



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



## Minister's Musings

*Amahl and the Night Visitors*, the Longest Night service, and our Christmas Eve service were gifts of our church, not only to its members, but also to the wider community. They were the church at its best. Amahl was a huge effort requiring many hours of rehearsals and much work behind the scenes to give such a major gift to our community. Thank you all! The services did not require the rehearsals, but they also required the efforts of many. Thank you all!

Behind the scenes, each of these events had their last minute times of scrambling to deal with a host of details and the unexpected concerns that always crop up. And of course they did not take place in a vacuum: committees met, children and grown-ups made ornaments at WFFF, the church budget was being worked on, light bulbs were being replaced, computers were demanding their pound of flesh, etc. etc.

I love it when the church is so alive, even if it's all a little chaotic. I particularly loved the inter-generational ornament making at WFFF, where people in Amahl costumes wandered by from time to time. I think a couple even grabbed a taco or two on their way to rehearsal. Then we had to get all the children and adults calmed down for Cindy to read them a Christmas story. A little chaotic? Yes - and a lot wonderful.

As we move into a new month and a new year, there will be more of the same: Communion on New Year's Day, the celebration of the Epiphany the week after. WFFF will start up again. There will be meetings galore including the congregational budget hearing on January 15<sup>th</sup> and the annual meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Also during this time, as you will see in the next article, our Search Committee continues its faithful work.

Again lots going on, lots of details, and many opportunities for the unexpected to insert itself. Indeed, there may be times when you feel that chaos reigns.

Incipient chaos is the cost – I think also the joy – of being an active church. It is also comes from our being heirs to the congregational tradition. This means that in our congregational meetings we function as a democracy, where each member has his or her voice and vote. As a veteran of close to forty congregational annual meetings, I can affirm that it's messy, at times chaotic, but ultimately wonderful: an imperfect polity for imperfect people, but I think it's also the best, most human polity.

And look at what we can accomplish! Look again at the gifts this church made to our community these last weeks. Yes, there may be moments of chaos, but I would

much prefer life in all its messiness, to sterile order. I'd rather have a dough ornament made by a five year old, perhaps a star that's a little lumpy, then something perfect from a store. Jesus is ultimately the head of our church. By his grace we have life and have it abundantly – even if it is a little crazy sometimes!

~ Rev. Dr. Bob Griggs



Church Council

## Search & Call Update

On December 4<sup>th</sup> we finished the last of three in-person interviews. It has been fascinating to see other congregations and engage in various worship experiences with our UCC family throughout the region. Each candidate visit has included observation in a neutral pulpit, a two-hour full-committee interview, a tour of our church and town, meals and fellowship together, and a fun, unique Northfield experience.

We will continue at a deliberate and appropriate pace to ensure that we have the best candidate, and we ask for your blessings as we do so.

~ Tracy Fossum, on behalf of the Search and Call Committee: David Beimers (Chair), Sarah Forster (Vice Moderator), Jerry Hankins, Bobbie Peterson, Sue Mieska, Anna Fure-Slocum, Marty Hodel, Jan Shoger, Ed Langerak



## January Stewardship Message

### The Need for Love Continues

*An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up..." Matthew 2:13*

Christmas and all the surrounding hoopla are over, and it is very tempting to just sit back, digest the season, and rest from giving for a while. There are credit card bills to pay, trees to take down, and houses to clean, and that seems enough for January.

The thing about babies, though, is that they continue to need all sorts of care, and we have just celebrated the birth of a baby! Joseph was called to flee with Mary and the infant Jesus to save him from Herod's dangerous fear. Mary needed to feed him, change him, and rock him to sleep as they traveled. Seasons change, but the need for love continues.

And that's what giving springs from, is it not? Love. Parents, foster parents, grandparents, godparents, churches, and all who care for children continue to give to them in season and out because they love them. God remembers what it is like to be a child! Consider the children of your church and of your town. What kind of love do they call forth from you today? How can we continue our Christmas love of children all through the New Year?

*~ Rochelle A. Stackhouse is the Senior Minister of The Church of the Redeemer UCC, New Haven, Connecticut.*



### 2012 Pilgrim Point All-Church Retreat

First UCC will be having its second annual all-church retreat at Pilgrim

Point on July 20-22, 2012. More information to come!



### SSR Update

First UCC is responsible for providing drivers for Meals-on-Wheels from January 29th - February 4th. Volunteers report to the Northfield Hospital to pick up two or three coolers and then deliver meals to people who are homebound. A route may take about an hour, after which the coolers are brought back to the hospital. This is a great way to serve, and it's fun to do with a friend. If you are an experienced driver, please consider taking a novice along with you to learn the ropes - but novices can often do without a mentor. If you can help - or if you want more information - please call Jan Mitchell (645-6734) or email her at [denmark60@gmail.com](mailto:denmark60@gmail.com).

