Friendship News, February 2023

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Brainerd

An Open and Affirming Congregation

The Church Office Hours: Wednesdays – Fridays from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Pastor Leslie’s Drop-in Hours: Wed. 1:00pm – 3:00pm, Friday 10:00am – 12:00pm

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.*

**Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith**

The scripture readings for Lent this year offer us many stories of Jesus encountering people who are seeking: Nicodemus comes to him in the veil of night, he approaches a Samaritan woman at a well, he heals a man born without sight. In these stories, each person is seeking a new beginning, a different life, a deeper faith. What unfolds is an exchange filled with questions and exploration. Often, an unveiling occurs—assumptions are disrupted, a new perspective is revealed, mystery grows.

This year, we will be engaging with a Lenten series founded on questions. Many of the weekly questions feel restorative (“Can these bones live?”). Some feel like a charge or challenge (“Who will you listen to?”). Some questions are hopeful and curious (“How do we begin again?”). These questions won't necessarily lead to answers, but they can help us find clarity and a new perspective. Ultimately, engaging with these questions with prayerful intention may lead to a new beginning, a restoration, a wider grace.

Like the characters in our Lenten scriptures, we are also seeking many things: clarity, connection, wonder, justice, balance. We are seeking our calling, the sacred, and how to live as a disciple. Throughout the turbulence of the past few years, many of us are asking big questions about our lives and our faith. This series is intended to help us unpack some of those big questions in ways that are honest and faithful. Throughout this season, you are invited to continually ask yourself: what am I seeking? What is God seeking?

I pray that these questions will create a safe space to explore—to be drawn more deeply into the fullness of life, into the heart of God.[[1]](#footnote-1)

 With God’s love and light,

**Moderator’s Musings**

Things are happening in our church!  So many, I can hardly keep track!  It is so refreshing after a long covid lull.  It is a testament to an energizing and very successful 150th Anniversary celebration and parishioners’ desires to be in community.  Won’t you come and join us?

WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supporting, and Engaged) is meeting and planning again;  the Cooking For Everyone group is working on a delicious fund raising “something or other”;  a new Historical Documents Organizing Task Force has been started to find, sort and decide what to do with all of the paper documents we have; the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee is learning more about their role in the church by participating in some special training offered by the Conference.

A pastor review is in the making; adult forums are booked every week through March, a Clergy Renewal Planning Task Force is writing a grant request to help fund our pastor’s renewal time (a.k.a. as a sabbatical); a tech team is doing an inventory of tech equipment and a listing of what we need for state of the art audio upgrades while also seeking funding for new equipment; ideas for developing a Care Team are being explored; church cleaners are whisking away each week; we are hearing great music at each Sunday service.

I haven’t even touched on Council work: updating by-laws, approving a “privilege of call” request (more on that in an upcoming adult forum); revising and updating our facilities use policies and guidelines; monitoring budget to meet our goal of balancing it; each department (Christian Education, Christian Ministry, Trustees and Stewardship) tending to and fulfilling their responsibilities; looking toward the future and what is all possible.

Nor have I mentioned the every day dedication to office management by our administrative assistant, Terri, and to our spiritual quests and needs by our pastor, Leslie.

If you are part of all of this activity, thank you!  Your involvement makes a world of difference.  If you have not been involved, please consider joining the fun. All are welcome in this house!

Colleen LeBlanc, Council Moderator

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**First Congregational UCC News & Updates**

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**Prospective Member Classes Starting February**

**Contact Pastor Leslie with your availability if interested**

**Have you thought about becoming a voting member of First Congregational UCC? Whether you know you definitely want to join or you aren’t sure if joining is right for you, please join Pastor Leslie for the three-session series. You will meet other prospective members, hear each other’s faith journeys, learn about the history and governance of United Church of Christ and the history and culture of our congregation. You’ll also learn about healthy and unhealthy communication in a faith community, as well as what you can expect from your church and what will be expected of you!**

**Annual Connection Letter**

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In the next week or two, our church will be sending out a letter for you to fill out and return. This information will help us update our membership list and make informed decisions about programs, and much more. Your response is important to help us better connect with one another and better serve our members and visitors. So keep your eyes on your mailbox! If you do not receive a letter and would like one, please contact Terri in the church office.

