



First Congregational United Church of Christ

PO Box 95
300 West Second Street
Grand Marais, MN 55604
Rev. Beth A. Benson

May the Peace of Christ be with you,

It was my first car and most of the time it worked, but then one day as I was driving deep into the North Dakota countryside on a work assignment, one of the tires went flat. The day was hot and dry and I was on a desolate stretch of gravel road with no help in sight and wearing my best outfit. I knew how to change a tire and do a tune up because my dad taught me to do such things. Still, it was slow work, just getting the lug nuts loosened took all my strength. By the time I finished getting the spare on I was covered in dust and sweat and clearly going to arrive late for my presentation.

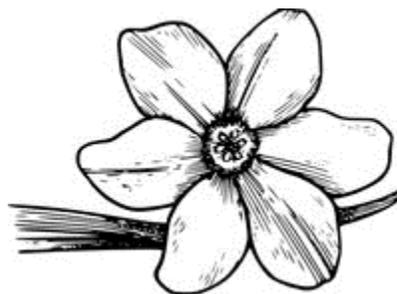
The women's group I was speaking to greeted me very graciously, pouring me a glass of water and iced tea. I remember their luscious hospitality as if it were yesterday. Driving the rest of the way after the flat tire I was worried they would be angry, worried they would call my boss and say I came to the meeting filthy, exhausted and unprofessional. Instead they sent a gracious note thanking the agency for sending me and remarking on how well I had done. There was not one word about what a mess I was, they left that story for me to tell. It became a source of hilarity for my co-workers and my boss told me if he ever got a flat tire, he would call me.

Recently, our congregation has experienced something of a flat tire. The work has been messy. To those not aware, the recent congregational meeting came out of the blue. Like the long ago group waiting, not knowing, all they saw was a mess full of pain and anger. It could have been a meeting that erupted in disrespect and growing disharmony, but it did not. Agreement was reached on the need for outside help. Rev. Rick Wagner came quickly to our aid on behalf of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. Initially he came because the Church Board of Directors and I requested his assistance. It was a powerful moment when so many of us present at the meeting voted to also request the help of Rev. Wagner and the Minnesota Conference of the UCC. Even now he is interviewing organizations who offer help to churches that are struggling. He assured us that we are not alone, many churches need outside help these days.

Our new Church Board will be installed this coming Sunday, July 8, in church. According to the faith and order of the United Church of Christ we enter into covenant with the lay leaders chosen from among us to guide and direct the affairs of the church between congregational meetings. *We are pilgrims on a journey, we are travelers on the road; We are here to help each other go the mile and bear the load.* These words are from one of my favorite hymns, "Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?" I am grateful to be on this road with all of you, even when the tire goes flat! Thank you for your faithfulness and grace, your listening hearts and open spirits!

In joy and peace,

Rev. Beth Benson



Preliminary Report from Summer Congregational Meeting

By Nancy Starr, Moderator

We had a difficult and challenging congregational meeting this past Sunday, June 24. There were 59 people present and the meeting lasted for three hours. There will be more detailed information in the newsletter when it comes out next week, but for now, here are some highlights:

Facilitated Reconciliation Process

Given the degree of conflict in our congregation at present, Rev. Rick Wagner, Associate Minister from the MN Conference of the UCC, was invited to attend the meeting. Those present voted to *“hereby instruct their elected Board of Directors to hire a trained professional, recommended by the Minnesota Conference of the UCC, to lead us in a process of Facilitated Reconciliation. We envision sessions involving our Pastor, the Board, and those people who felt compelled to leave or consider leaving our church due to a conflict with our Pastor and related actions of the Board. These sessions are to be open to any church member who wants to attend unless the professional feels their presence would be counterproductive. These sessions are to be scheduled and held by the end of this year.”* On our behalf, Rev. Wagner is researching and interviewing three consulting firms that deal with reconciliation in churches. Those firms are the Lombard Center in Chicago, the Sand Bur Group in Wisconsin and the MN Renewal Center in Roseville. Rev. Wagner has committed to reporting back to Pastor Beth by the end of June with his research and recommendations. That information will then be discussed at the July 8th Board meeting so the Board can decide on the most appropriate consultant to work with our church and on a plan to cover the cost.