*~ The Service and Social Responsibility Committee (SSR): Jan Mitchell, Barbara Crouter, Garda Kahn, Matt Rohn, Mary Savina*



### Children's Education Committee News

A second teacher is needed for the 2nd and 3rd grade Sunday school classroom from January through May. This individual would teach approximately twice a month. Our Safe Church policy requires every teacher to complete a background check, which the church provides. As part of that same policy, a second adult helper is also in the classroom each week. A curriculum is provided, with lesson plans clearly laid out every week. Overall, the

experience is a rewarding one with clearly written lesson plans and enthusiastic, wonderful children. If we do not have a second teacher, Sunday school will only be offered on a half-time basis for this class. Our policy requires two teachers so each can have opportunities to also be in worship. Please contact a member of the Children's Education committee if you are interested! (Jami Reister, Shari Sneary, Melissa Sharpe)

HELPERS! We have had some great helpers in our Sunday school classes, and many of those individuals have volunteered a number of times in the past few months. However, as we look to the last five months of our Sunday school year, we are in desperate need of additional helpers. Our Safe Church policy REQUIRES us to have a second adult in the classroom each week; if we do not, we cannot hold Sunday school that day. PLEASE volunteer 45 minutes of time to help! There is no preparation work involved - you simply be present in the classroom to assist the teacher as needed. Sign-up sheets are available on the Children and Youth bulletin board near the restrooms. THANKS!

Mark your calendars! We are tentatively scheduling great discussions about the future of children/youth/family/adult Christian education during WFFF in January and February. This will be very insightful and helpful as we evaluate our current and future programming. So far, we are planning to hold these discussions on January 18, 25, February 1, 8, and maybe the 15th as well. This is a very relevant and important topic as we vision for the future of our church and its educational ministries. Watch for details and definitive dates.

**SNACK TABLE for kids! If you are helping with coffee time on**

any Sunday other than the first Sunday - please note the following: A small table should be set up on the east wall of the Assembly Room and stocked with the same treats offered to the congregation. (And keep in mind that it needs to be re-stocked!) Because children finish Sunday school at 11:15, there is a real possibility that some snacks may be eaten before they (or the teachers!) even have an opportunity to attend coffee time! By setting aside a special table for them, not only do we guarantee that they are not left out, but we also emphasize and reinforce how they are valued members of our church family. Simple acts such as this can go a long way towards extending an extravagant welcome to the youngest among us.

~ CE Committee: Jami Reister, Deb Olien, Shari Sneary, Melissa Sharpe



**Holy Yoga**

**Wednesday, Jan. 11th  
After WFFF**

"You realize, don't you, that you are the temple of God, and God is present in you? . . . God's temple is sacred—and you, remember, are the temple" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 *The Message*).

In the rush and hustle to get through the current pace of life, our "temples" take much abuse from fast food, to too much sitting, to no quiet space to breathe. Explore with Lori Heutmaker how "Holy Yoga" can be a spiritual practice that restores your temple to the sacredness God created right in you. Lori is a graduate of United Theological Seminary (Master of Arts in Religious Leadership), serves as the Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry at St. Anthony Park UCC, and is enrolled in Holy Yoga, a Christian-based yoga practice dedicated to honoring the

gift of our own creation and connecting with God through word, worship, and wellness. Come ready in your comfortable clothes to relax, to breathe, and connect through a few basic yoga poses.

**Budget \$ Hearing**

**Annual Budget Hearing**  
**Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**After Worship**  
(in the rear of the sanctuary)

This is an opportunity to promote better understanding of the proposed 2012 budget put forth by the board of Trustees and the Church Council.

At this hearing the proposed budget will be explained, questions from the membership will be answered, and feedback from the congregation will be taken.



**Congregational Annual Meeting**

**Sunday, January 29th**  
**After Worship**

All members are invited to attend this meeting to receive the yearly reports of the officers, boards, committees and organizations of the church and to vote upon the 2012 proposed budget and nominations to fill all elected leadership positions.



**A Heartfelt  
Thanks to the  
Congregation**

As the head of staff, I want to personally thank the membership for sponsoring a beautiful Christmas Luncheon for the entire staff. Although two of our staff were

unable to attend (due to other work commitments) the remaining eight of us enjoyed incredible food and fabulous fellowship. Each staff member was given a \$60 Christmas check and candy which was presented to the staff that day by our Vice-Moderator, Sarah Forster. The mood of the day was joyous!

I am truly blessed to work with these incredibly gifted people. Thank you for the privilege.

So, on behalf of the entire staff – thank you for remembering us in this, the holiest season of the year!

Merry Christmas!

