

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



Do you find it difficult to sit in the pews or to hear the service?

Thanks to the Trustees, accessible seating is now available near the southeast door to the sanctuary. Two upholstered chairs with arm rests are available for seniors and those with limited mobility. Space for wheelchairs and walkers is there too.

Personal hearing devices are available at the back of the sanctuary for anyone with limited hearing. Ask an usher to assist with the devices that amplify the microphones used during the service.

Sundays and Special Worship Services during December


Wednesday, December 2

- 5:30-7:00 p.m. WFFF (Wednesdays for Food, Fun and Faith Development in Assembly Room)
- 5:30-6:15 p.m. there will be a prepared supper (free will donation)
- 6:15-7:00 p.m. Planned activities for children and discussion series for adults and youth.



Second Sunday in Advent

Sunday, December 6:

- Bell Ringer: Leota Goodney
- 10:00 a.m. Worship &  Communion
- Guest Preacher: Rev. Laurie Crelly
- Readings: Malachi 3:1-4; Philippians 1:3-11
- 10:15 a.m. Multi-age Sunday School Class (ages 3-grade 3)
- 11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour
- 11:15 a.m. Junior High Youth Group
- No Senior High Youth Group (Confirmation retreat at Camp Omega)
- 11:30 a.m. Adult Forum: continuation of our discussion of The First Christmas by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan.

Wednesday, December 9

- 5:30-7:00 p.m. WFFF (Wednesdays for Food, Fun and Faith Development in Assembly Room)
- 5:30-6:15 p.m. there will be a prepared supper (free will donation)
- 6:15-7:00 p.m. Planned activities for children and discussion series for adults and youth.



Third Sunday in Advent

Sunday, December 13: Senior Choir Festival

- Bell Ringer: Greg Muth
- 10:00 a.m. Worship, Senior Choir Festival
- The Senior Choir will sing five Advent anthems of Hugo Distler, accompanied by flutes and viola. Distler (1908-1942) led the modern movement to restore the sounds and structures of early Baroque music, and his anthems are simultaneously simple and profound. Please come and listen.
- 10:15 a.m. Sunday School
- 11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour: The Corey and Jessica Stadler Family
- 11:15 a.m. Junior High Youth Group
- 11:30 a.m. Senior High Youth Group
- 11:30 a.m. Adult Forum: continuation of our discussion of The First Christmas by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan.
- 4:00 p.m. Confirmation

Wednesday, December 16

- 5:30-7:00 p.m. WFFF (Wednesdays for Food, Fun and Faith Development in Assembly Room)
- 5:30-6:15 p.m. there will be a prepared supper (free will donation)
- 6:15-7:00 p.m. Planned activities



Sunday, December 20:

January Chronicle articles are due to the office

Bell Ringer: Bill Poehlmann
10:00 a.m. Worship
Sermon: Singing With Mary
Readings: Micah 5:2-5a;
Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour
11:15 a.m. Junior High Youth Group
No Adult Forum
11:30 a.m. Senior High Youth Group
4:00 p.m. Confirmation



Monday, December 21 Longest Night Service

The Longest Night service will be on Monday evening, December 21, at 7:00 p.m. Please join us for this beautiful service of prayer, music, Scripture, and sacred silence. For many people, the festivity of the holiday season is incongruent with the pain in their own lives. This service recognizes that and offers space for those who wish to escape, for a little while, the blaring festivity of the season.

If you are interested in helping with this service, call (645-7532) or email Cathy. (cathycammack@firstucc.org)



Thursday, December 24: Christmas Eve

(The Church Office will be closed on Thursday, December 24, and Friday, December 25)

Please invite your family, friends, and neighbors to join us for worship on Christmas Eve.

Bell Ringer: Greg Muth
Sermon: Out of the Dark
Readings: Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-20; Matthew 2:1-12

4:00 p.m. Christmas Service will include music by the Senior Choir and a special opportunity for children to meet the Holy Family.

8:00 p.m. Service will include special music from baritone Daniel Greco and the celebration of Holy Communion.



