



Friendship News, June 2024

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Brainerd
An Open and Affirming Congregation

The Church Office Hours: Wednesdays – Fridays from 10:00am – 2:00pm

Office phone 218-829-2528

Office E-mail uccbrainerd@gmail.com

Pastor T. Michael's E-mail: tmichaelrock@gmail.com Website: www.uccbrainerdmn.org

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

Pastor's Pen

From your Sabbatical Supply Pastor



Thank you Brainerd Congregational, United Church of Christ for opening your hearts and your church home. I have loved being among you for these three months and I will miss you. One of the best gifts I have received in ministry was ongoing wisdom and learning for folks. Invitations to learn and cause Good Trouble are always welcome as we live in covenant in the MN Conference, United Church of Christ. I love to exercise my brain and heart in prayer and action. So, I want to leave you with ongoing work and wisdom so that we can all keep learning and growing in our faith. *Lectio Divina*, or the practice of reading spiritually and out loud the words from others as if they are written just for you is one way to keep growing. Words from a teacher, a mentor, a friend. They tell the truth and confront our tendencies to minimize or justify our point of view. They invite us into a deeper way of knowing and understanding. Our church newsletter may be a place to pass along information, but it is also an invitation to a deeper spiritual life. So, I have included seven quotes from people who speak from a deep place. They are gifts for all of us to spend time with. They are invitations, not to agree or disagree, but invitations to open and explore. This is the gift of ministry and love that we are called to in this most amazing community of ministry and mission. This is the joy of finding wisdom from people from different cultures and contexts, folks with various gender identities and expressions, and folks with all kinds of neurodiversity. Wisdom comes when we engage and listen deeply.

“A loving person lives in a loving world.
A hostile person lives in a hostile world.
Everyone you meet is your mirror”.

Ken Keyes, Jr.

“For it isn't enough to talk about peace.
One must believe in it. And it isn't
enough to believe in it. One must work
at it.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

“For those who have seen the Earth from space, and for the hundreds and perhaps thousands more who will, the experience most certainly changes your perspective. The things that we share in our world are far more valuable than those which divide us.”

Donald Williams

“I am where I am because of the bridges that I crossed. Sojourner Truth was a bridge. Harriet Tubman was a bridge. Ida B. Wells was a bridge. Madame C.J. Walker was a bridge. Fannie Lou Hamer was a bridge.”

Oprah Winfrey

“I hate racial discrimination most intensely and all its manifestations. I have fought all my life; I fight now, and will do so until the end of my days. Even although I now happen to be tried by one, whose opinion I hold in high esteem, I detest most.”

Nelson Mandela

“I keep my ideals, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart.”

Anne Frank

“I look at an ant and I see myself: a native South African, endowed by nature with a strength much greater than my size so I might cope with the weight of a racism that crushes my spirit.”

Miyamoto Musashi

May your reading bring you strength and courage on your journey.
T. Michael

Rev. T. Michael Rock has been an ordained minister, liberation theologian, and educator in the United Church of Christ and is currently a Professor for Spiritual Formation and Contextual Education at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. T. Michael also guides the Contextual Education and Spiritual Direction programs for United. He has served as a Spiritual Director and teacher of Spiritual Direction for over 20 years and has 30 years of congregational leadership serving UCC congregations in Minnesota, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Throughout his career T. Michael has volunteered as a trauma-informed chaplain for prisons, police, at George Floyd Square, the World Trade Center, Occupy Wall Street, and other places of tragedy, violence, and transformation. T. Michael is also an activist on the local and national level and an experienced trainer in nonviolence, civil disobedience, and sexuality education

First Congregational UCC News & Updates

“First Congregational UCC is a welcoming, inclusive, and progressive community committed to promoting social justice, spiritual growth, and love for all people. We reject discrimination and advocate for equality and dignity for marginalized communities. Through worship, education, and service, we work to make a positive impact on the world and invite all individuals to join us in this journey of faith and service.”

