



THE GOOD NEWS!



Community Church of Walker United Church of Christ

P.O. Box 267
Hwy 371 & Tianna Drive
Walker, MN 56484

(218) 547-1093

commchurchucc@arvig.net

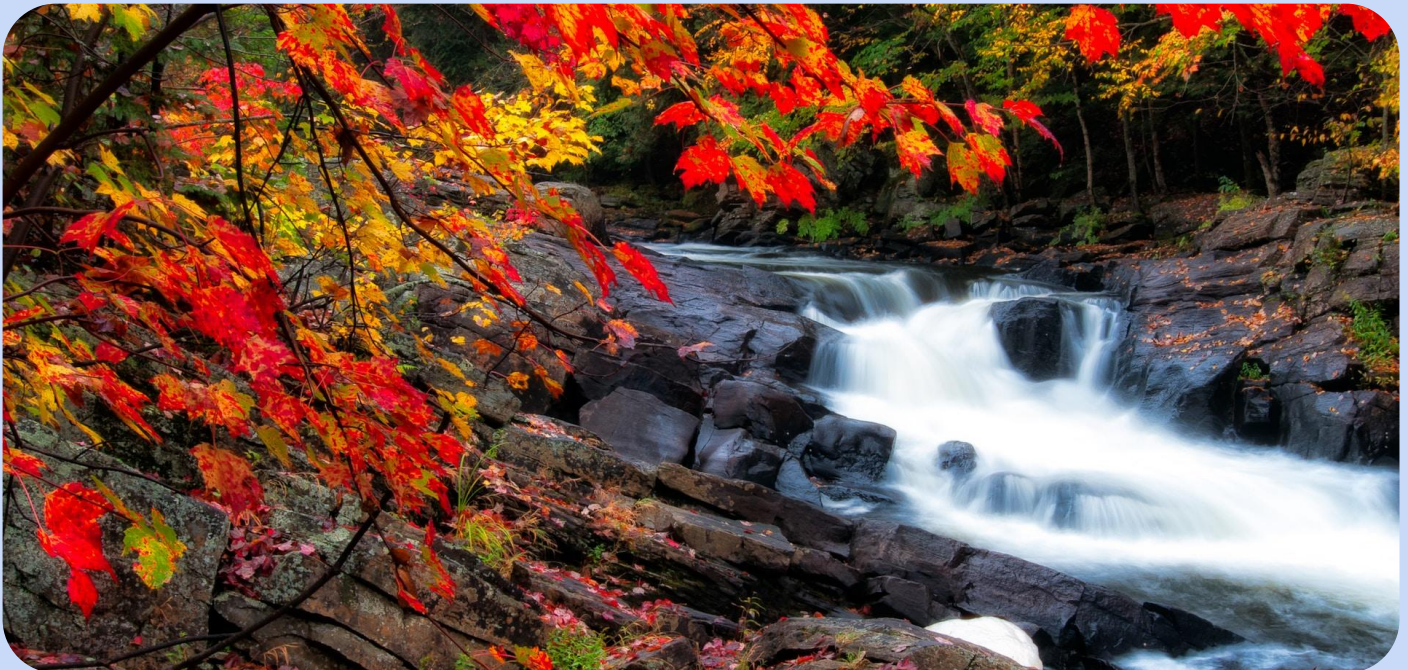
www.uccwalker.com

Our Mission

To offer a welcoming church home to all, where friendships grow, spiritual needs are met, community concerns are addressed and where

"God is Still Speaking..."

SEPTEMBER 2023



In-person worship is on Sundays at 10:00am.

Contact Pastor Michael at 218-280-1401 or email mjsmall.ucc@gmail.com if you have questions or suggestions.

FROM PASTOR MICHAEL



Nature and God?

During fellowship following worship I was asked, “Tell me about God and nature and how they are related?” I paused for a moment, thinking about how I could answer and pondering what I truly believe. In northern Minnesota nature clearly is profoundly and ever-present in our daily lives – sunrises, sunsets, stars at night, eagles soaring, loons singing, gentle winds blowing, rain, lightning, thunder, clean lakes sparkling, and even smoke from Canadian fires. We clearly experience the natural cycles of summer transitioning into fall (the leaves are beginning to change). Cold nights, shorter days, snow, and ice mark the transition to winter which can be too long and hard. Melting snow, trees budding, animals awakening, warming days, and birds returning mark the arrival of spring (along with muddy roads). And then warm and long days bring about summer. It is a predictable cycle every 365 days.