Friday, December 25: Christmas Day

No Worship Services today
Church Office Closed

Sunday, December 27:

Bell Ringer: Leota Goodney
10:00 a.m. Worship, Carols & Stories
Sermon: What Child Is This?
Readings: Psalm 148;
Luke 2:41-52
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour
11:15 a.m. Junior High Youth Group
No Adult Forum
No Senior High Youth Group
No Confirmation Class

Church Office Hours
June through September 4
Monday through Thursday
7:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

September 8 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

Pastoral Care Associate:
Cathy Cammack
cathycammack@firstucc.org

Director of Educational and Youth Ministries: Cher Langley Duys
cherduys@firstucc.org

Director of Music: Chris Brunelle
chrisbrunelle@firstucc.org

Director of Children's Music: Janet Lewis Muth, janetmuth@firstucc.org

Director of Spirit Voices:
Bob Gregory-Bjorklund
bobgregory@firstucc.org

Organist: Theo Wee
theowee@firstucc.org

Office Manager: Elaine Malecha
church@firstucc.org

Bookkeeper: Andrea Pegram
andreapegram@firstucc.org

Custodian: Ron Olson

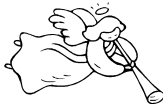
Childcare Coordinator: Tammy Rischmiller
tammyrischmiller@firstucc.org

Night Security: Mark Fischer

Seminary Intern: Ruth MacKenzie
ruthmackenzie@firstucc.org

Officers

Moderator: Ed Lufkin
Vice Moderator: Tracy Fossum



Dear Friends,

I want to issue a special invitation to all of you to attend our ***Longest Night*** service at 7:00 p.m. Monday evening, December 21 .

I am never sure exactly how to describe this service to people, because it is so rich in meaning:

- It acknowledges that Christmas is a painful holiday for many people – those who have experienced the death of a loved one or other loss, those who are estranged – or just far away – from family members, those who struggling with illness or injury, and those struggling with despair and depression.
- It reminds all of us that Christ does not come because we have finished our shopping and mailed our cards; Christ comes to offer hope and comfort to those who are suffering or struggling in their lives.
- It reminds all of us that the “true light” came into the world at a particularly dark time of the year, and a notably dark time in history – some comfort in our own dark times.
- And it invites all of us into a quiet and contemplative spiritual presence at a time of year when overwork and overexcitement are the rule.

Cathy Cammack, our Pastoral Care Associate, and the Congregational Care Council plan and lead the ***Longest Night*** service. Candlelight, music, and readings come together in a moving and meaningful way.

So I (gently but persistently) urge you to make time on Monday evening, December 21, to mark

the ***Longest Night*** as a time of renewed hope and promise.

Grace and peace, *Sandy*

The Minister’s Schedule

Pastor Sandy will be away on vacation from December 2 to 8. Our guest preacher on Sunday, December 6 will be the Rev. Laurie Crelly, a member of our congregation.



Pastoral Ponderings

Yesterday during Joys and Concerns, David Maitland stood up and shared his gratitude for all of the support and care he felt from this congregation. He also shared something that I find to be more powerful than that. He said he is trying to teach his adult children how to cope with an aging parent.

In that statement, he reminded us that parents never stop teaching their children. The lessons start out simply: tie your shoes, say your prayers, mind your manners, and share your toys. They progress later to driving lessons, conflict resolution, and responsibility. When our children become parents, we see ways that our parenting is reflected in their parenting.

David’s remarks remind us that, no matter our age, we are still teaching our children and those around us how to navigate the many paths of life. We model to our children how to age. And, eventually, we will teach them how to die.

When Jesus came into the world, he went ahead of us. He showed us how to live in community as well as in solitude. And, he later showed us how to die. In that death, he modeled to us that death is only a moment but that the bigger story is the Resurrection. Just as parents blaze the trail for children, Christ blazed the trail for us. We no longer stumble around in the darkness.

May you have a blessed holiday season.

Peace always, *Cathy*

The Men’s Group to meet

The Men's Group will meet in the Assembly Room for breakfast on Tuesday, December 8, at 8:30 a.m. Chefs will be Jerry Hankins and Jerry Mohrig. Our discussion will be on the provocative John Updike short story, "Made in Heaven", taken from the book "God Stories" edited by Michael Curtis. All men are welcome to join us.