Pastor T. Michael’s Final Workday Schedule

>> Friday, Saturday & Sunday <<
Friday 10:00am to 4:00pm
Saturday by appointment as needed
May 31st & June 1st

*Rev. T. Michael Leading Worship Services: June 2nd
& June 9th Rev. T. Michael & Pastor Leslie Co-lead*

you can email Pastor T. Michael at tmichaelrock@gmail.com or call/text at 612-275-0387.

Pastor Leslie’s Workday Schedule

First work day back from Renewal June 3rd

>> Sunday through Thursday (Days off are Friday and Saturday) <<
Drop-in Hours*
Wednesdays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm Thursdays 2:00 – 4:00 pm”

**Drop-in hours are times set aside for “drop-in” conversations, much like a professor’s office hours. Pastor Leslie is typically working at the church the rest of the week, but it is possible that she may be in meetings, at a community event, or working off-site.*

Everyone is encouraged to make an appointment if the above times are not convenient. You can go to www.calendly.com/pastorleslieucc and select a day and time that works for you, or you can email Pastor Leslie at pastorleslieucc@gmail.com or call/text at 218-656-0096.



Church Office Hours

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
10:00 am - 2:00 pm

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

Stay Connected

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/ucbrainerd/live>

****Live stream videos are saved and can be viewed at any time. All memorials, weddings and 12th Night Concert are on our church Facebook page.**

How to stay connected with First Congregational friends and members: Join the private group for our Facebook Connections Page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ucbrainerd>
Follow Pastor Leslie on her blog during Renewal: renewal24.weebly.com.

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/ucbrainerd>

Announcements & Reminders

Annual Meeting -- June 16th

After Sunday Worship

Our Annual Meeting will be held this month when Pastor Leslie is back from her Renewal Time. All voting members are encouraged to attend as we elect new committee members and review the last 12 months. Reports will be emailed to voting members the second week of June. Please contact the church office if you need a printed copy mailed to you.

**** Movie Night,
TheShop Cooking &
Adult Forum will resume in the Fall ****

Myers-Briggs Assessment

If you have not had a chance to take the assessment, there are copies available. Pick one up during office hours or request to have Terri mail you one.

Kay Cox is available to go over the assessment with you after you have completed and returned it. Contact Kay Cox to schedule an appointment.

June Birthdays

Erik Lukanen	June 2	Lowell Johnson	June 20
Sarah Jo Armstrong	June 5	Patrick Bertram	June 23
Ryan Kelley	June 8	Claire Steen	June 25
Shelly Trimble	June 8	Steve Waller	June 25
Barb Stokke	June 10	James Flath	June 27
Becky Twamley	June 10		



UCC Fellowship

UCC Women's Coffee

Saturday, June 8th 9:30 am

UCC Brainerd in Fellowship Hall

Marcia Ferris is hosting



UCC Women's Lunch



Thursday, June 27th 11:30 am

Location: Sage on Laurel

Downtown Brainerd

Hostess: Kay Cox

Everyone is welcome - no reservations are required for either gathering.

UCC Men's Lunch

Not Organized - No Agenda - Join us!



Each Wednesday of the Month @ 11:45 am

Location: Wings Café—Brainerd Airport



W.I.S.E Survey April 2024

Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged in the Mental Health of the community and the wider world

About the Survey

Purposes

- *To get a rough measure of the congregation's personal experiences with our own mental health issues and coping skills.
- *To assess the congregation's readiness to commit to being a WISE church.

Questions and Responses

- There were 9 questions, many of them fill-in-the-blank.
- 60 surveys were completed; a 43% response rate. This is an acceptable response rate, given that there were no formal reminders and the open period was one week.

What did we learn about our church-wide mental health?

1. Our overall mental health picture is similar to that of the country.
2. In difficult times, we use a wide range of coping mechanisms.

37% Exercise	32% Walking
32% Therapist	32% Trusted
28% Nature	22% Meditation
20% Prayer	12% Medication
3. Almost all of us have experienced difficult feelings that seem to last too long.

5% Never	48% Rarely
40% Sometimes	5% Usually
4. What kinds of "difficult feelings?"

