a just world for all

First Congregational United Church of Christ

PO Box 95 300 West Second Street Grand Marais, MN 55604 Rev. Enno Limvere, Settled Pastor

The Shining Light - March 2023

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HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

March Worship

Worship is at 10:30AM in person and on Zoom

March 5, 2nd Sunday in Lent, in March we are going through some of the Gospel of John. We start with the story of Nicodemus and the scripture that has been plastered everywhere John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may be perish but may have eternal life." What if that wasn't the point of the story? What other things may be lifted up? How about the world (yes everything) might be saved, not just some, most, or all people?

March 12, 3rd Sunday in Lent, during this Sunday, we cover most of chapter 4 in sharing the story of the Samaritan Woman at the Well. In this story, we have many boundaries that are crossed with the "Messiah" being alone with a foreign woman, a woman who has 'had' many husbands and currently cohabitating with a man, and Samaritans believing a woman they shun.

March 19, 4th Sunday in Lent, time for another Reader's Theater! We will be looking for 6 narrators and 6 actors (at least) to walk through the story of Jesus healing a blind man and causing all sorts of drama by the local religious authorities demanding to know who healed him and sinned by working on the Sabbath. The parents are dragged in and they are afraid so they throw their son under the caravan... Contact Pastor Enno to sign up.

March 26, 5th Sunday, we come upon the story of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary to talk about death and grief. Though the story does end happily (maybe not a happily ever after), it walks us through the stages of grief. This story shows that even Jesus, knowing Lazarus comes back to life, takes time for tears and feeling the loss of a friend. What grief have we had and how do we go through it? We will explore the possibilities this day.



Shining God's Light!!

PASTOR MESSAGE

"If a butterfly flaps its wings in Africa, there is a hurricane in the Caribbean," posits Chaos Theory. Small little changes that have far reaching effects. When the Gospel of John was written, the writer called Jesus, "Logos" which we hear and interpret today that it means "Word" which is something whole, fulfilled, and unchangeable. In the time of writing the Bible, 'logos' was often heard as 'conversation'. (as read in Church of the Wild by Victoria Loorz). Just imagine our Christian religion if our American English Bibles would use "Conversation":

In the beginning was the Conversation, and the Conversation was with God, and the Conversation was God. The Conversation was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through the Conversation and without the Conversation no one thing came into being. What has come into being in the Conversation was life and the light was the light of all people. The light shines in darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

This, in my opinion, does better reflect the Creation Story in Genesis chapter 1: God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear." God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation..." God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky..." God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth..." God said, let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness..." Sounds like there is a Conversation to me, a call and response.

Can we flutter our wings, if you agree that a relationship with God is a conversation more than obedience? Can we see the care that God put into creating our universe and God didn't do it alone? Can we imagine that God is still speaking, still creating in our world, in our lives, and through the Conversation that was and is and is to come?

I hope our little ripples will flow out and through the world that will bear good fruit in generations to come. May we heal our faith, our world, and bring justice to those who have been left out and left behind.

Peace.

Pastor Enno

March Prayer of the Month

Almighty and glorious God, we come to you in this time of prayer having doubts and fears. Our lives are filled with hurts, pains, and distractions. We try to do it ourselves and feel like failures when we don't succeed. Merciful God, we need you in our lives. Not just in times of prayer and worship, but when we rise in the morning, go about our business, and lay down to sleep. You are truly one who can bring us peace and heal our lives, our bodies, and this world. In Jesus' name we pray, with you and the Holy Spirit reign eternally. Amen.

A Message From a Board Member

Through

Perhaps it's a sign of aging when one progresses from saying 'We all gotta die sometime' to wondering just exactly how that death will occur. In my career I had many conversations with people about death. Most folks were not afraid of dying, but they were fearful of what they would go through in the course of an illness. It's frightening to think of pain, loss of function, loss of hope, abandonment, side effects of treatment and any number of other bad things that might come our way. Part of our job, as caregivers, is to try to ease that journey. And one thing all of us can do is to tell others we care about them - no need to wait until 'the time is right'.

It must have been very difficult for Jesus to live with the realization that the government was stacked against him and needed to 'eliminate' him as a threat to their power. It must have been frightening to know that he would suffer physical pain and abandonment, that he would be humiliated and mocked. He went through tremendous suffering before and as he died. But he didn't stop at death. He went through death, to the other side.