~ Rev. Cindy Mueller



**Faith  
Formation ~  
It is for Folks  
of All Ages**

Beginning Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, we will embark upon a visioning process that will enable us to look toward the future and imagine what God is calling us to do and be as people of faith. This conversation will involve everything from how we have sought to pass on the old, old story of faith in the past, how we are currently attempting to do this work, and how we might do this even better in the future.

It is our hope to have as many people involved in this discussion as possible. Our conversations will include (but not be limited to) the following:

What is the best way to help raise our children in the Christian faith?

Why is it so hard to recruit Sunday School teachers?

What do we do really well in forming the faith of our members?

How might we craft a Confirmation program that keeps our youth involved in the life of the church AFTER they are confirmed?

How do we ensure our children understand that faith calls them to action and to service of others?

In general - How can we integrate the wisdom of our elders, the excitement of our children and the enthusiasm of our youth into a Faith Formation Program that reaches out to our members and to our community?

If any of these questions strike a chord with you, join us on Wednesday nights at WFFF – *Wednesdays Food Fellowship and Faith* beginning with a meal at 5:30 pm on January 18<sup>th</sup>, then stay for our ongoing conversation that will address these types of questions. We will continue this conversation for several consecutive weeks following the meal.

As a faith community we are charged to deepen our own faith and to reach out beyond ourselves to share in helping form the faith of our whole membership (beginning at baptism and continuing throughout our entire adult lives). I hope you will seriously consider taking part in these conversations.

~ Rev. Cindy Mueller

*Faith is a journey into the mystery and wonder of God and that journey will always take us beyond the road maps of our human past. Journey well!*  
~ John Shelby Spong

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### 9 Years of Nine to Dine

That's right. This is the 9<sup>th</sup> year we have had groups of nine (or eight or ten) for dining.

These are groups of usually nine folks who gather at each other's homes throughout the year for a meal. It is really intended to provide a fun way to get to know others from UCC. It is expected that each household from the group will host a meal at their home and provide the main dish. The other members will then provide the rest of the meal: appetizers, salad, dessert, etc. Typically the group will meet about five times during the year – approximately every other month. The host will coordinate and work with the group to pick a time and date to gather. It might be a Friday night dinner or a Sunday brunch or afternoon bar-b-que. This is meant to be a fun, casual meal and a chance to make new friends.

The new “kid friendly” group in 2011 was very successful. The families who participated would encourage others to sign up this year.

Sheets for signing up will be available beginning Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup>. You may sign up after church on Sundays during January or send an e-mail to Liz Hankins ([liz36hankins@yahoo.com](mailto:liz36hankins@yahoo.com)) or Linda Wagenbach ([lwagenba@kmwb.net](mailto:lwagenba@kmwb.net)). We will contact groups in February.

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### 2011 Committee Reports Due

All committee reports are due to the church office no later than Wednesday, Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> for inclusion in the 2011 Annual Report.

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### January Trustee Counters

Marty Pelikan  
Pete Carlson



### January Coffee Hour Hosts

- Jan. 1: Gary and Linda Wagenbach
- Jan. 8: Cynthia Lund
- Jan. 15: Greg Muth
- Jan. 22: Gail Moll
- Jan. 29: Annual Meeting Luncheon

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### January Sunday Forums

There will be **NO** Sunday Forums during the month of January.

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### January Bell Ringers

- Jan. 1: Frank Sheehy
- Jan. 8: Nancy Johnson-Maloney
- Jan. 15: Greg Muth
- Jan. 22: Sarah Beimers
- Jan. 29: Scott Richardson

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### January Sound Technicians

- Jan. 1: TBD
- Jan. 8: Christoph Hodel
- Jan. 15: William Beimers
- Jan. 22: Henry Beimers
- Jan. 29: John Severson

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### 2011 Year-End Giving Statements

Final year-end contribution statements will be mailed by January 31, 2012. Please keep these statements for your tax returns.

All contributed amounts during 2011, including pre-paid 2012 amounts, will be listed on these statements. Questions? Contact the church's bookkeeper, Andrea Pegram.



Our family would like to express our deep gratitude for all the support we have received from this church family. The Christmas tree ornaments will be treasured, and the donations of everything from furniture to cooking pots is so appreciated! Thank you also for the monetary gifts.....everything is helping us put our lives back together again.