Membership

Nancy Starr, Moderator, reported that the Board has been discussing the meaning, roles and responsibilities of church membership. We do not currently have an official list of members, nor a way to welcome new members into our congregation. A number of ideas were shared by those present at the meeting and additional feedback is being sought by the Board. During the next two months, please share your ideas with Board members or Pastor Beth or email the church office office@grandmaraisucc.org. The Board will gather your feedback and develop a proposal on membership, to be presented at an upcoming congregational meeting.

Food Shelf Resolution

The congregation voted to pass the following resolution:

“The members of First Congregational UCC hereby affirm our partnership with the Food Shelf program.”

Financial Resolution

There was a resolution passed regarding financial reporting to the congregation *“to make all employee expenses (salaries, benefits, and associated costs) listed as separate line items in our annual budget and financial statements.”*

By Laws/Constitution Change Resolution

A resolution to return to previous Bylaws/Constitution from 2014, as amended in June, 2015, was brought by a group of individuals seeking to address church governance concerns. After considerable discussion, this resolution was removed from the agenda on a point-of-order. Copies of the current and past Bylaws/Constitution were not mailed out to the membership two weeks before the meeting, as required by our current Bylaws. The Board will appoint a working group to review both sets of Bylaws/Constitution, and to discern what structures will best support the work of our current Vision and Mission as a church. Opportunities for additional member input and discussion will be provided before our next congregational meeting.

New Board of Directors

The newly elected seven-member Board of Directors will have our first meeting Sunday, July 8th after the worship service. The newly elected Directors are: John Bottger and Drew Heinonen; returning Directors are Helen Carter, Sue Hennessy, Joan Lilja, Chris O'Brien and Nancy Starr. Some of the agenda items will be:

- Elect officers
- Determine a regular Board meeting date/time for future meetings
- Review and discuss report on the Facilitated Reconciliation Process as presented by the UCC Conference (choose most appropriate consultant)
- Create a committee to begin preliminary work on the bylaws and constitution
- Discuss/prioritize list of projects and issues needing completion
- Set date and time for Board retreat and orientation
- Discuss timing for next congregational meeting

And there may be more. There is plenty to work on and the Board is committed to serving God and working with the congregation to carry out our mission and purpose!

I part the out thrusting branches
And come in beneath
The blessed and the blessing trees.
Though I am silent
There is singing around me
Though I am dark
There is vision around me.
Though I am heavy
There is flight around me.

~Wendell Berry



REACHING BEYOND OUR LOCAL CHURCH!

Join in supporting the UCC Strengthen the Church Offering!

**SUNDAY, July 22, 2018
(or send your check to the church office)**

The annual Strengthen the Church offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of United Church of Christ local congregations. Our support of this offering helps the UCC fulfill on its commitment to create a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities.

God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, and our generosity helps plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life of our youth and young adults. Funds from this offering make possible programs such as these:

1. Grants to the New and Renewing Spiritual Communities Program -

In 2017, 27 new faith communities were added to the UCC. Support from this offering included new congregations like [The Lighthouse Church of Chicago](#), a predominately African American LGBT-inclusive church that welcomes all people. "Many who have joined The Lighthouse are hearing and experiencing Christ and Christian community that liberates, includes, and loves for the first time," said the Rev. Jamie Frazier, church pastor. "Your financial support is making this work and healing possible."

Support also went to The Center for Sustainable Justice at Lyndale UCC in Minneapolis, a ministry of the 135 year old congregation seeking to create spiritual community in the midst of intersectional, local activism. "In the last two years our small congregation has taken in twenty new members and every single one of them connected with us because they saw us 'in the streets' – at the 4th Precinct occupation in protest of the killing of Jamar Clark, an unarmed Black man in North Minneapolis; at Standing Rock; at the Whipple Building where most of the deportations from Minnesota happen – seeking to pray and preach with our feet," said the Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, director of the Center for Sustainable Justice.

