

The Church Visitor

First Congregational United Church of Christ Church, Alexandria, MN 56308

WORDS FROM PASTOR JILL

Dear Friends:

Our Church Council has been working over the past several months to articulate a mission (or purpose) statement for our church. A mission statement is important because it explains, in concise and compelling terms, our purpose for being.

At our March meeting, the Council affirmed the work of the writing team and adopted the following mission statement: **“To be an inclusive community that welcomes extravagantly, seeks God, and follows Jesus into the world.”**

We hope that this mission statement will be internalized by all of us, **used** and repeated regularly as it guides our planning and decision-making. The worst thing that can happen with any mission statement is after a long word-smithing process leading to a statement too long for anyone to remember, the statement is filed and forgotten about. Mission statements are like muscles. They are meant to be used—and the more we use them, the stronger they become.

When the Church Council is setting goals for the year, their goals should be in service of this mission. When Committees are planning their work, they might ask: “How does this event, activity or service we are planning help us to live out our mission “to be an inclusive community that welcomes extravagantly, seeks God and follows Jesus into the world?” Some questions we might ask, although not intended to be an exhaustive list, are:

Are there ways we can make this plan more inclusive?

How will we welcome, not ordinarily, but extravagantly?

Who might not know that they are welcome?

Leadership

Moderator:

Jane Harstad, 760-7044

Assistant Moderator:

Administrative Board:

Clayton Mielke, 766-2910

Memorials:

Sandy Grove, 491-2441

Women’s Fellowship:

President:

Ann Branch 320-491-0316

Angel Care Team:

Daisy Stahlberg, 763-9461

Missions:

Co-Chairs:

Judy Kuhlmann, 763-6033

Julie Thompson, 846-4768

Connections:

DiAnne Loch, 766-0610

Christian Education:

Pam Schauff, 852-7338

Kylie Schauff, 304-0045

Music:

Greg Kappahn,

612-978-2944

Stewardship:

Ron Branch, 320-491-0135

Worship:

Marc Blakesley, 612-325-1467

Library:

Board of Spiritual Life

Joy Wrolson, 612-277-4220

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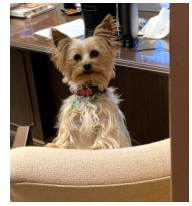
How will we seek God in our meetings and our planning?

Are we providing regular opportunities for people to seek God—personally and corporately?

How will we equip people to follow Jesus into the world?

What spiritual gifts and talents do the members of our congregation have to offer beyond our walls?

How might we support our members whose ministry is in the wider community?



A clear mission statement helps us decide what to do—and what not to do. If we are not clear about our mission, we often make decisions based on personal preferences or the bottom line. In healthy, thriving organizations, decisions are made based upon their sense of mission.

It is my privilege to work alongside you as we serve God in Alexandria and beyond. It is my hope and prayer that living into this stated purpose (mission) statement will lead to deepening discipleship and transformational ministry in our congregation and community! May it be so!!

On the Journey with You!

Pastor Jill



THOUGHTS FROM OUR MODERATOR

Psst...Can You Hear That? It's Opportunity Knocking!

Hi Friends,

Our Annual Programmatic Meeting is coming up on Sunday, May 21 right after church. It's always an important meeting for our entire congregation, and this year especially so. We have two primary goals for this meeting:

1. Elect the new slate of officers for our committees/council
2. Vote on a resolution to declare ourselves open and affirming

So herein lies the opportunity! The good work of our church is dependent on having active committees who regularly meet and as the saying goes – “git ‘er done”.

We would *love* to have you join in on that work. I say work, but I can tell you from experience that I have also had a great deal of fun on our church committees and board. Our congregation is full of smart and interesting people who are genuinely fun to be around, so I highly recommend joining a committee or board.

Whether you are interested in Facilities, Investments, Tech, Missions, New Members, Music, Worship, Outreach, Memorials, Christian Education or Fellowship – we have a committee for you!