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**Expanding Congregational Justice Ministry**



Joy Persall and Steve Newcom recently moved to the Brainerd area and joined our community. They are both social justice activists. Steve is the founding director of the Kaleo Center for Faith, Justice & Social Transformation, which is a sponsored project at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. Joy is an executive coach and Program Strategist for Native Voices Rising, a program of the Common Counsel Foundation.

Steve is seeking Privilege of Call within the UCC, which grants standing as an authorized minister of the UCC to clergy from another denomination. Steve served as a minister in the Community of Christ denomination for over 45 years but left the C of C because they would not support his justice work as “mission and ministry” of the church. Ministry within the C of C is unpaid and bi-vocational, so, while serving his local congregation, Steve provided full-time leadership to the following organizations:

**Founding Director: *Kaleo Center for Faith, Justice & Social Transformation*: 2010 - Present.** Situated at the intersection of spirituality, academy, and community, Kaleo Center exists to advance the theory and practice of spirit-grounded movements for justice.

* + In 2014 Steve was invited into the UTS faculty, and in 2016 created two degree offings for UTS, a MA in Leadership for Social Transformation and an M. Div. concentration, and served as United’s founding Social Transformation program director.
	+ Host multi-faith convening and conferences with a healing justice lens centering BIPOC and LGBTQ movement leaders.
	+ Advancing Sevenfold - a praxis (theory and practice) of social transformation providing the theological, strategic, analytical, and practical skills needed to act powerfully in the healing of the world. Steve is currently working on a book on *Sevenfold* for Fortress Press Academic.

**Leadership Fellow: *Archibald Bush Foundation*: 2008-2009.** Researched social justice education within theological contexts, including 125 key informant interviews, program content analysis, and a literature review of the field of Public Theology. One key finding: over 50% of seminaries in the US offer specialized degrees and concentrations in Pastoral Care and Counseling, while less than 5% have equivalent offerings in justice making.

**Executive Director: *Headwaters Foundation for Justice*: 1989-2007.** Headwaters supports grassroots-led social change with annual donor contributions.

* + - Grew from a $175,000 start-up to the premier social justice foundation in the region with a $1.4 million annual budget and increased annual grant-making from $90,000 to $900,000. Headwaters currently grants about $5 million annually.
		- Shifted from a predominantly straight white board and staff to a majority of women, a majority of people of color, and 30% LGBTQ, then established these as board composition standards.
		- Created the *Fund of the Sacred Circle*, a native-led $2 million endowment for indigenous organizing throughout MN and WI.

**Program Director: *Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches:* 1982-1989.** Built and coordinated a neighborhood-based ecumenical network providing household chore services for senior citizens and disabled adults, enabling them to continue living in their own homes.

**Pastor of Justice Ministries**

The church council reviewed and is moving forward with a call for Steve to serve as Pastor of Justice Ministries for the congregation. This will be a part-time, unpaid volunteer position that affirms Steve’s work of research, publishing, and consulting on the theory and practices of spirit-grounded social transformation as an expression of the mission and ministry of the church. Steve will also work with the congregation 5 hours a week to advance its justice ministries and impact.

**On February 12,** during the adult forum, Steve, Leslie, and Council representatives will provide information, answer questions, and lead a conversation about Steve’s work and the congregation's justice ministries. Final approval is subject to congregational vote and UCC Conference authorization.

Steve and Joy live 10 miles south of Baxter, where they are starting a small organic farm. They have nine grandchildren (heart berries), two dogs, and two cats, and chickens planned for spring.

**February Birthdays**

Yvonne Leiser February 2 Ann Turnbull February 18

Annie Grabowski February 7 Colleen LeBlanc February 24

Roger Maas February 11 Autumn Caldwell February 27

Georgia Harris February 15 Grace Johnson February 29

Mary Reardon February 17

**Church Office Hours**

 **Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays - 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.**

Please call Terri at the office 218-829-2528 or cell 218-537-1636 for further assistance.

