

February 2024

Volume 58 Number 2

# THE SHINING LIGHT



*The Voice of the Congregation*

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC  
*of Grand Marais*

# First Congregational United Church of Christ

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Moderator: Tom Yuhasey    Treasurer: Kevin LeVair  
Board Members: Stephen Aldrich, Francie Beaster,  
Jenny Delfs, Bruce Tyler, Carol Winter



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## Mission Statement



First Congregational United Church of Christ is an open, inclusive church that exists to worship God and practice the gospel of Jesus Christ. We welcome all people of goodwill who seek to share the love of God and honor the diversity of creation in a spirit of tolerance and flexibility. As a Just Peace Church, we invite all who seek the reign of God to join us in reaching out in healing ministry, working for justice, witnessing for peace and striving to overcome all forms of oppression. We recognize two sacraments: Baptism and Communion.

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*Contributions to the newsletter are encouraged! Please submit writing of no more than 500 words, poetry, or artwork to the office. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity.*

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## *Prayer of the Month*

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O God, you speak to us in the small, still voice and through the workings of your world. You call us to pay attention to what you are doing and to join in. Your love and work continually manifest itself where justice is strived for, mercy is given, and healing is offered. Inspire us and use us to be your messengers of hope and workers of kindness. Equip us and lead us in our local church, and in our lives, so that your light shines through us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## *Worship in February*

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**Feb 4, [5th Sunday after Epiphany](#)** – People in Jesus' hometown are amazed of what at what Jesus can do, Jesus is amazed that they have such little belief. King Herod is amazed at John the Baptist even when John proclaims that Herod is doing wrong. It is Herodias and her daughter Herodias(?) who schemed to have John the Baptist beheaded. Jesus sends the Twelve Disciples out to preach repentance, cast out demons, and anoint the sick and heal them. What a full story...

**February 11, [Transfiguration Sunday](#)** – This is the story of Jesus going up the mountain with Peter, James, and John to talk with Elijah and Moses. The light that shone through Jesus that night shines through us today, maybe not in dazzling white, but in ways that show God's love and we are all God's beloved. Come to church in your dazzling clothes as we are having a Mardi Gras potluck after worship.

**February 14, [Ash Wednesday](#)** – In our narrative lectionary, we follow along Mark's chronological story. We hear Jesus' prediction of his passion, but then the disciples start arguing about who amongst them will then be the greatest. Jesus reminds them what God's kingdom is truly about.

**February 18, [1st Sunday in Lent](#)** – Up to Jesus comes a young man, who is earnest and wanting to do what is right, wanting to inherit eternal life. Jesus saw him and loved him, but realized there was something else the person loved more that kept him from God's kingdom now.

**February 25, [2nd Sunday in Lent](#)** – In this week's long scripture, James and John are still thinking about their place in the kingdom, while a blind beggar cries out to see. What is important for us while we are on this planet.





## *A Message from your Board Member*

-by Carol Winter

Minnesota is so beautiful - even during what may turn out to be a very prolonged mud season the earth is beautiful. The sun came out today and the late afternoon sky is pink. There's still enough snow to see myriad animal tracks when you go out for a walk. I ask myself sometimes whether I'm doing what I should to care for it. Certainly, we have all been charged to care for this home. When I was young we believed ocean fish were so abundant that food could never run out. Only a few generations ago we believed that the forests of North America were truly endless. Those types of beliefs have contributed to the creation of a new disease with an old disease's name

Tuberculosis used to be known as 'CONSUMPTION'. Before there was effective treatment for that disease the tuberculosis victim would slowly weaken and waste away, appearing to be consumed. By using resources far beyond our needs, we are giving the earth a case of 'consumption'. Earth has started to run a fever and although it is still strong, it is also vulnerable. In fact, in the seven years

since I first wrote this, the rate of change has increased, like a fever spike. Weather events are causing more damage, loss of pollinators is threatening food systems, and icecaps are melting faster than predicted.

There's some good news though. We can have happy and fulfilled lives with less STUFF. Spending time with others and creating community is more satisfying than recreational shopping. Or if shopping is essential then check first at the thrift stores and keep stuff out of the waste stream. (The money we save this way can find better uses - such as supporting the mission of our church!) We can get just as clean with a short shower as with a longer one. And we can urge legislators to support sensible policies that take the long view rather than only considering short-term goals.