Please consider getting in on the active work of our church by joining a committee. I – or any member of our Council – would be happy to share more information with you and help you select a committee to serve on. Pastor Jill would too!

In Peace, Love and Service-Jane Harstad ,Moderator

TREASURER'S REPORT

This Report is based on my March 2023 Reports which were approved by the Church Council in our April 18th meeting

Here are figures from March, 2023, from February 2023, and from March, 2022 for comparison:

<u>March 2023</u>	<u>February 2023</u>	<u>March 2022</u>
<u>General Fund Income</u>		
\$67,207.95	\$10,951.00	\$17,592.00
<u>Monthly Expenses</u>		
\$13,953.46	\$17,868.68	\$16,180.11

Yes, the income figure for March 2023 is quite miraculous - first, because we received a \$50,000 unrestricted bequest from the estate of Helen Jane Morrison, and second, because even without that bequest, our income exceeded our expenses. With interest rates for Certificates of Deposit high enough to justify it, the Board of Administration has now invested \$40,000 from the General Fund in a CD at Viking Bank.

This will still allow us to keep enough in our General Fund to pay our bills, even if we eventually have to borrow from the Special and Reserved funds contained within the General Fund Balance.

As we move forward together under the wonderful leadership of Pastor Jill and our Church Council and Board of Administration, I am thankful for miraculous surprises that God sends our way! Let me thank each of you, once again, for your continuing generosity to our church as we seek to do God's work in the world around us.

-Greg Kapphahn, Treasurer

The Annual Programmatic Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, May 21. One of the main features of this meeting is to elect a slate of Committee and Board members and chairs. We will also be voting on a resolution to declare ourselves open and affirming.

A quorum for the transaction of business at any membership meeting shall be not less than ten percent of the members entitled to vote.

Unless otherwise required, a majority vote is decisive.

A member present shall be entitled to vote. Proxy and cumulative voting are prohibited. Associate and regular members are allowed to vote.

INVITATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM PASTOR JILL

Pastor Jill is still meeting folks at Dunn Brothers Coffee (between Wal-Mart and Fleet Farm) every



Monday at 10 am. Join us, grab a cup of your beverage of choice—and join the conversation about the biblical text(s) for the upcoming Sunday!

Drop-Ins Welcome



And we're still gathering for Holy Happy Hour, Thursdays from 4:30-6:00 pm, at Pike & Pint in the dining room (or patio). Come for all or part of the time, and feel free to bring something you would like to talk about. We look forward to getting to know you! Questions? Call Jill Sanders @319.361.0737



Wednesday May 10 6 pm

Joyride

2022, 93 minutes

JOYRIDE is a huge-hearted, wickedly funny and emotional story about hope; a story of how we can heal the wounds of our past with love, spirit and courage. The film, at its heart, is a meditation on friendship and the miracle of forgiveness. Or if forgiveness is not possi-

ble, then at least acceptance. It tells a powerful story of healing and of motherhood. It is a journey of exploration into the heart of what it means to be, to have, to lose, a mother. It looks at motherhood in all its beauty and challenges. The film hopes to talk of friendship, of trust, and ultimately, of the inter-connectivity of all our lives, and asks us to reimagine the idea of family.

This exploration begins with a 12 year old boy running away from his Dad during his Mother’s wake and stealing a taxi that has a sleeping woman and her newborn child in the back seat.

Wednesday June 7 6 pm

Inside Out

2015 95 minutes

Growing up can be a bumpy road, and it's no exception for Riley, who is uprooted from her Midwest life when her father starts a new job in San Francisco. Like all of us, Riley is guided by her emotions - Joy, Fear, Anger, Disgust and Sadness. The emotions live in Headquarters, the control center inside Riley's mind, where they help advise her through everyday life. As Riley and her emotions struggle to adjust to a new life in San Francisco, turmoil ensues in Headquarters. Although Joy, Riley's main and most important emotion, tries to keep things positive, the emotions conflict on how best to navigate a new city, house and school.