**Pastor Leslie’s drop-in hours\* are as follows:**

**Wednesdays 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Fridays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm**

*\*To make an appointment outside of the drop-in hours, go to* ***calendly.com/pastorleslieucc/1to1*** *to schedule an appointment, or call or email Pastor Leslie directly.*

**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>
Live stream videos are saved and can be viewed at any time.

**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.

**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

**Church Leadership**

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

**There are many other 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 -Christian Ministry

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

**The First Congregational UCC’s Foundation** is looking for a volunteer to join the Board.

 It is a great job – only 4 meetings a year, usually via Zoom. The Board receives requests for funding, evaluates requests and either accepts or rejects requests based upon the by-laws of the Foundation Board and the dollar amount requested.

The Board may request more information before a decision is made to accept or reject.

The best part of being on the Board is that its members get to spend money!

 If you are interested or would like more information, contact Lisa Wigand, president, at (218)330-8477 or lisawdavet@outlook.com.

**Highlights from the Council Meeting, January 19th, 2023**

**Thursday, 4:00 pm (In-person and Zoom)**

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

**Present**: Present: Pastor Moughty, Colleen LeBlanc, Alvin Velslaag, Judy Whiteman, Lowell Johnson, Karen Ford, Deb Griffith, Sue Hadland. Via Video: Tim Anderson, Terri Chidester. Guest: Steve Newcom

**Report Highlights:**

**Clerk Report** – Karen – No report

**Guest –** Steve Newcom– Privilege of Call – Covenant, Job Description, Abbreviated Resume, Theological and Ministerial Reflection presented by Steve. The procedure for an Ecclesiastical Council to Examine a Candidate for Orientation or Privilege of Call was discussed. A meeting will be held in February or March to explain process to the congregation. Alvin made a motion to approve the call and to set the process in motion to secure approval by the congregation. Second by Sue and motion was approved unanimously.

**Financials**

1. December 2022 Financial Report – Discussion – Place on File
2. Transfers from Checking Account to Term Share Certificates (CDs) – Motion made by Lowell to move $50K from checking account to 3 different CDs (laddering) which will make $1,743 in interest. Tim seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
3. Pastor’s Health Insurance Update – Pastor Leslie reported that she has secured health insurance at $549.00 per month beginning February 1.

**Old Business** A. Information Points – No action needed by Council – Any questions about

1. Technology –Request to Foundation made – Foundation has asked for clarifications Foundation’s assets lost over $54,000 during 2022.
2. Facility Policy Update – Deb is reviewing from Trustee perspective – hope to bring to Council for approval in February.
3. Church Records Organizing Committee – Will deal with paper only. Basic plan established. Will work in lockable classroom in Rainbow Room.
4. Care Team – Barb Hoeft has begun working with Pastor Leslie to develop a team for checking in on members and referrals for pastoral visits.
5. Proceeding with department by-laws revisions – Exec committee gathered department revision suggestions. Setting up meeting with Pastor Leslie to do revision work.
6. Connection Letter – Posted in January, data entry complete in March, Council review to confirm quorum number; and create new form for additions/corrections in April.

**New Business**

1. Council Position Nominations –need input of all Council members. Colleen created a worksheet to define the needs of each committee and department. **Council members/departments to completed and brought to the February Council meeting.**
2. Pastor Review in February – Exec Committee developing process agreeable to Exec.

 Committee, PPRC and Pastor Leslie

1. Dan Hegstad @ Feb Council meeting - Visioning of church’s future.
2. Council approved by consensus to approve donating the bed(s) and bedding to whomever can use it.

**Pastor Report** – (no written report) Rev Leslie verbally reported the casual Christmas Day service was attended by 21 people. Pastor volunteered at the 5th Street Shelter on Christmas Eve. The remainder of the month was spent on the budget, the GSA at the high school and preparing for vacation.

**Member at Large Report** – Alvin reported that the WISE committee meeting was held to revive the momentum of the mental health program. He requested that the Affirmation of Covenant be reaffirmed at the Annual Meeting.

