

GCW

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@gmail.com

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...”

APRIL 2024



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



The Critical Need for Cultural Change and Evolution

We are moving from the culture of winter to the culture of spring (in-spite of recent snowfall) – from the culture of Lent to the culture of Easter! Christ is risen! Christ is Risen indeed!

Culture, defined as “the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.”

Every day we live out of the norms and expectations of culture, often multiple and competing cultures. One could argue that one purpose of church, faith, and belief is shape and inform the culture we participate in, therefore establishing “the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular people, or other social group(s).”

Some remember the 1950's and 1960's when it felt as if we, family, friends, neighbors, lived out of a common and unified culture. We spoke the same language, had the same thoughts, looked the same way (of course that was not true for all). And I think many long for the alleged security, stability, and predictability of that culture of old.

In all times we live with multiple cultures, some dominant, others less so. Participating in multiple cultures conflicting with one another makes living productively and with a consensus of purpose a challenge. We are enmeshed in competing cultures, highlighted by a never-ending political season leading to “alternative” realities and truths. With the predominance of the internet and social media, some are tempted to “silo” themselves in one, limited culture, thus limiting common ground with others who are not like us. It then becomes impossible to see “eye to eye” and problematic that we can walk side by side with other cultures.

Try as we may, we cannot manipulate or change another culture. The only work we can do is to deeply explore the cultures that have predominantly shaped who we have been, who we are, and who we hope to be. To move forward, evolve, grow is to do the hard, and sometime painful work of remembering, of speaking with one another and listening, forgiving when needed, being forgiven when needed, and by taking on the work to create healthier, more inclusive, more loving, kinder cultures built upon where we have been and where we hope to go. Included in this process is repentance and repair for the damage we have incurred upon others.

With the cultures we mainly live in, may we put on the armor of the Spirit, may we clothe ourselves with the ways of Christ while seeking to evolve and transform the cultures we dwell in. This is a process of self-reflection, conversation with others, consensus building, and the courage to move forward with the confidence that we are not alone in this adventure.

Perhaps the words from the letter to the Romans 12:9-18, 20-21 are the beginning foundation to reshape and evolve our cultures.

Continues on Page 3

Continued from Page 2

⁹Your love must be sincere. Hate what is evil and cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with the affection of sisters and brothers. Try to outdo one another in showing respect. ¹¹ Don't grow slack, but be fervent in spirit: the One you serve is Christ. ¹² Rejoice in hope; be patient under trial; persevere in prayer. ¹³ Look on the needs of God's holy people as your own; be generous in offering hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless your persecutors—bless and don't curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Have the same attitude toward everyone. Don't be condescending to those who aren't as well off as you; don't be conceited. ¹⁷ Don't repay evil with evil. Be concerned with the highest ideal in the eyes of all people. ¹⁸ Do all you can to be at peace with everyone. . . ²⁰ But there is more: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them drink. For in doing so, you will heap burning coals upon their heads." ²¹ Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil by doing good.

May this culture be so! In Christ, Pastor Michael

Book Conversation – Begins Wednesday April 10th

Light Meal at 6:00 p.m.

Conversation 6:45 p.m. – 7:45 p.m

In-person and Virtual via Zoom

God Can't: How to Believe in God and Love after Tragedy, Abuse, and Other Evils

by Thomas Jay Oord

Hurting people ask heartfelt questions about God and suffering. Some "answers" they receive appeal to mystery: "God's ways are not our ways". Some answers say God allows evil for a greater purpose. Some say evil is God's punishment.

The usual answers fail. They don't support the truth that God loves everyone all the time. God Can't gives a believable answer to why a good and powerful God doesn't prevent evil.

Author Thomas Jay Oord says God's love is inherently uncontrolling. God loves everyone and everything, so God can't control anyone or anything. This means God cannot prevent evil

single handedly. God can't stop evildoers, whether human, animal, organism, or inanimate objects and forces.

In God Can't, Oord gives a plausible reason why some are healed, but many others are not. God always works to heal everyone, but sometimes our bodies, organisms, or other creatures do not cooperate with God's healing work. Or the conditions of creation are not right for the healing God wants to do.

Some people think God causes or allows suffering to teach us lessons or build our character. God Can't disagrees. Oord says God squeezes good from the evil God didn't want in the first place. God uses pain and suffering without willing or even allowing it.