Is it simple and easy? Nah. Worth the effort? Of course.

Peace,  
Carol Winter



## **MARDI GRAS THEMED POTLUCK, FEBRUARY 11**

All are invited to a potluck lunch in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, February 11, following worship. New Orleans, Cajun, or Brazilian-style dishes, for the adventurous among you, especially welcomed. No worries if bringing a dish to share is a hassle. Some bring the pot, others bring the luck. There's always more than enough for everyone! Looking forward to a rollicking good time before Lent begins.

Please dress to the nines. Costumes are welcome. Ladies bring your hats!





# Pastor's Column



All Humanity is One!

When we take up arms against other humans, we are harming ourselves. When we belittle another human because of skin color, sex, gender, religion, ethnicity, culture, or any of the

many unique ways God has created us, we only belittle ourselves. When we generalize that all Jews, Muslims, Christians, Democrats, or Republicans are this, believe that, seek to destroy, we are only planting the seeds of pain and isolation.

In our Cook County Middle East Peace Advocates on Wednesday night, we heard a Jewish resident talk about vandalism to their home. At the Cook County Pride meeting last night, we heard about bullying in school and harm being done as the family of certain youth cannot accept who they are. We may be ahead of the curve on some “Woke” issues, but we still live in a world where there is fear, desire to control, and stupidity of stereotypes: the -Isms (homophobia, antisemitism, sexism, white patriarchy, Christian nationalism, racism, islamophobia, and so on and so on).

WE have proclaimed at our benedictions “God loves us, we are enough, and we are worthy!” We look to each other, “You are loved, enough, and worthy!” In my grandmother’s Methodist church where she was organist for over 50 years, at the end of the worship bulletin, it would say, “And now the service begins...”

So, we end our benediction as a proclamation to the world, “God love you! You are enough! You are worthy!” This message is for everyone. It is for the bullied, the harassed, the victims and survivors, the poor, the homeless, those who struggle, and those who just can’t get it together. But it is also for the bullies, the predators, the rich, those in nice homes, those who are doing well, and those who

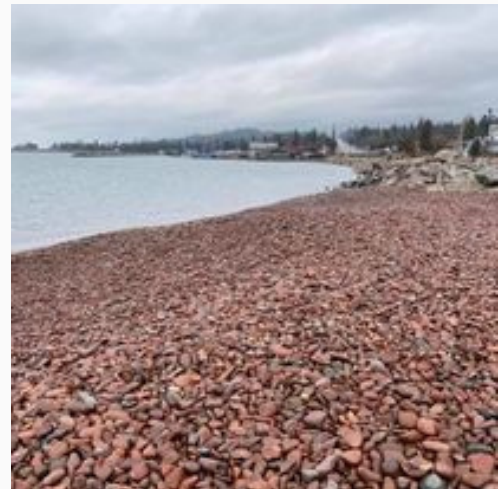
think they pulled themselves up by their bootstraps without anyone’s help. I believe that if those who inflict harm really believed that they are loved, enough, and worthy, they would not be so quick to knock down others.

Any group is not all bad or good. Any group does not all think the same. Let us show God’s love not just in our words, but in our compassion, our actions and reactions, our efforts, our goals, and our care for those who need justice.

Peace

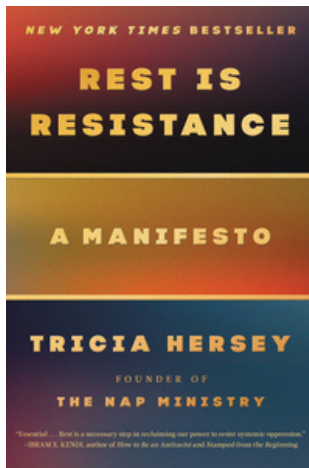
*Pastor Enno*

Harbor watch, Fridays at  
8 am  
at Java Moose



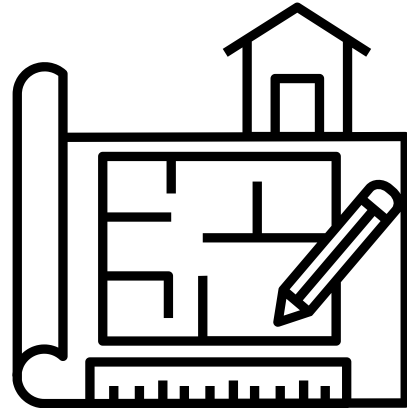
*Whether is it still, waving, or bashing the shore; whether the weather is sunny, cloudy, or snowy; whether it is ice cold, covered with ice, or a warm 62; it is still the harbor. Whether you are doing well, ok, or failing, you are still a child, a beloved child of God.*

