



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

Sundays in May

Sunday, May 2:

10:00 a.m. Worship,
Confirmation,
Communion,
Spirit Voices sing
Scriptures: Psalm 148;
Revelation 21:1-6



10:15 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour in honor
of Confirmands (sponsored by
PLF)
6:10 p.m. Fighting Apostles
softball game at Sechlar #2 vs.
St. Dominic's White
7:00 p.m. Inquirer's Class meets
with their sponsors in the
Assembly Room. Childcare
provided.

Sunday, May 9: Mother's Day

10:00 a.m. Worship (led by Ruth
MacKenzie), Reception of
New Members
Scripture: Matthew 13: 31-39
Sermon: A Community of
Mothers
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Blessing of the Bikes
11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour in honor
of New Members and Janet
Muth
6:10 p.m. Fighting Apostles
softball game at Sechlar #1 vs.
Rejoice Prophets

Sunday, May 16:

10:00 a.m. Worship
Guest Preacher: Carol Rutz
Scriptures: Psalm 97;
Acts 16:16-34.
Sermon: Earthquakes as Praise
10:15 a.m. Last Day of School
Year Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Annual Senior High
Mission Trip Chili Fundraiser
6:10 p.m. Fighting Apostles
softball game at Babcock vs.
Rejoice Disciples

Sunday, May 23:

10:00 a.m. Worship, Baptisms
Scriptures: Acts 2:1-21;
Romans 8:14-17
Sermon: Getting a Voice
11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour
7:20 p.m. Fighting Apostles
softball game at Babcock vs.
Trinity Red

Sunday, May 30:

10:00 a.m. Worship,
Baccalaureate
Scripture: Proverbs
8:1-4, 22-31; Psalm 8
Sermon: Sophia
11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour in honor
of Graduates (sponsored by
PLF)



Bell Ringers

May 2: Phil Parsons
May 9: Pete & Gus Carlson
May 16: Julie Maxson
May 22: Julie Maxson
May 30: Nancy Johnson Maloney



Confirmation Service

May 2 is Confirmation Sunday!

First, we will recognize the year-long program in which fifteen youth and 5 adults from our congregation have shared their faith journeys. Then those youth who choose to be confirmed will come forward and we will welcome them as members of our congregation.

Please make a special effort to be present on this important day for the families in our church!

Spring Work day

Please mark your calendars!
We will hold our Spring workday on Saturday, May 8, from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. Light inside cleaning, raking, trimming, etc. Questions? Please contact Nancy Lehmann or the church office.

Dear Friends,

Over the past couple of weeks I have been thinking a lot about grief. Some of that is very personal. April was the first anniversary of my mother's final illness and death, and anniversaries of loss often bring back our grief in fresh and unexpected ways.

One of the ways I marked the anniversary was by setting up a doll house that had been my mother's. She was a collector of exquisite miniatures (1/12 scale) which she displayed in five rooms named after members of our family. I felt very close to her as I carefully unwrapped these small treasures (like a tiny pin cushion complete with spools of thread, a dresser with dovetailed drawers, and a weaving loom that actually works!)

And of course I am already experiencing grief about retiring from my position as your minister at the end of June. I dearly love the life of the church – even (most of the time!) the frustrations and complexities of our congregation. I will really miss the rhythm of my week and the pattern of the church year. Most dramatically, I will miss the time I spend with all of you and with our very gifted staff.

My grief is eased somewhat by my conviction that this is the right time for me to retire, and by my confidence that the Holy Spirit has more in store for me – even if I am not clear right now about what that might be! Moreover, I am also convinced that God has a wonderful future in store for this faithful, energetic, and generous congregation.

We will have several opportunities in June to celebrate our time together, and to reflect on the ministry that we have shared. There is much joy to be savored, as well as grief to be acknowledged. And the joy is much the greater.

Grace and peace, *Sandy*

Worship led by Our Seminary Intern

On Sunday May 9, our seminary intern, Ruth McKenzie, will lead our worship service. Ruth has participated in all parts of our service during the year, and this is the day she will put it all together. We look forward to her leadership.

Ruth will conclude her work with us on Sunday, May 23. We'll recall her ministry with us, and to send her on the next part of her journey with our love and blessings.



Blessing of the Bikes

It's become an annual tradition at First UCC to "Bless the Bikes" each spring. This year's blessing will be Sunday, May 9 directly after worship. ALL bikes, trikes, wagons or anything else on wheels (no cars please) will be eligible for the blessing. Please join us for this very fun event.





