

February 2013



FIRST UNITED  
CHURCH of CHRIST  
Northfield · Minnesota

# The Chronicle

A monthly newsletter of The First United Church of Christ, Congregational

300 Union Street, Northfield, MN 55057

An Open and Affirming, Just Peace Church



## Minister's Musings

February 13 is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent. Lent is a season of renewed devotion and renewed practice. For forty days we focus ourselves on God's presence and movement in our lives in a new way. We repent, which simply means, "return to God."

During Lent, we have two additional opportunities for spiritual growth. I invite you to read the book *Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor. I also encourage you to join a small group that will meet four times during Lent to discuss the book. The book is wise and beautiful. It is focused on helping us experience God in our everyday lives. Taylor introduces simple practices like walking meditation and prayer, the practice of paying attention, and the practice of saying no, among others. Yes, saying no can be a very holy thing.

Taylor writes, "If you have run out of breath yourself – or out of faith – then this book is for you. If you are tired of arguing about religion, tired of reading about spirituality, tired of talk-talk-talking about things that matter without doing a single thing that matters yourself, then the pages that follow are for you."

If you are interested in reading this book and being a part of a discussion group, please email the church office, [church@firstucc.org](mailto:church@firstucc.org), and we'll get you signed up.

The second opportunity for growth is an Introduction to Meditation that Melissa Sharpe is offering Sunday mornings through the season of Lent. Melissa has great experience with meditation and is an excellent teacher. If you have been wanting meditation of some form to become a part of your daily life, look for more information in her article later in *The Chronicle*.

A former spiritual director of mine named Ed Beers liked to tell a simple story. Friends would often ask him what was most important for contemplative practice like meditation. And Ed would always reply, "showing up."

It's time for Lent.

Faithfully,

*Pastor Todd*



## **Moderator's Minute**

The January meeting of the Church Council was a time to affirm the many changes that are taking place both as natural cycles of the calendar and as part of the changes needed as we anticipate the hiring of a new Associate Minister. The Personnel Committee presented the necessary changes to our policies document for ministers and staff that now align our current practices with our policy. Having this in place will allow the search committee to move forward with their discernment over the two remaining candidates and allows us to be confident that our treatment of staff is fair and just (and well documented). At the Annual Meeting we will also vote on changes to the Church Constitution that align this important document with our current practices. It is an exciting time in the governance life of the Church. Many thanks are due to the Council members and committee members for their thoughtfulness to these matters and careful reading of the documents.

Closing the books on 2012 cannot go by without recognizing the phenomenal work of Phil Kasten and all of the members of the newly commissioned Finance Committee (soon to be known solely as the Trustees). Phil has shepherded our church budget through a complicated restructuring of staff and steered us through innovations in stewardship. Moving forward with sound policies, prudent practices and generous compensation allows us all to be confident that the good work of all of ministries can continue in a sustainable fashion.

By now you have probably noticed a different voice in the text of these Moderator's Musings. As I look forward to assuming the role of moderator I have to express my complete gratitude for Sarah's work in the last year. While not as tumultuous as some of the previous years, the work was hard and the hours were long. What I observed her do was graceful, thoughtful and filled with love for each member of the congregation and the spirit of Christ. I ask all of you for your patience as I try to do this job in a manner suitable for a congregation of this caliber.

Respectfully submitted,

*Greg Muth*

## **2012 Giving Statements**

Final giving statements for the 2012 tax year were mailed to each donor's home in January. If you did not receive a statement, or if there is an inaccuracy in your statement, please contact the bookkeeper, Andrea Pegram, at [andreapegram@firstucc.org](mailto:andreapegram@firstucc.org) or 507-645-7532.



## **Spring 2013 Inquirers' Classes**



Would you like to know more about First UCC and/or become a member of our Church?

The Spring 2013 Inquirers' Classes will be held on March 10 and March 17, immediately following Worship. Child care will be provided.

Reception of New Members will be during worship service on April 14.

## Annual First UCC Parent Potluck

The party you've all been waiting for! A chance to meet and converse with other parents at First UCC, without the children present! Think of all the friendships that will blossom. Imagine the wonderful food. Look forward to the excellent conversations, uninterrupted by small children.

**Parents of First UCC, mark your calendars!!!**

**Date:** Saturday, March 9

**Time:** 5-8pm

**Place:** Elise Eslinger and Don Perkins' house, 803 Thye Pkwy, Northfield

**RSVP by Wednesday, March 6,** to Melissa Sharpe at [melissa.m.sharpe@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.m.sharpe@gmail.com) or [507.301.3291](tel:507.301.3291)

### Potluck guidelines:

If your last name begins with:

A - J: Side dish (veggies, bread, fruit salad, etc.)

