Friendship News, January 2022

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Brainerd

An Open and Affirming Congregation

The Church Office Winter 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](mailto:uccbrainerd@gmail.com) Pastor’s E-mail: [pastorleslieucc@gmail.com](mailto: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.*

**Can I Get a Do-Over?**

I think I can safely say that most of us, at one point or another, have day-dreamed about what it would be like to have a do-over. To rewind and try again – a moment, a crucial decision, an entire year, a period in our lives. But do-overs don’t exist outside of Hollywood movie-making. I wonder if this desire for a do-over is part of our human fascination with marking the new calendar year. It feels like a chance to do things differently.

There’s a reason that rituals of new beginnings show up in many religions and in secular celebrations all around the world. In Islam, the celebration of the Muslim New Year is called Muharram and, like Easter, the date is determined by the phases of the moon. While not a major holiday in Islam, it offers celebrants an opportunity to gather with family and their faith community with a focus on emphasis is on reflection, remembrance and gratitude. This year, Muharram is July 30. In the Jewish tradition, the religious new year is called Rosh Hoshanah. The day marks the beginning of 10 “Days of Awe” which conclude with Yom Kippur.2 There is a focus on reflection and renewal. Apples and honey are eaten signifying the hope that the coming year will be a sweet one.

I would bet that everyone reading this is familiar with the secular New Year’s tradition of making resolutions. Although resolutions are more often broken than kept, this tradition reflects our desire to try again, to do better, to be better. As I reflected on the difference between the secular tradition of New Year’s resolutions, and the way Muslims and Jews celebrate Muharram and Rosh Hoshanah, I realized that our resolutions do not typically include intentional reflection and repentance. There’s little to no time spent looking back, only forward. While looking to our past and the ways in which we have fallen short of the type of life God invites us to live isn’t the most fun or celebratory way of marking the New Year, without it we miss out on the potential for real change and growth.

Really examining our mistakes, or the ways in which we missed the mark can be scary. We might experience feelings of guilt, regret, grief, anger, sadness, and maybe the biggest and scariest feeling of all… shame. Some of these feelings are helpful in moderate doses. If we didn’t feel any regret at all, we may not have the motivation to make a change. But staying mired in those feelings isn’t helpful either. God’s grace is so deep and so wide that the forgiveness and potential for healing is beyond our imagining. The purpose of reflection and repentance isn’t to make ourselves feel awful, but to move forward with intention and hope. So while we might not be able to press rewind and erase the past with a do-over, we are invited reflect on the past, welcome the grace and forgiveness of God, to forgive ourselves and others, and seek to live into the life God wants for each of us.

Blessings for a sweet new year!

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1https://www.islamicity.org/6321/muharram-the-start-of-the-islamic-calendar/

2https://www.hfcc.edu/news/2020/rosh-hashanah-and-yom-kippur-high-holy-days-jewish-year

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**First Congregational UCC News & Updates**

**Pastor Leslie is on vacation from 12/29/21 to 01/12/22**

Rev. Linda Tossey will lead worship on Sunday January 2

Rev. Darrell Pedersen will lead worship on Sunday January 9

For **emergency Pastoral care** during this time, contact **Revs. Bethany and Luke Nelson** by calling **218-829-4116** and listen for the after-hours contact information.

**Pastor Leslie is on Clergy Retreat January 18th thru 20th**

**How to watch Sunday worship**  
The worship service is **broadcasted on the church Facebook page every Sunday at 10:00 am.**  
To watch worship on Facebook, go to <https://www.facebook.com/uccbrainerd/live>  
We are working with a new system for streaming are still working out the kinks for streaming to YouTube.

**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>

**January Birthdays**

Lilja Behr January 1 Marcia Ferris January 13

Linda Downs January 5 Betty Alderman January 16

Macyn Harder McBroom January 7 Pam Patrick January 22

Deb Lundberg January 8 David Schaeffer January 26

Nick Kalinoski January 31

**NEW Church Office Hours – Winter Hours January & February Update!**

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

Please call Terri at the office for further assistance at 218-829-2528

**Pastor Leslie’s drop-in hours\* are as follows (no change):**

**Wednesdays 1:00pm – 3:00pm Fridays 10:00am – 12:00pm**

*\*These are hours that, barring an emergency, Pastor Leslie will be in the office and available for drop-in conversations or meetings.*

*Appointments are preferred to best manage her schedule, but don’t hesitate to drop in during the above times. Pastor Leslie will be in the office at other times but may not always be available due to other obligations.*

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

**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.

**Committees needing fresh faces**

-Christian Education -Trustees -Memorial -Christian Ministry

-Music -Arts -The Foundation Board

Call or text Joe Stattine - Moderator, with your nominations: 218-838-1311

*“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.” ~Elizabeth Andrew*

**Highlights from the Council Meeting, December 16th, 2021 - 7:00 pm (via Zoom)**

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

**Present**: Joe Stattine, Colleen LeBlanc, Barb Stokke, Deb Griffith, Judy Whiteman, Sue Hadland, Lowell Johnson, Sue North, Admin Terri Chidester, and Pastor Leslie.