Pastoral Ponderings

I've often found vacations to have their own particular "epiphany moments". Perhaps this happens when we leave the stress and routine of our "normal" lives and allow ourselves to be open to new experiences. My husband and I just returned from a week's vacation in Florida, and yes, I had one of those moments.

It's important to preface this with the fact that I am a person who tries to follow the rules. (Although, a State Patrol officer I met on Hwy. 19 a few weeks ago might disagree with this statement.) So, I was sitting at the outside pool of our hotel.

Right in front of me, written in large letters on the cement, was a "No Diving" rule. Also, in front of me was this young girl who seemed about 8 or 9 years old. She was DIVING. To make matters worse, her grandmother was in the water, and she was "grading" each of the girl's dives on a one-to-ten basis. This continued for over an hour.

Well, I had problems with this. The rule was written plain and clear, and this grandmother was allowing her granddaughter to blatantly break that rule. The "Monitor of the World" in me kicked in, and I was ready to go over and kindly point out the sign to the grandmother. That is when I had "my moment". The girl surfaced from each dive and immediately looked to her grandmother for her score. The grandmother, though encouraging, was very objective about each dive. If the score were below a 7, she immediately

pointed out to the girl the reasons for it.

I realized that I'm maybe a bit too quick to see the errors in someone else's behavior and miss my own. So, yes, that's an important thing to know. But, maybe the greater lesson in this comes from watching the young girl and her grandmother at play. The girl was not in danger. She was quite small, the water was 6 feet deep, and she was doing shallow dives. She interfered in no one else's swim. So, someday when she looks back on that beautiful sunny day, will she remember that she broke a rule or that she had the undivided attention of a loving grandmother?

All of this took me just a bit more into the epiphany piece. Do we, sometimes, get so caught up in all of the rules, creeds, and regulations but forget what it's really all about? When all is said and done, isn't it really about seeing ourselves through the loving eyes of the one who created us and whose attention is focused on the beloved child?

Peace always, *Cathy*

Minister's Vacation Schedule

Pastor Sandy will be on vacation May 14 to 17. Please contact the church office for emergencies or pastoral needs.

Clergy Gathering

Our church will be hosting the East Metro Clergy Cluster meeting on Wednesday, May 5, at noon time. Ministers from the area gather each month for lunch, fellowship, and a brief program.

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

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Night Security: Mark Fischer

Seminary Intern: Ruth MacKenzie
ruthmackenzie@firstucc.org

Officers

Moderator: Tracy Fossum
Vice Moderator: Brad Hoff

Bridging to the Future – Transition and Transformation

First UCC is blessed with an active congregation that finds many ways to pursue our Christian work. The same people you share the pews with also play vital roles in their families, workplaces and in other volunteer organizations. Our current governance structure calls for more than 110 committee positions to be drawn from the approximately 200 people who worship at First UCC each Sunday. After reviewing our minister's reports for the last 40 years, each minister has identified the need to change.

We are not unique. As society has changed and more families have two partners working outside the home, churches across the country have been feeling the strain of traditional governance structures. Council leadership, in consultation with Pastor Sandy, have been exploring different ways that we might organize our governance so that we can spend more time "being the church" instead of running the church. Towards that end the council leadership divided our church's work into five focus areas or "buckets." They consisted of Administration, Pastoral Care, Faith Formation, Worship, Outreach/Social Justice. The council spent a half day advance-exploring the model and was then tasked to conduct parishioner interviews. More than 50 interviews were conducted as congregation members were asked what work their committees do, what the priorities should be, what barriers stood in the way, what was most exciting, and if

anything should be added to their work.

An interesting picture began to emerge. While no two interviews were identical some common themes came to the fore:

- Feeling pressed for time
- Expressing an interest to change, if not sure what that looks like exactly
- Wanting fewer meetings with richer content
- Looking for more specific tasks with limited time commitments
- Expressing some interest in a volunteer coordinator

First UCC members said their work was important and was satisfying because:

- Being part of something larger than themselves
- Enjoying working with other members
- Doing Christ's work – in different forms

The Council has acknowledged the need to change our governance and is working on ways that it can be accomplished in light of selecting an interim and then permanent pastor, looking at our long-term financial needs and reviewing our staffing model. While the other tasks are more pressing, here are a couple changes that have already been implemented.

