

Church Life News

Health, Wholeness, Healing, Faith-Based Nursing

Recently Sally Dunn, Nancy Starr, Sue Hennessy, and Beth Benson met to talk about the portion of our mission and purpose that says we will “reach out in healing love to all creation.” Ideas poured forth amidst the laughter and camaraderie that comes from shared values and commitment to a common mission and purpose. We agreed that core to faith communities of all kinds is health and healing. We work as individuals and as a congregation to be a healing presence with each other and with the community in which we serve.

Sally served as a public health nurse in Ramsey County for many years and so brought a wealth of knowledge, experience and understanding to the table. Nancy Starr served for many years as Executive Director for an elder community in the Twin Cities and is passionate about health and well being. Sue Hennessy spent years as a care giver for her parents and like Sally and Nancy continues to be active in promoting healthy practices for individuals and communities. We talked about things we are already doing such as our Fourth Monday Meals, Sunday Dinners, music as a healing, joyful practice, participating in our worship ministry at the Care Center, providing space to recovery groups, using our labyrinth, the upcoming yoga classes that will be held at the church, to name at least a few. Sally shared resources about various congregations who have parish or faith-based nurses within congregations. We discussed and imagined ways we might participate in such a dream.

We are spending time with a book called Parish Nursing: Promoting Whole Person Health Within Faith Communities, edited by Phyllis Ann Solari-Twadell and Mary Ann McDermott. Here is a brief excerpt:

...it is a continual challenge for faith communities to reach out to their community in love and service. The faith community is able to influence people at the microlevel, empowering individuals to take control of their life with boldness. They can encourage the community of support that shapes the way people grow and become, role modeling full and abundant life experienced when the individual lives in harmony with self, others, and God.

We agreed to work on doing a congregational survey/needs assessment to better understand how we as a congregation can deepen our commitment to work toward health and healing as individuals, as congregation, and as we serve our community. Our hope is to do the survey/needs assessment this summer. Call the church office or talk to any of these women if you are interested in helping or would like more information.

Fourth Monday Meals

During Lent we have been using the wonderful cloth labyrinth given to our church a number of years ago. We folded it up to make room for the Fourth Monday Meal that Suzanne Weber, Mike Carlson, Nancy Starr, and Carol Harris gathered to prepare from the roast beef that had been frozen after our last Sunday dinner. In addition to the delicious “roast beef soup” there was a hearty vegetable soup for those who don’t eat meat. It is such a joy to be able to gather with people around a table of good food. We learn new things about each other. Who knew that Chris O Brien and Jane Alexander, Nancy Starr and Steve Nielsen were married on the same

day in the same year! This led to hearing that Pete and Carol left Michigan on their wedding day to spend their honeymoon at Lamb's Resort on the North Shore. We got to hear about Melissa's latest clay projects and stories about the Birkebeiner Skiing Race that Chris had just completed and other adventures in people's lives. Our bodies and spirits were nourished by good food and good company. After we cleared the tables and chairs away, some of us cleaned while Abby and Sandy unfolded the labyrinth. Abby was the first one to walk it, not just once or twice, but several times, inviting her mom to join her. We all left grateful for yet another opportunity to "walk together in all God's ways." We gather the fourth Monday of each month to prepare food and share it together in a meal. Sometimes there are 10 or 12 of us, sometimes 5 or 20, but the food is always delicious and the company wonderful and all are welcome to join us! Next time we gather will be March 26. Save the date!

Ash Wednesday

Vegetable soup simmered on the stove as we gathered in the Social Hall on Ash Wednesday. Anders and Naomi were the youngest among us and Lois claimed her place as oldest. We were a small but diverse group. While we ate our soup and crackers we revisited the prophet Joel, whose words are often heard on this day of ashes. Joel recorded vast destruction—people in anguish, the land desolate, with much weeping and rending of hearts. In the midst of hopeless and despair, Joel hears God say, "Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for God has done great things!"

After supper we scooped up dirt and reassured it, inviting it to rejoice in God's great and good purpose, plans for the well being of dirt, but also for us. Then we scooped up ashes from trees that have laid down their lives in Cook County so that we can be warm through these cold months of winter. We gave thanks for the trees and the warmth as we mingled and mixed the ashes and dirt, planting the seeds of the God's new creation. Anders led the way for us as he plunged his small hands deep into the dirt and ashes, kneading them together into one body. His older sister, Naomi was the first to respond to the invitation to receive the sign of ashes with a joyful, "Yes, please!" As she stepped forward to receive the ancient reminder that we come from the dust and dirt of the earth and in due time return there, held always and forever in God's astounding love for each of us and for all creation.

