

March 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

I want to thank everyone who has participated in the listening sessions regarding the multimedia proposal for the sanctuary. The conversation has been thoughtful, and important themes have emerged.

There are two central questions. The first question is, "How would this tool be used?" How much will these monitors be in use? If monitors are used to add visuals to the sermon, what would that look like? Will worship aids that we value (the bulletin, hymnal) become obsolete? Does this represent a shift towards the mega-church style of worship, or are we talking about something else?

The second central question is, "Will these monitors add to our worship of God or will they distract us?" This depends on how they are used, but it also depends on what the monitors look like when not in use.

There are technical questions too as well as ethical questions about whether this technology is good for us and for our children.

At the same time people have expressed that if the monitors are used well, adding more visuals to worship could be helpful. There is awareness that this technology is increasingly being integrated into educational settings and church settings.

My own feelings on this issue have changed significantly over the course of my ten years in pastoral ministry. As I started in ministry, I felt very strongly that screens did not belong in worship. I thought they were a distraction. I thought they were symbols of fundamentalism, and I thought they symbolized so much of what is unhealthy in our culture. I did my best to ignore that, one by one, churches were embracing this new technology.

Over the last ten years, I've seen more and more pastors use this technology gracefully in worship. I've been moved by how these worship leaders have integrated painting, film, and photography into worship. I like some uses better than others, just as I like some preaching styles better than others, but I can no longer ignore that this technology can be used in ways that enhance worship in churches like ours.

I've also come to terms with the fact that our culture is becoming increasingly visual. More and more, images are a part of the way that people communicate. Increasingly, when presentations are given, people expect that images will be used to facilitate communication. Churches are realizing this and are adapting. I feel like it is time for me to adapt, to interact with these trends rather than ignore them.

If the Barbour family hadn't come forward with this gift, I would have raised the issue soon. I think it is important for us to find ways to engage the visual sense more frequently in worship. I trust that as we talk more about this issue, we will find a way to do this that is a good fit for First UCC.

Faithfully,

Pastor Todd



Moderator's Minute

One of the joys of being moderator is to have your finger on the pulse of this very vibrant congregation. It means at times that your inbox is overflowing, but a little sifting and prioritizing makes it possible to enjoy all of the wonderful things that are happening.

On March 16-17 we have the opportunity as a congregation to answer the call of the Reverend Abigail Henderson as our new Associate Minister. The search committee did a wonderful job vetting the candidates and they feel that God is truly calling Abby to become part of our church family. Please look in your mail, in *The Chronicle*, online and listen in church for more information about Abby and her ministry. Following worship on March 17th there will be a special congregational meeting where we will vote on the call. Please make every effort to be present for this important event in the life of the church.

One of Pastor Todd's goals is to broaden our experiences in prayer and worship. He has asked us to have conversations about how we could enhance our worship experiences. Members of council have been listening to conversations about improving the audio in the sanctuary and creating opportunities for the visual arts during worship. This has been an exciting time to hear a lot of different opinions about what we value in our shared worship experience. Please know that no decisions have been made at this time; we are still listening and excited about what we are hearing from you.

On the horizon is a capital campaign and we are beginning to discuss and focus our priorities for this endeavor. There have been conversations about upgrading our kitchen and lowering our carbon footprint by making our building more efficient (and many other directions too!) I will continue to keep you informed as work progresses on this very important task.

Through it all I hope we are listening for God's voice. What are we called to do? Why are we being called to do this work at this time? I feel truly blessed to be part of the process.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Muth

Associate Minister Search Update

Our committee is very pleased to recommend to the congregation the call of Abigail Henderson as our new Associate Minister. Call Sunday will be on March 17 with an open house on Saturday, March 16 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Church.

The open house will offer you an opportunity to meet Abby and learn more about her background and the skills she brings to this position. Sunday's service at 10:30 a.m. will be conducted by Pastors Todd and Abby, so that you will be able to see her in action as part of the ministerial team that is key to this position.

After the service Moderator Greg Muth will hold a special congregational meeting to formally present Abby's call to the congregation. After time for discussion, there will be a paper ballot vote on her call.

We hope to see all of you at the open house on Saturday, March 16 and on Call Sunday, March 17 as our congregation takes this next important step in our journey together.

~ *Margit Johnson (Chair), Nancy Johnson-Maloney, Kaara Maki, Will Marroquin-Haslett, Jerry Moberg, Greg Muth, Bill Poehlmann, Jami Reister, Rev. Todd Smith Lippert*



March Faith Forums at 11:45 a.m.