Trustees – In order to have the council making more informed decisions, the Trustees have been split into two pods, with one group focusing on the buildings & grounds while the other, focusing on budgetary issues, has joined the council. In this manner Council sets direction for our church while understanding the financial ramifications of

those decisions and simultaneously makes the Trustees' workload more manageable.

Christian Education - This group has split into three areas to better focus on specific segments of the congregation. Rather than holding monthly meetings where members sat through two-thirds of a meeting that didn't impact them, these groups e-mail task-oriented information and meet only when decisions need to be made. They've divided up much of their work into projects, with a project leader who commits to completing a task they feel passionate about (e.g. flooded supply room clean out).

The Council's goal is to have congregants spending more time doing what they feel called to do and less time sitting in meetings. As we bring an Interim Minister on board there will be more discussion to help flesh out our new governance model. We will be sharing information with the congregation on-line, during work of the people and with occasional coffee hour talks. If you have thoughts you'd like to share please contact Tracy Fossum at fossum@stolaf.edu or Brad Hoff at hoffx110@umn.edu.



High School Baccalaureate

We will recognize our High School seniors on Sunday, May 30, during worship. This is a time to remember their many contributions to our faith community, and to wish them well in the days ahead. Plus – Pastor Sandy often finds a clever way to preach for the graduates!

Women's Spirituality

We will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 24, and will finish discussing *Take this Bread*.

This group is open to all women of First UCC. Friends are welcome. We meet the 4th Monday of each month and through the summer. Notices regarding times and activities are always on the bulletin board inside the parking lot door.

Please call Cathy Cammack at 645-7532 if you have questions.

Interim Minister Update

The Interim Selection Committee responsible for securing an Interim Minister has met with the Associate Conference Minister and is drafting a job description that will be posted locally and nationally. The Committee is made up of David Beimers, Brad Hoff, Beth Kallestad, Jerry Mohrig and Kathleen Pender. The goal is to have an Interim in place by August. They are seeking an Interim who is a proven change agent to help our congregation through the process of calling a new pastor, reviewing our long-term financial needs, reviewing our current staffing structure, guiding our governance restructure as well as conducting worship.



An Invitation from the SSR Committee

The Service & Social Responsibility Committee apportions 10% of the OCWM funds to various good causes in the community, nation, and

world. In the past, this has amounted to about \$7,000 per year, distributed among the CAC, Habitat for Humanity, Pilgrim Point, Health Finders, Interfaith Service to Latin America, the What If Foundation, and others. We invite parishioners to give suggestions. A one-page application is available in the church office or on the SSR bulletin board. We hope to be able to amplify the work you are doing by giving funds in the name of the church. Completed applications may be turned in to the church office or the SSR mailbox.

Dear Friends,

In just a few weeks, my time with your community will come to a close. I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your great sense of hospitality, your beautiful offerings of friendship, and your kind teachings. This congregation has been a blessing to my formation as a religious leader and an artist. There are many things I've come to love about this place and my journey among you, more than can be listed here, but I will hold up these few:

- Children running into the sanctuary looking for their parents at the end of Sunday School
- The emergence of a prayer, created by the congregation itself, repeating over and again: "Your prayer is our prayer now."
- The tender smiles of elders and the open faces of teens
- Bible Study with one questioning, persevering highschooler

- Hymn accompaniment as art making
- Loving talks with my Advisory Group and supportive staff members
- Authentic and wise counsel from Sandy
- The opening water and farm fields along 35E as winter let go into spring
- The quixotic secrets that six and seven year olds entrusted to me as we ate our suppers during WIFF
- Looking into so many beautiful faces as I participated in the distribution of the Eucharist meal

For these things and much more, I give thanks to all of you, and the beauty of this place called First United Church of Christ in Northfield. I will miss you.

Ruth MacKenzie, Intern
United Theological Seminary

Congregation Connections

You may have noticed the new bulletin board as you enter the Assembly Room. It is called "Congregational Connections" and notices, offers, or requests of skills, talents, goods, or services (i.e.: babysitting, handyperson work, lawn care, goods for sale, etc.). This will provide a spot for people to connect with others and to share or barter services and goods. It is our way to connect those who need help with those who have help to offer.

Please contact Cathy Cammack, the Pastoral Care Associate (645-7532) or a member of the Congregational Care Council with questions.