Lenten Wednesdays

March 7, 14, 21 — 6 pm soup & sharing

Gather with us on Wednesdays in Lent as we seek to make the rainbow connection of God's love and promises for peace and reconciliation within the earth and all creation. Recently we shared stories of local bird visitors and listened to their songs thanks to Mike Carlson's phone app! *But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the sky and they will tell you, or speak to the earth, it will teach you; the fish of the sea, they will inform you. (Job 12:7).* All are welcome!

Walking prayer on our labyrinth

During Lent our cloth labyrinth is available in the Social Hall, as we walk rainbow connections in ourselves and with others. The labyrinth is an ancient practice of walking prayer or meditation that guides us to the center and leads us back out. Labyrinth patterns have been found on every inhabited continent. Although there are many shapes and patterns all labyrinths take you to the center and guide you back out with no wrong turns, no getting lost.

New Task Force Formed

The Church Board recently established a task force to do fund-raising for Phase I of our Facility Renovation plan. Members are: Mike Carlson, Nancy Starr, Carol Harris, Nancy Seaton, Tom Yuhasey, Anne Swallow Gillis, Suzanne Weber and Beth Benson. Here are the notes from their meeting:

1. *We agreed on a theme— "Raise the Roof for our Second Century of Service and Love in Community"*
2. *A date is set for our musical kickoff celebration on April 15 — Nancy Seaton and Anne Swallow Gillis will work on this. There will be deserts after an hour of music. We discussed having quarterly music events.*
3. *Carol Harris offered to make a "raise the roof" quilt that can be raffled off.*
4. *Nancy Seaton is going to explore making glass pieces that could be sold at events.*
5. *Discussion on making a visual display*
6. *Making a brochure that includes a variety of giving options. Suzanne has already started on this.*
7. *We will send out a mailing inviting the congregation to help. It will be ready to be assembled at our next meeting. It will include a letter and the brochure.*

Wow. We accomplished a lot and we laughed often. What a gift!

Here is the press release that will go out to the public on April 1:

CELEBRATING A 100 YEARS OF SHARED COMMUNITY SPACE!

A benefit concert that will "Raise the Roof" with jazz and gospel, while welcoming funds to further enable the church to provide meeting space for a wide variety of community groups and programs.

GRAND MARAIS, MN: The public is invited to a concert of jazz and gospel, featuring local pianist Chris Gillis and friends, **Sunday, April 15 at 3:00 pm** in the church Sanctuary. Light refreshments will follow the concert.

Featured will be the recently renovated, 1915 Mason Hamlin baby grand piano, previously owned and played by traditional jazz pianist, band leader and ethnomusicologist, Frank Gillis. The piano has been recently donated to the congregation, who desires to share its beautifully restored sound with the community.

Since 1917, the First Congregational Church, UCC, has opened its building to all kinds of different community groups and activities. For the last 50 years, its current building on the corner of West 2nd Street and 3rd Avenue West, has been making things happen! The building is a place where, at little or no cost, service programs and support groups

can meet and be of service to our community. From 12 Step meetings, to Scouts, other faith communities and the local Food Shelf, all kinds of people are empowered to serve others through this space. But the congregation's current building is in dire need of roof repair and outside door replacement. To maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all who use the building, the church is conducting a "Raise the Roof" campaign to support needed repairs. A free-will offering will be welcomed on the day of the concert.

First Congregational Church, UCC, seeks to be an accessible, open and affirming community of faith, committed to peace and justice, reaching out in healing love to all creation. We welcome all persons, including those of all races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, faith backgrounds, abilities and economic circumstances. This church building makes good things happen in Grand Marais!

For more information, contact:

Nancy Seaton (218) 388-2275 or Anne Swallow Gillis (218) 370-9318

Confirmation

Cayden Zimmer officially began his confirmation journey on December 17, when he and his family hosted and led worship along with Rev. Beth Benson. It was a beautiful service that celebrated Cayden's many years of Sunday school, as well as his leadership with our younger children. Watching Cayden and his younger brother, Elliot light candles together gave light to the intergenerational journey of faith that we make as a congregation.

Recently, Cayden gathered for supper with Tom Yuhasey and Beth Benson. The conversation was rich and varied, including faith stories, learning about our shared values, discovering the gifts God has blessed us with and the mission and purpose of our individual lives, noticing many intersections and common ground. This will happen once a month during the school year and will include Cayden and Beth and one other person. If you are interested in being part of one of these gatherings please contact Beth or the church office.

News about Pews

Making a home for our new piano displaced a few pews. If you or someone you know would like to have a pew or two or three, please contact Beth or the church office. They are available immediately and donations are welcome!