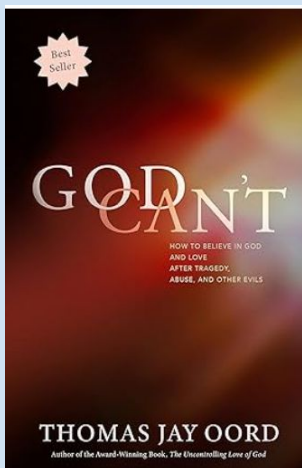
Most people think God can overcome evil singlehandedly. In God Can't, Oord says God needs cooperation for love to reign now and later. This leads to a better view of the afterlife called "relentless love." It rejects traditional ideas of heaven, hell, and annihilation. Relentless love holds to the possibility all creatures and all creation will respond to God's love.

God Can't is written in understandable language. Thomas Jay Oord's status as a world-renown theologian brings credibility to the book's radical ideas. He explains these ideas through true stories, illustrations, and scripture.

God Can't is for those who want answers to tragedy, abuse, and other evils that make sense!

Future Book Conversations

- Awakening: Five Practices for Living Fully, Feeling Deeply, and Coming into Your Heart and Soul by Catherine Duncan (Minnesota UCC Clergy).
- The Gospel of Mark DVD: A Beginner's Guide to the Good News by Amy-Jill Levine is recommended in late spring with evening session and afternoon session offered.



Community Church of Walker – United Church of Christ
Church Council Meeting
March 19, 2024

Present: Ruth Niedermann, Linda Barber, Joanne Detwiler, Doris Johnson, Michael Small, Bonnie Bailey, Esther Covert, Ryan Pels, Deb Farrell, Chris Kolp, and Gay Jacobson.
 Via Zoom: Bev Jorland and Wendy Paul.
 Absent: Sue Grage

Moderator Bonnie Bailey called the meeting to order at 6:03.

Opening Prayer: Michael Small led us in prayer.

Review of 2/20/24 Minutes: There were three misspellings: Ruth Niedermann's last name, Joanne Detwiler's last name, and desserts. Ruth Niedermann made the motion to accept the minutes with corrections made and Doris Johnson second. Motion carried.

Review/Approve Written Reports:

As of today we have \$1,015.00 for the Food Shelf in donations. That will be added to the 5th Sunday donations dedicated to the Walker Area Food Shelf.

We have been unable to find the Easter decorations that were saved from our fall sale.

Joanne Detwiler questioned if she needs to send tax information from memorial funds. It was decided that is not necessary and if someone needs it, they can request and it will be sent. Esther Covert made the motion to accept the written reports, Linda Barber second. Motioned carried.

Oral Reports

Trustees:

Ryan Pels reported that he restocked the water softener salt. We went through to 2 bags so he is going to adjust the recycling process.

There was a discussion about the sound board.

We will see the snowplow because snow is coming.

The door jamb was fixed by Ryan Pels and Kent Reeves.

Exterior signs and hooks are up.

The exterior solar lights were installed on the northside providing needed light at night. They are motion activated.

No update on solar panels.

Ryan Pels asked if when we have soup at the book studies, we rinse the bowls.

Music board:

Pastor Michael, Ken Barber, Bonnie Bailey, and Esther Covert met with Mike Schmitt (Member of Union UCC and IT person) Union UCC in Hackensack to look at their newly installed sound mixer tied in with video and streaming.

Proposal: The current sound board be replaced with a Behringer X Air X18 18-channel Tablet-controlled Digital Mixer, 2 mini-computers with keyboards and mice, one or two monitors (one touch screen), UPS for modem/router, StreamYard, brackets for monitors and necessary hardware and wiring.

Gay Jacobson made a motion to install a new mixer system for the cost up too but not over \$5000. If it will be over that amount they will come back to the council. Joanne Detwiler second. Motioned Carried.

Linda Barber shared the idea they have to create the corner downstairs for the coffee and music events. It will cost \$170 for the wood. Ken will build it and the money will come out of memorials that were given for Gary Jacobson. The concerts will be on April 28 with Ryan and Jo Pels and May 19 with Ken and Linda Barber. They will begin at 6:00 p.m. All donations given will be sent to two charities. April 28th will go to the World Central Kitchen. May 19th will go to Paws and Claws in Hackensack. Gazebo concerts will begin in June. Ruth Niedermann made the motion to approve these charities, Joanne Detwiler second. Motion carried.