Faith Formation through Christian Education

Sharing, caring, Learning, and Serving

Children



**Childcare for
infants through age 2,**
from 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

Ages 3-Grade 6 after children's
time in worship; return for
worship closing

- May 9, See Sunday School class
event in assembly room
- Last day May 16, resumes
September 19

First Sunday of the Month

Resumes, October 3

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

Summer Sunday School

**Ages 3-Grades 3 with Grades 4-6
participating in worship**

- June 6, after worship, Leaders
gathering
- June 20-August 29 multi-age
class in preschool classroom
Leaders are needed Please
contact Cher Langley Duys or
David Maki-Waller



Junior High Youth

Grades 7 & 8

Sundays at 11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Additional Activities:

- May 22, River Bend Buckthorn
clean up

Senior High Youth

Grades 9-12 (check email for
updates)

Senior High Youth Group

Sundays at 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Resumes in the fall

- Mission trip meetings to begin
in May. 11 youth participating!

Thanks to all who ordered
hanging baskets to support the
mission trip fundraiser.

They will be available, Sunday,
May 2-9. All baskets not picked
up by May 10 will be resold or
donated.

May 16 - Annual Mission Trip

Chili Dinner Fundraiser

Families \$20, Adults \$7, Children
ages 3-10 \$5. Thanks for helping
us serve with Habitat for
Humanity and LaPuente home in
Alamosa, Colorado

ISLA Announces a Call for Nominations for Board Service

ISLA (Inter-Faith Service to Latin
America), a non-profit
organization that provides health,
education and construction
programs to the community of
Jalapa, Nicaragua, is now
accepting nominations for board
member service for the 2010-2013
term. A successful applicant will
share the vision, values and spirit
of ISLA as enumerated on our
website: <http://isla.cc/index.html>.

Although helpful, previous ISLA
trip experience is not a pre-
requisite for consideration.
Candidates with experience in law,
medicine, education, public
relations or marketing are
encouraged to apply. To submit a
nomination, please send a letter of

interest stating the skills,
attributes and experience of the
nominee, along with contact
information, to Jon Kerr at
jon@isla.cc by 5:00 p.m. Friday,
May 14, 2010.

For further information, please
email Jon at jon@isla.cc or phone
(612) 819-8877.

Special Thanks

On behalf of the volunteers
involved with the new church
directory, I would like to thank
the congregation for your
tremendous support of the
project. For those that came
during photography week and for
those who took the time to send
in a picture, your efforts are
appreciated and have made the
directory a success!

Putting together the directory
was very much a team effort. The
next time you see any of the
following individuals please send
a word of thanks their way - they
did an outstanding job! Elaine
Malecha, Jean Haslett, Carl
Henry, Sue Mieska, Jane Scott,
John Severson, Ed Lufkin,
Courtney Scholl, Linda
Wagenbach, Elizabeth Olson,
Kathy & Gary Kasten, Mary
Carlson, and Andrea Pegram.

Peace, Shari Sneary

2010 Northfield Church Softball League

6:10 p.m. May 2, at Sechlar #2 vs. St. Dominic's White
6:10 p.m. Sunday, May 9, at Sechlar #1 vs. Rejoice Prophets
6:10 p.m. Sunday, May 16: at Babcock vs. Rejoice Disciples
7:20 p.m. Sunday, May 23, at Babcock vs. Trinity Red
6:10 p.m. Sunday, June 6, at Babcock vs. Emmaus
6:10 p.m. Sunday, June 13, at Sechlar #1 vs. Northfield E-Free
Sunday, June 20: Bye #2
5:00 p.m. Sunday, June 27, at Sechlar #1 vs. Methodist White
7:20 p.m. Sunday, July 11, at Sechlar #1 vs. Little Prairie
6:10 p.m. Sunday, July 18, at Babcock vs. St. Dominic's Blue
6:10 p.m. Sunday, July 25, at Babcock vs. Bethel
5:00 p.m. Sunday, August 1, at Sechlar #2 vs. Methodist Maroon
6:10 p.m. Sunday, August 8 at Sechlar #1 vs. Trinity Blue
Sunday, August 15: Just For Fun/Fellowship Playoff
2:00 p.m. Sunday, July 11 at Babcock Park: ALL STAR GAME for Northfield CAC

Reminder: Church league players are NOT allowed to play in another league.

Questions: Contact Shawn Dudley at 612-735-8250 or Don Enberg at 507-263-4567.