“Spirit on the Screen” meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Being people of faith means living as spiritual beings in the context of everyday life. Each of these movies has both subtle and obvious spiritual dimensions. After each movie, time will be spent talking about our observations. You can come just for the movies or stay for the conversation that follows. ALL are welcome, so take this opportunity to invite someone who you would like to introduce to our Church and who may find this type of involvement a better fit than Sunday morning Worship.

-Sponsored by the Board of Spiritual Life

* * * * *

Our Journeys Continue through the summer



We are still enjoying our walks together at Big Ole Park on Thursday mornings. We welcome anyone to join us at 9 am. There’s plenty of parking available there, too. So come on along!

-Board of Spiritual Life

F.R.O.G. POWER 2022 (Fully Rely On God’s Power)

We meet monthly on the 3rd Sunday from 11-2 pm. During this time, we leap into Bible stories, go on adventures, have lunch, find ways to serve others, and form bonds with each other while we discover the power of our God. Friends are always welcome!! Pam and Kylie always have something new and exciting that they pull up from amongst their lily pads!

NEWS FROM MISSIONS



Throughout the month of April we collected donations for One Great Hour of Sharing. This offering is meant for those facing disasters, floods, -tornadoes, and more. Disasters never go away . If you missed the opportunity to give in April, we still welcome your donations.

Beginning in June our conference mission is Strengthen the Church. The Strengthen the Church Offering supports the work of our conference and the national United Church of Christ to become a multi-racial/multi-cultural church, accessible to all. The offering funds leadership development, youth and young adult ministries and new and renewing congregations.

Bountiful Basket

Thanks to your donations, both monetary and items placed in the basket our neighbors and friends suffering with food insecurity we were able to deliver to the Outreach Food shelf 261 lbs of non-perishable goods and two checks : the first for \$1052.86 and the second for \$400. That is amazing.

In May the Bountiful Basket continues to be for Someplace Safe. Lists are right on the basket to help you provide them with much needed items.

God bless you all, you make our job as members of this generous , loving church so rewarding!

-Julie Hjelm for the Missions Committee

Do you have any Graduates (high school, college, tech, etc.) in your immediate family this spring? We will be celebrating their achievements in worship on Sunday, June 4th, with a reception following. Please call the Church office with names and a brief description of their accomplishments to be shared that Sunday Photos are welcome, too, and can be emailed to office@firstcongregationaluccalex.com Thank you!

April was Earth Month. But it is important to live every day as if we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors. We only borrow it from our children.

Monday, May 29th



*serving from
8:30 to 12 noon*

Our Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast is just around the corner. This has been an annual fundraiser to support our on-going ministry for over a decade.

There is energy already growing around the church with people asking how they can help -- offering to flip pancakes, bus tables, do the dishes, etc. Look for sign-up sheets for volunteer opportunities in the back of the sanctuary.

As in previous years, we are thankful for folks who help by promoting the event and selling tickets in advance. There will be ticket packs available from the office during regular office hours and after worship in the back of the sanctuary. Please consider selling advanced tickets or buying a batch to give to friends, neighbors, co-workers as a way of letting them know of our ministry and presence in the community.

Thank you for all the ways you are already helping us reflect the love of God in the Alexandria and thank you for considering how you might put your God given gifts to use in make this year's pancake breakfast a success.

Your Pancake Breakfast Leadership Team:

~Emersen Anderson, Marc Blakesley, Ann & Ron Branch

WOMEN'S SECTION

WOMENS FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Womens Fellowship will meet on Thursday, May 4 at noon. Bring your own lunch, a sweet treat and beverage will be provided. The program will be “spring” related and sure to be of interest. Barb Brown and Kay Sukovich will provide the treat and Carol Zavadil will lead a devotion. The Board will meet at 11 in the Cambridge Room.

Of special interest is the planning for the Summer Salad Luncheon and Bake Sale in July. Please save the date —July 13, 11-1 pm.