Spiritual life:

Ruth Niedermann reported that the Church Directory will be completed when our snowbirds return home.

Benevolence:

Doris Johnson. announced that the *UCC One Great Hour of Sharing* offering will be received on April 14th. Our 5th Sunday donations will go to the Walker Area Food Shelf on March 31st.

Moderator Bonnie Bailey shared that the hooks are up for the outside banners, budget requests are needed this month and sent to the Trustees. If a budget is not sent, then it will remain the same as last year.

Pastor Michael shared that instead of our usual Maundy Thursday Service, we have been invited to the Seder meal at the Union Church in Hackensack. Meal surrounded by remembering as the Passover. Thus far there are 15 that have made reservations to attend.

Easter Sunday, March 31st will not have fellowship following service and Sebastian will sing.

Pastors report:

Completed the Zealot book. Sarah Koch joined. Next book will be *God Can't: How to Believe in God and Love After Tragedy, Abuse, and Other Evils* by Thomas Jay Oord and will begin in April. *Everyday Awakening: Five Practices for Living Fully, Feeling Deeply, and Coming into Your Heart and Soul* by Catherine Duncan (Minnesota UCC Clergy) is another book being considered. *The Gospel of Mark DVD: A Beginner's Guide to the Good News* by Amy-Jill Levine is recommended in late spring with evening session and afternoon session offered.

We need to set a date to complete the bi-laws and constitution revision:

Pastor and Trustees need to meet with Larry Kimbell about the elevator:

Moderator Bonnie Bailey asked for a motion to adjourn after Pastor's closing prayer. Joanne Detwiler made the motion and Deb Farrell second. Motion carried.

Pastor Michael led our closing prayer.

Next meeting will be April 16th at 6:00 p.m. in-person and virtual.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:10

Respectfully submitted by Gay Jacobson, Clerk

Sound Mixer Replacement

During the month of April the sound mixer for the sanctuary will be replaced. This will enhance the ability for folks to hear during worship, create flexibility for "sound management" during the service, and maximize the sound quality on streamed events. We will also be able to live-streamed concerts and events both from the Fellowship Hall and from the outdoor Gazebo. Moving from the older system should be seamless and more accessible for persons to operate.

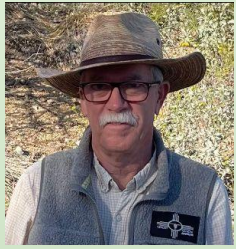


Spring Coffee House Concerts

The Music Board is presenting **NEW Coffee House Concerts**, performed in the southeast corner of Fellowship Hall. **All are welcome – bring guests!** There will be a backdrop and small stage for the performers.

And, when outdoor summer Gazebo Concerts need to be moved indoors – this also will be the space from which they perform.

- 6:00 pm on Sunday, April 28th, CCOWUCC will embark on one of two **Spring Coffee House Concerts**. The first concert will feature Ryan and Joanne Pels with all donations going to *World Central Kitchen (WCK)*. World Central Kitchen is a not-for-profit non-governmental organization devoted to providing meals in the wake of natural disasters. WCK is first to the frontlines, providing meals in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crises.
- At 6:00 pm on Sunday May 19th, Linda and Ken Barber will present the second **Spring Coffee House Concert** with all donations going to Paws and Claws in Hackensack MN. The mission of Paws and Claws is mission is *to save animal lives, educate youth and complete families*.



Kindness

*A Guest Commentary by JIM BURKLO
Pastor, United Church of Christ, Simi Valley CA
Executive Director, Progressive Christians Uniting*

About this time every spring, for many years, I took students down to the Arizona/Mexico border for a week. We put water jugs on the desert trails where migrants cross into the United States. And we visited with border justice activists.

We always spent an afternoon at the US courthouse in Tucson, where Operation Streamline was conducted. It was mass-production justice. Busloads of migrants apprehended by the Border Patrol would be driven to the courthouse, given perfunctory interviews with lawyers, and then would be paraded into the courtroom to plead on the charge of illegal entry into the US. About 60 migrants at a time would go through this process. They were wearing the scruffy clothes they wore when they crossed the desert. They were awkwardly holding up their pants with their shackled hands because their belts had been removed due to security concerns. Their faces told their stories: hopes dashed, money wasted on “pollero” smugglers, families disappointed. One by one, before the judge on the high dais, they would plead “*culpable*” – “guilty”. And then be marched out to be deported back over the border.

