Friendship News, July 2022

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Brainerd

An Open and Affirming Congregation

*Church Office is currently closed due to Covid. Please call to make an appointment.*

Office phone 218-829-2528 Office E-mail uccbrainerd@gmail.com Pastor’s E-mail: pastorleslieucc@gmail.com Website: [www.uccbrainerdmn.org](http://www.uccbrainerdmn.org)

**Schedule a 1 to 1 (in-person or by Zoom or Phone) with Pastor Leslie:**

[www.calendly.com/pastorleslieucc/1to1](http://www.calendly.com/pastorleslieucc/1to1)

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.*

# **‘We will stand with you in protest’:**

# **National officers speak out after SC overturns Roe v. Wade**

by [**UCC Leadership**](https://www.ucc.org/author/uccleadership/) | published on Jun 24, 2022

The national officers of the United Church of Christ are speaking out against the U.S. Supreme Court decision [**eliminating, after almost 50 years, the constitutional right to an abortion**.](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/06/24/us/roe-wade-abortion-supreme-court)

Long before the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, the United Church of Christ, by action of the General Synod, affirmed the right of every individual to follow their personal religious and moral convictions regarding their reproductive healthcare. We continue to stand by this conviction today. This religious and moral agency includes the autonomy of birthing people to decide whether to complete or terminate a pregnancy.

Our Synod resolutions, which represent the will of the church in light of scripture, highlight the importance of ensuring access to the full range of reproductive health care regardless of race, religion, or economic status. We do not take this stand in spite of faith, but rather because of it. Throughout sacred text humankind is tasked with care of self and others. Bodily autonomy is a human right given by God.

Today’s Supreme Court decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, discarding nearly 50 years of precedent, will endanger the lives and well-being of birthing people who do not choose to continue pregnancy. God loves and cares for people who have abortions, and so does the United Church of Christ. We believe all people have the right to make their own decisions about their bodies and medical treatment. We believe women have an inalienable right to shape the direction of their lives as they see fit, and no institution established by humankind should supersede such freedom.

The Supreme Court’s decision to vacate Roe v. Wade and return the protection of a woman’s human right to states represents a continual effort to oppress women and people who can give birth. Such uniform repression targeted at one specific class of people, namely those who have a uterus, creates yet another stark division in a country that so desperately needs unity. In addition to gender bias, such a rendering also disproportionately effects birthing people of color and women in rural or low-income areas who face challenges in access to safe and medically supervised reproductive health care, including abortions. The gravity of this decision and the devastation of its impact cannot be overstated.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God offers these words of comfort to the Israelites during a challenging time: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10) These are not words that assuage us with easy answers and shallow promises. There is no declaration that things will be better tomorrow. They will not be. But they do promise that we are not alone in our struggles.

We, the officers of the United Church of Christ, want those feeling the pain of today’s decision to know that you are not alone. God has not abandoned you and neither will we. We will do what we always do when the law loses its love. We will grieve with you and offer space for lament and mourning. We will work with you until the rights of every person are honored in this land. We will stand with you in protest. We will kneel with you in prayer. And we will maintain our commitment to educate people about abortion access and safe medically supported reproductive healthcare. Now and always, we remain firm in the knowledge that all are beloved of God, and this cause is right and holy.

***The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer***

General Minister and President

***The Rev. Traci Blackmon***

***The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson***

Associate General Ministers

**Moderator’s Musings**

Today, someone who had been at FCUCC for a funeral a few years back, said “*that church is a safe place for conversation.*”  In the context in which they spoke, “church” meant the folks, the people.

What a dynamo statement!  and It got me thinking about the variety of conversations I’ve had and heard in the first month of being your moderator:  exciting dialogue about the church’s 150th anniversary and the great job everyone is doing reaching and working with neighbors; discussions about racial justice, equity for all; questions about our finances and who might step forward to be our treasurer; what is our human capacity: back door churching; how can we be better at welcoming to all; suggestions about “reorganizing” our church; asks for marketing our and partner church projects; facility use policy questions; safe space policy development; how to keep up with technology, what steps we might take in creation justice work; “who wants to volunteer at PRIDE week events?”. Phew!  And that’s just a sampling.