As a human I don't think I can understand what life after death actually is, but it gives me comfort to think that no matter what is ahead, Jesus will understand from his human experience. And when we reach death's door we won't be stopped at the threshold. Instead, we will be ushered through the doorway into the mystery of new life.

Blessed Easter to you. Carol Winter

First Congregational United Church of Christ Board of Directors Meeting Minutes February 14, 2023

Present: Pastor Enno Limvere, Tom Yuhasey, John Bottger, Kevin LeVoir, Carol Bennett, Bruce R Tyler, Carol Winter (Unable to attend: Jen Delfs)

Meeting was called to order at 5:03pm by TY
Minutes this month by CW
TY read Mission Statement
Joys and concerns were shared
Pastor Enno asked that people share their favorite hymn
TY read communication agreement

IMMEDIATE BUSINESS/HOUSEKEEPING

VII. January minutes were previously approved on line
VIII.February agenda was accepted as proposed. Motion by JB, second by KL
IX. Financial report was presented by KL. Cash flow has been tight, but some

generous gifts have been received. Report was accepted. Motion by CW. Second by JB.

X. CW has submitted a short musing for the March newsletter. March BOD meeting will be on 3/21 at 5pm

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

a. Pastor Enno had submitted a written report. In addition, there is a church group from lowa coming to GM in June. They will stay at the church and shower at the Y. They plan to assist with the Sunday service on 6/11. Recruiting is underway for custodian and office manager. b. Maple Hill Cemetery lease is close to ready for signing. c. Mutual Ministry Goal status was reviewed. Mission statement: vote will be in summer. Multiple community- building activities are underway, including potluck 2/19. BRT will present on Earth Day Fair this Sunday.

Update on potentially leasing space for childcare center:

Real estate tax is estimated to be \$1434 per year

An insurance rider would be \$138 per year. Our insurance company wants to review lease and would require that they center operator would carry coverage of \$1million for child molestation/sexual abuse. Also, they want a clause to hold the church harmless for actions of the center. Information on current rental rates is being sought. The church can charge more, but not less, than the average local rate. Many thanks to Kevin for his work on this project.

Name tags: reaction thus far is mixed

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

XIVChurch Life brief reports/updates

- a. Pastoral Relations: Carol B will be going off this group. Many thanks for her work.
- b. Finance committee weekly updates to congregation re actual/ budget

- c. Stewardship committee Follow-up letters sent to prospective pledgers
- d. Children and Youth life/faith formation Youth group meeting regularly and there is one Sunday School student. Activities planned for families.
- e. Memorial Committee
- f. Building and Grounds Team Proposal to hire architect for advice on future projects RFP's will be mailed soon
- g. Outreach –Climate meeting, Food Shelf, Rooted and Rising Bruce
- h. Worship Committee meeting monthly
- i. Standing Grievance Committee: Delfs, Mattice, Bennett one individual with a complaint has been referred to the committee, but has not contacted them.
- j. Food Team: multiple folks have signed up for potluck this Sunday Meeting closed at 6:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Winter

Treasurer's Report for March 2023 Newsletter

The January 2023 (latest fully available information) Financial Report shows a total income of \$12,653.04 and expenses of \$13,059.22 (See Detail Below). This means that the Church's Income was less than its Expenses by \$406.18

Income for January 2023					
Pledged Donations	\$10,235.80				
Non-Pledged Donations	\$ 1,180.00				
Loose Plate Offering	\$ 171.00				
Building Use	\$ 434.25				
Income from Outside Sources	\$ 551.39				
Youth Fund Offering	\$ 80.00				
Interest Income	\$ 0.60				
	\$12,653.04				
Expenses for January 2023					
Pastor	\$ 6,823.03				
Pastor Staff	\$ 6,823.03 \$ 722.60				
Staff	\$ 722.60				
Staff Business	\$ 722.60 \$ 2,516.06				
Staff Business Worship	\$ 722.60 \$ 2,516.06 \$ 800.00				
Staff Business Worship Education	\$ 722.60 \$ 2,516.06 \$ 800.00 \$ 131.15				
Staff Business Worship Education Building and Grounds	\$ 722.60 \$ 2,516.06 \$ 800.00 \$ 131.15 \$ 1,667.81				
Staff Business Worship Education Building and Grounds Parsonage	\$ 722.60 \$ 2,516.06 \$ 800.00 \$ 131.15 \$ 1,667.81 \$ 146.16				
Staff Business Worship Education Building and Grounds Parsonage	\$ 722.60 \$ 2,516.06 \$ 800.00 \$ 131.15 \$ 1,667.81 \$ 146.16 \$ 252.41				

This is a free community event, open to all. Free Will donations will be accepted for all events and food provided. We will also be taking signups for our "Pride 2023" t-shirts. All funds raised will be used to present our Community Rally in June. This event takes place in the log cabin at the Community Center.