December Women’s Spirituality Group

There will be no *Women’s Spirituality Group* meeting during the month of December. The group will next meet on Monday, January 25 at 7:00 p.m. Watch the January *Chronicle* and the bulletin board for information.

Welcome New Members on November 8

Katherine (Katie) Nelson
Dean Paxton
Courtney Scholl
Timothy Scholl
Teresa Swenson
Jennifer (Jen) Winerfeldt



Online Giving

Please remember that you can make donations to the church – including for our special offerings and other programs – from our congregation’s website, www.firstucc.org.

So, for example, if you are going to be out of town for Christmas, but wish to make a donation to our Christmas Eve Offering, go to the website and click on [Give Now](#).



2009 Tax Year Contributions

All contributions that may be claimed for the 2009 tax year, including 2009 and pre-paid 2010 contributions, must be in the church office no later than 3:00 p.m. on December 31, 2009 or mailed in a letter that is postmarked by December 31, 2009. Final 2009 contribution statements will be mailed to donors during January 2010. Questions? Please email the bookkeeper, Andrea, at andreapegam@firstucc.org, or call the church office at 645-7532.

Stewardship 2010

Please remember to submit your 2010 pledge card to the church office. Both the Stewardship committee and the Trustees, who are trying to set a budget for 2010, are interested in receiving your pledge cards even if you are unable to pledge at this time.



Advent Yoga

Yoga classes as a Spiritual Exercise will be held at First UCC from 8:45-10:00 a.m. on the following Saturday mornings during Advent: December 5th, 12th, and 19th.

Please contact Bob at 645-9279 with questions or if other times would work better (he might be willing to change if enough people request it).

Advent Yoga is sponsored by the Deacons. There is no charge but a free will offering will be taken. All are welcome.

Help Available

Paul McDonnell, a long time member of this community, is available to work with special needs children and adults. He has more than fifteen years of experience working in day treatment programs, with school age children and as a PCA in Rice County. He is presently unemployed and is happy to do volunteer work. References available. Call his cell phone at 651-206-8679 or Jane McDonnell at 507-645-9840.



Christmas Offering

This year the Service and Social Responsibility Committee plans to allocate the Christmas Eve Offering to three programs: the UCC Christmas Fund Offering, Northfield Community Action Center and Alliance Housing.

The Christmas Fund helps provide pension and health premium supplementation to lower-income retired church workers; emergency assistance to clergy families in need; and Christmas checks to hundreds of annuitants. These programs are administered by the Pension Boards of the UCC.

Our congregation has a long history of involvement with the Northfield Community Action Center whose mission is to promote “a healthy, caring and just community for all people through resources, advocacy and volunteer effort.”

Alliance Housing creates, owns and operates housing for low and very income people in Minneapolis and the wider Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Anyone not participating in the Christmas Eve worship service may contribute by either mailing your gift to the church, or leaving it in the church office. Please write “Christmas Eve Offering” in the memo line.

**Save the date ---
January 23
First UCC Presents**

Here's a concert you won't want to miss. On Saturday, January 23, First UCC Productions has invited our own Ruth MacKenzie to perform with friends Peter Ostroushko and Dan Chouinard. Besides being our seminary intern, Ruth is an accomplished musician, playwright and composer. She frequently collaborates with Peter and Dan to create soulful musical poetry, part folk, part blues. More later, but do save the date.



**Mark your
Calendars!**

Ruth Mackenzie is a singer, writer, and composer who has been a member of the Twin Cities arts community for many years. She is also our seminary intern. Along with purely artistic endeavors, Ruth has brought her writing and performing abilities to many organizations such as NSP, the Metropolitan Council, First Bank Systems, Minnesota Corrections Agency, and the Wilder Foundation creating live performances and workshops that address issues affecting the workplace such as racism, gender equity, change, gifts and talents.

On Saturday morning, February 6, Ruth will lead a retreat at First UCC entitled, "Finding Your Voice." It is a memory workshop devised to unearth hidden gifts, and build community through storytelling. Ruth has presented this workshop annually at the Wilder Foundation in St. Paul for the past 12 years, and at many

churches throughout the region. Please join us for a workshop of spiritual deepening and continuing fellowship. Watch for upcoming registration information.