**Report Highlights:**

**Clerk:** Alice Widmark, daughter of members Charles and Karen Widmark, and Josh Wethammer were married at First Congregational on November 19, 2021 by Pastor Leslie.

**Pastor**: •Pastor Leslie reported on a partnership that is developing between our church, the Shop, and the Gender Sexuality Alliance at the high school along with Rainbow Coalition, TRIO and Upward Bound – CLC’s programs for disadvantage students, youth in particular. One of the biggest projects the groups are working on – and that our church can participate in – is a youth-focused Pride event to take place at the same time as the Brainerd Pride event. •In response to a question raised at the annual budget meeting, Pastor Leslie clarified the MN Conference compensation guidelines for pastors. •Pastor Leslie is making preparations for pastoral coverage while she is on vacation after Christmas.

**Financial:** As of Monday, December 13, the 2021 budget, which began the year with a shortfall, may be balanced or even in the black, depending on final billing for the lighting controls.

The 2022 budget was passed with a significant shortfall. We need to look at possible fundraisers.

**Trustees:** Trustees announce the power-surge repairs are nearing an end, and volunteers are needed to help clean the church.

**Stewardship:** Stewardship is usually inactive at this time of the year, but members have made follow-up calls for pledges and will be focusing on fundraisers in 2022. Stewardship is also seeking two more committee members to fill vacancies.

**Christian Ministry:** CM did not meet formallybut did green the church and want to thank all who helped. De-greening will take place January 3.

**Christian Education:** CE hopes to bring back adult forums a couple times a month, starting in January. CE also reviewed a possible new description of Christian Education for the updated bylaws.

**Memorial:** The Memorial Committee is scheduled to meet January 12.

**Members at Large:** No report

**Covid Task Force:** Because the number of COVID infections is high and the Omicron virus is easily spread, Council determined beverages and treats will not be available during the fellowship time, and mask and distancing will be required. Since Christmas Eve services usually draw a larger number of people, Sue Hadland will bring extra masks, and will check with ushers, making sure they follow COVID prevention protocol.

**Old Business:**

1. Bylaw Task Force members, Colleen LeBlanc, Joe Stattine, and Pastor Leslie, introduced the proposed revisions of Articles I-IV: Membership, Governance and Meetings, Church Council, and Officers. Council will be reviewing revisions of those bylaws and the Membership Policy booklet and seeking Council’s approval of the revisions at the next Council meeting, January 21, 2022.
2. Joe Stattine has submitted a request of $2,000 to the Foundation for the purchase of a T-Coil Hearing Assistance but has not heard from them.
3. The new lighting system is installed, but more training is needed on programing the 7 groups of lights. Billing also needs to be reconciled. It was recommended that lists be made of people who know how to operate the lighting, sound, and video streaming systems.
4. Due to the 2022 budget shortfall and the cost of a cleaning service, Council will seek more volunteers to help clean the church.
5. Council is investigating different financial institutions in hopes of saving money by reducing or eliminating fees. More research needs to take place.
6. Joe Stattine has tried contacting Raymond James, but has not gotten a response. More information is needed about short-term, medium-tern, and long-term Investments.

**New Business:**

1. Council discussed plans to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of First Congregational in August 2022. Two hundred dollars seed money has been donated for this event, Pastor Leslie has invited the Conference to participate and is collecting ideas, and the planning needs to begin.
2. Council designated these 1st quarter Special Offerings for 2022: January - The Warm Shelter/Bridges of Hope, February - The Food Shelf, and March - One Great Hour of Sharing. (Motion: Sue North; Second: Lowell Johnson; motion passed)
3. The Bylaws Task Force is updating the bylaws of First Congregational. As part of this process, the task force will be asking Trustees, Stewardship, Christian Education, and Christian Ministry to review the descriptions of their departments in the bylaws and suggest revisions.
4. Lowell Johnson will provide Food for Thought for the January 21st Council meeting.

**Next Regular Council Meeting: Friday, January 21st, 2021, 3:00 pm in-person and via Zoom**

**Christmas Flowers**

Christmas flowers can be removed from the sanctuary on ***Sunday, January 2 after worship***. The donors of the plants get first choice!

**De-greening the church**

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to take the tree down and the other Christmas greens and move everything to storage for next year.  Please take an hour or so on ***Monday, January 3 at 10:30*** and join in the fun!

THANKS FOR VOLUNTEERING!