37% Sad, depressed	35% Anxious, worried
23% Overwhelmed	20% Angry
17% Hurt	13% Irritable
13% Lonely	3% Self-deprecating

The survey asked about one of the most prevalent types of mental illness: Depression

In your lifetime, has there been a period of two weeks or more that you felt down, sad, hopeless, or empty most of nearly every day?

5. The survey found that three out of five congregants have experienced a depressive episode within their lifetime.

61% Yes	1.7% Not sure
37% No	1.7% No Answer
6. About a fourth of us said that we would appreciate church member support at difficult times.

28% Yes	24% No	48% Maybe, not sure
---------	--------	---------------------

What did we learn about our attitudes towards welcoming and supporting people with mental health issues?

1. 87% of our congregation think that we should become better informed about people with mental illness.
2. 97% think that it is important that our church welcome people with mental illness.
3. 58% think that our congregation can provide helpful support to congregants with mental health issues; 42% aren't sure.

Survey participants shared a lot of good ideas about how we could learn more and become more supportive.

Suggestions for becoming more informed.

- *Hold learning sessions for skill development, which could lead to Mental Health First Aid certification.*
- *Make materials and resources available: Books, tools films, sermons, outside experts.*
- *Provide ample opportunity for discussion.*
- *Engage community support and partner with existing organizations to offer mental health forums, sponsor speakers, etc.*
- *Organize mental health-themed events like movies, talks, presentations.*

Congregants suggested many ways our church could be supportive.

1. We can learn through training.

- *Educate the congregation about mental health.
- *Provide resources and training on how to offer support.
- *Learn how to recognize when individuals may need more help.

2. We can Organize.

- *Establish support groups.
- *Establish system for regular check-ins, supportive calls.
- *Ensure that pastoral care is available
- *Establish e*mergency assistance system.
- *Learn how to advocate for accessible mental health care.

3. We can create a compatible church culture.

- *Create a safe space for all individuals.
- *Foster a welcoming atmosphere through small gestures like smiling and greeting.
- *Find new ways to maintain a consistently welcoming and accepting environment.
- *Practice kindness, love, and acceptance.
- *Take the time to learn and understand one another.

4. We can provide support.

- *Offer a listening ear without judgment.
- *Take proactive steps to reach out and offer help.
- *Offer supportive programming and recognize when individuals may need help.

Summary

Survey Purpose 1:

Get a rough idea of the congregation's personal experience with difficult feelings.

We found that---

Currently, mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, feeling overwhelmed, and anger are not uncommon in the lives of at least half our congregants.

Survey Purpose 2:

Assess the congregation's readiness to commit to being a WISE church.

A majority of the congregation feels that we can be welcoming and supportive of people with mental health issues; the congregation has many suggestions for learning more.



Garden Gleaning

A Biblical (and environmentally) inspired activity

This is how it works: Gardeners and plant people bring in their “gleanings” to share. This ranges from rhubarb and vegetable plants in the spring to daffodil bulbs in the fall. A table, poster and donation basket are in Narthex entrance. Enjoy the fruits of our labors! It’s RHUBARB time! All are welcome to help themselves – no charge! All monetary donations are given to the Food Shelf.

Historical note: Begun here circa 1988 when our church began Hunger Action outreach, Central America updates and global food connections.

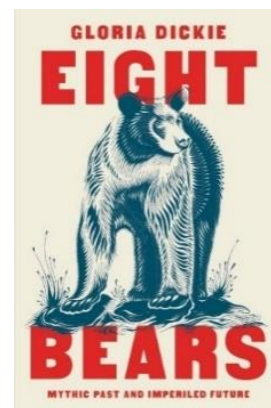
Note: Using our resources, recycling, re-purposing, and not wasting our food are all acts of Creation Care and Justice. Garden Gleaning is an Easy-Peasy way to put words into action.

Friday Book Group

We meet each Friday morning at 10:30 am via zoom.