We are a safe place for all of these conversations and many more.  Let’s keep these conversations going.  We have much to talk about, and many ideas to share and flesh out as we take action to continue loving our neighbor, never forgetting that “God is still speaking.”

Chao,

*Colleen*

**First Congregational UCC News & Updates**

**How to watch Sunday worship** The worship service is **broadcasted on the church Facebook page and the church's YouTube channel every Sunday at 10:00 am.**
To watch worship on Facebook, go to <https://www.facebook.com/uccbrainerd/live>
To watch on YouTube, go to <https://www.youtube.com/firstcongregationaluccbrainerd>
Live stream videos are saved and can be viewed at any time.

**Worship Bulletins are available for download each week at** <http://tinyurl.com/UCCBrainerdBulletins>**.**The bulletins will be ready for download first thing Sunday morning. They are available in both Word and PDF formats and are labeled by date. You can download the document and print it at home or follow along on your screen.
We can also send a copy of the bulletin in the mail each week as we have been doing for some of our home-bound members. Just contact Terri in the office.

**Financial Help Available** Your Church Council voted last year to allow the Pastor's Discretionary Fund to be used to assist church members and others in the Brainerd area who are experiencing financial distress during this time. We received many generous donations! If you need assistance, please email, call, or text Pastor Leslie. Let her know what your situation is and how the church might be of help.

**You can now donate to the church online!**We are now accepting your offerings and donations using **PayPal.** You do not need to have a PayPal account to make an online donation with a credit card. To use PayPal, go to: <https://www.paypal.me/uccbrainerd>

**July Birthdays**

Erin Twamley July 3

Gary Whiteman July 4

Mabel Schultz July 8

Miyah Ellis July 9

Charles Widmark July 12

Jeff Behr July 18

David Crum July 19



Carol Crust July 23

Chris Yager July 23

Vi Heiser July 23

Stephen Crum July 26

Samantha Bertram July 29 Roger Grussing July 30

**Church Directory**

**The directory was emailed and snail mailed out to those who responded to the Connection Letter.**

**If you find an error in your contact information, please call Terri in the church office at 218-829-2528 or send her an email with corrections.**

**Thank you to those who helped work on this huge project!**

**Church Leadership**

**Get Involved, Give Back, Grow Connections – Volunteer at Church!**

 There are many opportunities for you to share your talents:

--**Treasurer,** serves a 1 year term (may renew for 6 terms). The primary role is oversight of bookkeeping, church finances and Executive Committee discussions. This candidate should have a strong background or interest in finance or banking.

--**Council Member-At-Large:**  Attend council meetings, act as a liaison for church members and council, help with nominations, spokesperson for historically underrepresented groups (HUGS).

**Committees needing fresh faces and leadership:**

-Christian Education -Trustees -Stewardship -Memorial

-Music -Arts -The Foundation Board -Christian Ministry

Call or text Colleen LeBlanc - Moderator, with your nominations: 218-251-4065

**Highlights of Council Meeting, June 16th, 2022 - 7:00 pm (In-person and Zoom)**

~ These are highlights. If you would like a copy of the full minutes, please contact the church office ~

**Present:** Leslie Moughty, Colleen LeBlanc, Alvin Velsvaag, Marina Grabowski, Lowell Johnson, Deb Griffith, Karen Ford, Marcia Ferris. **On Zoom:** Tim Anderson, Terri Chidester

**Addition to Agenda**: NEW vendors are to be reminded that a W-9 form must be turned in with billing.

**Report of Clerk:** Linda Gustafson, sister of Kay Kraywinkle, died on May 25, 2022. Services were held in Little Falls, Minnesota on July 16, 2022 with Pastor Leslie officiating.

**Financial Report**: Treasurer’s Report provided by Terri was approved.

Quarterly Special Offering: July - Food Shelf, August - TheShop, September – Neighbors in Need, October – Crisis Line, November – Soup Kitchen, December – UCC Christmas Fund.

