snow-related activities. But, for someone who is disabled, these months offer nothing but isolation. Remember, we must care for one another.

Just a reminder...I am only half time, so I am at the church usually on Mondays and Wednesdays. I also attend two church services here per month. You can always leave a confidential voice mail for me at 645-7532, ext. 203. I also check my church emails daily. (cathycammack@firstucc.org). If you need to speak to me personally on the days I'm not here, Elaine can give you my cell phone number.



Peace always, *Cathy* Women's Spirituality Group

The Women's Spirituality Group next will meet on Monday, February 23, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. We will discuss Chapter 5 of *The Story of Ruth: Twelve Moments in Every Woman's Life* by Joan Chittister.

Please join this lively group for discussion, sharing, and laughter. All women of the church and their friends are invited. It doesn't matter if you haven't read the earlier

chapters or if you have never before attended, you are welcome.

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

Midwinter Retreat

Midwinter Retreat: Join us for a spiritual afternoon of nature and relaxation at the River Bend Nature Center on February 15th from 2:00-6:00 p.m. Retreat will include nature walk, yoga, and guided meditation. Focus is on the connection of nature and spirituality. Snacks will be provided. Cost is \$10 and space is limited. Contact L-21 students Hannah (campbelh@carleton.edu) and Terra (petersot@carleton.edu) with questions or to make reservations.

Christian Education



Habitat for Humanity
and LaPuente Home
Senior High Mission Trip
2009 - Alamosa, CO

www.habitatcolorado.org/SanLu
www.lapuente.net

Friday, July 24, Monday, August 3

3-5 Mandatory pre-trip meetings
inclusive of fundraisers

Cost of trip is \$425 (actual cost is
approximately \$800.) Contributions are
welcomed.

Registration forms and the first
payment in the amount of \$250 is
due by February 2. Second
payment in the amount of \$175 is
due by March 22.

Payment plans and partial
scholarships are available by
contacting cher@firstucc.org ahead
of time.

Registration forms are available on
the bulletin board by the church
office or by emailing
cherduys@firstucc.org.



Coffee Hour

February 1: Corey & Jessica Stadler
February 8: Nancy Casper, Nancy
Lehman
February 15: Mim Mueller, Tom
and Paul Benson
February 22: Liz Hawkins, Linda
Wagenbach



Bell Ringers

February 1: Julie Maxson
February 8: Julie Maxson
February 15: Greg Muth
February 22: Julie Maxson



Nursery Volunteers

February 15: Nursery: Deb Miller
February 22: Nursery: Kaara
Maki-Waller



§ for your recent gift to Global
Ministries that will be used to
support the "Thrifty" stoves
project in Guatemala.

§ So much for your generous gift.
Many of our patients are alone,
but because of you their holiday
season was a little more special.
Wishing you peace and happiness
throughout 2009!

Thanks again, *Betty*
Peter Regional
Treatment Center

§ for granting Alliance Housing
one-third of 2008's Christmas
offering. This donation matters a
great deal to us and helps us keep

our rents affordable to the
families and single adults who live
in our housing.

Herb Frey,
Executive Director

§ very much for your support of the
Joint Religious Legislative
Coalition's Legislative Network.

Brian Rusche,
Executive Director

§ so much for your generous gift of
money supporting our trip to
protest the SOA. Your support
means a lot to us!

The St. Olaf Delegation
protesting the SOA

Immigration Forum with Phil Fishman

Date: February 22, 2009
Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Where: O'Gara Social Hall at
Church of St. Dominic,
Northfield, Minnesota

Immigrants often feel powerless and
live in fear. Attend a session about
immigrant rights, legalization and
how you can help.

Phil has practiced law for 4 years, is
an adjunct professor at the U. of M.
and Augsburg College, and is
recognized as an outstanding lawyer
in Minnesota in the field of
immigration.

For more information contact Judy
at 645-6904.



Too much mail

Are you on too many mailing lists?

Send a letter to:

Direct Market Assoc.,
Mail Preference Service,
P. O. Box 9008,
Farmington NY 11735

Too many fax lists?

Send a fax to:

866-788-5202



Cleaning or downsizing and want to donate?

§ **CAC Clothes Closet** in need of used clothes and small household items.

§ **Used A Bit Shoppe** is in need of good household items, pictures and frames, and antiques.

§ **Old eye-glasses:** deposit in a box at Econo Foods Pharmacy.

§ **Unneeded cell phones** – Call to Protect (donateaphone.com) sells old phones and uses proceeds to help victims of domestic violence.

§ **Extra digital cameras:** Operation Homefront (operationhomefront.net) provides military families with cameras so they can stay in touch with a service member.



Websites to check out . . .

§ **The Rice County Solid Waste website** which has information about what can be recycled curbside and what can be recycled in terms of hazardous waste items during certain hours at the landfill (electronics, CFL bulbs, etc.). Check <http://www.co.rice.mn.us/waste/>. Click on “Rice County Recycling Program” which is a one page flyer.

§ **Northfield Freecycle** is an organization dedicated to helping people recycle things by making them available for free to others. It's website to make the transactions (post things and find them) is: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/northfield_freecycle/.

§ **Xcel Energy** has information about CFL bulbs, including coupons for saving money on recycling them at commercial places and lists of where they can be recycled, at: http://www.xcelenergy.com/Residential/Programs_Resources/BulbRecycling/Pages/Bulb_Recycling.aspx



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, tc. for the church (and get the Chronicle earlier)** Sign up for the e-mail version of the UCC Chronicle. Just contact Elaine at 645-7532 or 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 2nd 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.



Adult Education for February

February 1

Jim Blaha, director of the Community Action Center, and Regi Haslett-Marroquin, director of the Rural Enterprise Center of the Main Street Project, will be talking about the needs in our Northfield community.

February 8

Roy Grow, from Carleton College, will share information on the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan.

February 15

What does it mean to be a Christian today? Marcus Borg discusses so clearly this issue in his book *The Heart of Christianity*. The Sunday Forum will be continuing our conversation about this book as we discuss chapters 6, p. 103-122, "Born Again: a New Heart" AND chapter 8, p. 149-163, "Thin Places: Opening the Heart." Jan Shoger will lead the conversation.

February 22

We will continue our study of Marcus Borg's book *The Heart of Christianity*. Ed Langerak will lead the discussion of chapter 11, p. 207-225, "Heart and Home: Being a Christian in the Age of Pluralism."