2. The Adese Fellowship Program -

This groundbreaking program enables participants to build sustainable businesses that counter systemic poverty in their communities. Recipients of the Fellowship engage in a year-long curriculum of self-discovery, theological reflection and business development, which provides tools to create enterprises that help their communities, and renew the Church's mission to create a just world for all. Fourteen new Fellows were accepted into this program in 2017.

Article compiled from the UCC website, by Anne Swallow Gillis

If you know of someone who enjoys playing the organ please let Pastor Beth know. It would be wonderful to again have the music of the organ included in our worship. It's a longstanding practice to have the organ support the classic hymns of our faith tradition.

Recipes

Pistachio Salad

1 No. 2 C crushed pineapple (juice and all)
1 pkg Pistachio instant pudding

Mix this together

Add 1 C of chopped walnuts, 1 C miniature marshmallows,
1 sm bottle Maraschino cherries (cut up)

Fold in 1 9 oz carton of Cool whip or 1 C of cream whipped

Cranberry Salad

1 pkg cranberries ground
1 pkg miniature marshmallows
1 Can crushed pineapple
1 C cream whipped
1 C sugar

Let sugar & cranberry stand one night, add the rest and let stand another night

Raise the Roof

For our second century of shared community space

Estimated Project (roof, rocks, doors) Cost \$200,000 Raised \$28,965.04

Roof and Rocks are completed.



Raise the Roof of Joy
Have a Heart!
Ornaments--\$20
Happy Stones--\$8
First Congregational UCC

Fused glass creations by Nancy Seaton

Sale proceeds for Roof, Rocks, and Doors

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, July 8, Installation of Church Board of Directors, 2nd Sunday Dinner, Board of Directors meeting

Saturday, July 21, Walt Mianowski's Memorial Service The service starts at 11:00 am.

Monday, July 23, 4th Monday Meal, 3:30 pm preparation, 5:00 pm Meal

July 23-31 Beth will be on vacation Rev Carol Mork will be available for pastoral emergencies and will be preaching and leading worship on July 29.

Thank you Ministry There are times we send out many thank you cards. If you would like to be part of the writing and sending of these cards please give Jane Gellner your name and preferred way of contact.

Please sign up to help with hospitality on Sunday, as well as, readers, ushers, and greeters.

Grand Marais UCC Board

May 22, 2018

Attendees – Pastor Beth Benson, Nancy Starr, Sue Hennessy, Helen Carter, Joan Lilja, Suzanne Weber, Steve Deschene, Chris O’Brien. In addition we were joined by Dave Steckleberg and Nancy Cihlar, who attended the meeting as guest listeners.

I. Call to Order

II. Moment of Meditation

III. Consent Agenda

A. March 27, 2018 minutes

- Minor corrections suggested by Suzanne and Beth

B. May meeting agenda

- Motion to approve consent agenda approved unanimously.

IV. Pastor’s Reflection

- Beth suggested that we skip this portion of the agenda to allow for more time for discussion on other items.

V. Church Life Reports

- Christian Education program is finished for the summer
- We are hosting the Baccalaureate Service at the church on Thursday, 5/30
- We are hosting a barbeque on Memorial Day at 3PM at the Harbor Pavilion as the Fourth Monday Meal.

VI. Financial Report

- Suzanne and Beth sent out the full Q1 financial report on 4/27
- For this meeting, Suzanne distributed and discussed a summary of Q1 income and expenses vs. budget. Both expenses and income are tracking with the budget.

VII. Old Business

A. Building renovation updates

- Project Loan. A loan of up to \$120k (previously approved by Congregation) was approved by Grand Marais State Bank. Closing costs were covered by “Rocks and Roof” funding drive receipts.
- Roof replacement. Roof work is largely completed. The old roofs have been removed and the membrane replaced. Next step is finishing work by tin and wood workers.
- Rock work. Rock work was started last week, smooth progress so far. Stonework will be guaranteed 50-100 years.
- Vestibule work. Refurbishment of the church doors and vestibule has not yet started.