Church Zoom link: <https://tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom>

We are reading the non-fiction book about animals, “*Eight Bears: Mythic Past and Imperiled Future*”, by Gloria Dickie. In *Eight Bears*, journalist Gloria Dickie embarks on a globe-trotting journey to explore each bear's story, whisking readers from the cloud forests of the Andes to the ice floes of the Arctic; from the jungles of India to the backwoods of the Rocky Mountain West. Weaving together ecology, history, mythology, and a captivating account of her travels and observations, Dickie offers a closer look at our volatile relationship with these magnificent mammals. Engrossing and deeply reported, *Eight Bears* delivers a clear warning for what we risk losing if we don't learn to live alongside the animals that have shaped our cultures, geographies, and stories. Contact Pat Scott for more information.



UCC Care Team



For anyone who wishes to join in on making calls or visits, the Care Team meets every month on the first **Thursday at 10:00 am**. The next meeting is **Thursday, April 4th**. *If you know of anyone who would enjoy a call from the care team, please contact one of our Care Team; Barb Hoeft, Jack and Kay Kraywinkle, Pat Scott, Chris Yager, Deb Griffith, and Pastor Leslie.*

H.U.G.S.

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. Signup below for your first Sunday as the face of the church!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E48A9A823A5FFC07-hugs/16034811>

Serving One Another

*Radical
Hospitality*





First Congregational Food Shelf Collection

Our church continues to collect non-perishable food items for the Salvation Army Food Shelf. Please consider bringing items and donating. There are two collection boxes: one in the parking lot entry hallway, the other in the Narthex. Brian Twamley picks up and delivers the food. **Thank you!**

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 Make sure to write in memo "Food Shelf".

Cooking for Everyone

Cooking for Everyone is a loosely knit group of church folks who like to cook and eat good food, and occasionally do fundraisers for the church. If you would like to be included on the email list, contact Lowell Johnson at johnsonlowells@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 sent 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

Special Offering Sunday Worship June 23 - WeARE

Advocates for Reproductive Education (WeARE) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, organized in 2015 around a commitment to promote and provide comprehensive reproductive education and healthcare services for youth, young adults, and the underserved in Brainerd, MN and the surrounding community.

Our vision is that everyone in the Brainerd Lakes Area have access to accurate and evidence-based reproductive education and healthcare. Through community collaboration, led by compassionate healthcare professionals, the underserved living in the Brainerd Lakes Area are empowered to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

Follow WeARE on Facebook @ <https://www.facebook.com/WeAREbrainerd>

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

Make note on your offering "**WeAre Special Offering**". Thank you!

Church Leadership

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

There are many other opportunities for you to share your talents!

--Assistant Moderator: Serves a 1-year term (may renew for 3 terms). Serve as Moderator in case of absence or incapacity of the Moderator. Participate in the service for reception of new members as the representative of the Church Council. Serve as liaison between the Council and the various small group ministries functioning within the Church. Serve as an ex-officio member of the Long-Range Planning Committee.

--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 *Stewardship *Music *Arts *Trustees

*Contact Mary Reardon -Moderator, or
Tim Anderson-Asst. Moderator with your nominations*

Highlights from the Council Meeting, May 16, 2024

Thursday, 3:30 pm (In-person and Zoom)

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

Present: Mary Reardon (Moderator), Deb Griffith (Trustees), Steve Newcom (Justice Ministry, ZOOM), Cynthia Janes (Clerk), Sue Hadland (Christian Ministry), Terri Chidester (Admin. Asst., ZOOM), T. Michael Rock (Pastor, Zoom), Judy Whiteman (Stewardship)

Absent: Alvin Velsvaag (At-Large—Mental Health), Dan Hegstad (PR/Marketing), Tim Anderson (Assistant Moderator), Marcia Ferris (Stewardship), Kay Cox (PRC)

Council Minute for March 2024—Approved

Clerk Report – No changes reported.

Review of Financials - Mary wondered if utilities were higher than expected. Terri reported an adjustment in April Financials. There was \$3,075 that was corrected and moved from February's General Income to special offerings. This updated April's financial reports and Terri will send out corrected reports.

Care Team: Deb reported for the Care Team that they will start next month reporting monthly the number of people contacted. LuAnn Rice will stop sending birthday cards in August. She has been doing this for years on behalf of the church. Next month the Care Team will refresh their list of congregants to be contacted.

