

GCN

THE GOOD NEWS!



**Community Church of Walker
United Church of Christ**

P.O. Box 267
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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...”

NOVEMBER 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



Moving Beyond Fear

On Wednesday nights, there are some who gather in-person at the church and with zoom for soup, sometimes with a sandwich. Currently we are having a GREAT conversation about the book ***American Idolatry – How Christian Nationalism Betrays The Gospel and Threatens The Church*** by Andrew L. Whitehead. Whitehead's words and sense of what it means to be Christian in a world that is fear-filled call us to be faithful!

*The kingdom of God inverts the power dynamics of the kingdoms of this world. [Jesus] did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. He commands us to give to those who ask. He commands us to give our cloak if someone asks for our tunic. He commands us to go two miles with the one who asks us to go one mile. **He commands us not to fear but to respond with love to those around us—even if, and especially when, it might cost us our power, privilege, and comfort.** We are to confront our fear by loving our neighbors and enemies through service and self-sacrifice, seeking the flourishing of all.*

I don't know about you, but these commands scare me. I am afraid of being commanded to live according to these principles. It seems like counting ourselves among the marginalized, seeking their good, and not giving in to fear ensures that we Christians will be sidelined. It seems like a surefire way to invite others to take advantage of us. Moreover, it can seem like an inefficient way to live out the gospel and influence the world around us.

However, God does not call us to efficiency. He calls us to be faithful. *Before going to the cross to give up his life in order to complete his rescue mission, Jesus was deeply afraid. Dying must not have seemed like the most effective or efficient means to achieve the end goal. His disciples certainly felt this way. Most of them embraced fear at what Jesus's sacrifice meant for them. Jesus, however, committed to trusting the upside-down nature of God's kingdom, and he transformed the world. In time, his disciples did the same.*

These are difficult teachings. *They do not align with the American ideals of individualism, power, comfort, safety, and security. The gospel animating Christianity is a lot more radical than most American Christians are likely to admit. It sure seems radical to me. And uncomfortable.*

But it also sounds so beautiful. This vision always pulls me back in. I wish to see this expression of Christianity reflected in our organizations, in our nation, and in the world around us. Christian nationalism would have none of this sacrifice and service business. Christian nationalism demands we embrace group-level fear and threat. But by doing so, we betray the gospel.”¹

Continues on Page 3

¹ Whitehead, Andrew L., *American Idolatry: How Christian Nationalism Betrays the Gospel and Threatens the Church* (pp. 97-98). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

Continued from Page 2

In these fall days, transitioning to winter . . . , days that are getting darker and shorter – let us not fall victim to those who would have us fear. In the darkness, may our words shed light, speak truth, and instill hope for the days to come. As Christians, we are called to be faithful, faithful to God/Spirit/Christ who are a constant companion. They give us courage, wisdom, comfort in the midst of sorrow, calm on the turbulent seas, a hope for the world to be.

May we know and experience the abundance of God, and out of that abundance be a people who lead.

Thanks be to God, Pastor Michael

How to Actually Help After Yet Another Mass Shooting

As of October 26, there have been 565 mass shootings in the United States this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive. That means there have been more mass shootings than days in a year.

Again, another shooting. In Lewiston, Maine eighteen people are dead, thirteen injured with an “assault rifle” in the hands of one person. Again, there are those who pray . . . and then say there is nothing I can do. I found Jillian Wilson’s article to be very helpful. I would encourage you to read the complete article that can be found on-line. The points below are from Wilson’s article.

1. **Don’t let your anger fizzle out.** - This feeling you have right now? Let it propel you in the weeks to come. Action is necessary all year round — not just in the wake of a horrific shooting.
2. **Understand that mass shootings are just one part of the gun violence problem.** Shannon Watts, the founder of *Moms Demand Action* says, “I am grateful that people decide to get off the sidelines after a horrific shooting tragedy. I am so, so grateful. But it’s important that they understand this is committing to the work of activism, and it’s also about looking at this issue holistically.” Mass shootings and school shootings get a lot of publicity, but they are just 1% of the gun violence that happens in this country, according to Watts.
3. **Volunteer with a gun safety organization in your state.** Gun regulations and legislation vary by state, which means what is going on with legislation in your area may be totally different for your friend 1,000 miles away.
4. **Connect with a local community violence intervention organization.** “There are a lot of partner organizations that we work with that are doing this work and have been, frankly, for decades with very little attention,” Watts said. **Donate if you’re able to offer money.**
5. **Fight the narrative that guns make us safer.** Many people believe the myth that guns make us safer — but the numbers show they do not. This misconception is a huge part of American gun culture, according to Nina Vinik, the founder of Project Unloaded, a gun violence prevention group.
6. **Call or write your local representative.**
7. **Vote for candidates who support gun safety.**
8. **If you get involved, don’t forget to take care of yourself.** According to Dr. Alexa Mieses Malchuk, a primary care physician at One Medical in North Carolina, gun violence — whether you experience it firsthand or hear about it on the news — affects your body and mind.
9. **Don’t feel hopeless; it will lead to inaction.** ,” Adam Garber, the executive director of [CeaseFire PA](#), writes, “As long as we feel helpless, I think this is in politics in general, we give up our power in this moment. So, the choice to feel hopeful, to be helpful, is a reclaiming of the power that we have as citizens, and reclaiming that power means that we can take action to save lives.”