**Neighbors in Need
Offering**

Our Neighbors in Need Offering this year to date is \$2,146.

**THANKS-GIVING
from THEO**

What a wonderful celebration of music and words happened at our worship together on Sunday, November 8th! I want to express my deep gratitude to the entire congregation for the exuberant love shown to me on that day.

There were many people working under my radar screen to pull off that celebration. Chief among them was Director of Music, Chris Brunelle, working in cahoots with Pastor Sandy, several choir members, moderator, Ed Lufkin, and others whom I may not be aware of. I am honored to have been a recipient of the commissioned organ composition by Twin Cities composer Janika Vandervelde, to have received such an official proclamation from Mayor Rossing, as well as the cash gifts sent to Church World Service in my name, and to us personally for air fare.

Through these "first forty years" I have received much appreciation and support from the staff, from individuals in the congregation, and from the choir members-- all of whom have nurtured my creative juices (and an occasional

headache!) I strongly feel that it is this mutual expression of support and appreciation for what happens between congregation, clergy, and musicians that keeps a community of faith vibrant and relevant. May this spirit of mutual commitment continue even beyond the "next forty years" (no promise or threat intended!) Thanks again, everyone!



PEO Fundraiser

Have Breakfast with Santa at First UCC on Saturday morning, December 12. Watch for more details.



Faith Formation through Christian Education

Sharing, Caring, Learning and Serving



Children

Childcare

Infants through age 2,
9:45 a.m.-11:15 a.m.
and infants through grade 6,
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

School Year Sunday School

Adults: Support the children by being a helper. Sign up on bulletin board across from office

Ages 3-Grade 6

www.spiritseasons.com/

- After children's time in worship; return for worship closing
- Thanks to the grades 4-8 who served at Feed My Starving Children
- Thanks to the children who helped with the Harvest Meal

First Sunday of the Month

- **Multi-age Class**, ages 3 through Grade 3, www.godlyplay.org
- **Grades 4-6** participate in worship with family



Junior High Youth

Grades 7 & 8 each Sunday from
11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Additional group events
Each Sunday, 11:15 a.m. –
12:30 p.m.

- Additional group events
- December 19: Heart of the Beast theater, *La Natividad*
 - Saturday, January 23 from

8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.: MN UCC
Conference Junior High
Service days in Minneapolis



Senior High Youth

Grades 9-12 (check email for updates)

Senior High Youth Group
Meets each Sunday, 11:30 a.m. –
12:30 p.m.

December – Stress relief Fun!

- December 13: Cocoa, creatively frosting holiday cookies and chatting!
- December 20: Pizza and a Movie. Plan to end around 1:00 p.m.

SUMMER: July 23–August 2,
2010 **Mission Trip** to Alamosa,
Colorado serving Habitat for
Humanity and La Puente

**Wednesday's for Food, Faith
and Fun (WFFF) in Advent**
December 2, 9, and 16 from
5:30-7:00 p.m.

Please join us for our annual
advent intergenerational evenings
of supper, holiday stories, songs
and activities! Sponsored by the
Children's Committee

**Thanks to all who contributed
to the 40 hygiene kits for**
Church World Services which
have been sent to those in need.



Confirmation Class

Confirmation Class will be held
on Sundays from 4:00-6:00 p.m.



Adult Education: Sunday Forums

Join us after worship each week.
Childcare is available downstairs
until 12:30 p.m.

Sundays, December 6 and 13

We will continue our discussion
of *The First Christmas* by Marcus
Borg and John Dominic Crossan.
Books are available for purchase
for \$11 and one copy of the book
will be in the church library.

"Borg and Crossan help us to see
this well-known narrative afresh
by answering the question, 'What
do these stories mean?' in the
context of both the first century
and the twenty-first century.
They successfully show that the
Christmas story, read in its
original context, is far richer and
more challenging than people
imagine."

December 20:
No Sunday Forum


December 27:
No Sunday Forum


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 _____