**Adult Forums in January**

**NEAR Science - *January 16th 11:30 am.***

NEAR is an acronym standing for Neuroscience, Epigenetics, Adversity and Resilience, the four content areas of this PowerPoint presentation and discussion. The neuroscience portion will examine the latest research on brain development. Epigenetics will look at the intersection of nature and nurture. Adversity will address the effect of trauma on brain development and its relationship to physical, mental, and interpersonal health. The resilience portion will look at promising solutions to the problems of personal and intergenerational trauma. Handouts will be provided. **WISE and 100 Conversations - *January 30th 11:30 am*.**

Our WISE Ministry team has been actively involved with a new community initiative, 100 Conversations. WISE is an acronym for Welcoming, Involved, Supportive, and Engaged around mental health issues. The purpose of 100 Conversations is to have 100 or more 1:1 conversations with marginalized folks in Crow Wing County. Some of the demographic categories we are trying to include are people with black and brown skins; LGBTQ+ folks; people with lived experiences of addiction, mental illness, and/or incarceration; and the disability community. Once the interviews have been completed, a summary report will be prepared and delivered to decision making groups such as County Commissioners, School Boards, City Councils, and Civic and Community groups. We hope that the 100+ conversations will positively impact policy and program decisions.

*This session will be a sharing of perspectives from those WISE members who have acted as volunteer interviewers, and anyone who has been interviewed and is comfortable talking about that experience.*

Lowell Johnson at [johnsonlowells@gmail.com](mailto:johnsonlowells@gmail.com) or c 218-820-5290.

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***Every Wednesday at Noon***

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

**Please contact Jack Kraywinkle for location each week.**

**Jack’s cell” 612-396-3480 or email:** [kraywinklej@gmail.com](mailto:kraywinklej@gmail.com)

**Cooking For Everyone**

This group is OPEN FOR EVERYONE!

Email Lowell [johnsonlowells@gmail.com](mailto: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 – *January 19th - 3:45 pm 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.

**Choir Practice - Postponed until further notice**  
Please contact Diane Hauan for more information:  
218-839-0669 or [diane.hauan5@gmail.com](https://uccbrainerd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0&id=7bae397a8f&e=5e2c6f93e6)

**Calling all singers and musicians!**

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

Please contact Diane Hauan for more information: 218-839-0669 or [diane.hauan5@gmail.com](https://uccbrainerd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7358d6fe5c26410d29dfb93f0&id=7bae397a8f&e=5e2c6f93e6)

**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](mailto:dawnstattine@gmail.com)

**Special Offering Sunday Worship January 23rd**

**Brainerd Lakes Area Community Warming Shelter /Bridges of Hope**

Bridges of Hope, in partnership with law enforcement, Crow Wing County, nonprofit organizations, church partners, and community members recognized the need for a safe place for homeless adults (ages 18+) to sleep in our community. This group has come together in a collaborative effort to address homelessness by providing a low-barrier warming shelter that offers a safe place for individuals to rest for the night.

Please send your donation to First Congregational UCC, 415 Juniper St. Brainerd, MN 56401. Make sure to note on your offering: “Special Offering Warming Shelter”. Or for your convenience use our Paypal account at: [paypal.me/uccbrainerd](https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/uccbrainerd)

Be sure to note on your offering “Special Offering Warming Shelter”. in comments. Thank you!

**Annual Connection Letter**

At the end of January, our church will be sending out a letter for you to fill out and return. This information will help us update the directory, make informed decisions about programs, and much more. Your response will help us better connect with one another and better serve our members and visitors. So keep your eyes on your mail box!

**Prospective Member Classes Starting February 13**

**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!**

**Classes will be held on Sundays after worship.**

**Brainerd Lakes Area Information**

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

**Brainerd Lakes Area Community Warming Shelter**  
At Bridges of Hope, we are thankful for all who have helped make the Warming Shelter a reality. The new [Warming Shelter](https://www.bridgesofhopemn.org/warmingshelter) is open from 8 PM to 8 AM for those aged 18+ who need a warm place to sleep at night. **THANK YOU!**

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**The Brainerd Baxter Youth Center**

As 2021 comes to a close, we reflect on our year and the lives of youth we have shaped because of our community supporting and uplifting us in uncertain times. Because of your generous donations of time, supplies, resources and money, we were able to provide a safe space for our youth to gather, learn and have fun. We provide meals and snacks for each evening the shop is open, along with our ShopCart program that delivered over 300 meals to families in the area that had food insecurities. Toiletries and hygiene products are always readily available for anyone who walks in our door, along with clothing, towels and linens. It has also allowed us to host parties and events for youth to connect with the community and be a part of something outside of school activities. 2022 approaches and our mission is ongoing and unwavering, to be a safe space for our community youth to flourish and grow into community involved citizens. Without your support, our vision would not have come into fruition. Please consider donating to the TheShop to continue our mission. Below I will provide links to GiveMN, TheShop website and our Paypal for any monetary donations. I will also attach to this email our New Year’s newsletter that highlights some events and activities that had happened throughout the year.