This event continues to be a major fundraiser for our group and we will need many helpers. Think about what you may do to help.

The June meeting will be on Thursday, June 1 at noon. There will be a special program to honor the memory of those women of the group who passed away this past year. Watch for more details as the date gets closer.

Friendly Service Quilting Group - We will meet on Tuesday, May 9th at 9 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Since it is the last meeting until September, we will have our usual Pot Luck Luncheon. Bring your favorite dish to share. Everyone is welcome to come to help us assemble quilts and to enjoy the fellowship. Lunch will be at approximately 11:30 a.m. We will give Someplace Safe 4 quilts in May. Carol Zavadil & Carolyn Chlian, Co-Chairs

Lunch Bunch - Will meet on Tuesday, May 16th for lunch at the Grand Arbor Pioneer Grill Restaurant at 11:30 a.m. Come join us for lunch and lots of visiting. We will also be meeting on Tuesday June 20. Everyone welcome. Carol Zavadil, Facilitator

In May and June we're celebrating ...

Birthdays and Anniversaries

May

Becky Strand	05/01
Stuart Henrickson	05/04
Curt Schimmelpfennig	05/07
Donna Myers	05/09
Charles Lawrence Perkins	05/10
Megan Norling Wilken	05/11
Deb Bergstrom	05/11
Cindy Norling	05/14
Julie Hjelm	05/15
Audrey Froemming	05/19
Mary Mische	05/25
Diane Alveshere	05/29
Sydney Gauthier	05/29



June

Maryjane Westra	06/06
Lori LeBrasseur	06/20
Penny Trenne	06/23
Pam Schauff	06/25
Deb Verpy	06/25
Capistrant anniversary	06/26
Erin Weatherwax	06/30

REDESIGN TASK FORCE REPORT

Many improvements have taken place in our church building during February and March. The largest project was new wiring, lighting, and ceiling tiles in all 3 rooms of the office complex. This project was paid for with money from the capital fund. We are grateful that the Board of Administration approved this much needed improvement to our facilities.

The West Central Community Action tax people used many spaces in our building the past 3 months. They are grateful for being accommodated so they could serve many people in our community. Rooms will be back for regular use by April 20th.

The task force is grateful for donations from Women's Fellowship, emerging ministry fund, memorial committee, and individual members to fund new furnishings for the Cambridge Room. The room will have a new look by the end of May, and will be a beautiful space with comfortable and flexible seating for use by various groups. Thanks so much to Jo U and Mary M for the time and energy to plan and implement this redesigned space.

In January we invited Julie M from our congregation to display her artwork throughout the hallways and rooms. We hope to continue this project by installing proper track hardware for the main hallway so that we can invite other artists from the community to display their art in the future. We are in need of funding to install proper hardware to hang art.

There will be a complete listing of projects completed the past year in our church's annual programmatic report. There are still spaces to be redesigned in the next year. We are looking for input from our members and friends for more ideas. Thank you to all the people who have helped with hands on labor and consulting advice to make so much happen to bring beauty and useful improvement to our building.

Marc B, Barb B, Lauren D

PRE-CAPITA MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

Did you know that when you are a member of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Alexandria, you are also a member of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ (UCC)? You are part of something even bigger than our incredible local church. You are part of a ministry and a movement that proclaims and works for a *"a just world for ALL."*

Each year the 122 local churches of the Minnesota Conference UCC are asked to contribute \$25 per member to the ministry budget of the conference to help with funding the programming and staffing of ministry opportunities best done by the larger church and in support of our local congregations. It has been the custom of this local church to ask our members to consider reimbursing this cost back to First Congregational UCC.

Later in May, members of this church will be getting a letter asking for a \$25 contribution to help defer the amount that is automatically contributing to the conference. As someone who has spent a majority of my professional ministry serving in the wider UCC and ecumenical settings, I want you to know how much your contributions are appreciated. They allow for ministry connections by many like myself. Thank you for your covenantal relationship with me and our Minnesota Conference UCC.