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

3/3: Faith Story: Mary Caroline Henry

3/10: Presentation on human trafficking by the organization "Breaking Free"

3/17: No Forum (Associate Minister Call & Vote)

3/24: No Forum (Palm Sunday)

3/31: No Forum (Easter)



Lenten and Easter Worship Services

This is a reminder that there are services on Wednesday evenings during the Lenten season. Soup suppers are offered by various committees at 5:30 p.m. each Wednesday with a quiet service of reflection following. The service will be from 6:30 until 7:00 p.m.

Maundy Thursday, March 28, will be a service at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. There are two services on Easter Sunday, 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., with a coffee served between them. All are welcome!

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 24, following Worship in the Church Parlor off the Assembly Room. Child care will be provided.

New members will be received on Sunday, April 14, during the Worship Service.

Nine to Dine

Nine to Dine sign-up will continue in March! Sign-up after church or email Liz Hankins (liz36hankins@yahoo.com) or Linda Wagenbach (lwagenba@kmbw.com).

First UCC to Participate in Yale Institute of Sacred Music Congregations Project

From June 20-June 27 Chris Brunelle, Bob Gregory-Bjorklund and Todd Smith Lippert will be participating in the Yale Institute of Sacred Music Congregations Project in New Haven, CT. Chris, Bob, Theo Wee and Pastor Todd submitted a proposal that seeks to address the question, "Now that children are present for all of our Sunday service, how else should our worship evolve?" To attempt to answer this question, we want to explore working towards "Arts-Infused Worship," integrating more of the arts into worship on a regular basis. Also, we recognize that there is "simple but compelling" worship music that encourages very strong singing at First UCC, and we want to find ways to add more of this type of music. Chris, Bob, and Todd will be working with worship and music experts from around the country to help worship at First UCC become even more meaningful and life giving. We are grateful to God for this opportunity and pray that it will serve our church's ministry in the years ahead.

A New Song

Copies of "A New Song," a sermon by Bob Griggs in which he talks about being hospitalized for depression, are available outside the church office.

Newsletter Format/Frequency Change

Beginning next month (April), *The Chronicle* will be published twice per month on the second and fourth Thursdays. If you have “opted in” to the church’s email distribution list, you will receive *The Chronicle* via email.* If you have not, you may pick up a paper copy from the hallway rack near the south (parking lot) entrance. If you have requested to be on our paper mailing list, a paper copy of both issues will be mailed to you at the end of each month. (If you are on the paper mailing list but plan to pick up a paper copy at church, please let the office know so we can reduce our paper/printing/postage costs.)

* To “opt in” to our email distribution list, please visit our website (www.firstucc.org) and enter your information on the right-hand sidebar under “Join Our Mailing List.”

ONA Worship Celebration

Annual Open and Affirming (ONA) Worship Celebration - "Widening the Circle" Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

118 4th St., Elk River, MN

April 14, 2013

Workshops at 2:30 p.m.

Worship at 4 p.m.

Reception following.

This year, our Conference Open and Affirming (ONA) Celebration will be something new! The success of the “Vote NO on the Marriage Amendment” campaign last fall gives our 39 churches an additional reason to gather and celebrate being in community with together. We need to see and embrace each other; worship, sing, pray, study, eat and vision together; and for some this year to lodge and travel together.

The worship this year will be led by Rev. Dr. J. Bennet Guess, Executive, Minister for Local Church Ministries of the UCC. Guess has written more than 500 articles on all aspects of the church, earning him more than 60 awards. His writing demonstrates his broad knowledge of the UCC and local-church life and demonstrates his capacity to think critically as well as creatively. He is a member of numerous ecumenical organizations and is a member of the UCC’s 5 member national Collegium of Officers.

Music will be provided by the St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ sanctuary choir.

Two workshops are offered at 2:30 p.m.: “A New Way of Doing Church” presented by Shift UCC - a brand new ministry setting within the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, led by Lawrence T. Richardson, and “Sing Out” led by Gigi Nauer, co-director at Pilgrim Point Camp and Music Director for Pilgrims’ UCC in Maple Grove.

For those who would like to be present for the Celebration but find constraints due to the distance, some members of ONA churches in the metro area are offering their homes for overnight lodging on the weekend of the celebration.

Accommodation for those nights will also be available in Alexandria for those who would like to break up a trip from the North and carpool from Alexandria to Elk River on Sunday the 14th of April.

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 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.