GiveMN Weblink-   <https://www.givemn.org/organization/Theshop>

TheShop homepage-  <https://theshopbrainerd.org/>

Paypal-  <https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=SB5MFUME7V7TS>

**Crisis Services** - All are available 24-hours (unless noted), FREE and confidential

**Crisis Line & Referral Service:** 218-828-4357, 218-828-HELP or 1-800-462-5525

**CRISIS:** from cell phone call CRISIS (274747)

**Crisis Nursery-Crow Wing County:** 218-692-2859

**Crisis Text Line:** Text “MN” or HopeLine” to 741741

**Bridges of Hope:** 218-825-4357 or 1-800-462-7682

**Minnesota 1st Call for Help:** 211

**Minnesota Farm & Rural Helpline:** 833-600-2670

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-8255

**Poison Control Center:** 1-800-222-1222

**Suicide & Mental Illness:** 1-800-462-5525

**Teen Crisis Line***:* 310-855-4673

**The Trevor Project (LGBTQ Crisis & Suicide Hotline – Youth under 25):** 866-488-7386

**Trans Lifeline:** 877-565-8860

**Veteran’s Crisis Line:** 1-800-273-8255 – press 1

**WARMLINE:** Speak with peers who are there to listen and support adults experiencing emotional distress. 1-844-739-6369 from 5:00pm -7:00am.

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| January 2022 Calendar |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|  | Office Closed  Open by Appt. | Office Closed  Open by Appt. | Office Hours  10am – 1pm  Pastor Drop-in  1pm-3pm | Office Hours  10am – 1pm | Office Hours  10am – 1pm  Pastor Drop-in  10am-12pm | **1**  ***New Year’s Day*** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8:30am Choir TBD  **2**  8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y**  10am Wrship & Communion-**Y&V**  w/ Rev. Linda Tossey  11am Fellowship-**Y** | 10:30am De- **3** greening church  12pm Vets Bk  Grp- **Our Zoom**  4pm Grl Scts #373-**Y**  7pm BACP- **V** | 2pm Emotions **4**  Anon- **Y**  5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y** | 10am Pray Crcle-**Y 5**  12pm Mens Grp-**Y**  7pm AA Common-**Y** | **6** | **7**  10:30am Book Grp-**Z** | **8** |
| 8:30am Choir TBD **9**  8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y**  10am Wrship-**Y&V**  w/ Rev. Darrell Pedersen  11am Fellowship-**Y** | **10**  12pm Vets Book Grp- **Our Zoom** | 2pm Emotions **11**  Anon- **Y**  5:30pm Overeaters Anon- **Y** | **12**  10am Pray Crcle-**Y**  12pm Mens Grp-**Y**  12pm Memorial **Y**?&**Z** 7pm AA Common-**Y**  7pm Trustees- **Y**&**Z** | **13** 6:30 BLUE -**V** | **14**  10:30am Book Grp-**Z** | **15** |
| 8:30am Choir TBD **16**  8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y**  10am Wrship-**Y&V**  11am Fellowship-**Y**  11:30 am Adult Forum NEAR Science-**Y** | **17**  12pm Vets Book Grp- **Our Zoom**  4pm Grl Scts #373-**Y** | **18**  2pm Emotions  Anon-**Y**  5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y** | **19**  10am Pray Crcle-**Y** 12pm Mens Grp-**Y**  3:30pm TheShop Cooking-**Y**  7pm AA Common-**Y** | **20**  7pm AA Dist-**Y** | **21**  10:30am Book Grp- **Z**    3pm Council Mtg-**Y&V** | **22** |
| 8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y** **23**    10am Wrship-**Y&V**  11am Fellowship-**Y**  ***Special Offering:***  ***Warming Shelter***  ***\*\*Newsletter Deadline\*\**** | **24**  12pm Vets Book Grp- **Our Zoom** | 2pm Emotions **25**  Anon-**Y**  5pm LeMesa-**V**  5:30pm Overeaters Anon-**Y** | **26**  10am Pray Crcle-**Y**  12pm Mens Grp-**Y**  7pm AA Common-**Y** | **27** | **28**  10:30am Book Grp- **Z** | **29** |
| **30**  8:30am Bnrd Frnds-**Y**    10am Wrship-**Y&V**  11am Fellowship-**Y**  11:30 am Adult Forum WISE-100 Conversations-**Y** | **31**  12pm Vets Book Grp- **Our Zoom** |  | **\*Pastor Leslie is on vacation 12/29/21 - 01/12/22** | **\*Pastor Leslie on Clergy Retreat 1/18/22 - 1/20/22** |  | **V** or **Z** –**Virtual** Online or **Zoom**  **C**- Cancelled  **Y**- Mtg. in person  N-None |