**Department Reports** – anything new to add to written reports?

1. Trustees – Deb reported that the sanctuary light project is not completed since there is a problem with the wiring/installation and the two firms (Holden and Dutch’s) will need to be accountable for the issues that exist.
2. Stewardship –Judy – Nothing additional
3. Christian Ministry – Sue commented on and thanked the participants in the services held while Pastor Leslie was on vacation.
4. Christian Education – Lowell – Steve Newcom will be presenting at a Forum in an upcoming Sunday.

**In the “Parking Lot”**

1. Manual of Church – https://youtu.be/OsNdRYFIHig
2. Social Media - Conference does not have guidelines - What next?

<https://uccfiles.com/pdf/ASF-SocialMediaGuidelines.pdf>

1. Creation Justice - Ensuring all that we can to reduce our waste/improve our interactions with nature Jan Kurtz’s info on Creation Justice - When to start this discussion at Council.
2. Analysis of cost of keeping parsonage in collection of assets versus paying the pastor for housing costs.

Minutes written and respectfully submitted by Karen Ford, Clerk and Secretary to the Council

**Next Regular Council Meeting: Friday, February 16th, 2023, 4:00 pm**

**in-person and via Zoom** [tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom](http://tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom)

**TheShop Meal with First Congregational UCC**

***February 1st - 3:45 pm church kitchen****.*
***We meet once a month on the first 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. Mary Benson is the new point person. If you are interested in helping, please email Mary at marybenson75@gmail.com

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**February Adult Forums – 11:30 am after worship**

**February 5th - Clergy Renewal and Funding:**Information Session**:** We’re making plans for 2024 and applying for a grant to support Pastor Leslie’s renewal leave. Come and learn about this wonderful opportunity we have as a congregation for not only supporting our pastor but re-energizing our community and our faith.

***Feburay 12th –*** **Pastor of Justice Ministries**: The church council reviewed and is moving forward with a call for Steve Newcom to serve as Pastor of Justice Ministries for the congregation. This will be a part-time, unpaid volunteer position that affirms Steve’s work of research, publishing, and consulting on the theory and practices of spirit-grounded social transformation as an expression of the mission and ministry of the church. Steve will also work with the congregation 5 hours a week to advance its justice ministries and impact. During the adult forum, Steve, Leslie, and Council representatives will provide information, answer questions and lead a conversation about Steve’s work and the congregation's justice ministries. Final approval is subject to congregational vote and UCC Conference authorization.

***February 26th -*How'd you Do That?:**An informal artist chat and Q&A. Carla Benjamin will speak about inspiration and techniques used in creating the photo encaustic artworks on display in the Fellowship Hall. The exhibit will close on 2/27/2023. A portion of the proceeds from sales will be donated to the church.

**UCC Men’s Group - Every Wednesday at Noon**

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

***New rotating schedule 2023***

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| First Wednesday:              B-MeriSecond Wednesday:         El TequilaThird Wednesday:             Dunmire’s EastFourth Wednesday:           Black BearFifth Wednesday:              Wings Airport Café |

**Contact Jack Kraywinkle for more information 612-396-3480 or email:** kraywinklej@gmail.com

**Friday Book Group - 10:00 am**

 Via Zoom: [tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom](http://tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom)

This month we will begin reading ***“The Book of Hope, A Survival Guide for Trying Times”*** by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams with Gail Hudson.

In this urgent book, Jane Goodall, the world's most famous living naturalist, and Douglas Abrams, the internationally bestselling co-author of *The Book of Joy*, explore through intimate and thought-provoking dialogue one of the most sought after and least understood elements of human nature: hope. In *The Book of Hope*, Jane focuses on her "Four Reasons for Hope": The Amazing Human Intellect, The Resilience of Nature, The Power of Young People, and The Indomitable Human Spirit.