B. Capital campaign task force update

- Carol Harris will donate a beautiful quilt “In the Beginning” which will be raffled later this year. The drawing is tentatively scheduled for 10/28.
- The first “Raise the Roof” concert was attended by approximately 80 people (despite the inclement weather), and raised approximately \$2k in free will offering.
- Sale of glass heart ornaments (Nancy Seaton) ongoing
- Overall, \$30k has been raised so far. Setting a fundraising target is deferred until we have clearer estimate of the total project cost including door and vestibule refurbishment.

C. Summer Meeting preparation

- Beth will prepare and present a slide presentation on the building renovation project including an update on the “Rocks and Roof” fundraising campaign.

- There will be votes on four Board seats, including 2 renewals and 2 open seats (Steve and Suzanne are not renewing).
- There was an extensive discussion regarding a proposed new membership process that would be outlined at the Summer Meeting. This was a continuation of a discussion from the Board Retreat on 5/17, where the Board considered various options to establish a membership list for the church, since there is no reliable list today of church membership. At that retreat, the Board concluded that the best approach would be to introduce a simple enrollment process for new and old churchgoers who wish to be voting members of the church. Steve reported that some of the church community with whom he's been talking have expressed concerns about this proposed new membership process, seeing it as restrictive compared to the membership provisions under the previous constitution, where membership was self-determined. Steve also reported push-back on the proposal that all church members, new and old, review and endorse a simple behavioral covenant as part of the voting member enrollment process. Chris recapped the Board Retreat discussion for the benefit of the guests at this meeting, Dave Steckleberg and Nancy Cihlar. He and other Board members noted that the process was intended to fix a problem, that there is no reliable list of church membership, and that the intent of the proposed Membership enrollment process was not to exclude anyone, but rather to provide a fresh start that might heal some of the wounds affecting the congregation today. Nancy Starr read an example of a behavioral covenant that is used by Falcon Heights, received from Rick Wagner. Nancy Cihlar commented that the semantics were important, particularly for long time church members, and suggested "refresh" might be a better word. Steve suggested that endorsement of a behavioral covenant should not be a requirement of the voting member enrollment process, but rather should be a separate process. There was concern expressed about whether long time churchgoers would feel excluded if they were not included as voting members if they missed or opted out of the new membership enrollment process. Chris reiterated that the intent is not to exclude anyone, and acknowledged that it will take some time and outreach to ensure that we connect with everyone in the community to build the new membership list. Dave added that we need to be sure that the process is seen as welcoming and honoring long-time church members. Joan questioned whether we needed to have a formal voting right at all.

VIII. New Business

A. Treasurer Position

- Suzanne will continue to serve as Church Treasurer, though she will no longer be on the Board once her current term expires. The Board had a brief discussion of the how this role and a Board Treasurer role should be defined, but the discussion was curtailed due to shortage of time. Suzanne will distribute suggested draft language for the job description by email.

IX. Other Business

A. Proposed Resolutions.

- Steve shared with the Board a draft of four resolutions that have been developed by a group of unidentified church members, intended to be included on the agenda for votes at the Summer Meeting. A full copy of those resolutions is attached. A summary of the four resolutions is below:
 1. Ensure that Cook County Food Shelf program continues to be run at the church
 2. Rescind the Constitution and Bylaws that were approved by the congregation in June 2017 and revert to the old Constitution and Bylaws (2013)
 3. Add more detail to financial reporting, specifically include separate line items for direct and indirect compensation for each church employee.
 4. Hire an outside professional to lead a Restorative Justice process for the congregation.

There was a spirited and contentious discussion of the proposed resolutions. Steve said that he was representing the views of a large group of “old timers” who have numerous complaints and concerns about the current church, including the diminished role of formal committees under the new constitution, the increased administration responsibilities for the Pastor under the new constitution, a delay in Board follow through on measures to address congregation concerns (e.g. a formal grievance process) and a large number of people leaving the church. Chris said he viewed three of the resolutions as being constructive, but said he viewed #2 as being destructive, not helpful in addressing the current problems in the church in a positive and inclusive way. Suzanne noted that there was an inconsistency in the proposed resolutions #2 and #4, i.e. that if the congregation voted to proceed with a Restorative Justice process, that process would likely include a review and suggested modification of church governance, and that a vote to rescind the current Constitution and Bylaws would preempt that process. Steve said he would go back to the group he is representing and consider whether to amend the proposed resolutions.