~ *The Haslett-Marroquins*

**First UCC Staff:**

Interim Senior Minister:  
Rev. Cindy Mueller

Interim Assoc. Minister:  
Rev. Bob Griggs  
bobgriggs@firstucc.org

Office Manager:  
Jennifer Kluzak  
church@firstucc.org

Director of Music:  
Chris Brunelle  
chrisbrunelle@firstucc.org

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

Director of Children's Music:  
Shana Hodel  
shanahodel@firstucc.org

Organist:  
Theo Wee  
theowee@firstucc.org

Bookkeeper/Chronicle:  
Andrea Pegram  
andreapegram@firstucc.org

Childcare Coordinator:  
Tammy Rischmiller  
tammyrischmiller@firstucc.org

Security:  
Mark Fischer  
markfischer@firstucc.org

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**Office Hours:** 9:00am - 2:00pm,  
Tuesday through Friday

**Website:** [www.firstucc.org](http://www.firstucc.org)

**Phones:** (507) 645-7532, 645-4694

**Lay Leaders of First United Church of Christ**

**Council**

**Officers:**

- Moderator** - Brad Hoff
- Vice-Moderator** - Sarah Forster
- Treasurer** - Phil Kasten
- Assistant Treasurer** - Leota Goodney
- Clerk** - Jane McWilliams

**Members at Large Members** - Carol Rutz, Bob Bruce, Kaara Maki-Waller

- Nominations** -Phil Parsons, Chair
- Personnel Subcommittee** - Shannon Garlitz, Chair
- Minister-Congregation Relations Subcommittee** - Scott Richardson, Chair

**Boards**

- Deacons** - Bill Poehlmann, Chairperson
- New Member Sub-Committee** -Jean Haslett & Pat Kiesel, Co-Chairs
- Trustees** - Pete Carlson, Chair
- Memorial Committee** - Grace Buck, Chair

**Committees**

- Arts Committee** - Lynne Severson & Nancy Lehman, Co-Chairs
- Christian Education (CE)**
  - Children's Ministry** (birth - 6<sup>th</sup> grade) - Jami Reister, Chair
  - Youth Ministry** (7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade) - Ann Wind, Chair
  - Adult Ministry** - Lynne Severson, Chair
  - College Relations** - John Severson, Chair

- Parish Life & Fellowship (PLF)** - Linda Wagenbach, Chair
- Search & Call Committee** - David Beimers, Chair
- Service & Social Responsibility (SSR)** - Jan Mitchell, Chair
- Special Functions** - Bobbie Peterson, Organizer
- Stewardship** - Shawn Nuebel, Chair

Generally Rev. Mueller is in Northfield Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, & Sunday  
 Generally Rev. Dr. Griggs is in Northfield Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, & Sunday

<b>JANUARY 2012</b>						
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>1</b> 10:00 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:15 AM Coffee Hour 11:15 AM Middle School Youth Group 11:30 AM High School Youth Group	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 4:15 PM Men's Group (Parlor)	<b>4</b> 12:00 PM Stepsisters (#113) 4:45 PM Angel Choir Rehearsal 5:30 PM WFFF 6:15 PM Rainbow Choir Rehearsal	<b>5</b> 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl Knitting Group 1:30 PM Office Staff Meeting	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Transition Northfield 9:30 AM Stepsisters (#113)
<b>8</b> 10:00 AM Worship Service & Sunday School 11:15 AM Coffee Hour 11:15 AM Middle School Youth Group 11:30 AM High School Youth Group (led by Beimers family)	<b>9</b> 6:00 PM Girl Scouts (Assembly Room)	<b>10</b> 7:00 PM Cabinet Meeting	<b>11</b> 12:00 PM Stepsisters (#113) 4:45 PM Angel Choir Rehearsal 5:30 PM WFFF 6:15 PM Rainbow Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Church Council Meeting 7:00 PM Senior Choir Rehearsal	<b>12</b> 5:30 PM - 9:00 PM LWV (Sarah Entenmann)	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 9:30 AM Stepsisters (#113)
<b>15</b> <b>BUDGET HEARING AFTER WORSHIP</b> 10:00 AM Worship Service & Sunday School 11:15 AM Coffee Hour 11:15 AM Middle School Youth Group 11:30 AM High School Youth Group	<b>16</b> 8:30 AM Men's Breakfast	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 12:00 PM Stepsisters (#113) 4:45 PM Angel Choir Rehearsal 5:30 PM WFFF 6:15 PM Rainbow Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Deacons Meeting 7:00 PM Senior Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Trustees' Meeting	<b>19</b> 10:30 AM - 2:00 PM Growing Up Healthy Multi-Cultural Cooking Club 1:30 PM Office Staff Meeting	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 9:30 AM Stepsisters (#113) 10:00 AM Bible Study
<b>22</b> 10:00 AM Worship Service & Sunday School 11:15 AM Coffee Hour 11:15 AM Middle School Youth Group	<b>23</b> 6:00 PM Girl Scouts (Big Room)	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 12:00 PM Stepsisters (#113) 4:45 PM Angel Choir Rehearsal 5:30 PM WFFF 6:15 PM Rainbow Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Senior Choir Rehearsal	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 9:30 AM Stepsisters (#113)
<b>29</b> <b>ANNUAL MEETING AFTER WORSHIP</b> 10:00 AM Worship Service & Sunday School 11:15 AM Coffee Hour	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				