K - Q: Main dish

R - Z: Dessert

Everyone: Your preferred beverage(s)!

Childcare not provided.



## A Taste of Meditation

The word "meditation" conjures many stereotypical ideas - someone twisted like a pretzel, sitting motionless under a tree for hours; a group of people chanting "OHHHHHHHMMMM"; Buddhist monks, walking in circles with candles.

BUT.

Meditation, simply put, is making a choice to focus your mind on something. Meditation provides a sense of calm, peace, and balance that benefits our emotional, physical, and spiritual health, and it's accessible to everyone.

First UCC is offering a **free** 6-week meditation series, starting the first Sunday in Lent. Come to all six classes or come to only one, and explore different types of meditation. Designed for beginners, and open to everyone. Child care provided.

February 17 - Coffee Drinking meditation (non-coffee drinkers welcome)

February 24 - Mandala meditation

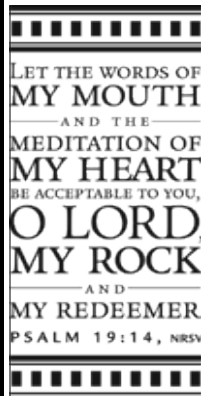
March 3 - Mudra meditation

March 10 - Mantra meditation

March 17 - Labyrinth & Gazing meditation

March 24 - Conscious Relaxation meditation & Silence meditation

**Classes will meet in the Northfield Day Care from 9:30 - 10:00am.** Led by Melissa Sharpe.



## ***Service and Social Responsibility (SSR) News***

**SSR striving to help finance good works:** Please let us know if there is an organization or cause you believe First UCC should support. You'll find forms on the SSR bulletin board to help the committee learn what it needs to know, or you can contact a committee member, including by dropping a note in the SSR mail slot in the church office. We learn each month what 10% of the previous month's OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) giving actually was paid. Then we then distribute, and make sometimes difficult decisions about what organizations should be given what amount of that money, with a goal of helping a variety of service and social responsibility organizations. These organizations are doing work the Church seeks to be done, promoting the more just society our religious values seek to achieve.

**SSR striving to help organize the good works our congregation does:** We are but one committee doing this, but want people to be aware of several things this month:

- **Feb. 21 The Joint Religious Legislative Coalition's annual Day on the Hill.** It starts at 9 a.m. in St. Paul with prayer and information and continues to about 3 p.m. with talking to Minnesota legislators about matters that faith communities see need addressing. Visit the JRLC website (<http://www.jrlc.org/>) to learn more and register (with a reduced price until Feb. 1)
- Come to the **Adult Forum on Feb. 3**, when staff member Rev. Alison Killeen will talk about what JRLC does. Become more proactive about **reversing Global Warming** with opportunities starting Feb. 3. and **Feb. 10 Preach-in** to meditate more and into May for us to start taking serious action. We (all of us in our congregation and Northfield society) keep warming the atmosphere with now visible, serious problems imposed on ourselves, our children, people, and living things throughout the world. We can change the actions and habits causing global warming.
- **Feb. 14 Valentine's** celebrations start at **3 p.m. at the MN Capitol Rotunda**. Show support for helping 1<sup>st</sup> UCC achieve its open and affirming goal of performing fully legally recognized and spiritually sanctified marriages between loving couples, gay and straight. Learn more at Minnesotans United for All Families (<http://mnunited.org/>).
- **Feb. 24 1:30 – 4 p.m.**, stop by the **Northfield Peace and Justice Fair** being held at Bethel Lutheran Church (1321 North Ave.). There will be kid and family activities and displays by Northfield organizations seeking peace and justice.

**Thanks for the good works and support of late:** Many thanks to all who filled our Congregation's pledge for Meals-on-Wheels the last week of January and the first week of February. Thanks, as always, for your gifts of money that fund OCWM good works.