X. Adjourn

- Beth led a concluding prayer, and the meeting was adjourned

Grand Marais UCC Board

May 17, 2018

Attendees – Pastor Beth Benson, Suzanne Weber, Sue Hennessy, Joan Lilja, Helen Carter, Nancy Starr, Steve Deschene, Chris O’Brien

I. Introductions

II. Worship Service

III. Discussion on Conflict Resolution

The Board had an extended discussion on conflict resolution within the congregation and within the Board, sharing experiences and ideas, especially with regard to divisions that have emerged in the aftermath of Shelly Kinzli’s dispute and resignation from the church. The discussion began with a group reading of an excerpt of a book written by Anita Bradshaw, outlining guidelines for effective communications in dealing with conflict. All acknowledged the wounds and divisions that have developed in the congregation in recent months, and all agreed on the importance of moving forward in a positive and prayerful way, inviting participation in church life and leadership from all in the congregation, following through on actions to address some of the specific concerns regarding Board communication. Some of the Board suggested that an outside consultant could help to heal the divisions within the congregation. The Board did not make a decision on this, pending other actions agreed below. The upcoming Board election (2 Board positions will be open and voted on in the June meeting) will provide an opportunity to reach out to encourage leadership participation and reconciliation from all segments of the congregation.

IV. Discussion on Board Role and Lay Leadership

The Board had a long discussion on the roles with the church that have resulted from implementation of new Constitution and Bylaws in 2017 and from changes in structure and function of committees that govern different parts of church life. Historically, the congregation has had strong lay leadership, with the pastor’s role being to provide advice and counsel for the lay committees and leaders. Under the new bylaws, the pastor has clearer administrative responsibilities. Pastor Beth and the Board have also implemented some changes to committee structure, intended to address a problem of dwindling committee participation by relying to a larger extent on shorter-term task-focused work groups to support some church life activities. Some in the congregation have expressed concern that these changes have led to some ambiguity and concern regarding lay leadership roles within the church life – e.g. “Who is the point person for specific activities in the absence of formal committees?”, “Are there some church responsibilities that are falling through the cracks?”. The Board agreed that this is more a communication issue than a structural issue, i.e. that as long as it is clear who the point person is for specific activities, it matters less whether there is a standing committee or an ad hoc working group responsible for that activity. The Board also agreed that more can be done to acknowledge the lay

church members who are making important leadership contributions to church life, whether as part of a formal committee or not. Pastor Beth suggested this could be done during a “River of Gratitude” segment during the Sunday worship service. The Board discussed having Board members volunteer to be the liaison for committees and/or working groups in specific areas of church life, as an additional way to improve communication among the Board and other lay leaders in the congregation. This will be considered after the June meeting once the new Board members are in place.

V. Membership in the Church

Currently the church does not have a list of voting members, and the Board agreed that it is an important priority to address this ASAP. The Board discussed different options and agreed that the best approach would be a “fresh start”, inviting both existing and new church members to enroll as members of the church, while also welcoming participants to continue to attend church services and other church life activities.

To become a member, a person would be asked to do the following:

1. Review the mission and covenant of the church, as well as the Open and Affirming statement.
2. Review and agree to Covenant of Behavior. Beth and the Board have reviewed several examples from other communities, and will likely opt for a simple version, not yet finalized.
3. Attend a learning group to hear more about the history of UCC and the history of First Congregational in Grand Marais. This portion may be optional for current members who are enrolling as voting members. We would hope to engage some of the eldest members of the church to share their history of the congregation, perhaps in video interviews that could be archived on the church website.
4. Provide/confirm accurate contact information.

New members will be recognized in a Sunday service, likely timed to coincide with Second Sunday meal. Board members agreed to be “guinea pigs” for this new membership process, planned for the upcoming Board meeting on 5/22.

Board members expressed hope that this “fresh start” will not only improve the administration of the church but will also provide an opportunity to heal some of the wounds and divisions within the congregation.