2:00pm... Doors Open. Smoothie lunch served, sponsored by Shook Smoothies.



Presented by Cook County



3:00pm... Drag Queen Story Hour, presented by That Queer Isa, sponsored Grand Marais Public Library.

by

- 4:00pm... Community Social Hour. Gather with your neighbors for conversation, board games and arts and crafts, (sponsored by *)
- 5:30pm... Presentation on The History of Pride, sponsored by Outfront MN.
- 6:00pm... Dinner served. Ramen and House Salad. Vegan and Gluten Free, sponsored by Angry Trout Cafe.

7:30pm... Queer Movie Night. The Birdcage, sponsored by First Congregational United Church.

Can't make the event, but still want to support Cook County Pride? Contact Ben Nichols at benjaminnichols13@gmail.com

Protecting God's Gift of Creation – Psalm 24:1

Minnesota Conference 61st Annual Meeting June 9-10, 2023

College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, MN, with an online option

We acknowledge the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University occupies the original homelands of the Dakhóta and Anishinaabe peoples. We honor, respect, and acknowledge the Indigenous peoples forcibly removed from this territory, whose connection remains today.

The Minnesota Conference will gather in June, building on the hybrid model we inaugurated last year of virtual and in-person workshops, meetings, and worship. We seek to engage our youth and young families, our local congregations, our state, and the Spirit to participate in protecting and renewing the Earth, which is God's and the fullness thereof.

The sacred gift of creation entrusted to us by God is being destroyed. As we imagine and live into the church of the 21st century, let us remember, "The earth is God's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." (Psalm 24:1) Let us come, as children of this sacred creation and the enduring body of Christ, as we are being called forward with the charge of protecting God's gift of creation.

We know that the work of conservation and eco-justice is a familiar one to many of us, while others have struggled to find traction or see any other way forward. Our keynote speaker will be the Rev. Michael Malcom, ordained in the United Church of Christ and founder and executive director of the People's Justice Council in Birmingham, Alabama. He will share how he created an unparalleled opportunity for faith communities throughout Alabama to unite and raise their voice against environmental racism, economic oppression, environmental injustice, and climate change.

In addition, we will create space for your efforts to be uplifted as well. If you have a "Green Team" or lay leadership at your church who wants to share or learn from what other churches are doing, look out for our online workshop earlier that week. Plus, many other workshops will return in-person this year.

Deadly earthquake strikes Turkey/Syria border, UCC delegation in Europe connects with partners to respond

by Connie Larkman | published on Feb 6, 2023

Thousands have been killed in Turkey and Syria by a <u>massive earthquake</u> that struck Monday morning before dawn on the border of the two countries. The magnitude 7.8 quake, centered in a heavily populated area of southeastern Turkey but felt as far away as Israel and Cyprus, collapsed buildings and buried scores of people in the rubble. The Feb. 6 temblor has already been followed by a series of powerful aftershocks.

A United Church of Christ <u>delegation in Europe</u> tracking <u>the Ukraine appeal response</u> has already been in touch with partners in the affected region and sends back the following report.

AN 'ALREADY VULNERABLE' REGION

Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Jeremiah 31:15

"We were awakened to the news of another tragedy in the global community," said Associate Minister Karen Georgia Thompson. "The impact of this earthquake on the border of Syria and Turkey was felt as far as Cyprus, Lebanon, and Greece. The death toll continues to climb in a region that is already vulnerable as a result of the more than decade long war in Syria.

Rev. Thompson shared this prayer:

God of grace and mercy, there are many who are suffering loss today. Around the world and in our communities, we are mourning. Today we come holding in our prayers our siblings in Turkey and Syria who are still searching and rescuing survivors and victims of this earthquake. Be present with these families and communities during this time of crisis and need. Be a source of strength and comfort through these days ahead. Help us to be present on behalf of those in need. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The UCC is issuing an appeal to assist those affected in the region. Please designate International Emergency on this donation page to support this response.