Blessings!

STAY CONNECTED!!!

Our worship services can be found on **YouTube** and also each weekday morning at approximately 11:45 on Charter cable channel #181.

Great, easy news!!!! Jay Clark has found us a really nice and easy way to access our worship services online!!

Go to <http://tiny.cc/firstcongo> or
<http://tiny.cc/FirstCongo>

-Thank you, Jay!

To watch our recorded services or to watch live on Sundays, our direct link to YouTube is: <https://www.YouTube.com/c/firstcongregationaluccalexandria> All videos should be listed there, and you can choose the one you want to watch. We continue to use the screen in worship, which you can see at home, so you can follow and sing along if you wish. If you have questions, please call the Church office. We are trying to keep everyone “connected” as a Church family.

Like Us On...



or



Instagram

Our Church’s general ZOOM connection information:

1) **TO JOIN VIA YOUR CONNECTED DEVICE:**

<https://zoom.us/j/9990015170>

Meeting ID: 999 001 5170

2) **To dial in by phone:**

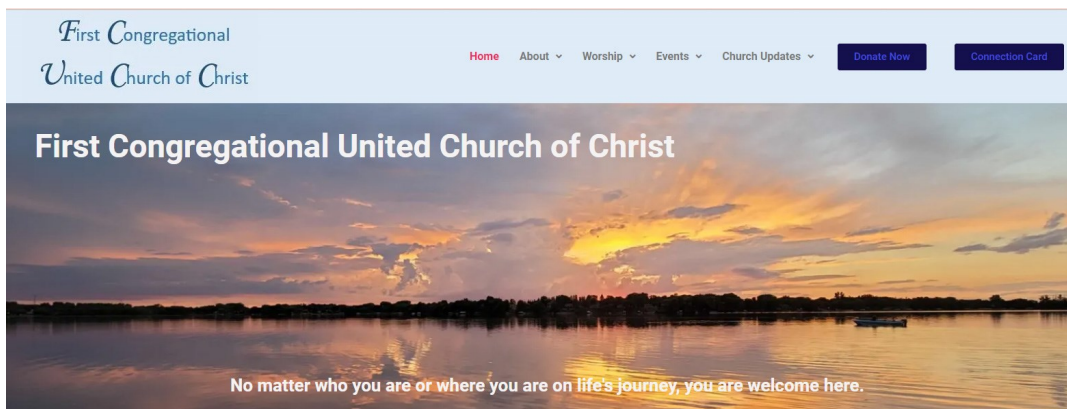
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 999 001 5170

We also have online giving available! Check out our updated website: www.firstcongregationaluccalex.com.

Click on the word “donate” at the top of the screen.

Or you can text the word “Give” to our new number: (844)987-4483 to give to our general fund. ♪



Welcome Home

Light Walking Arc...png

Show all

May 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 10-11: "Caffeinated Christianity" @ Dunn Bros.	2 4:30 OnA meeting 6:00-6:30 Prayer Connect	3 4:30 Choir rehearsal 5:30 Pastoral Relations	4 9:00 Walk @ Church 11:00 Women's Fellowship Bd 12 Meeting 4:30-6 Holy Happy Hr @ Pike & Pint	5	6
7 KXRA 9:00 Choir rehearsal 10:00 Worship in person & online 11:30 Chasing Francis	8 10-11: "Caffeinated Christianity" @ Dunn Bros.	9 9:00 Friendly Service 12-4 Elder Net. 1:00 Worship 3:45 Connections Committee 5:45 p Bd of Adm 6:00-Prayer Connect 7:00 Council	10 4:30 Choir rehearsal 6 pm Spirit on screen	11 9:00 Walk @ Church 4:30-6 Holy Happy Hr @ Pike & Pint	12	13
14 Communion 9:00 Choir rehearsal 10:00 Worship in-person & online 11:30 Chasing Francis"	15 10-11: "Caffeinated Christianity" @ Dunn Bros. •	16 11:30 a Lunch Bunch @ Grand Arbor 6:00-6:30 Prayer Connect	17 4:30 Choir rehearsal	18 9:00 Walk @ Church 4:30-6 Holy Happy Hr @ Pike & Pint	19	20
21 9:00 choir rehearsal 10:00 Worship in-person & online 11:00 Annual Programmatic Meeting 11:00 FROG power 11:30 Chasing Francis	22 10-11: "Caffeinated Christianity" @ Dunn Bros. .4;15-5:30 group spiritual direction	23 12-4 Elder Network 6:00-6:30 Prayer Connect	24	25 9:00 Walk @ Big Ole 4:30-6 Holy Happy Hr @ Pike & Pint	26	27
28 10:00 Worship in-person & online	29 8-12 Pancake Breakfast	30 : 6:00-6:30 Prayer Connect	31 4:30 Choir rehearsal			