VI. Summer Congregational Meeting

Date for the meeting is June 24. Agenda for the meeting will be distributed in advance of the meeting and will include the following:

1. Votes on four Board seats, including two renewals (Suzanne Weber and Steve Deschene have completed their terms and are not renewing). The Nominating Committee (comprised of Beth, Nancy, Helen, Sue H) will present two candidates after reviewing all candidates that have expressed interest in joining the Board.
2. Update on the roof repair and the “Rocks and Roof” fundraising campaign
3. Introduction of new process for voting membership (see above)

Pastor Beth will send out a notice shortly that will include a meeting notice, a request for additional agenda items to be considered by the Board for inclusion on the agenda, and a solicitation of candidates to be considered by the Nominating Committee.

VII. Conclusion and Closing Prayer

July Birthdays

- 1 Eleanor Sjoberg
- 7 Sandy Stover
- 7 Art Kidd
- 10 Leah Leonard
- 14 Laura Quaife Turnquist
- 15 Peter Igoe
- 16 Nancy Leonard
- 18 Ryan Thompson
- 21 Emily Cihlar
- 22 John Bottger
- 27 Helen Carter
- 27 Ryan Bockovich
- 28 Joyce Riggle
- 28 Marice Zimmer



Anniversaries

- 8 Dan & Nancy Strayer
- 8 Ryan & Sherry Thompson
- 8 Nancy & Duane Cihlar
- 11 Jason & Marice Zimmer
- 25 Doug & Katie Anderson
- 31 Jim & Frances Beaster



Office hours: Tuesday 10am-1pm, Thursday 9am-4pm. Other times by appointment. **July 2018**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Weekly Events</i>						
CHOIR PRACTICE 9:30 WORSHIP 10:30	Yoga 11-12 am (LL) Food Shelf 3-5pm (LL) CODA 5pm (FS) AlAnon 7pm (FS)	OEA 11am (FS) Yoga 11-12 am (LL) Yoga 5:30-6:30pm (LL) ACOA 7PM (FS)	Yoga 11-12 am (LL)	Yoga 11-12 am (LL) Women's AA 12pm (SR)	AA 8am (FS) AA 4:30pm (FS)	7th Day Adv. 10-12 (SA)
1 Communion	2 9-10 Music (SA)	3 9-10 Music (SA) 2-4 WOW	4 9-10 Music (SA) 5-7 Foodshelf	5 9-10 Music (SA) 2-4 WOW	6 9-10 Music (SA)	7
8 2nd Sunday Dinner	9 9-10 Music (SA)	10 9-10 Music (SA) 9:30-noon Centering Prayer (SR) 2-4 WOW	11 9-10 Music (SA)	12 9-10 Music (SA) 2-4 WOW	13 9-10 Music (SA)	14 3:30-7pm Skamskar Family Reunion (SH)
15	16 9-10 Music (SA)	17 9-10 Music (SA) 2-4 WOW	18 9-10 Music (SA)	19 9-10 Music (SA) 2-4 WOW	20 9-10 Music (SA)	21 11:00am Walt Mianowski's Memorial Service
22	23 9-10 Music (SA) Beth gone	24 9-10 Music (SA) Beth gone 2-4 WOW	25 9-10 Music (SA) Beth gone	26 9-10 Music (SA) Beth gone 2-4 WOW	27 9-10 Music (SA) Beth gone	28 Beth gone
4th Monday Meal						
29 Beth gone Pastor Carol Morik will do Worship today	30 9-10 Music (SA) Beth gone	31 9-10 Music (SA) Beth gone 2-4 WOW				

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

First Congregational United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 95
Grand Marais, MN 55604-0095

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Sent with Joy to:

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

**First Congregational United Church of Christ
Open & Affirming Covenant**

We covenant to be an accessible, open and affirming community of faith,
committed to peace and justice, reaching out in healing love to all of creation.

We exist to worship God and practice the gospel.

We welcome all persons, including those of all races, ethnicities, ages,
sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family structures,
faith backgrounds, abilities and economic circumstances to fully share
and participate in leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship,
sacraments, responsibilities, blessings and joys of our church family.



Justice & Peace

A Just peace church