## Lenten Journey: February 14, 2024 after the Evening Service



We are working through our Lenten Journey using the book “Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto” by Tricia Hersey. After the formal worship on Ash Wednesday, we will gather informally (and on Zoom) in the Media Room. We will explore the topics Rest, Dream, Resist, Imagine, and Kingdom Building. Each week we will read through a story from the Bible and explore it through Tricia Hersey’s lens. She proclaims that we are in the grind culture, the system only wants us to keep producing, making more and more. The only way to truly defeat this system is to stop, even for 2 minutes to breath. Come and join the resistance.

## Architects coming to town, survey before!



### WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

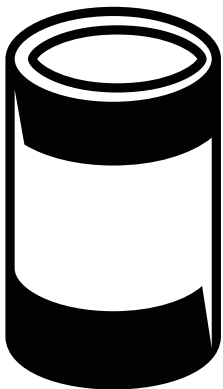
The church has contracted with ATSR Architects to provide:

- Facility Assessment
- Energy Audit
- Facility Master Plan

They have provided two surveys to gather information. One is for the building structure and the other is for use of the building.

Please take a look at both and add your comments. Go to [www.grandmaraisucc.org](http://www.grandmaraisucc.org) to fill these out online. Let us know if you’d prefer a hard copy.

**Please complete your surveys by February 10.** The architects will also hold an in person congregational meeting on February 13 (time to be determined) to hear from the congregation on issues, perceptions of needs and principals to guide the process.



### Food Shelf

Mondays 3-5 PM

&

the First Wednesday  
of the Month  
4:30- 6:30 PM

Downstairs

### Tai Chi - Thursdays at 10 am

Join us at the church on  
Thursday mornings,  
10:00 am, to practice  
Tai Chi.



# Cook County Middle East Peace Advocates



About 8-12 people have gathered in their common concern about what is happening in the Middle East. We decided after discussions and breaking up into groups to pursue three areas:

## Education

*One Part:*

Reading List of books, articles, essays, podcasts to help our community understand what is happening.

Central Website/Google Drive accessible to all in our community

*2nd Part:*

Bring in Speakers and Host Video Series to look at four areas.

- Refugee Crisis
- Learn Different Cultural Perspectives (including antisemitism and islamophobia)
- Look at the Politics of the world and governments shaping this conflict
- Historical Story of how we got here.

## Fundraising

Sharing through churches, finding and creating a list of reputable organizations who are doing the best at helping the refugees.

## Political Action

Post Card Event – we gathered to create postcards to send to our elected officials calling for an immediate cease fire.

Create Resolutions to bring the political party caucuses in February.

Create Petitions calling for an immediate cease fire. Rally for Cease Fire. (and Antisemitism and Islamophobia)

*Anyone is invited to come participate and share their voice.*



## Mark Your Calendar for the 2024 Our Whole Lives (OWL) Facilitator Training

April 12 @ 3:00 pm–April 14 @ 3:00 pm  
**REGISTER by Friday, March 29**

Clergy and lay leaders who plan to offer an Our Whole Lives program in their congregations are invited to three days of facilitation training from April 12-14, 2024, at Camp Eden Wood in Eden Prairie, MN. Facilitator training will be offered for the OWL secondary curriculum (Grades 7-9, 10-12).

Our Whole Lives, or OWL, is a comprehensive human sexuality curriculum for elementary-age children through older adults, developed by the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association.

- Commuter Rate (training and meals): \$250
- Double Occupancy Rate (includes training and meals): \$350 (includes linens)
- Single Occupancy Rate (includes training and meals): \$450 (linens included)

Participants from UCC congregations will receive a \$100 registration discount through a generous subsidy of the Ashley Fund of the Minnesota Conference UCC.



**We have hired Rory Island as our new building custodian. She will begin on February 3rd.**



## Conference Announces 2024 Regional Youth Event

January 17, 2024



### Save the date! July 17-20, 2024

Augustana College, Rock Island Illinois

Join hundreds youth from United Church of Christ congregations in Minnesota and across the Great Lakes and West Central regions. Come together for three days of connection, fun, worship, service, and learning. We are excited to be working with The Many to provide music, worship, and program leadership throughout our time together. The Many is an uncommon, intentionally diverse collective making music for people to sing together about peace and justice and a world where all belong.