Christian Ed. Lowell reported that the WISE service, May 26, has been planned. The group will meet this week.

Christian Ministry: Report. Sue Hadland reported that on June 9 the congregations will say goodbye to Pastor T Michael and welcome back to Pastor Leslie. Christian Ministry will provide the celebratory fare during fellowship, including muffins and skewered food.

Justice Ministry: Steve Newcom has been ill.

Marketing: Report.

Mental Health: (verbal) Alvin was absent

PRC: (Did not meet and will not meet until Leslie returns.)

Stewardship: Report.

Trustees: Report. Deb reported verbally that the meeting with Mr. Moe about the organ's issues went well.

Pastor's Report: T. Michael said that he is trying to visit and call as many people as possible before he leaves.

Old Business

1. Policy on Council references to political candidates. Council voted to remove from April minutes the reference made to Donald Trump as a goodwill gesture to a Council member who had asked that it be stricken from the record. Council did not vote on a general policy about references to political candidates.

2. Annual Conference meeting June 7-8th at College of St. Benedict (St. Joseph) the annual MN UCC Annual Conference meeting: Are attendees finalized? Skipped.

3. Annual meeting will be Sunday, June 16.

Assistant moderator was absent. No further candidates have been secured since last month, although Mary has found two who are "considering" serving as assistant moderator or secretary

4. Choir director Update: (Mary Reardon)

Mary reported that she spoke with Jennifer Person, who said that she may be interested. The announcement was met with great enthusiasm by Council.

New Business

1. Annual meeting agenda planning—"Suggested items" were reviewed. No further action. Mary said that the agenda for annual meeting will be set at another (special?) Council meeting.

Suggested items

- Short review of how Council works; how things are done.
- Call for committee members
- Financially, how the church did financially in 2023-4 vs 2022-3

2. May 18, 11 AM.. Conference folks here to administer focus group on the possibilities of initiating outdoor ministries. T. Michael said he hopes that Council members will be able to attend.

Respectively Submitted,
Cynthia Janes, Clerk

Next Regular Council Meeting: *Thursday, June 20th, 2024, 3:30 pm*
in-person and via Zoom tinyurl.com/uccbrainerdzoom

Events of Interest – Past Present Future



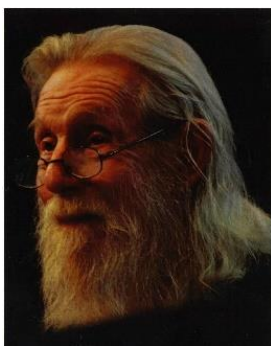
Congratulations Tracy!
Our friend graduated from CLC.
A job well done!

Macyn Harder McBroom
Class of 2024 - Pillager High School



Please join us for a Grad Party on Saturday, **June 8, from 11am-4pm** at **Whipple Beach Recreation Area Pavillion**, 14441 Oakwood Dr in Baxter. Please RSVP by emailing lois_mcbroom@hotmail.com if you can make it.

Macyn plans on attending Central Lakes College in the fall to complete her generals, and then transition to a 4yr college in order to complete her degree. Macyn would like to be a kindergarten teacher - to help shape and inspire young children.



Lance James Internment Service

Please join family and friends in a full military service.

Wednesday, June 12th, 2:00 pm
Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery
Fort Ripley, Little Falls MN.

Gary & Judy Whiteman's
60th Anniversary Celebration

**Sunday, June 16th Open House 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at First
Congregational in Fellowship Hall.**

Please share this occasion with us. (NO gifts, please)



MEN'S SUMMER RETREAT
The Times They Are A-Changin'

Inspired by the music and poetry of Bob Dylan

Friday, June 21, 5:00 PM through
Sunday, June 23, 2024, 1:00 PM
[In-person]



Register at <https://illumanoofmn.org/upcoming/2024/summer-retreat-dylan>

Join us for this year's summer in-person retreat, which coincides with the summer solstice, to renew ourselves and find our voices through writing, reflection, and council circles, illuminated by the wisdom, challenge, and beauty in the music and poetry of Bob Dylan.