Every time, my students wept at this sorry spectacle. And so did I. The Operation Streamline system was merciless and dark, but every time I sat through it over the years, I witnessed glimmers of light. I remember one judge in particular showing remarkable deference toward the migrants, overtly sympathizing with their plight, explaining the legal process carefully in easy-to-understand language that I hoped was translated well to them. The defense lawyers assigned to the migrants were paid on a per-diem basis at a low rate, and it was obvious that they were at the bottom of the barrel of the Tucson legal community. But there were exceptions. One lawyer put her hand on the shoulder of each of her migrant clients as they were ushered out of the courtroom, looked them in the eyes, and in Spanish, wished them well. I can’t know the impact that these very intentional gestures had on the migrants, but it certainly left me with a lasting impression that can be summed up in Jewel’s lyrics: “*In the end, only kindness matters....*”

The question before me and my students, every time, was this: how do we blow on these embers of kindness glowing in the darkness of our broken immigration system, until they burst into flame and melt it down and recast it into a border policy that is kind?

*Think this through with me, let me know your mind
Wo-oh, what I want to know is, are you kind?*

Those are lyrics from a Grateful Dead song. (Yes, it’s true, folks – I’m a Deadhead, from way back.) How about some basic, good ol’ fashioned kindness, eh? Is it too much to ask of ourselves and others?

Is it too much to ask of society as a whole – to set things up systematically so that kindness prevails?

We need kinder immigration laws, offering mercy for the 10 to 20 million people who came into our country without papers, but have been here so long that deporting them would be incredibly cruel. Kindness should inspire us to give them green cards and a pathway to citizenship. Of course we should have a secure border and an orderly process for immigration and for granting asylum to endangered refugees. Kindness should inspire us to temper our need for control of immigration with mercy for the most vulnerable.

Wo-oh, what I want to know is, are you kind?

Are you patient, present, attentive to the inner needs and yearnings of others? Willing to enter into the experience of others, on their terms, letting your opinions and judgements get out of the way?

Kindness really isn’t too much to ask. It doesn’t demand that we be effusive and gushy and mushy. Kindness is simple. Kindness is love without the roses and chocolates. Kindness is compassion without chrome plating. It doesn’t demand that we be best pals with people who behave obnoxiously – just that we take a deep breath and respond as kindly as we can. Kindness moves us to greet the unhoused person you see on the street with a smile and a good wish. It does not require you to pack the person into your car and move them into your house. Kindness is a doable expression of love. And it’s in short enough supply that just a little of it can go a long way.

“*In the end, only kindness matters...*” A mantra worth repeating. So many ways we can exercise kindness in our day to day lives, with the people around us. And with our votes, and with our advocacy and activism, we can make kindness systematic, as well....

Did You Know?



Our Church's History



CHOIR 1955

(Left to right) **Back Row:** Carl Johnson, Dick Hein, Ronnie Libertus, Cecil Johnson, Martin Reid **Third Row:** Joyce Anderson, ?, Roberta Moore, Jareen Johnson, Karen Bilben **Second Row:** Janice Johnson, Sandy Bilben, Ila Gene Mengis, Diane ?, Nancy Larson, Virginia Greer **First Row:** Glenda Noble, Jeaninne Bailey, Elaine Licke, Ona Nash, Ray Peterson, Barbara Tausch

1944

The year 1944 proved to be a significant and memorable one, as it was the year in which the church was free of all building debts; all existing mortgages having been satisfied.

1945

On November 11, 1945, Rev. and Mrs. Hammond were honored at a banquet by the congregation and friends, for twenty-five years of faithful service to the church and community.