The Minnesota Conference UCC will help arrange transportation for any congregations interested in participating and traveling together. Registration will open in mid-February, and more information will be available soon.

Contact Kevin Brown, Associate Conference Minister, for more information or with any questions.



## Newly released Statistical Profile highlights strengths of small UCC churches

by Kayla Berkey | published on Jan 23, 2024

If you have ever felt curious about how the United Church of Christ appears by the numbers and the ways it has changed over time, the UCC Center for Analytics, Research & Development and Data (CARDD) has the resources for you.

The recently released 2023 Statistical Profile brings together the latest data on congregational, financial and ministerial trends in the UCC, as well as new information on virtual worship and additional topics covered by contributors.

“I hope the Statistical Profile can be useful for local churches and clergy to understand how their church fits into the wider context of UCC churches, to identify places where their church might have particular strengths and to find inspiration for how their church might find new pathways to flourishing,” said Erica Dollhopf, CARDD director.

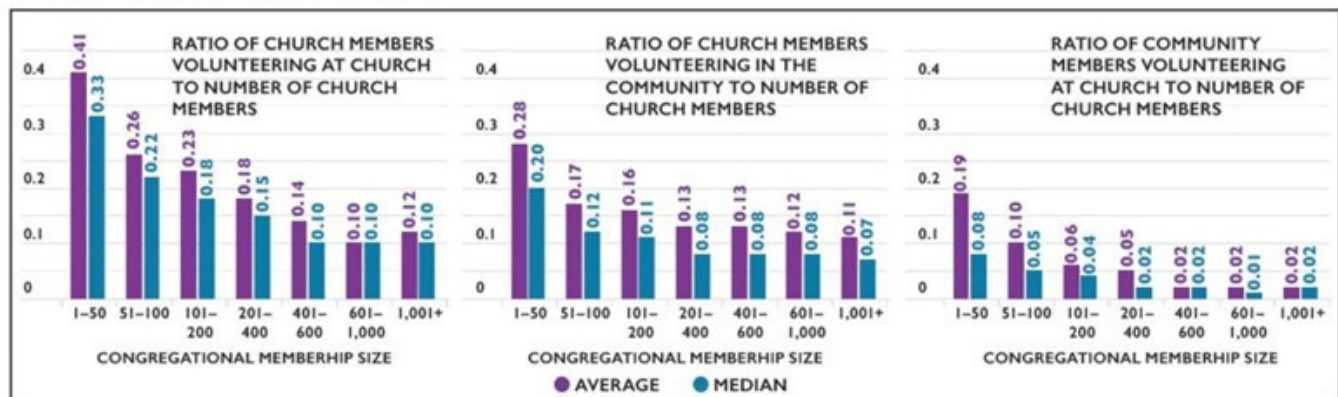
### Smaller churches’ ‘particular gifts’

The trends and patterns of the profile aim to “give a fuller picture of the evolving vibrancy of the various contexts of the UCC,” its introduction describes.

One special report in this year’s publication — “Church Communities by the Numbers: Outside Organizations and Volunteers,” found on page 41 — aims to do just that through capturing new metrics on the number of outside organizations that share church space and the number of people who volunteer at the church, as well as members who volunteer in the community.



## VOLUNTEERS BY MEMBERSHIP SIZE



Churches were asked to report specific numbers on these elements for the first time in the 2023 Supplemental Survey sent to churches to gather information, after they were highly mentioned themes in the 2022 Supplemental Surveys.

The calculations listed in the special report show that the ratio of volunteers to church membership within the smallest churches by membership size had the most engagement from volunteers of all types by far, relative to their church size.

“This finding highlights the particular gifts of smaller churches – they tend to be close-knit, highly involved communities,” Dollhopf said. “The findings here echo what we see on page 12 of the profile, where we look at the ratio of worship attendance to membership. The smallest churches by membership size tend to have the most people attending in-person worship relative to membership. While not everyone who attends worship is necessarily a church member, this calculation is another way to approximate engagement, which generally is highest within smaller churches.” Dollhopf said she was eager to share these findings and “show the many ways our churches are engaged with and support their local communities and, furthermore, about how vitality can be found in churches of any size.”