Investment Progress: Joe Stattine will report in July on the information from Thrivent. He is still waiting for information from the UCC Funding Plan.

**Department Reports:**

**Addition to reports:** The application for Use of Facilities by Strikepoint Bell Choir was approved with a M/Marcia S/Alvin. Deb will host the group on the date in July they have chosen.

**Trustees**: Deb reported that the carpets have been cleaned, windows washed and painting completed. The sanctuary LED lighting project is still in the plans, but contract, dates, etc. have not been finalized. Dale Hadlund has been in charge of the Memorial Garden and may need help with the care and the winterizing of the fountain.

**Stewardship:** Marcia stated that the next meeting will be in August with the Stewardship season beginning in September.

**Christian Ministry**: Marina stated that a H.U.G.S. plan has been worked out. Each member will be responsible for one month to schedule hosts, ushers, greeters. Sign-Up Genius will be used to recruit members of the congregation for those roles.

**Christian Education**: Lowell indicated that the focus will be on adult education. Hopefully, confirmation instruction will begin this Fall.

**Member at Large:** Alvin reported that Focus on Families in Recovery was not well attended under the sponsorship of Up Front Alano. Board has met to resolve issues.

**Pastor:** It was discussed how to manage the Covid plan on masking in the church and that it be based on CWC numbers or personal choice. The committee on the Lilly Grant has been tabled to July after the 150th celebration.

**Old Business:**

**Filling Leadership Positions**: Executive Committee will discuss at the July meeting re: filling the Treasurer’s position with a non-council at-large member.

**Completion of Directory:** Terri is waiting for Barb Stokke to complete phone calls to folks who have not responded to survey.

**150th Anniversary Update**: Lowell commented on the status and was confident that the scheduled events will be covered.

**Department/Committee by-laws and updates**: Departments should be aware that a FIRST DRAFT of the changes to their description of duties should be turned in by the next Executive Committee Meeting on July 13.

**New Business:**

**The Council binders:** prepared with the time, knowledge and expertise of Colleen are guidelines for our work this term. Please remove the section on Pastor/Parish Relations Committee since it is out of date and no longer was/is used by the PPRC, thus needing revision.

**Marketing:** The development of an ad-hoc committee is necessary. This project may fold into the Lilly grant.

**Take-Away from MN Annual Meeting:** Tim attended the session for moderators which he felt was important, plugged the 150th celebration and met many people from around the state. Leslie highlighted the tour of the St. John’s Bible exhibit and history. Leslie was impressed by people from other MN Conference attendees who had praise for Leslie and her ideas.

**Other dates for your schedules:**

* Department Meetings anytime between this date and prior to July 16. Agenda and Department written reports sent to Terri and Karen by July18.
* Executive Committee meets on July 13.
* Agenda and written reports sent to Council by Karen on July 19.
* Note: You will receive the agenda and all written reports on July 19. Only brief summaries and questions on reports will be entertained by the Moderator at the Council meeting on the 21st.

**Next Regular Council Meeting: July 21, 2022, 4:00 pm in-person & via Zoom**

**\*Note new time**

**Uppity Women of the Bible Study: Song of Songs**

**Continues Thursdays at Noon continues through July in person and via Zoom.**

**Join Pastor Leslie for “Uppity Women of the Bible,” a series featuring Hebrew Bible professor Dr. Lisa Wolfe. Combining careful scholarship with humor and fresh insights, Dr. Wolfe presents information for a lively, thoughtful discussion.
Song of Songs is an exquisite collection of love lyrics, arranged to tell a dramatic tale of mutual desire and courtship. It presents an inspired portrayal of ideal human love and a resounding affirmation of the goodness of human sexuality.**

**Book Group - Will be reading a new book starting this month!
 Fridays at 10:00 am via Zoom**

We will be starting this book on **July 8th.** Our next book is "Susan Orlean*, On Animals"* (about the interaction between animals and humans).  Warm and Witty collection of essays.