**Service & Social  
Responsibility**

## Service and Social Responsibility (SSR) News (continued)



### Service & Social Responsibility

#### Thank You...

... for your generous gift. Your support is important to the work that we do and will be leveraged as we go to foundations to seek the funding to maintain and expand our services to kids. ~ Beth Berry, **TORCH (Tackling Obstacles and Raising College Hopes)** High School Coordinator

... for your generous donation to our 2012 Annual Appeal in support of the **Three Links Foundation**. Your generosity will strengthen the Three Links Foundation to sustain our mission in challenging economic times as we prepare to meet the future needs of the seniors in the community. ~ Deborah Carpenter, Fund Development Director, Three Links

... for your recent donation. Thanks for your interest in the work of WINGS and the many local non-profits that benefit from our grants. ~ Gwen Daniels, Treasurer, **WINGS (Women in Northfield Giving Support)**

... for your generous gifts to support CUE Seminaries. Your contribution is an investment in the current and future leadership of the United Church of Christ. **Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries** provide an essential ministry by training and equipping leaders who will serve congregations and the wider world with compassion and justice. Thank you for supporting theological education as a vital ministry of your congregation. ~ Kiely Todd Roska, Director, CUE Seminaries

... for the donation we received. By donating to our mission you help make it possible for our community members to find shelter, food, and other assistance they may need. ~ **La Puente Home**

... for your donation to **Alliance Housing Incorporated**. We will use your gift to help subsidize the rents of our scattered site housing units for homeless singles and families. ~ Herb Frey, Executive Director

## February Faith Forum at 11:45 a.m.

Please join us after worship service in the Sanctuary as we explore the many aspects that form our faith:

**2/3:** Alison Killeen of the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition - upcoming issues relevant to faith communities in the next Minnesota legislative session

**2/10:** Michelle Kotek from Center for Victims of Torture, St. Paul, will tell of healing work providing care and supportive training for clients mostly from Africa

**2/17:** Faith Story by Jerry Mohrig

**2/24:** Andrea Een will tell about views of God in her music



## Soup Makers Wanted



The Deacons are looking for **soup makers** who would be willing to prepare soups for Wednesday Lenten Soup Suppers. Soup suppers are served from February 13 through March 20th, Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. Please contact Pat Richardson via email at [srichardson50@centurylink.net](mailto:srichardson50@centurylink.net) if you would be interested and willing!

## Stewardship Update

The Stewardship Committee is pleased with the results of this year's Consecration Sunday and the subsequent stewardship campaign. Thank you so much to all of you who participated in the service, the meal, and this year's giving.

2013 total pledge dollars (local + Our Church's Wider Mission) = \$385,825.

2013 local pledge dollars = \$319,257.



## Nine to Dine



These are groups of usually nine folks who gather at each other's homes throughout the year for a meal. They are intended to provide a fun way to get to know others from First 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 then provide the rest of the meal: appetizers, salad, dessert, etc. Typically the group will meet about five times during the year. The host will coordinate and work with the group to pick a time and a date. This is meant to be a fun, casual meal and a chance to make new friends. We have had several "kid friendly" groups that have been popular and they will continue for those interested.

Sheets for sign-up will be available after worship in February or send an e-mail to Liz Hankins ([liz36hankins@yahoo.com](mailto:liz36hankins@yahoo.com)) or Bobbie Peterson ([bobbie514@usfamily.net](mailto:bobbie514@usfamily.net)).

## Youth Group Update

The Youth Group meets Sunday mornings 9:15 to 10:15am. This excludes the first Sunday of the month, which gives the youth an opportunity to attend the FAST family program. We have enjoyed our time together the past several months. We have talked a great deal about values that are important to kids at this age. This included, among other things, moving around the church in blind folds and having cocoa at the Jesus Java Joint! (which is actually right at UCC, bet you hadn't heard). We ate several chocolates over the holidays but only after playing advent trivia and some fun "minute to win it" games. We did have grapes and bagels as well so it wasn't all chocolate all the time! Lastly, we are so excited to be moving into the winter as we prepare a musical that will be performed in the early spring. More to come on that but start gearing up, it's going to be a great show!