**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.

**UCC Volunteers for the Warming Shelter**

**Our UCC has been asked to volunteer** at The Bridge on 7th  the week of **February 19th through the 26th**. Please use the link to the volunteer sign up page, <https://whocanbethere.com/SignUp/week-of-feb-19ucc/1A4WgptOw4x> which you must use to sign up. If you know of anyone else who may wish to volunteer, please share this information with them. If you have any questions email me at ranger2949@gmail.com. Thank you for your commitment to the shelter and for volunteering. Deb Griffith

**Special Offering Sunday Worship February 26th**

**My Neighbor to Love Coalition**

Ending homelessness in the Brainerd Lakes area with a comprehensive approach. Building homes, connecting people, offering hope. The mission is to increase the stability, health, safety, and wealth of our most economically disadvantaged community members by creating affordable housing in an intentional living community. Our goal is not to keep people more comfortably homeless, but to end homelessness altogether. Building small, connected rental homes within an intentional living community in NW Brainer – Creekside Community. Learn more at: www.mntlc.org

Please send your donation to First Congregational UCC, 415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401. Or for your convenience use our Paypal account at: [paypal.me/uccbrainerd](https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/uccbrainerd)

Make sure to note on your offering: “Special Offering Neighbor to Love”. Thank you!

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**Hosts, Ushers, Greeters, Scripture-readers**

Sunday morning greeters/ushers and coffee hosts play an important part in making our church a warm and welcoming place for all. Here’s a secret; it’s FUN!! If each household committed to 3 Sundays a year as greeter/ushers and/or coffee hosts we would have a full complement of participants. Are you ready to take the leap into RADICAL HOSPITALITY? Give it a go and signup below for your first Sunday as the face of the church! <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E48A9A823A5FFC07-hugs/16034811>

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**First Congregation Food Shelf Collection**

**Our church continues to collect non-perishable food items for the Salvation Army Food Shelf. There is a collection box in the parking lot entry way. Brian Twamley picks up and delivers the food.**

**Please consider bringing items and donating. You may also send a money donation to the church;** First Congregational UCC, 415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401. Or for your convenience use our Paypal account at: [paypal.me/uccbrainerd](https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/uccbrainerd) **Make sure to write in memo “ Food Shelf”. Thank you!**



**Sunshine Cards – Luann Rice**

**A friendly reminder to send card requests for those who would appreciate a little sunshine in a card…”Get well, thinking of you”, etc. Contact Luann via email or phone,** **or to Terri in the office at** uccbrainerd@gmail.com **with your request.**

**Calling all singers and musicians!**

**We want to include your voice and instruments during the worship services.**

Please contact Pastor Leslie at pastorleslieucc@gmail.com

**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!

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 and a packet of materials will be send you 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

**Introduction to Meditation**

**Mondays in February 6:30 – 7:30 pm. First Congregational UCC 5th & Juniper, Brainerd. Upstairs Forum Room. Even though this is being held at our church, it is not religious. Bring nothing but an open mind. Discussion following meditation. We will focus on stress reduction, relaxation and inner peace. You do not need to attend all four sessions. Free and open to all, facilitated by Dan Hegstad. Questions:** [dan@danhegstad.com](dan%40danhegstad.com)

**UCC News & Updates!**

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**Outdoor Ministry Announces 3rd Annual Winter Zoom Series**

﻿Join us for Zoom gatherings this winter focused on environmental justice issues.

**Microplastics in the Great Lakes**

February 9, 7:00-8:00 pm CST

Presenter: Art Hirsch; Host: Jane Dow

Free; [**register here**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001194gTPrsFeUdjrNlR6c1jpv0WqiPTJKaKcI5D-tVnUziZBRFpbuigh9qx0R6TAmlyNsZSGCrfrtStBMlMKHT7FyncjkT9_VYo9Dff3LONN5QnXNnjnrPgYWCdDfF351vlfrn4vkoTtq4hd1pR8kA5A3uhZcVpLpfCJQ9h4N3eF_755zY9w4Hu75xjFPfyS4elrbc3XCB2vhKpt7LXnb0UG7f7aOTjNmxugckor4JhLD3Ty_Z3QqwJ8YqzXEsgCSKYFAyoBBfVRE=&c=pePdGCLszGVTuf1yZhwFB1qHJoESEDY8JcLrizrsgI6Zr1YoBOG8SQ==&ch=JV5q0doJma1_BwhANBRtypCkE74k5dr7FplYG0kKM5zheG-71e8gbQ==) to receive the Zoom link