### ‘New ways of becoming church’

The Statistical Profile addresses a wealth of topics, with the graph of UCC Congregations by Date of Organization (page 9) another highlight for Dollhopf. “I always look forward to computing the data for the graph,” she said. “Each year, the percentage of churches

founded since 2000 grows a little more. And it’s exciting to see that, even in the midst of ongoing change, we continue to find new ways of becoming the church and starting new church communities.”

This year’s profile includes 17 special reports highlighting various areas of ministry within the UCC.

Data from the Washington, D.C., office’s Take Action alerts (page 48) show the highest number of actions taken by advocates in 2022 were on the topics of gun violence prevention, humanitarian support for Ukraine and immigration reform. Meanwhile, the number of most common languages (besides English) spoken in UCC congregations and used in worship can be found on page 44, with Spanish, Hawaiian and American Sign Language topping the list.

“CARDD is so appreciative of the time our colleagues from across the UCC take to tell the story of their work through data, and we are thrilled to be able to include these stories in the profile, allowing our readers to understand the work of the church beyond our clergy and congregational data,” Dollhopf said.

Information for the Statistical Profile primarily comes from data reported through the UCC Data Hub annually to produce the UCC Yearbook.

“Reflection” sections are placed throughout the Statistical Profile in blue boxes with questions designed to assist local church leaders in applying this data in their specific contexts.

The 2023 Statistical Profile – and other recent work from CARDD – can be found on CARDD’s Statistics and Reports page.

## Board Minutes - Jan. 16, 2024

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Attending: Tom Yuhasey, Moderator; Steve Aldrich; Francie Beaster; Jenny Delfs; Kevin LeVoir; Bruce Tyler; Carol Winter; Rev. Enno Limvere, ex-officio

The meeting was called to order, mission statement read, joys and concerns shared, this month's question contemplated, communication agreement read.

Minutes from December and January agenda unanimously approved.

Carol will do the newsletter article.

Financial Report by Kevin LeVoir approved and accepted.

There were fewer pledges this year, 26 pledging \$75,680.00 as compared to 33 pledging last year but at a smaller amount: \$65,000.00 More pledges will "trickle in." 77 givers in 2023 will get giving statements.

We are still seeking a Financial Secretary, may rely on members to count money and deposit in bank.

The proposed Budget for 2024 was approved for presenting to the Annual Meeting on Jan. 28.

Full details of Finances are available in the church office.

Once again, Kevin is MVP.

Pastor's Report by Enno Limvere was upbeat and positive.

Cook County Pride is asking to use our mailbox as it needs an "address" to apply for liability insurance. Moved and passed to grant use of mailbox.

There are three potential new members attending an orientation meeting on Jan. 25!

Peace in Palestine meeting had 12 attending including community members. Inspiring and informative. Follow up meetings are planned.

Interest from young families has been shown for Friday night potlucks and services.

A memorial service for Nancy Cihlar will be held on Jan. 27 at 11:00.

Lent begins on Feb. 14. There will be an Ash Wednesday service. The theme for Lent is "Rest is resistance."

Easter is early this year: March 31.

Training for OWL "Our Whole Lives" will take place in the Cities April 12-14. The program equips participants with responsible decisions about human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, society and culture. We would focus on our youth.

### Mutual Ministry Goals

The board is tasked with pitching ideas via email and at next meeting to enhance congregational life.

The Sock and Mitten tree was very successful. Jenny filled her car with boxes headed to Duluth's Damiano Center.

The Winter Annual Meeting agenda will include: Summer meeting minutes approved, Budget, Report on Architect (a contract was sent to the architect. He wants to meet with the board and congregation for our needs and desires.) Also on the agenda will be Committee, Moderator and Pastor reports.

Janitor work is currently being done by volunteers. We are seeking a paid person, offering \$20.00 an hour.

Northwoods Child Care is up and running with 10 children. A light (not motion) for that outside entrance is needed. Building and Grounds will be notified.

### Committee Business

All committees are meeting and working. Reports will be forthcoming at the annual meeting.

### Adjournment

We ended early, in good humor and "no fisticuffs!" (Bruce)

Respectfully submitted, Francie Beaster

# Treasurer's Report

WOW REPORT 2023

The December 2023 (latest fully available information) Financial Report shows a total income of \$11,380.28 and expenses of \$12,802.94 (See Detail Below). This means the Church's income was less than its expenses by \$1,422.66.