The natural world/cosmos is something one experiences through all the senses; **Sight** (Vision), **Hearing** (Auditory), **Smell** (Olfactory), **Taste** (Gustatory) **Touch** (Tactile). Two more senses have been identified; **Vestibular** (Movement): the movement and balance sense, which gives us information about where our head and body are in space. It helps us stay upright when we sit, stand, and walk. **Proprioception** (Body Position): the body awareness sense, which tells us where our body parts are relative to each other. It also gives us information about how much force to use, allowing us to do something like crack an egg while not crushing the egg in our hands.

Historically persons of faith have proclaimed the God to be known as **Creator**, of ALL THAT IS throughout the (infinite?) Cosmos AND all that will be, **Christ**, known in first century Jesus of Nazareth, born to Mary and Joseph, who died and then was resurrected, and **Spirit**, who manifests the holy in mysterious ways moving through all creation. In the UCC we proclaim that the holy, “God is still speaking, thus still creating”. These are the things of faith.

It can be argued that Creator, Christ, and Spirit are known and experienced through nature. As a person of faith, I believe there is a presence of God manifest in all that is created . . . two legged, winged, finned, four legged, all creatures large and small. I would also argue that there is a presence of God manifest in all the Cosmos, as a mark of the holy.

Are God and nature the same, overlaid upon each other? No. If one were to equate God and nature being the same, what would one say about the wildfires in Hawaii. How would one explain hurricane, tornado, flood, blizzard – all events of nature that wreak havoc, destruction, widespread death, injury, and sorrow? Sitting by a campfire on a cool summer night by the lake is remarkably different from witnessing the destruction of home and land.

Continues on Page 3

Continued from Page 2

I turn to 1st Kings 19:11-12 ¹¹ God said [to Elijah], “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of YHWH, for YHWH is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountain apart and shattered the rocks by YHWH’s power—but YHWH was not in the whirlwind. After the wind there was an earthquake—but YHWH was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire—but YHWH was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper¹.”

God and nature – God is known in that whisper, “a sound, a thin silence” perhaps heard by the heart and the soul. God is known in relationship within the beloved community. God is known in compassion, forgiveness, in the spontaneous acts of kindness, in the eyes of the other, in the touch and smell of a baby, in a long and loving relationship between loved ones. And yes, God is known in the struggles, in the disasters – not by the events alone, but how people come together to be about healing, repairing, restoring, renewing, and standing with one another in the breach, among the broken walls, and among the burnt-out buildings. God is present in our grief and loss as comforter. God is in those fearful moments as courage and wisdom.

And the glory of God can be seen in the shimmering northern lights, or the aurora borealis, in the sunrise and the sunset – for they all manifest a glimpse, only a glimpse of the beauty and wonder of God. Nature and God – what a blessing!

Pastor Michael

¹ Other translations: “a still small voice” (KJV), “a soft murmuring sound” (JPS), “a sound of sheer silence” (NRSV); literally “a sound, a thin silence.”

Thanks from your Benevolence Committee

Thank you to everyone that donated generously for our 5th Sunday collection.

This collection is going to the Pregnancy Support Center in Walker. This is to help those in need in our local areas.

Ryan and Joanne Pels donated their Gazebo free will offering to this mission.

You can be proud that we have collected over \$600.00.

Thank you again, for your support in our church missions to reach out to others. God is still speaking!

Walker Community UCC
Benevolence Committee

Chris Kolp
Doris Johnson
Doris Splichal





Benevolence Board Asks For Focus On Hawaii

5th Sunday Offering – October 29 Designated for Hawaiian Relief, Recovery, and Long-Term-Restoration

Unimaginable destruction by wind and fire has wreaked death, pain, and despair on the island of Maui. We want to respond. Checks may be written now, and in the days to come, for relief by indicating in the memo line “UCC Hawaiian Relief”. Those checks will be sent to the MN Conference UCC and passed on to UCC efforts to respond. You may directly give by clicking the QR code.