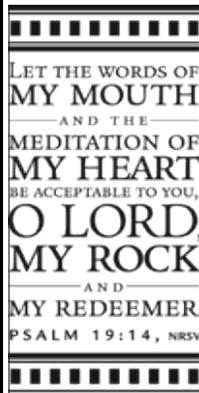


A Taste of Meditation

The word "meditation" conjures many stereotypical ideas - someone twisted like a pretzel, sitting motionless under a tree for hours; a group of people chanting "OHHHHHHHHMMMM"; 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** meditation series, which began 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.

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 assisting our open and affirming aspirations: I'm just back from the State Capitol where over 100 Minnesota faith leaders from many religions and communities led over 2,000 of us in a rally for legalizing marriage for *all* Minnesotans *this legislative session*. Please help our church achieve a goal of exercising our religious freedom to marry gay and lesbian couples in true marriage. Support this effort in ways you can including making sure legislators know how important marriage is as it relates to religious freedom, a healthy, creative community, and one open and affirming of the broad spectrum of God's creation. Our work is not done. Others started a conversation about marriage, and it's wonderful to see where that has taken the state once we started to talking to each other.

SSR organizing the energy of the congregation to help community members in need: Thanks so much to those who helped us fulfill our time in late January for helping cover the hospital's Meals-on-Wheels. We have another two weeks' block of time **March 17-30**. Please let Liz Hankins know if you would do this 1-hour task at noon any one of those days. I found when my kids were young that it was an excellent way to introduce children to some of the needs of people of all incomes and introduce them to service.

SSR partnering with others and you, most of all, to live out Christ's call to feed those in need: Minnesota has an exceptional network of food shelf activity. A central repository and wise facilitator of that is the interfaith Minnesota FoodShare. They designate **each March Minnesota FoodShare month**. We will again see what we can do to help meet the need by raising as much money, food, and awareness as we can. **Money is usually best** because FoodShare can by bulk and through various resources to obtain 10 times the food we buy and give. **Giving nutritious, nonperishable food is also good** especially if you obtain it with your children. They can grasp the reality of hunger that way, learn about nutrition, the cost of food, and perceive how the gift of food can help others. **Food we collect this month** (and all year) goes directly to the Northfield Community Action Center foodshelf but will count toward our setting a standard of weight we'll use to challenge our congregation each year. **Money** can be directed to either the CAC foodshelf or MN FoodShare, where it helps this state-wide resource and is distributed to various foodshelves including the CAC. Money directed either way in March will help us set a standard. Give what you can this month and as you can – can of beans, can filled with money, etc.

Stewards of God's creation: SSR and others are collecting information and making plans to turn our February activity into a bigger initiative of meaningful engagement changing our society's bad habits and hubris in warming the climate in ways detrimental to other societies and living things. Keep putting into action things you know to do to live the dreams you and those closest to you have for environmental stewardship; stay alert for additional ideas and initiatives.

Your OCWM dollars this past month were distributed to the following organizations for the good works they help the Congregation see get done: Salvation Army of Rice County, Heifer International, Ruth's House, the What If Foundation, and the Northfield coalition Peace and Justice Fair. Please let SSR know about anything you believe we should be supporting. There are forms on the SSR bulletin board for this or write a note.

Thanks...

... for your contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), Pilgrim Point Camp and to the four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ! Because of your generosity, the Minnesota Conference was able to forward more than \$266,000 to the national United Church of Christ for its global, local, and justice/witness ministries. The remaining approximately \$500,000 went to strengthening and empowering the ministries of the Minnesota Conference. ~ Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers, Conference Minister

... for your generous donation to Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection in support of the Chicago General Fund. With the support of donors like you, DOOR will continue to provide life-changing experiences to all participants as they seek the face of God in the city. ~ DOOR National Office (Denver, CO)

... for your generous contribution which supported our providing an annual community celebration to honor and remember Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his message. ~ Corinne Smith, Northfield Healthy Community Initiative

... for your role in helping HOPE serve 500,000 clients in 16 countries around the world. Thanks to you, these men and women are receiving access to financial services and the Good News of the Gospel. ~ HOPE International

... for your generous contribution to CAC. Your financial support gives us the ability to meet the costs of rising essential services, food-clothing-shelter, to our Northfield neighbors. ~ Jim Blaba, Northfield CAC Executive Director