Income for December 2023	
Pledged Donations	\$ 7,799.62
Non-Pledged Donations	\$ 1,400.00
Loose Plate Offering	\$ 220.00
Building Use	\$ 260.00
Income from Outside Sources	\$ 1,064.28
Architect Fund	\$ 250.00
Youth Fund	\$ 385.00
Memorial Donations	\$ -
Interest Income	\$ 1.38
	\$ 11,380.28
Expenses for December 2023	
Pastor	\$ 6,891.53
Staff	\$ 1,271.25
Business	\$ 985.50
Worship	\$ 600.00
Education	\$ -
Building and Grounds	\$ 1,024.61
Parsonage	\$ 693.99
OCWM and Per Capita	\$ 1,087.50
Loan Principle	\$ 249.04
PR Taxes and Wages	\$ (0.48)
	\$ 12,802.94
Difference	\$ (1,422.66)

WOW for 2023 was busy, we checked out about 65 bikes, and many but not all have been returned. Several workers donated their \$30 refund to the program. Several required multiple fixes; mostly flat tires, but some more complex. Steve did backup for Jeff when Jeff was out of town. Jeff did most of the interface with foreign workers. I think it was John who did many test rides.

The bike room is overflowing. Almost no room to do repairs without moving bikes out of the room. We received about a dozen donations of bikes. -most need some work.

The big plus is that Beth and Tim Kennedy have offered one of their rental garages for us to use as storage. The caveat is that the garage is full of renters' stuff- past and present. Tim and I have spent several days going through it but there's more work to do.

It still looks promising, but the main problem is deciding how to dispose of stuff. I've put lots on my curb and most have been taken, but there's more.

Interesting interactions with the workers; I took one girl to the ER. She cut her hand doing dishes and didn't know where to go for help. I called the ambulance and drove to her residence. I took her in my truck- she was fine. Catalin (from Romania) drew a picture of me. See attached. That was a high for me!



The full report is available in the Church office.

-Kevin LeVoir

# To Congo Board: Thoughts on Rocks and Roof

Some background:

In 2015 I think I volunteered and then was asked by the church board to do a capital campaign. I put together a committee. The committee included board members and eventually, our new pastor, Beth. We worked for the entire year meeting monthly, and I have saved the minutes and our results. Near the end of 2015 I wrote the following about the next steps to take.

I invite you to follow this link to find most of my saved committee files, minutes, and resources.

There is some useful stuff there.

<https://1drv.ms/f/s!AugsViMdjU0yi9hV6mN7Bxb-zXCT5w?e=kWQPsy>

**First** was my hope to hire an architect. I spent an afternoon with a visiting architect (She was in the area working on the old bridges on highway 61.) She did a volunteer walk-through the property with me and another congregant. She exhibited understanding of the special character of our building and offered several ‘off the cuff’ suggestions that have fertilized my vision of some possibilities for change. She sparked my interest in involving an architect at the early planning/brainstorming stage.

**Second** my study convinced me that we needed to have a more complete understanding of the vision held by the congregation and that we all needed to be united about why we were doing these upgrades to the church building.

What follows is excerpts from two essays. Since we've already decided to hire the ATSM architects I can skip some of that part and just focus on the need for shared values and vision. I spent time working with Pastor Anne on the discovery team and came to understand that our reasons for being at Congregational Church are wide ranging. There's a lot of variety; not necessarily conflict, just variety, so I'm convinced that we need to investigate more about our shared values and our vision for the church. Also, all my reading, my contacts, and our work on the capital campaign led me to believe that **shared vision is critical to a successful capital campaign.**

EXERPTS FROM TWO ESSAYS dated 1/12/2016 by jeff.

We inherited our church building from those who came before us. In the late 60's, I'm told the congregation took the time to consider the future needs of the congregation and community and with the help of Warren Kane, designed and then constructed the building we have today. We have inherited one of the most distinctive buildings in Grand Marais. We have lived with those choices made 50 years ago. Their investment in the church building has given us a place to gather, to worship, and importantly, a place to share.

