

**Small Talk – September 13 2021**  
**By Michael Small**

One knows that we are in the midst of the fall season when the footballs begin to fly. Already into college and high school games, the pro season began with a flurry this past week. The good news for the PAC 12 Conference, of which I am a fan, is that Oregon dominated the powerful Ohio State Buckeyes by beating them at home, at their beloved “horseshoe”. The good news is that the Minnesota Vikings are tied for first in the NFC North Division! The bad news is, the Vikings are also tied for last place, all of the NFC North teams lost this weekend, though the Vikings lost in overtime by smallest of margin – three points. Ugh! It is going to be a long season.

It seems to me that my favorite sports teams are placed on this earth to teach me one lesson over and over again – humility. Their role has been to widen my perspective, to accept that which I cannot control, and to remind me that perhaps the least of my worries should be whether a sports team wins or loses. The sun always comes up the next morning and we are all faced with a new and wonderful days with many tasks before us! If I weren’t so invested in the outcome, it would be easier to accept defeat and put victory in perspective.

I am thinking about Community Church of Walker – United Church of Christ who will recognize 125 years of ministry this Sunday, September 19 2021. The nascent ministry of CCOWUCC began in 1896. Imagine what these lakes and Northwoods must have been like? Isolated, yet connected by a newly built railroad – a mixture of loggers, settlers, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, mosquito infested summers, bitterly cold winters – all instilled with a hope for a better future.

*“The Walker MN area was inhabited for thousands of years by succeeding cultures of indigenous peoples. Before European settlement, the Ojibwe moved into the area from the Great Lakes, pushing out the historic Dakota peoples, such as the Assiniboine and Hidatsa. European American settlers followed the early fur traders and trappers and encroached on Native American territories.*

*Following the construction of the railroad to the area, Patrick McGarry founded Walker in 1896. He named the settlement after the logging giant Thomas B. Walker, in hopes of luring construction of a sawmill. Walker instead chose to establish and set up operations in nearby Akeley, because of his wife's moral objection to the bars and brothels in Walker, a rough frontier town. Walker developed with business, jobs and other services generated by four other logging companies.”<sup>1</sup>*

Alongside the brothels, the bars, the newly built homes, there were those who dared to bring another presence, another vision into this newly bustling logging community built upon Ojibwe land. They brought a message of hope and gospel, good news, to a people who were dreaming dreams and raising families.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walker,\\_Minnesota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walker,_Minnesota)

Over the years, CCOWUCC, has impacted this community. Historically and presently this faith community has been a blessing, at times a light in the darkness, a place of hope when there has been despair.

For those of you who have connections with the church, I challenge you to be about remembering how you have been a part of CCOWUCC. Send me your memories that they might be shared on Sunday morning. Be present, safely (masks are highly recommended with appropriate distancing) on 9/19 at 11:00 am.

Following the Service of Recognition of 125 years you are invited to join in fellowship, outside in and out of the Gazebo. You may greet one another, the Rev. Kevin Brown from the Minnesota Conference with visions of hope, and perhaps a few good football stories.

May this be a week of blessing, hope, and discovering that God is doing a new thing in and among us!

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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