Microplastics in the Great Lakes is an emerging water quality issue that has a huge potential of impacting human health and the aquatic environment. Microplastics are found in our food, water, air, and even beer along the Great Lakes. Fish are ingesting microplastic that cause them to starve and allow microplastics to move up the food chain. Humans are ingesting plastics made from endocrine disruptor chemicals. [**Read more**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001194gTPrsFeUdjrNlR6c1jpv0WqiPTJKaKcI5D-tVnUziZBRFpbuigh9qx0R6TAmlhuCrFfm7kjbOnWGqyo0HoN13cSBy38hV6yhk-GTlBYvTS1WK1ENLIqjL2yYZOCQfc8xT3AJW2y6N_HfaENzdwVPDbbQ34sfEjeMKLN5Yg5ZCBrhSqUId5A3Le29-14cRahdN5igudHealLrnap3AdRzEq_RGREAW&c=pePdGCLszGVTuf1yZhwFB1qHJoESEDY8JcLrizrsgI6Zr1YoBOG8SQ==&ch=JV5q0doJma1_BwhANBRtypCkE74k5dr7FplYG0kKM5zheG-71e8gbQ==)

### **Mining Pollutants**

March 9, 7:00-8:00 pm CST

Presenter: Paula Maccabee

[**REGISTER**](http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=xj4cltcab&oeidk=a07ejjl22ud27a9899b) **here to learn more and receive the Zoom link.**

Mining pollutants have been on the forefront of Minnesota’s environmental conversations for many years. The effects on our water, habitats, and health are well documented. However, the push for copper-nickel is an urgent concern, especially from the PolyMet mine.

**Register for July 2023 Youth Trip to Washington, D.C.**

Students from Conference congregations currently enrolled in grades 8-12 will travel to Washington, D.C., for a service-learning experience focused on the work of legislative advocacy.

* Lobby members of congress and their staff about issues selected by the youth
* Visit monuments, memorials, and museums such as the Frederick Douglas National Historic Site, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, and U.S. Holocaust Museum and Memorial
* Learn about root causes of systemic oppression through direct service
* Have time for fun, reflection, and conversations that matter!

**Learn more and register:** [**https://www.uccmn.org/event/summer-2023-youth-trip-to-washington-dc/**](https://www.uccmn.org/event/summer-2023-youth-trip-to-washington-dc/)

**Brainerd Lakes Area Information**

**~ Opportunities to Know and Share God’s Love ~**

**PEARLS – Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives**

The Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives (PEARLS) educates older adults about what depression is (and is not) and helps them develop the skills they need for self-sufficiency and moreactive lives. The program generally takes place monthly (once a month) over 6-8 months in an older adult’s home or a community-based setting. Sessions generally run from 45 minutes to an hour.

Older adults do not need to be clinically diagnosed with depression in order to participate in PEARLS. PEARLS coaches meet one-one with older adults to help them build the skills they need to live happier, healthier, and more independent lives.

There are no professional licensing, accreditation, or higher education requirements to participate in PEARLS training. Our goal is to make this program as accessible as possible.

Below is a link with more information on the program. We are looking for volunteers to become PEARLS coaches. The training to be a coach takes about 8 hours and there will be no charge to participants for this training.<https://depts.washington.edu/hprc/programs-tools/pearls/>

Please let Tina Johnson at Tina.Johnson@crowwing.us or Teresia Mortenson at Teresia.Mortenson@knutenelson.org) know if you would be interested in being trained to be a coach.