June 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29 8-12 Pancake Breakfast	30 : 6:00-6:30 Prayer Connect	31 4:30 Choir rehearsal	1 9:00 Walk @ Big Ole 4:30-6 Holy Happy Hr @ Pike & Pint	2	3
4 KXRA 9:00 Choir rehearsal 10:00 Worship in person & online	5 10-11: "Caffeinated Christianity" @ Dunn Bros.	6 . 6:00-6:30 Prayer Connect	7 6 pm Spirit on screen	8 9:00 Walk @ Big Ole 4:30-6 Holy Happy Hr @ Pike & Pint	9 UCC Annual Conference	10 UCC Annual Conference
11 Communion 10:00 Worship in-person & online	12 10-11: "Caffeinated Christianity" @ Dunn Bros.	13 12-4 Elder Net 3:45 Connections Committee 6:00-6:30 Prayer Connect	14 5:30 Pastoral relations meeting	15 9:00 Walk @ Big Ole 4:30-6 Holy Happy Hr @ Pike & Pint	16	17
18 10:00 Worship in-person & online 11:00 FROG power	19 10-11: "Caffeinated Christianity" @ Dunn Bros.	20 11:30 a Lunch Bunch @ Grand Arbor 5:45 p Bd of Adm 6:00-6:30 Prayer Connect 7:00 Council	21	22 9:00 Walk @ Big Ole 4:30-6 Holy Happy Hr @ Pike & Pint	23 Newsletter items due	24
25 10:00 Worship in-person & online 11:00 Memorial Board	26	27 12-4:00 Elder Net. @ Church: 6:00-6:30 Prayer Connect	28 4:30 Choir rehearsal	29 9:00 Walk @ Big Ole 4:30-6 Holy Happy Hr @ Pike & Pint	30	

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
221 7th Avenue West
Alexandria, MN 56308**

**“Like Us” on Facebook!
“Where People Believe, Belong and Become”**

**E-mail: office@firstcongregationaluccalex.com
Our web page: www.firstcongregationaluccalex.com**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC – CHURCH INFORMATION

REGULAR SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 am
now: in-person and on line
with Fellowship for all ages 11:00 am
Mondays 10:00-11:00 am
“Caffeinated Christianity” @ Dunn Bros.
Tuesdays 6:30-7:00 pm
“Prayer Connection” on Zoom
Thursdays 4:30-6:00 pm
“Holy Happy Hour” @ Pike & Pint
Sunday School (F.R.O.G. Club)
every 3rd Sunday of the month
(Sept – May) 11:15 am – 2:00 pm
Women’s Fellowship
Sept – June (except Jan, Feb & July)
1st Thursday of the month, 12:00 noon



CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jill Sanders
Organists: Margaret Kalina & Greg Kapphahn
Custodians: Cliff & Phyllis Roers (summer)
Church Office: Joy Wrolson
Church phone: 320-763-3341
Church Office Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays,
and Thursdays, 10:00 am til 2:00 pm (or so)