March 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 9:00 AM-11:00 AM Main Street Project 9:30 AM Stepsisters (#113) 12-5:00 PM Kelm Bridal Shower
3 9:15 AM F.A.S.T. Families 9:15 AM Lenten Meditation 10:30 AM Worship with Communion 11:30 AM Coffee Hour 11:45 AM Faith Forum (Mary Caroline Henry)	4 PASTOR TODD OUT 4:15 PM Men's Group	5 PASTOR TODD OUT	6 PASTOR TODD OUT 12:00 PM Stepsisters (#113) 4:45 PM Angel Choir 5:30 PM WFFF 6:00 PM Rainbow Choir 6:30 PM Lenten Worship Service 7:00 PM Senior Choir 7:00 PM Facilities	7 PASTOR TODD OUT 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl Knitting Group 5:30 PM Trustees 7:00 PM Screens Conversation	8 PASTOR TODD OUT	9 PASTOR TODD OUT 9:30 AM Stepsisters (#113)
10 PASTOR TODD OUT 9:15 AM F.A.S.T. Kids 9:15 AM Lenten Meditation 9:15 AM Middle School Youth Group 9:15 AM High School Youth Group/Confirmation 10:30 AM Worship Service 11:30 AM Coffee Hour 11:45 AM Faith Forum ("Breaking Free" presentation on Human Trafficking) 11:45 AM Inquirers' Class #1	11 PASTOR TODD OUT	12 1:00 PM Office Staff Meeting	13 12:00 PM Stepsisters (#113) 4:45 PM Angel Choir 5:30 PM WFFF 6:00 PM Rainbow Choir 6:30 PM Lenten Worship Service 7:00 PM Senior Choir 7:00 PM Deacons	14 7:00 PM Cabinet	15	16 9:30 AM Stepsisters (#113)
17 ASSOCIATE PASTOR CALL & VOTE 9:15 AM Lenten Meditation 9:15 AM F.A.S.T. Kids 9:15 AM Middle School Youth Group 9:15 AM High School Youth Group/Confirmation 10:30 AM Worship Service & Call/Vote 11:30 AM Coffee Hour (No Forum)	18 8:30 AM Men's Group Breakfast	19 6:00 PM Girl Scouts	20 12:00 PM Stepsisters (#113) 4:45 PM Angel Choir 5:30 PM WFFF 6:00 PM Rainbow Choir 6:30 PM Lenten Worship Service 7:00 PM Senior Choir 7:00 PM Council	21 11:00 AM Growing Up Healthy 6:30 PM Bartness/Anderson wedding rehearsal	22 9:30-11:00 AM Cannon Valley Elder Collegium 5:30 PM Bartness/Anderson wedding	23 9:30 AM Stepsisters (#113)
24 PALM SUNDAY 9:15 AM Lenten Meditation 9:15 AM F.A.S.T. Kids 9:15 AM Middle School Youth Group 9:15 AM High School Youth Group/Confirmation 10:30 AM Worship Service 11:30 AM Coffee Hour (No Forum) 11:45 AM Inquirers' Class #2	25	26 1:00 PM Office Staff Meeting	27 12:00 PM Stepsisters (#113) 4:45 PM Angel Choir 5:30 PM WFFF 6:00 PM Rainbow Choir 6:30 PM Lenten Worship Service 7:00 PM Senior Choir	28 MAUNDY THURSDAY 7:00 PM Worship Service	29 9:30-11:00 AM Cannon Valley Elder Collegium	30 9:30 AM Stepsisters (#113)
31 EASTER 8:30 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM Worship Service 11:30 AM Coffee Hour (No Forum)						



March Bell Ringers

3/3: Scott Richardson
3/10: Bill Poehlmann
3/17: Frank Sheehy/Sarah Beimers
3/24: Sarah Beimers
3/31: Frank Sheehy/Sarah Beimers



March Sound Techs

3/3: William Beimers
3/10: John Severson
3/17: Henry Beimers
3/24: Alex Battiste
3/31: Christoph Hodel



March Counters

Leota Goodney
Marty Pelikan

Georg Frederick Handel's MESSIAH

March 2, 2013, in the Carleton College Concert Hall

7pm MESSIAH Insights:

The Libretto
with Richard Crouter, Professor of Religion, Emeritus

The Score and Baroque Performance Practices
with Stephen Kelly, Professor of Music, Emeritus

8pm MESSIAH Highlights:

Carleton Choir and Student Soloists
with a professional Baroque orchestra,
Lawrence Burnett, conductor

***Co-sponsored by the Carleton Music Department,
Office of the Chaplain, and Office of Director of the Arts***