Unapproved Minutes of Church Council – October 18, 2023

In Attendance: Bonnie Bailey, Pastor Michael Small, Deb Farrell, Ruth Niedermann, Esther Covert, Ryan Pels, Marge Koch, Joanne Detwiler, and Gay Jacobson. Wendy Paul and Joanna Aamodt via Zoom.

1. **Meeting was called to order** by Moderator, Bonnie Bailey at 6:02
2. **Pastor Michael** led us in an opening prayer.
3. **Review of Council minutes** from 9/19/23. Doris Johnson made the motion to approve, Joanna Aamodt second, motion carried.
4. **Written reports:** Treasurers, Financial, Memorial: Marge moved to approve all written reports as presented, Gay Second, motion carried.
5. **Oral Reports:**
 - **Trustees:** Ryan Pels:
 - Real Solar of Backus MN has been contacted seeking a consultation concerning solar panels installed at the church.
 - Kent Reeves is looking for the electrician will set up the mechanism for the handicapped door. When electrician is at the church ask to
 - Install emergency lights in the Fellowship Hall
 - Install a “Motion Activated” light for north entrance of the church
 - Church has been approached Marco Copiers/Printers about replacing copier. Esther stated “A new copying machine will not be needed at this time.”
 - Tim Johnson is working on plumbing issues in the bathrooms.
 - Ryan will talk to the city about street and potential closure.
 - Esther will ask Sentenced to Serve to wash windows down stairs.
 - Minnesota Power needs to be contacted for an energy assessment.
 - **Music:** No report.
 - There will be a joint meeting between the music board and Joanne Detwiler, Bonnie Bailey, and Sue Grage from Women’s Fellowship on Wednesday October 25th at 4:00 p.m. to discuss the Christmas Concert, scheduled for December 8, 2023. The meeting is scheduled October 25 at 4:00.
 - Joanna Aamodt shared that she thinks that the mics for the choir need to be addressed in order for the choir to be heard on the video recording. Ryan will work with Joanna to resolve.
 - **Benevolence:**
 - Neighbors in Need: \$505 was received
 - Sunday October 29 is the 5th Sunday and the money collected will go to the Hawaii relief fund.
 - Doris mentioned that December has five Sunday’s and she and Chris would like to suggest that the collection be given to the church this year. Ruth made the motion 5th Sunday in December given for Church. Deb second. Motion Carried.
 - **Christian Education:**
 - Joanne Detwiler stated that a meeting was planned but it didn’t pan out. They will have a meeting on Wed Oct 25th at 2:00.
 - **Women’s Fellowship:**
 - Esther Covert: \$657 was raised from potato bar. Women’s fellowship decided to donate \$200 Leech Lake Behavioral Health and \$457 will be given to the Walker schools for school supplies. Ruth Niedermann will deliver the backpacks that were donated and money from the potato bar.

Continued from Page 4

- o The Holiday Rummage sale brought in estimate of \$4,200. A check for \$1,000 each will be sent to St. Joseph's Hospice (CHI), Faith in Action, Boys and Girls Club, and Walker Food Shelf.
- o A box will be placed in the Narthex to collect winter coats, socks, long johns, hats and gloves, boots for Sentence to Serve for their needs. They especially need 2X and larger sizes.
- o Holiday concert: Joint meeting with music board will be planned.
- o There will be a meeting and Christmas Party for Women's Fellowship on Monday December 11 at 1:00 p.m.
- o There is an Rest & Relaxation room for anyone needing a break and some privacy. It was previously a Sunday School room.

Esther moved that all oral reports be accepted as presented, Joanne Detwiler second, Motion carried.

6. Old business:

- Building maintenance had been covered in Ryan Pels report
- A Facility Use Agreement will be negotiated with St. Mark's. Michael will talk with Pastor Ben concerning document.
- Solar Power... will give an assessment
- Fall Clean-up has been taken care of
- Holiday events: Christmas Concert, Christmas Eve at 5:00 p.m., December 24th 10:00 a.m. worship service will a rebroadcast the Christmas Concert.
- Christmas Eve collections will be designated for the UCC Christmas Fund (formerly The Veterans of the Cross offering).
- 5th Sunday Offering will go to the church general budget

7. New Business:

- Annual Blood Drive on 1/10/24, Wednesday, get calls to volunteer to help. Ruth Niedermann said she will help as will Esther Covert.
- Pastor report: Thanked everyone for the luncheon and the recognition for him. The hospital bombed in Gaza is funded by jointly by the United Church of Christ (UCC) and the Disciples of Christ (DOC). Book Study *American Idolatry* has been very good and they have provocative conversations. He purchased a new lavalier mic for the service. He continues having trouble with the computers, Arvig, and distribution lists.
- It has been suggested by some that there be a monthly music concert in the Fellowship Hall. Music Board will discuss and recommend.
- There was a brief conversation about dogs attending church. Possible further discussion.