As chair of Rocks and Roof Capital Committee, I read books about the fundraising process and have had multiple conversations with people who had successfully raised capital funds elsewhere. I became persuaded that perhaps I was thinking too small and aiming too low in our goals and estimates of amounts to raise. There are multiple major systems in the building that are also 55 years old. If we are going to go to the trouble of raising capital, we should raise enough to do many of the things that are on the to-do and wish list so we aren't in the same position in another year or five.

originally written; 1/12/2016



# To Congo Board: Thoughts on Rocks and Roof

Raising capital funds is a big job. It will probably take years. Every serious publication I've read about the process, and successful fundraisers I've talked with, say **laying the groundwork is critical to success.**

The church building is 50 years old. Most systems still work, but the plumbing, heating and air conditioning, siding, windows and doors, floor coverings, and folding walls, to name most, are showing their age. It's clearly time for a significant investment in the building.

Thinking about the amount to raise, I made a list and put rough numbers to the items on it. They added to over \$150,000. I've thought of more items for the list since then. I also made a pyramid of donation amounts following the rule 80% of the money will come from 20% of the donors. A good friend who has experience raising capital looked at my pyramid and recommended I raise the goal to \$200,000. (The numbers in these excerpts are before the roof and repointing was done and they don't include things like elevator nor bathroom rearrangements; plus, that was 8 years ago.) One of our tasks should be to decide if the amount is possible to raise. That amount still will probably not fix everything on the list, but this is all preliminary; both the list and the goal. It puts us in a ballpark. The groundwork I spoke of earlier includes refining the list, prioritizing, bidding, and more than anything, **being clear and united about why we need the building for the future and what the upgrades will do for our mission in the community.**

Today, we are faced with some major upkeep. Rather than simply reaffirming those original choices with repairs, we have an opportunity to re-evaluate them. Based on our experience living with the building, plus availability of new materials, new manufacturers, and today's energy costs, we may choose to make different choices. Add to the calculus new sensibilities such as building accessibility, pollution, and material recycling. There's also the question of our collective commitment to the building. What is our mission? Does the building still serve our mission?

The success of a campaign to raise money for repairs and improvements depends on a strongly shared vision within the congregation of the connection between our place of worship, our building, and our mission as a congregation. We must be united in our understanding that the cause is worth the effort. That said, there are many places in this process where we may legitimately decide to stop. It may turn out that we feel our mission doesn't depend on a better building. Maybe we're not united behind the effort. Maybe we simply don't have the energy or the money to move forward.

I suggest the following:

We begin discussing explicitly, "what is our vision and mission?", and "How does the building serve that mission?" We could ask the same questions about the parsonage.

The discussion could take many forms: articles in Shining Light, sermons, Discussion within the existing committees. At meals, we could write focused questions for folks to consider, say in small groups, table discussions at meals, loaves and hotdishes, etc. I find many gatherings relish having a topic to explore besides the weather. All we need is for somebody to take notes and pass the notes on to leadership. Eventually, we may want to convene a special meeting or more. We may benefit from having a

originally written; 1/12/2016

# To Congo Board: Thoughts on Rocks and Roof

moderator to lead us. **The desired outcome would be a clear understanding of the possibilities and a clear set of priorities with which to move forward.**

I'd go so far as to suggest this focus on mission could be fun, low-key, and ongoing and that it might focus and energize our various efforts.

While this is happening, the capital committee could be finding 'lead donors' to start the campaign. These would be large pledges in the range of thousands of dollars. This would be accomplished through one-on-one conversations with likely donors. The aim is to have as much as 75% of the goal of the money pledged before going public with the campaign. (If we cannot raise that much, it may be another sign to scale back or postpone plans)

At the same time, **I propose we start a congregational conversation asking "what is our commitment to the church building?"** Obviously, the church building is important to the congregation's mission, but it is very easy to take it for granted. **Raising the funds required will be much easier when we are *united* in our understanding (and can all articulate) the value of the building to our mission in the community.**

I envision the conversation begins with newsletter articles, maybe a sermon or more, perhaps some guest speakers. I invite you to listen to the <https://vimeo.com/68235839> . It's a Sermon given by the Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ. She addresses some of these same issues. (I just re-watched it; it's still online and it's worthwhile)

None of this should delay other preparations and activities including setting up a process for receiving stock and investment donations, and importantly, asking certain individuals and organizations for seed donations. We can make plans for different ways to raise money including loans, and multiple year pledges. We need to plan for acknowledgment of various levels of contributions.

Thanks for your thoughtful attention to this.