Sing For Joy—Sunday March 25, 4:00 p.m.

Gather with our sister and brother churches in Cook County at Bethlehem Lutheran for a time of singing and rejoicing on Palm Sunday. Singers and Listeners are welcome! Treats will be served following the music! Grow world peace and well being one note at a time!

Easter is April Fool's Day

This year Easter will be on April 1, and we are planning a joyful occasion where we can be “fools for Christ”! Here is what the schedule looks like for now:

Gather at dawn on the east bay of Lake Superior to greet the sunrise.

9:15 a.m. Egg decorating and an egg Hunt, hosted by Christian Education— all ages are welcome.

9:30 a.m. Pick Up Choir

10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion

11:30 a.m. Festive Refreshments & Friendly Conversation

Everyone is Welcome to share in any or all of these events!

Cook County Chaplaincy Program

Barb Bottger and Beth Benson have been working with our sheriff, Pat Eliason, and Valerie Marusco, Emergency Management Director, and several local clergy to establish a chaplaincy program for law enforcement and first responders. The group includes eight trained chaplains with versatile backgrounds and was launched in April, 2016. We partner with Lake County and often have joint meetings. Chaplains are available for death notification support, to build relationships with deputies through ride-alongs, to offer support that can reduce critical incident stress, to provide support to other first responders, and to serve as part of the team during disaster events.

Why Christian?

Jane Gellner and Sue Hennessy will be traveling to Durham, NC in March to attend the *Why Christian?* Conference this year. It is an amazing and diverse gathering of Christians who celebrate all the change and innovation happening in the life of the church. We look forward to all the rich resources they will bring back to share with us!

The Book of Joy

Nobel Peace Prize Laureates His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have survived more than fifty years of exile and the soul-crushing violence of oppression. Despite their hardships—or, as they would say, because of them—they are two of the most joyful people on the planet. It turns out that Steve Deschene and Beth Benson have both been reading this book. Steve was so inspired by it, that he has used it to fashion the learning curriculum for our Youth Group this year. Watch for opportunities this summer as Steve and Beth collaborate to bring this to adult learning opportunities this summer!

Office hours: Tuesdays, 1-4 pm & Thursdays, 10 am-2 pm. Other times by appointment.

March, 2018

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Weekly Events	CHOIR PRACTICE 9:30 SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:15 WORSHIP 10:30	<i>Yoga 11-12 am (LL)</i> <i>Food Shelf 3-5pm (LL)</i> <i>CODA 5pm (FS)</i> <i>AlAnon 7pm (FS)</i>	<i>Over Eaters Anonymous 11am (FS)</i>	<i>Yoga 11-12 am (LL)</i> <i>12 x 12 AA 6pm (FS)</i> <i>Al-Anon Steps 6:30pm (LL)</i>	<i>Women's AA 12pm (FS)</i>	<i>AA 8am (FS)</i> <i>Yoga 11-12 am (LL)</i> <i>AA 7:30pm (FS)</i>	<i>7th Day Adv. 10-12 (SA)</i>
	(April 1, Easter Sun *Sunrise at EastBay *9:15 Easter Egg decorating and hunt *9:30 Choir *10:30 Worship with Communion)					1 8 am Christian Ed 12:30 Board mtg	2 1st Yoga class
	4 Communion	5	6	7 6 pm Lenten Soup gathering	8	9	10
	11 2nd Sunday Dinner with informal mtg after worship before dinner	12 5-8 pm Youth group	13	14 10:30 CC Chaplaincy mtg. 6 pm Lenten Soup gathering	15 -----Why Christian Conference (Jane and Sue gone)-----	16	17
	18 Why Christian Conf	19	20 3-10 Jewish Community gathering	21 6 pm Lenten Soup gathering	22	23	24
	25 4 pm Ecumenical Sing for Joy concert at Bethlehem church	26 5:00 4th Monday Meal	27 12:00 Board mtg	28	29 7 pm Worship with Communion	30 9-3 Prayer and Contemplation in Sanctuary	31 2 pm New Fire

FS - Fireside Room LL - Lower Level MR - Media Room SA - Sanctuary SR - South Room N- Narthex



March Birthdays

- 2 *Bev Gruman*
- 3 *Malinda Berglund*
- 5 *Low Goodell*
- 9 *Damian Zimmer*
- 10 *Ada Igoe*
- 11 *Eli Wharton*
- 12 *Vanessa Jacobsen*
- 17 *Korey Bochovich*
- 19 *Mike Carlson*
- 20 *Kathy Jo Thompson*
- 22 *Lindsay Edson*
- 23 *Ray Sjoberg*
- 25 *Len Goodell*
- 31 *Sarah Smith*