UCC GMP Search Committee makes historic choice, recommends Karen Georgia Thompson as next leader

by Emma Brewer-Wallin | published on Feb 27, 2023

After a year-long search, the United Church of Christ Board's Search Committee for General Minister and President has made a historic choice. The committee will be recommending Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson to the UCCB this week as nominee

for General Minister and President. If elected, she would be the first woman, and the first woman of African descent, to lead the denomination. Below is the letter to the wider church from Search Committee Chair, the Rev. Emma Brewer-Wallin.

Rev. Thompson inspired the Search Committee when she paired the apparent hopelessness of declining



church membership with the possibility of people who are seeking places to form community, to make meaning of life's challenges, and to serve their neighbors. She suggests that among people who might be seeking such a home are the "spiritual-but-not-religious," families who are connected to multiple religious traditions, and people who follow teachings and practices of Christianity alongside another tradition. She affirmed that many UCC congregations are already a place of sanctuary for these kinds of people, and proclaimed the possibility of continuing to foster this type of ministry without letting go of the Christianity that makes us who we are.

Manager and Administrator

Rev. Thompson's care for the staff she works with, supporting them both as people and as leaders, emerged clearly in our conversations with her. She described a practice of leadership development that considers the big picture of the whole church, not only those who are currently working for her, to help ensure that new and emerging leaders are prepared when opportunities to serve arise.

In addition to her aptitude as a manager, Rev. Thompson has demonstrated her savvy of the behind-the-scenes aspects of administration. Her experience overseeing several multi-million-dollar budgets for Wider Church Ministries, General Synod, Global Ministries, and One Great Hour of Sharing prepares her to secure the financial strength of the UCC through sustainable, wise, and responsible fiscal management. As General Synod Administrator, Rev. Thompson emerged as a key pastoral leader during the church's early experience of the pandemic, adapting our 33rd General Synod to a digital environment. Her long tenure with the National Setting means she knows the inner workings of the UCC well, and she has put that knowledge to use in strategizing the realignment of the Common Global Ministries Board with the UCCB.

The church has repeatedly affirmed Karen Georgia Thompson's ministry throughout her tenure in multiple roles of progressive responsibility in the National Setting. After a thorough review by the board, she was recently nominated for a second term as Associate General Minister. With equal confidence in her capabilities as a minister, theologian, and spiritual leader for our church, our Search Committee enthusiastically recommends her as our nominee for General Minister and President.

The United Church of Christ Board will hear from Rev. Thompson at their meeting later this week, March 3-5. I ask for your prayers for Rev. Thompson as she shares her vision, and for the UCCB as they hear it, that this may be a time of fruitful discernment together about what the Church needs in this season.

Faithfully,

Rev. Emma Brewer-Wallin, Chair, General Minister and President Search Committee



Our church is raising funds for those affected by the earthquake by selling potholders in our entryway.

Open Positions:

Building Custodian

First Congregational Church, UCC, of Grand Marais is looking for a Building Custodian starting May 1, 2022. Flexible work schedule 6-7 hours a week with duties including: cleaning offices, classrooms, sanctuary, halls, kitchen, and bathrooms with light maintenance responsibilities. Salary starts at \$18.00 per hour. Taking care of outside grounds (lawn mowing & snow removal from sidewalks) can also be a part of this job with additional hours. Send resume and three references to: First Congregational Church PO Box 095, Grand Marais, MN 55604-0095.

Office Administrator

Location: First Congregational Church, UCC, Grand Marais, MN

Work Schedule: 8 - 12 hours weekly; actual schedule to be determined

Pay Rate: Starts at \$18.00/hour

This position manages the church office and supports the day-to-day ministry and mission of First Congregational Church United Church of Christ.

Duties include those associated with an office setting:

- Answering phones and greeting visitors
- Procuring and maintaining office supplies
- Creating content, proofreading, copying, collating, mailing
- Composing and sending electronic communications
 Advice in the sending electronic communications

Maintaining a calendar of church/pastor activities

Duties also include those specific to First Congregational Church UCC:

- Maintaining/entering/editing data in "Realm" (church specific software)
- Picking up mail, and maintaining filing system (digital and paper).
- Maintaining/creating content for/updating church's website
- Providing support and feedback to the pastor on various aspects of church communications and concerns
- Providing a listening presence in a welcoming, hospitable atmosphere for members and visitors
- Having an awareness of the needs of the congregation and providing necessary support

Keeping the physical space organized and inviting

SEASONS OF OUR LIVES

For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.