## February 2013

*Sunday*

*Monday*

*Tuesday*

*Wednesday*

*Thursday*

*Friday*

*Saturday*

					<b>1 Pastor Bob Out</b>	<b>2 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>9:00 AM-11:00 AM</b> Main Street Project <b>9:30 AM</b> Stepsisters (#113)
<b>3 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>Installation of New Board &amp; Committee Members During Worship</b> <b>9:15 AM</b> F.A.S.T. Families <b>9:15 AM</b> Screens Conversation (Big Room) <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship with Communion <b>11:30 AM</b> Coffee Hour <b>11:45 AM</b> Sunday Forum (JRLC)	<b>4 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>4:15 PM</b> Men's Group  <b>5:30 PM</b> Deacons' Retreat (Anne Meyer-Ruppel's home)	<b>5 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>1:00 PM</b> Office Staff Meeting	<b>6 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>12:00 PM</b> Stepsisters (#113) <b>4:45 PM</b> Angel Choir <b>5:30 PM</b> WFFF <b>6:00 PM</b> Rainbow Choir <b>7:00 PM</b> Senior Choir <b>7:00 PM</b> Facilities	<b>7 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>10:00 AM</b> Prayer Shawl Knitting Group  <b>5:30 PM</b> Trustees	<b>8 Pastor Bob Out</b>	<b>9 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>9:30 AM</b> Stepsisters (#113) <b>7:30 PM</b> Valentine Concert with Prudence Johnson & Dan Chouinard
<b>10 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>9:15 AM</b> F.A.S.T. Kids <b>9:15 AM</b> Screens Conversation (Big Room) <b>9:15 AM</b> Middle School Youth Group <b>9:15 AM</b> High School Youth Group/Confirmation <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service <b>11:30 AM</b> Coffee Hour <b>11:45 AM</b> Sunday Forum (Center for Victims of Torture)	<b>11 Pastor Bob Out</b>	<b>12 Pastor Bob Out</b>	<b>13 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b>  <b>12:00 PM</b> Stepsisters (#113) <b>4:45 PM</b> Angel Choir <b>5:30 PM</b> WFFF <b>6:00 PM</b> Rainbow Choir <b>6:30 PM</b> Ash Wednesday Worship Service <b>7:00 PM</b> Senior Choir	<b>14 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>7:00 PM</b> Cabinet	<b>15 Pastor Bob Out</b>  <b>11:00 AM</b> Growing Up Healthy	<b>16</b>  <b>9:30 AM</b> Stepsisters (#113)
<b>17</b> <b>9:15 AM</b> Lenten Meditation <b>9:15 AM</b> F.A.S.T. Kids <b>9:15 AM</b> Middle School Youth Group <b>9:15 AM</b> High School Youth Group/Confirmation <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service <b>11:30 AM</b> Coffee Hour <b>11:45 AM</b> Sunday Forum (Jerry Mohrig)	<b>18</b>  <b>8:30 AM</b> Men's Group Breakfast	<b>19</b>  <b>1:00 PM</b> Office Staff Meeting <b>6:00 PM</b> Girl Scouts	<b>20</b>  <b>12:00 PM</b> Stepsisters (#113) <b>4:45 PM</b> Angel Choir <b>5:30 PM</b> WFFF <b>6:00 PM</b> Rainbow Choir <b>6:30 PM</b> Lenten Worship Service <b>7:00 PM</b> Senior Choir <b>7:00 PM</b> Council	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>  <b>9:30 AM</b> Stepsisters (#113)
<b>24</b> <b>9:15 AM</b> Lenten Meditation <b>9:15 AM</b> F.A.S.T. Kids <b>9:15 AM</b> Middle School Youth Group <b>9:15 AM</b> High School Youth Group/Confirmation <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service <b>11:30 AM</b> Coffee Hour <b>11:45 AM</b> Sunday Forum (Andrea Een)	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>  <b>12:00 PM</b> Stepsisters (#113) <b>4:45 PM</b> Angel Choir <b>5:30 PM</b> WFFF <b>6:00 PM</b> Rainbow Choir <b>6:30 PM</b> Lenten Worship Service <b>7:00 PM</b> Senior Choir	<b>28</b>		



**February Bell Ringers**

- 2/3: Sarah Beimers
- 2/10: Brad Hoff
- 2/17: Scott Richardson
- 2/24: Chris O'Neill



**February Sound Techs**

- 2/3: Henry Beimers
- 2/10: John Severson
- 2/17: Alex Battiste
- 2/24: Christoph Hodel



**February Counters**

- Leota Goodney
- Carol Rutz

## ***Prudence Johnson and Dan Chouinard Return***

We are delighted Prudence Johnson and Dan Chouinard will be back in concert at First UCC Saturday, Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m. after a four-year absence.

These celebrated Twin Cities musicians will take us on a tour through the Great American Songbook, sharing the music of Gershwin, Carmichael and other great American composers in a performance geared for “hopeful romantics.”

This is an opportunity to hear two brilliant musicians perform up close in an intimate setting, and an opportunity for you to invite friends and neighbors to experience the warmth and hospitality of First UCC.

Tickets are \$15, available at the church or at Coldwell Banker, 419 Division Street. Buy one for yourself and one for someone else. Come enjoy a wonderful performance and stay for bars afterwards. And by the way, if you would like to contribute bars for the evening, contact Scott Richardson at [srichardson50@centurylink.net](mailto:srichardson50@centurylink.net).