**Strikepoint Handbell Concert**

**Sunday, July 10th at 7:00pm**

**at First Congregational UCC in Brainerd, MN**

Strikepoint from Duluth, Minnesota, is a church-based, community/professional handbell ensemble. Led by artistic director Bill Alexander, this eleven-member group performs in a directorless ensemble setting. Noted for capturing the enthusiasm of audiences with a dynamic style and accessible music, Strikepoint's concert selections can range from Bach to Lady Gaga and include music both familiar and new. The concert is free but a $15 donation is suggested.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE BRAINERD LAKES AREA**

**EVERYONE IS INVITED TO ATTEND !**
**Thursday, JULY 14th - 5:00pm Social Hour/5:30pm Speaker**

 **PROGRAM SPEAKER:** Dr. Heidi Hahn, new Superintendent of Schools ISD 181
**LOCATION**: First Congregational Church of Christ - Fellowship Hall

415 Juniper St Brainerd, MN

The Brainerd School Board elected Hahn, the district’s current assistant superintendent, on 14 April to replace retired superintendent Laine Larsen on July 1. Hahn has been working in the Brainerd School District for 26 years. Her other positions include being a counselor and special education teacher, as well as serving as assistant director and director of special education at the Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative.

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS:**
August 11th: Tour of the WeAre Clinic 5:00pm - Sept. 22nd: Deborah Erickson Crow Wing County Administrator speaking on the upcoming elections 5:00pm Brainerd Library

**Adult Forum – “Stories in Ink” Sunday, July 17th – 11:30am**

**More information coming soon!**

**Confirmation Classes continues on July 10th after worship!**

**Youth entering grades 9th – 12th are invited to explore their faith, ask lots of questions, share their doubts and build community. Text or email Pastor Leslie with to sign up or if you have any questions. At least one parent should attend the beginning of the first session to discuss the schedule.**

**We are seeking Confirmation Mentors! Walk with one of our confirmands on their journey. You are not expected to have the answers, but to be a partner in their exploration. Let Pastor Leslie know if you are interested. Background check is required.**

**150th Celebration Dates - Mark Your Calendars!**

**Tuesday, July 19th 5:00 – 7:00 pm**

***Community Party and Picnic in the Park***

**A festive, fun-filled afternoon with the surrounding churches, neighbors, and anyone who wants to join us for lawn games,**

**live music, food, (even some dancing!) and a few surprises!**

**Sunday, August 14th 10:00 am**

***Rooted in Faith; Growing in Love, A Celebration Worship Service***

**We are inviting everyone in town (and out of town**

**that we know) to join us for this culminating service**

**of our 150th Anniversary Celebration!**

**Special Music, Mayoral Proclamation, Imagining the future.**

**Desserts at Fellowship!**

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**Picnic and Party in the Park - Needs Your Help!**

As part of our 150th year anniversary celebration, First Congregational is co-sponsoring (with The Shop and Juniper St. churches) a community and neighborhood oriented event on **July 19th from 5-7 PM.** We plan on serving a free community meal for 200 people, providing lawn games and art activities, and having live music and dancing. Church members are encouraged to come dressed in their church t-shirts or period costumes.

We need lots of help to pull off this event. Starting at 3 PM we will need help with the following needs and tasks.

* 1 more grill and 3 more grillers
* Moving tables and chairs to Gregory Park and back again.
* Servers to help serve the food.
* Runners to transfer food to the serving table.
* 6 more large coolers with ice for water and sodas.
* Numerous lawn games for use by attendees.
* General worker bees to take care of tasks as they arise and help with clean up.

If you can help with any of these tasks, contact Lowell Johnson at 218-820-5290 or johnsonlowells@gmail.com Thank you for your help with this fun community building event.