-Jeff Kern



First Congregational  
United Church of Christ

FEBRUARY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28 9:30 AM - Pick up Choir 10:30 AM - Worship Fellowship Following	29 11:00 AM - Spring Forest Qigong 2:00 - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 3:00 - 5:00 PM - Food Shelf  Pastor Enno's Day Off	30 2:00 PM - Narrative Study 2:00 - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons	31 10:00 AM - Cook County Ministerial 12:00 Intro to OWL 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 4:30-6:30 PM - Food Shelf 6:00 PM - Confirmation	01 10:00 AM - Tai Chi 11:00 AM Building & Grounds Committee 12:00 PM - Women's AA Lessons 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano 3:30-5:30 PM - CCPH 5:00 PM - Pride Committee at CC Higher Education	02 7:00 AM - AA 8:00 AM - Harbor Watch 11:00 AM - Stewardship Committee 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 7:30 PM - AA	03 10:00 AM -2:00 PM - Piano Lessons
04 9:30 AM - Pick up Choir 10:30 AM - Worship Fellowship Following 11:45 AM - Mardl Gras Potluck 2:00 PM Worship At Care Center 4:00 PM - Journey Discipleship Group	05 11:00 AM - Spring Forest Qigong 2:00 - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 3:00 - 5:00 PM - Food Shelf  Pastor Enno's Day Off	06 2:00 PM - Narrative Study 2:00 - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons	07 10:00 AM - Cook County Ministerial 12:00 Intro to OWL 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 4:30-6:30 PM - Food Shelf 6:00 PM - Confirmation	08 10:00 AM - Tai Chi 12:00 PM - Women's AA Lessons 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano 3:30-5:30 PM - CCPH	09 7:00 AM - AA 8:00 AM - Harbor Watch 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 7:30 PM - AA	10 10:00 AM -2:00 PM - Piano Lessons
11 9:30 AM - Pick up Choir 10:30 AM - Worship Fellowship Following 11:45 AM - Mardl Gras Potluck 2:00 PM Worship At Care Center 4:00 PM - Journey Discipleship Group	12 11:00 AM - Spring Forest Qigong 2:00 - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 3:00 - 5:00 PM - Food Shelf  Pastor Enno's Day Off	13 9:15 AM - Cook County Sheriff Chaplains 2:00 PM - Narrative Study 2:00 - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons	14 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 5:00 PM - Worship Committee 6:00 PM - Confirmation 7:00 PM - Ash Wednesday Service	15 10:00 AM - Tai Chi 12:00 PM - Women's AA Lessons 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano 3:30-5:30 PM - CCPH	16 7:00 AM - AA 8:00 AM - Harbor Watch 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 7:30 PM - AA	17 10:00 AM -2:00 PM - Piano Lessons 10:30 AM - Surely Discipleship Group
18 9:30 AM - Pick up Choir 10:30 AM - Worship Fellowship Following	19 11:00 AM - Spring Forest Qigong 2:00 - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 3:00 - 5:00 PM - Food Shelf  Pastor Enno's Day Off	20 12:00 PM Clergy Cluster Study 2:00 PM - Narrative Lessons 5:00 PM - Board of Directors	21 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 6:00 PM - Confirmation 7:00 PM - Lenten Gathering	22 10:00 AM - Tai Chi 12:00 PM - Women's AA Lessons 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano 3:30-5:30 PM - CCPH 4:00 PM - Pastor Relations Committee 5:00 PM - Library Board of Trustees	23 7:00 AM - AA 8:00 AM - Harbor Watch 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 7:30 PM - AA	24 10:00 AM -2:00 PM - Piano Lessons
25 9:30 AM - Pick up Choir 10:30 AM - Worship Fellowship Following	26 11:00 AM - Spring Forest Qigong 2:00 - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 3:00 - 5:00 PM - Food Shelf  Pastor Enno's Day Off	27 2:00 PM - Narrative Study 2:00 - 6:00 PM - Piano Lessons	28 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 6:00 PM - Confirmation 7:00 PM - Lenten Gathering	29 10:00 AM - Tai Chi 12:00 PM - Women's AA Lessons 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano 3:30-5:30 PM - CCPH	01 7:00 AM - AA 8:00 AM - Harbor Watch 2:00-6:00 PM - Piano Lessons 7:30 PM - AA	03 10:00 AM -2:00 PM - Piano Lessons