With more than 2,200 buildings significantly damaged and destroyed, 86% of them residential homes, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) estimates it will cost \$5.5 billion to rebuild Lahaina. Including all fires, Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said the overall damage was estimated at close to \$6 billion.

The historic Waiola Church in Lahaina, a UCC congregation, was among the buildings destroyed, according to members.

The blaze that decimated Lahaina is the deadliest U.S. wildfire since 1918, when northern Minnesota’s Cloquet Fire, which raged for more than four days, claimed 453 lives, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Hawaii’s fires are the most lethal disaster to hit the islands since a tsunami killed 61 people in 1960 — a year after Hawaii became a U.S. state.

Amid the devastation, the church has been active in response. The UCC’s Global H.O.P.E. team leader, the Rev. Josh Baird, has been working with Hawaii Conference Disaster Coordinator Danny Tengan, in consultation with Hawaii Conference Minister the Rev. David Popham and other leaders, to continually assess the situation.

“As the tragic impact of these wildfires is revealed, local congregations already are providing resources and assistance to those who are affected, including gas, clothes, food and shelter,” Baird said. “Through this Hawaii wildfires appeal, the United Church of Christ will increase support to immediate relief efforts and be present for the journey ahead, enabling long-term aid for persons who require assistance with their recovery.”





UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
NEIGHBORS IN NEED 2023
ucc.org/nin

Behold!

*“God saw everything God made
and behold, it was very good.”*

Genesis 1:31

Artist: Alexis

Age: 15

Congregation: Trinity United Church of Christ, St. Louis MO

Neighbors in Need Offering Received at CCOWUCC on October 1, 2023

The Neighbors in Need offering, which we will receive on October 1, supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

Through our national Justice and Local Church Ministries office, <https://tinyurl.com/2bfytatb>, you can find resources, news updates, and action alerts on a broad spectrum of justice issues. Working with members of the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network (a network of thousands of UCC justice and peace advocates), Justice and Witness continues its strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice. Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). Historically, forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and northern Nebraska. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These churches and their pastors are supported by CAIM. CAIM is also an invaluable resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations in the U.S. With your assistance, we together can help our Neighbors in Need Please give generously.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

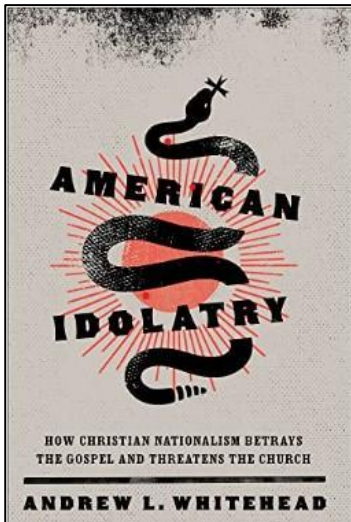
The August meeting will take place on September 19th at 6:00pm over Zoom.

Book Conversation — In-Person and Zoom

AMERICAN IDOLATRY

How Christian Nationalism Betrays The Gospel and Threatens The Church

by Andrew L. Whitehead



Mid-September, you are invited to participate in the book conversation of **American Idolatry**. Let Pastor Michael know by calling 218-280-1401, or emailing mjsmall.ucc@gmail.com. You may also talk to a member of the Christian Education Board.

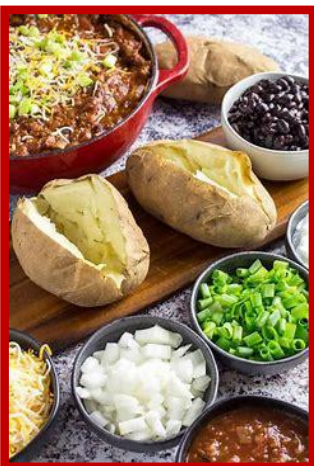
Of **American Idolatry** it is written, *"Power. Fear. Violence. These three idols of Christian nationalism are corrupting American Christianity."*

"Andrew Whitehead is a leading scholar on Christian nationalism in America and speaks widely on its effects within Christian communities. In this book, he shares his journey and reveals how Christian nationalism threatens the spiritual lives of American Christians and the church."

"Whitehead shows how Christians harm their neighbors when they embrace the idols of power, fear, and violence. He uses two key examples--racism and xenophobia--to demonstrate that these idols violate core Christian beliefs. Through stories, he illuminates expressions of Christianity that confront Christian nationalism and offer a faithful path forward."