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**150th Anniversary – Collecting Memories**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| July 3 | **Jazz Sunday -** Several outdoor services were planned during the ARTS IN THE PARK events, to keep in the festive mood and showcase some of our local talent. | * Are you a musician that would like to be involved?
 |
| July 10 | **LBGTQ activism - VOTE NO campaign** “Nov 7, 2012 — In an emotional and historic contest, Minnesota voters defeated the attempted constitutional amendment change wishing to declare marriage as “only between a man and a woman.” Many in our church rallied with phone and door/door efforts supporting the LGBTQ community. With Pastor Leslie’s direction, we began to commemorate Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20th. | * What Adult Forums or educational seminars do you recommend going forward?
 |
| July 17 | **New Pathways -** Homelessness is an issue that churches took on in the form of opening their buildings to provide safe shelter, meals, rides, and services to qualifying families. Kaylo Brooks introduced the idea to our Council and we later partnered with Park United Methodist and St. Paul’s Episcopal until the program ended. | * When did this begin and when did the program end?
 |
| July 24 | **2010s Día de Muertos / All Saints** A remembrance “tradition” began whereby the Mexican *Day of the Dead* was incorporated into honoring our dead. Altars, copal, Pan de Muertos, and authentic Mexican artifacts were used in service and coffee time. Children made Mexican paper flowers and decorated sugar skulls. Adult Forum, the movie COCO, and bilingual books brought cultural awareness to the events. | * What year did we first begin this celebration?
* What would you like to incorporate as we return to meeting in person?
 |
| July 31 | **Holy Humor Sunday -** The Sunday after Easter, with Rev. Leslie Moughty’s leadership, we began to dress in costumes, funny T-shirts, a crazy hat or other sign of humor. Sometimes, the services were conducted “out of order” or backwards. (ie, start with the Benediction) | * What is the Biblical context for this ritual?
 |

**Calling all singers and musicians!**

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**We would love to include your voice and/or instruments during the worship services**

**this summer.**

**Please contact Diane Hauan if interested.**

***Every Wednesday***

**You are invited to a casual fellowship at various locations in the Brainerd Lakes area.**

**July 6th Noon at Wings Airport Café**

**July 13th Noon at Black Bear Lounge in Baxter**

**July 20th 1:00 pm at Hunt Technologies Campus in Pine River**

**For more information contact the church office: 218-829-2528**

**Cooking For Everyone**

This group is OPEN FOR EVERYONE!

Email Lowell johnsonlowells@gmail.com and he will add you to the member list so that you will know when and where we will next meet.



**TheShop Meal – Wednesday July 20th - 3:45 pm in the church kitchen**.
We meet once a month on the third Wednesday.

We are working with the young people from TheShop (Brainerd/Baxter's Youth Empowerment Center) and are preparing a meal and serving it at TheShop for the participants in the program.

Thanks to all who have expressed an interest in helping out. If you are interested in helping,

please call Sharon Carlson at 828-1581.

**TheShop - ShopCart Program**

ShopCart is a completely free resource that anyone in the community can use. We deliver hot meals, as well as frozen meals, toiletries, and other household essentials to a household within a 23 mile radius of TheShop.

Anyone who would like to take part in this program can text our ShopCart phone (218-513-4751) before 4pm to receive their delivery. ShopCart will be happening every Friday.

Thank you, Erica Stepanek, Executive Director of TheShop (Brainerd Baxter Youth Center).

**WeARE** is “Celebrating the Legacy” **July 17th, 2022 at 5:00pm** Madden’s Pavillion (Madden’s on Gull Lake, 11266 Pine Beach Peninsula, Brainerd, MN 56401. Join in an evening honoring WeAre founders Julie Ingleman and Sue Hadland. 5:00pm Social Hour – 6:00pm Dinner – 6:30pm Program-7:00pm Live Music. Purchase tickets at <https://donorbox.org/events/33165>

**The Columbarium at First Congregational UCC, Brainerd**

 The Columbarium is located in the historic space that once was our church’s front entry way. How appropriate it is that our Columbarium now marks another entry way into a new life — where the Spirits of Love and Truth are always present!