The retreat is divided into six parts, each inspired by the words and music of Bob Dylan. We'll use this material to prompt our own reflections through journaling, poetry, and other creative expression, followed by sharing in small council groups. Sharing creative work is optional but strongly encouraged.

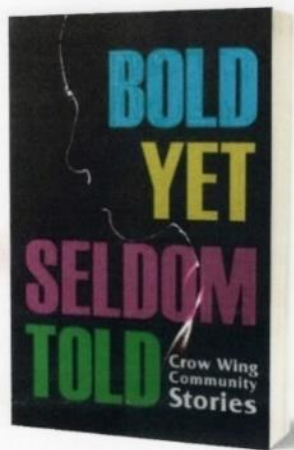
Participants will have ample time to venture out into the new summer landscape of **Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center** 54165 Audubon Drive, Sandstone, MN 55072.

<https://ospreywilds.org/> Osprey Wilds is a unique, beautiful, and diverse 780-acre preserve with more than 7 miles of hiking trails and situated on the eastern shore of the pristine Grindstone Lake. Like Dylan wrote in Mr. Tambourine Man, we long to be wandering.

Bob Dylan, one of the best known and loved song writers in the world, has won 10 Grammy Awards, and one Academy Award. His writing has earned him both the Pulitzer Prize and the Nobel Prize in Literature. He is the only musician to have won both awards. The Beatles, Elvis Presley, and Pete Seeger were all influenced by Bob Dylan. His writing continues to impact our world today.

Brainerd Lakes Area Information ~ Opportunities to Know and Share God's Love ~

"Bold Yet Seldom Told"



The book, was launched on April 14. Books are available at CatTales – downtown Brainerd. Either link below will allow you to view videos Dan Hegstad made of some contributors to the book telling their own stories. Powerful stories!

Crow Wing Energized:

<https://crowwingenergized.org/story-project/>

Crow Wing
energized

Steve Newcom's Justice Table website:

<https://sites.google.com/kaleo.center/justicetable/bold-untold-stories?authuser=0>



Mark Your Calendars!

The Brainerd Lakes Pride Weekend.

Pride in the Park Picnic is September 14th 10:00 am – 4:00 pm in Gregory Park.

Follow their Facebook Page for other Pride Activities that weekend.

[Facebook.com/BrainerdLakesPride](https://www.facebook.com/BrainerdLakesPride)

UCC News & Updates!



"Bold Yet Seldom Told": First Congregational UCC Brainerd

A couple years ago, Lowell Johnson and fellow church member Karen Johnson from First Congregational UCC Brainerd attended a "100 Cups of Coffee" seminar led by Wilder Research. Both were struck by learning how far the people who make policies usually are from the people most impacted by those same policies.

That important knowledge sparked a journey that led to more than 100 one-to-one conversations with people from marginalized backgrounds. Those conversations resulted in the publication of a book, "Bold Yet Seldom Told: Crow Wing Community Stories."

Lowell says they first brought the idea of hosting conversations to a group that is working on the church's designation as a W.I.S.E. congregation (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged in the mental health of the community and wider world). After getting a thumbs up, they trained ten interviewers to conduct 105 interviews with people often farthest from decision making: those with mental illness, addiction, and disability; those who had been incarcerated; Black and brown people; and LGBTQ folks. While they didn't set out to publish a book, Lowell said that while they were interviewing they had an "empathy stretch."

"While listening to these stories, we thought maybe we could improve empathy and compassion in the community by telling these stories," he says. "We started asking people if they would be willing to write a story, and they were. Most of the stories have elements of hope and transformation."

Project leaders connected with the Crow Wing County Jail to obtain artwork for the book. According to Lowell, all of the art was created with golf pencils, the drawing tool allowed in the jail. They also did a video series with ten of the stories and wrote a grant to the Opioid Settlement Fund that allowed them to purchase and distribute 450 books to people in the community working with the populations reflected in the book.

"We know that systems are broken in many ways, but there are also stories about how systems do work because people have gotten the assistance they need," says Lowell. "I'm a story guy and I

know people learn through stories. So, can this book help us as a community promote what's working?"