8. Next meeting: November 14th at 6:00 – one week earlier than normal due to Thanksgiving

9. Deb Farrell moved that the meeting would adjourn immediately after Pastors prayer, Ruth Niedermann second, motion carried.
10. Pastor Michael let in prayer.
11. Council Meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gay Jacobson (edited by Michael Small)
Clerk – Community Church of Walker - UCC

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The August meeting will take place on November 14th at 6:00pm over Zoom.

Faith Formation – You are INVITED To Think About and Have Conversations

One's faith, one's understanding of God, Jesus, Spirit, one's experience of trying to be faithful is not static – but it is always dynamic. Over the days, years, months of one's life – one's faith evolves, changes, and hopefully grows. Sometimes it diminishes. Faith formation is an intentional process of learning, reflection, engagement, change/transformation, and action.

Some suggestions Faith Formation activities:

- **Book Conversations**
 - Bible reading/study
 - Weekly Lectionary (Revised Common Lectionary three-year cycle of assigned readings) conversation
 - Authors addressing their faith
 - Emerging theologies and understanding of God
 - Understanding other faith traditions
- **Topical Conversation**
 - Faith in action
 - Issues facing us in our communities
 - Current events
- **Spiritual Practices**
 - Lectio Divina is a contemplative way of reading the Bible.
 - Meditation
 - Prayer
 - Exercise
- **Faith Formation – Guided Conversations about “How I have experienced faith?”**
 - Intentional conversations around table – after worship
 - Gatherings in homes
- **Forum's and or Lecture series**
 - Webinars
 - In-Person and Zoom presentations

When? – before worship, after worship, after fellowship, week day, morning, afternoon, evening

Where? – at the church, in homes, in a public setting (restaurant, bar/brewery, outdoor setting)

Members of the Christian Education Board (Esther Covert, Joanne Detwiler, Wendy Paul, Marge Koch) are inviting all of us to engage in a process, a conversation about the most effective ways to engage in faith formation activities.



Daylight Saving Time ENDS
SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 5TH
AT 2:00 AM!

NOVEMBER DATES TO CELEBRATE

Birthdays

- 1 Ken Huber
- 21 Matthew Paul
Karen Pooley
- 22 Pat Bartness
- 23 Beverly Lloyd
Deb Farrell
- 24 Wendy Paul
- 25 Chris Kolp
- 27 Joanne Detwiler



Anniversaries

- 19 Matt and Wendy Paul



WORSHIP MINISTRY — NOVEMBER

GREETERS

- November 5 Doris Johnson
- November 12 Deb Farrell
- November 19 Gay Jacobson
- November 26 Gay Jacobson

LITURGISTS

- November 5 Joanna Aamodt
- November 12 Sonja Huber
- November 19 Bev Jorland
- November 26 Chris Kolp

AUDIO

Esther Covert

VIDEO

Aurora Diehl

MUSIC

Leisa Bragg



CHOIR DIRECTOR

Joanna Aamodt

ALTER & COMMUNION PREPARATION

Earl & Ruth Niedermann



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is a monthly newsletter publication of the
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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 December 2023 edition of The Good News! newsletter
 need to be emailed by 11:00 AM Friday, November 24th, 2023**

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	1 WEDNESDAY	2 THURSDAY	3 FRIDAY	4 SATURDAY
5 Daylight Saving Time Ends 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	6 Indigenous Peoples' Day	7 Election Day	8 11:00am Deadline for Adding to Council Agenda 1:00pm Women's Fellowship 6:00pm Soup Supper 6:45pm Book Conversation - American Idolatry	9	10 Veteran's Day (Observed)	11 Veteran's Day
12 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	13 6:30-8:30pm St. Mark's Worship Service	14 6:00pm Council Meeting on Zoom	15 6:00pm Soup Supper 6:45pm Book Conversation - American Idolatry	16	17	18
19 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	20	21	22 6:00pm Soup Supper 6:45pm Book Conversation - American Idolatry	23 Thanksgiving Day	24 Native American Heritage Day 11:00am Newsletter Submission Deadline	25
26 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	27 6:30-8:30pm St. Mark's Worship Service	28	29 6:00pm Soup Supper 6:45pm Book Conversation - American Idolatry	30		



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Return Service Requested



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