 Our Columbarium is now complete. Should you wish to learn more about the purchase of a niche for your own cremains or for the ashes of a loved one, please call the church office at (218) 829-2528. Terri Chidester, Administrative Assistant, can send you a packet of materials via email or regular mail. The Memorial Committee has prepared the information packet, and it contains all the details you will need as you consider inurnment here at First Congregational UCC. Have any other questions? Contact Dawn Stattine at dawnstattine@gmail.com

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**Special Offering Sunday July 25th**

 **Salvation Army - Food Shelf**

This month we have an opportunity to help as we give our Fourth Sunday Special Offering to the Salvation Army Food Shelf. The food shelf offers a wide range of groceries, allowing individuals and families in need to stretch their budgets. Food boxes may include shelf-stable pantry items, breads, cereals, meat and other household necessities. On occasion, fresh produce is also made available.

To donate, send a check with "Food Shelf" in the memo line to: First Congregational UCC,  415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401 or donate online using PayPal and indicate "Food Shelf" in the Note. [payl.me/uccbrainerd](https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/uccbrainerd)

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| Church Calendar July 2021 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|  | Office Closed Open by Appt.  | Office ClosedOpen by Appt.  | Office Hours10am – 1pmPastor Drop-in2-4pm  | Office Hours10am – 1pm  | Office Hours10am – 1pmPastor Drop-in11am-1pm  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| \*Sun. Bk Stdy on hold\*Choir practice resumes in Sept.\*Girl Scouts #373 resumes in Sept | **V or Z**– Zoom or Virtual Online**C** – Cancelled**Y** – Meeting held? – No updates |   |   |   |  **1**10:30am Bk Grp- **Z** |  **2** |
|  **3**9am Brnrd Frnds-**Y** 10am Worship & Communion -**Y&V**11am Fellowship -**Y** |  **4**7pm BACP-Park w/chrch backup-**Y** |  **5**2pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y**  |   **6** 10am Pryr Crcl-**Y&Z**12pm Mens Grp-**Y** Wings Airport Café7pm AA Common-**Y** |  712pm Uppity Women Study-**Y&Z** |  **8**10:30am Bk Grp- **Z**Start New Book |  **9** |
|  **10** 9am Brnrd Frnds-**Y** 10am Worship-**Y&V**11am Fellowship-**Y**11:30 Confirmation-**Y****7pm Strikepoint Handbell Concert in Sanctuary** |  **11**  |  **12**2pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters |  **13** 9am Foundation- **Y&Z** 10am Pryr Crcl-**Y&Z**12pm Memorial-**Y&Z**12pm Mens Grp-**Y** Black Bear Lounge 4pm Exec. Mtg. -**Y&Z**7pm Trustees-**Y**7pm AA Common- **Y** |  **14**12pm Uppity Women Study-**Y& Z**5pm League Women Voters & AAUW-**Y** Fellowship Hall 6:30 BLUE-Park/church backup-**Y**  |  **15**10:30am Bk Grp- **Z** |  **16**1:00pm Linda Gustafson Memorial Service  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  **17** 9am Brnrd Frnds-**Y** 10am Worship-**Y&V** 11am Fellowship -**Y**11:30 Confirmation-?**5pm Weare Annual Event @ Madden’s Pavillion** |  **18**  |  **19**2pm Emotions Anon-**Y****5-7pm 150th Party in Park Gregory Park**5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y**  |  **20**10am Pryr Crcl-**Y&Z**1pm Mens Grp-**Y** Hunt Tech Campus 3:45pm TheShop Cooking-**Y**7pm AA Common-**Y** |  **21**12pm Uppity Women Study-**Y& Z**4pm Council Mtg -10am 7pm AA Dist.-**Y**  |  **22**10:30am Bk Grp- **Z** |  **23** |
| 9am Brnrd Frnds-**Y** **24**10am Worship- **Y&V*****Special Offering******Food Shelf*** 11am Fellowship -**Y**11:30 Confirmation-**?*****Newsletter Deadline***  |  **25** . |   **26** 2pm Emotions Anon-**Y**5pm Le Mesa- **V**5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y**  |  **27** 10am Pryr Crcl-**Y&Z**12pm Mens Grp-**Y**7pm AA Common-**Y**  |  **28** 12pm Uppity Women Study-**Y&Z** | .  **29**10:30am Bk Grp- **Z** |  |