(Ecclesiastes 3)

Time to Celebrate....

March Birthdays

3/2 Bev Gruman

3/3 Malinda Tasler

3/5 Lou Goodell

3/9 Damian Zimmer

3/9 Meredith Eliot

3/10 Ada Igoe

3/11 Eli Wharton

3/12 Vanessa Jacobsen

3/17 Korey Bochovich

3/19 Mike Carlson

3/20 Kathy Jo Thompson

3/22 Lindsay Edson

3/31 Sarah Smith

3/31 Wren Eliot

March Anniversaries

3/19 Ann & Wayne Russ



CELEBRATION!!

Please help keep us up to date by letting us know if you'd like to be added (or removed) from our Birthday and Anniversary newsletter announcements.

MARCH 2023

First Congregational United Church of Christ Grand Marais, MN

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
5 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Choir Practice 10:30am Worship 4:00pm Journey Group 5:00pm Pride Event	6 3:00pm-5:00pm Food Shelf Open to the Public (LL) 7pm ALANON Pastor Enno's day off	7 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 7:00pm Zen Meditation (LL)	1 10:00am Ministerial Lectionary Study 12:30pm Music Worship Planning 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 3:30pm Book Study 6:00pm Lentin 8 10:30am Ministerial Lectionary Study 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 3:30pm Rooted & Rising Book Study 6:00pm Lentin Service	2 10:00amTaiChi 11:00am Building & Grounds 12:00pm Women's AA FS) 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 2:00pm MNIPL Overview 9 9:15am Chaplin Meeting 10:00am TaiChi 12:00pm Women A A(FS) 2:00pm WTIP interview 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons	3 7:00am AA (FS) 8:00am Harbor Watch 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 5:00pm Family Dinner Night 10 7:00am AA (FS) 8:00am Harbor Watch 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons	4 9:30am-2:30pm Piano Lessons 2:00pm Pride Committee Fund- raiser 11 9:30am-2:30pm Piano Lessons 10:30am Surely Discipleship group
9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Choir Practice 10:30am Worship 2:00pm Care Center Church Service	3:00pm-5:00pm Food Shelf Open to the Public (LL) 6:00pm MNIPL Earth Day 7pm ALANON Pastor Enno's day off	14 10:30pm Small Church Collective 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 7:00pm Zen Meditation (LL)	15 10:30am Ministerial Lectionary Study 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 3:30pm Rooted & Rising Book Study 5:15pm Pizza & Social Justice 6:00pm Lentin Service	16 10:00am TaiChi 12:00pm Women's AA (FS) 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons	7:00am AA (FS) 8:00am Harbor Watch 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons	9:30am-2:30pm Piano Lessons 10:30am Java Moose Song Circl
19 NO Sunday School 9:30am Choir Practice 10:30am Worship	20 3:00pm-5:00pm Food Shelf Open to the Public (LL) 5:30pm Pride Event 7pm ALANON Pastor Enno's day off	21 12:00 pm Clergy Cluster 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 5:00pm BOD meeting 7:00pm Zen Meditation (LL)	22 10:30am Ministerial Lectionary Study 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 3:30pm Rooted & Rising Book Study 6:00pm Lentin Service	23 10:00am TaiChi 12:00pm Women's AA (FS) 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 4:00pm Pastor Relations 5:00pm Library	7:00am AA (FS) 8:00am Harbor Watch 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons (News Letter Articles Due!)	25
26 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Choir Practice 10:30am Worship	27 3:00pm-5:00pm Food Shelf Open to the Public (LL) 6:00pm MNIPL Earth Day 7pm ALANON	28 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 7:00pm Zen Meditation (LL)	29 10:30am Ministerial Lectionary Study 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons 3:30pm Rooted & Rising Book Study 6:00pm Lentin Service	30 10:00am TaiChi 12:00pm Women's AA (FS) 2:00-6:00pm	7:00am AA (FS) 8:00am Harbor Watch 2:00-6:00pm Piano Lessons	

FS—Fireside Room SH—Social Hall MR—Media Room SA—Sanctuary N—Narthex/Lobby SR—South Room LL—Lower Level