**My Neighbor to Love Coalition**

**Thursday, February 23rd** **5:30 - 7:30 pm**

**Dennis Drummond Wine Company**

$50 per person - Experience the art of wine tasting, enjoy delicious appetizers, take part in our silent auction or a round of “Heads or Tails”. Funds from the event will go towards the purchase and installation of windows and doors for the first housing units in our Creekside Community development. Register on our website mntlc.org/events or call Vicky at 218-821-7875 email at info@mntlc.org

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***The Gordon Rosenmeier Center for State & Local Government Presents:***

**Peter Tester, Deputy Commissioner MN Pollution Control Agency**

 **The Minnesota Pollution control Agency:**

**Getting it Right for Minnesota**

**Monday, February 6th 7:00 pm**

**Chalberg Theater, CLC Brainerd**

Deputy Tester advises the Commissioner of the MPCA on key policy and legislative initiatives and develops strategic, science-based environmental priorities for the state. He will help us understand more fully how the agency balances the needs of business, industry, and agriculture with the necessity for clean water and healthy soils that support fishing, hunting, and tourism. Forums are free and open to the public and can also be view here:

YouTube Live Link: <https://youtu.be/8aQ9a-nvrjs>

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| February 2023 Calendar |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|  | Office Closed Open by Appt.  | Office ClosedOpen by Appt.  | Office Hours10am – 1pmPastor Drop-in1pm-3pm  | Office Hours10am – 1pm  | Office Hours10am – 1pm Pastor Drop-in10am-12pm  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |  **1** 12pm Mens Grp@ B-Meri-**Y**3:30pm TheShop Cooking in kitchen-**Y**7pm AA Common-**Y** |  **2**  |  **3**  10:30am Book Grp-**Z** “The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times” by Jane Goodall |  **4** |
|  **5**  8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y** 10am Wrship Serv & Communion-**Y&V**11am Fellowship-**Y** 11:30 am Adult Forum-**Y** |  **6** 12pm Vets Bk Grp-**Z**6:30pm Beginning Meditation w/Dan Hegstad-**Y** |  **7**2pm Emotions Anon- **Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y** |  **8** 12pm Mens Grp@El Tequila-**Y**7pm AA Common-**Y** |  **9** 8:30am CM Mtg-**Y**3pm Trustees-**Y**4pm Exec Team Mtg-**Y**6:30pm BLUE -**Z**  |  **10**  9am Foundation Mtg.-**Z**10:30am Book Grp-**Z**  |  **11**  |
| 8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y** **12**10am Wrship Serv-**Y&V**11am Fellowship-**Y**11:30am Adult Forum Steve Newcome-**Y** |  **13**12pm Vets Bk Grp-**Z**6:30pm Beginning Meditation w/Dan Hegstad-**Y** | 2pm Emotions **14**  Anon-**Y** 5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y**  |  **15**12pm Mens Grp @ Dunmire’s East-**Y**7pm AA Common-**Y** |  **16**  4pm Council Mtg-**Y**&**Z** 7pm AA Dist-**Y** |  **17** 10:30am Book Grp- **Z**  |  **18**  10am-1pm AAUW in Fellowship |
| 8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y** **19** 10am Wrship Serv-**Y&V**11am Fellowship-**Y** |  **20**  12pm Vets Bk Grp-**Z**6:30pm Beginning Meditation w/Dan Hegstad-**Y** | 2pm Emotions **21** Anon-**Y**5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y**  | **Ash Wednesday 22** 5:30pm Wrship Serv**-Y&V**12pm Mens Grp@ Black Bear-**Y**7pm AA Common-**Y** |  **23** |  **24** 10:30am Book Grp- **Z** |  **25** |
| 8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y 26**  10am Wrship Serv-**Y&V**11am Fellowship-**Y**11:30 am Adult Forum-**Y** ***Special Offering:******My Neighbor to Love******\*\*Newsletter Deadline\*\****  |  **27** 12pm Vets Bk Grp-**Z**6:30pm Beginning Meditation w/Dan Hegstad-**Y** | 2pm Emotions **21** Anon-**Y**5pm LeMesa-**V** 5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y**  |  |   | ***New Member Class dates TBD*** | **V** or **Z** –**Virtual** Online or our **Zoom****C**- Cancelled**Y**- Yes Mtg. in personN-None**? –** No update |

1. This edited write-up of “Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith” comes from the creator of the resource: A Sanctified Art LLC. sanctifiedart.org [↑](#footnote-ref-1)