Project leaders are following up with those who received the book to understand its impact. "We want to know if they are using it in their work," says Lowell. "Is it promoting discussion and transformation or helping them take the next step? We know that when people process and think about something, it generally leads to greater empathy and compassion." The evaluation is scheduled to be completed this summer.

Lowell imagines other churches would find value in engaging in a similar interview process and sharing the resulting stories, in any format. "If we can do it here in Brainerd, others can, too! It takes work and perseverance but it's worth it."

"Bold Yet Seldom Told" is available for purchase through a local Brainerd bookshop. <https://www.cattalesbooks.com/>



Upcoming Conference Retreats

Below is a brief highlight of each event; you can find full details on the [Conference's website](#).

To help facilitate a more comprehensive and secure registration process, the Conference has implanted a new registration system for overnight events in 2024. [Check out CampDoc!](#)

Great Lakes & West Central Regional Youth Event

July 17-20 | Augustana College, Rock Island Illinois

Clergy Family Retreat:

"What Do You Mean We Don't Have to Plan Anything?"

August 11-13 | Camp Onomia, Onamia, MN

Women's Retreat: "You Are a Story"

Friday, September 13 – Sunday, September 15 | Camp Onomia, Onamia, MN
Martha Brunell, Facilitator

Fall 2024 Conference Youth Event

October 11-13 | Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center



June 2024 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Office Hours 10am – 2pm Pastor Drop-in Hours 11:00 am – 1:00 pm	Office Hour 10am – 2pm	Office Hours 10am – 2pm Pastor Drop-in Hours 2:00 – 4:00 pm	1
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y 2 10am Wrship & Communion-Y&FB <i>*Rev. T. Michael leads worship</i> 11am Fellowship-Y	*Pastor 3 Leslie's first workday back from Renewal 7pm BACP/ BLUE church backup	4 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	11:45pm Men's 5 Grp @Wings Café-Y 7pm AA Common-Y	6 10am Care Team Mtg.-Y	7 10:30am Bk Grp-Z <i>UCCMN Annual Mtg. Pastors T. Michael & Leslie, Mary R.</i>	8 <i>UCCMN Annual Mtg.</i> 9:30am Women's Fellowship-Y 11am-4pm Macyn Harder McBroom Graduation-Y
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y 9 10am Wrship-Y&FB <i>*Rev. T. Michael & Pastor Leslie co-lead worship</i> 11am Celebrate return of PastorLeslie and Farewell to Rev. T. Michael in Fellowship Hall-Y	10	11 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	11:45pm Men's 12 Grp @Wings Café-Y 2pm Lance James Interment Service 3pm PRC Mtg.-Y 5:30pm Trustees-Y 7pm AA Common-Y	13 8:30am Chrstn Mnstry.-Y 3:34pm TheShop-Y 4pm Exec.Team Mtg.- Y&Z	14 10:30am Bk Grp- Z	15
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y 16 10am Wrship -Y&FB 11am Annual Mtg after worship-Y 11:45am Fellowship-Y 3pm Whiteman's 60 th Open House-Y	17	18 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	11:45pm Men's 19 Grp @Wings Café- 7pm AA Common-Y	20 3:30pm Council Mtg-Y&Z 6:30pm Dist.7AA-Y	21 10:30am Bk Grp- Z	22
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y 23 10am Wrship -Y&FB 11am Fellowship-Y ** Newsletter Deadline **Special Offering WeARE	24 12:30- 4:30pm.AAUW Mtg.Fellowship Hall-Y	25 2pm EA-Y 5:30pm OA -Y	11:45pm Men's 26 Grp @Wings Café- 7pm AA Common-Y	27 11:30am Women's Luncheon @ Sage on Laurel-Y	28 10:30am Bk Grp- Z	29
8:30am Bnrd Frnds-Y 30 10am Sunday Wrship-Y&FB 11am Fellowship-Y						Y- Yes Mtg. in person FB –Stream Online Z- our Zoom C- Cancelled N-None ? or TBD– No update-To be determined