"American Idolatry encourages further conversation about what Christian nationalism threatens, how to face it, and why it is vitally important to do so. It will help identify Christian nationalism and build a framework that makes sense of the relationship between faith and the current political and cultural context."

Potato Bar in September



Put it on your calendar – **Potato Bar after worship of September 17th**. Look forward to a great meal, outstanding conversations, and a good time for all. More details to come.

This event is sponsored by Women's Fellowship.

Watch for News on Upcoming Rummage Sale in October – STAY TUNED!



SEPTEMBER DATES TO CELEBRATE

Birthdays

5	Benjamin Koch	27	Joanna Aamodt
10	Rosanna Walker		Beth Alderson
14	Phyllis Hallene	30	A Bixley
	Jack Hopen		Bob Winegar
16	Gay Jacobson		
17	Lexie Barber		
18	Barb Brownlow		
19	Don Splichal		
21	Dick Brownlow		
22	Kaitlin Farrell		



Anniversaries

2	Duane and Sue Grage
---	---------------------



WORSHIP MINISTRY — SEPTEMBER

GREETERS

September 3	Beth Alderson
September 10	Sue Standeven
September 17	Chris Kolp
September 24	Gay Jacobson

LITURGISTS

September 3	Bev Jorland
September 10	Deb Farrell
September 17	Joanna Aamodt
September 24	Sonja Huber

AUDIO

Esther Covert

VIDEO

Aurora Diehl

MUSIC

Leisa Bragg



CHOIR DIRECTOR

Joanna Aamodt

ALTER & COMMUNION PREPARATION

Bev Jorland

THE GOOD NEWS!

is a monthly newsletter publication of the
Community Church of Walker United Church of Christ
Located at the corner of Hwy 371 & Tianna Drive
Walker, MN 56484

Mailing address: P.O. Box 267
Walker, MN 56484

Phone: (218) 547-1093 **Email:** commchurchucc@arvig.net

Website: www.uccwalker.com

Pastor Michael Small

Mailing address: P.O. Box 38, Hackensack, MN 56452

Phone: (218) 280-1401 **Email:** mjsmall.ucc@gmail.com

Secretary: Sabbastian Wilson-Webb

Hours: 9:00am-2:00pm Tuesday & Thursday

Email: commchurchucc@arvig.net

Phone: 218-547-1093 (leave a message)

Church Moderator: Bonnie Bailey

Vice-Moderator: Sue Grage

Clerk: Gay Jacobson

Treasurer: Deb Farrell

Financial Secretary: Joanne Detwiler

Historian: Chris Kolp

Board of Trustees Chair: Ryan Pels

Board of Benevolence Chair: Doris Johnson

Board of Christian Education Chair: TBA

Board of Memorials Chair: Wendy Paul

Board of Music Chair: Linda Barber

Board of Spiritual Life Chair: Ruth Niedermann

Women's Fellowship Chair: TBA (**Acting Chair:** Sue Grage)

Minister/Church Relations Board Members:

Deb Farrell, Bev Jorland, Doris Johnson, Bonnie Bailey

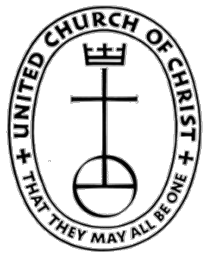
Choir Director: Joanna Aamodt

Custodian: TBA

**Articles for the October 2023 edition of The Good News! newsletter
need to be emailed by 11:00 AM Friday, September 22nd, 2023**

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	1 FRIDAY	2 SATURDAY
3 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	4	5	6 1:00pm Women's Fellowship	7	8	9
10 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	11 6:30-8:30pm St. Mark's Worship Service	12	13 11:00am Deadline for Adding to Council Agenda	14	15	16
17 10:00am Outdoor Worship Potato Bar and Fellowship Time after the service	18	19 6:00pm Council Meeting on Zoom	20	21	22 11:00am Newsletter Submission Deadline	23
24 10:00am Outdoor Worship Fellowship Time after the service	25 6:30-8:30pm St. Mark's Worship Service	26	27	28	29	30



Community Church of Walker
United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 267
Walker, MN 56484

Return Service Requested

September

THE GOOD NEWS!

Community Church of Walker United Church of Christ