1948

On February 15, 1948, with eleven members of the Church attending, a vote was taken approving the uniting of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and Congregational Christian Churches into the United Church of Christ, in accordance with the basis of union dated January 22, 1947. The vote was six for and five against. However, on June 17, 1956, at a meeting of the Trustees and Church Members, a resolution was adopted declaring the following: No action of

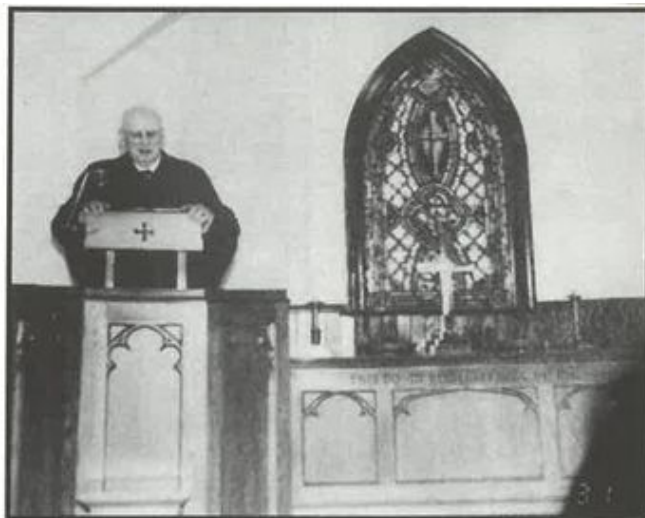
Local Association, State Conference or General Council of Congregational Christian Churches can make this church a part of any other denomination or of the proposed United Church of Christ. Then on January 15, 1961, with thirty-one members present, a unanimous ballot was cast to approve membership in the United Church of Christ and to accept their constitution. In the spring of 1948, Rev. Hammond was honored by being chosen as a delegate from the Walker Rotary Club to attend the International Rotary Convention at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and was granted a leave of absence for five week. Guest ministers filled the pulpit during his absence.

1951

On May 21, 1951, an Allen Electric Organ was installed in the Church at a cost of \$2,650.00.

1955

In the summer of 1955, a leave of absence was granted Rev. and Mrs. Hammond to permit a vacation trip to England. Rev. Barlow took charge of the services in Rev. Hammond's absence.



REV. W. E. HAMMON
"OLD" CHURCH ACROSS FROM
THE PRESENT POST OFFICE

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

This month's meeting will take place on April 16th at 6:00pm over Zoom.

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering received on – Sunday April 14, 2024



*“Let me tell you why you are here.....You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world...Keep open house; be generous with your lives.”
(Matthew 5:13-16, The Message)*

Dear partners in ministry,

I love Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of these verses in Matthew 5, and the clear commission they give to show up brightly in the world and be generous with our lives. That is the invitation extended in this year’s One Great Hour of Sharing theme, Share the Light.

The scriptures tell us that huge crowds were gathering, drawn to Jesus by his teachings and the miracles of healing he performed. So, Jesus climbed a hill, and delivered his “sermon on the mount” to an audience captivated by his message and ways. He offered them blessings, affirming them in ways probably no one had before.



Then he described a life of discipleship characterized by prayer, humility, love of one’s enemies, and a steady practice of being ‘salt and light,’ generously sharing the goodness of God in all the world.

One Great Hour of Sharing is a beautiful opportunity to do just that. When we participate in One Great Hour of Sharing, we become a dazzling prism of light scattering blessing in places that desperately need it. We offer hope to people forced to flee their homes in search of safety and new promise.

We support life-giving recovery efforts when disasters devastate communities and lives. We empower partners worldwide in their labors to build sustainable futures. We plant seeds of peace where war has multiplied despair and destruction.

Our communities and world need these blessings so very much right now. Our role as faithful light-bearers carries a witness of love and hope and persevering possibility that counteracts the cynicism, hatred, and hopelessness that are all too prevalent in this moment.

I hope you’ll invite giving to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering this year with a spirit of joyful generosity! The OGHS Planning and Resource Guide can be found online to help you promote the offering in your setting. It includes a short message I have recorded that may be used as a mission moment in worship or a piece for viewing in your mission and stewardship committees. The suggested date for the OGHS offering this year is March 10, but we welcome your gifts whenever your church calendar allows.

Thank you for ‘bringing out the God-colors in the world’ by generously sharing your OGHS gifts. This is why we are here: to be shining witnesses of uncommon love and enduring hope and to be generous with our lives.

Grateful for you,

Sharon K Prestemon

The Rev. Shari Prestemon, Acting Associate General Minister and Co-Executive of Global Ministries United Church of Christ



APRIL DATES TO CELEBRATE

Birthdays



Anniversaries

5 John Aamodt
Britta Rand

25 Tim and Shelli Johnson

7 Jesse Kolp

9 Jacob Wolfe

11 Peg Jennings

22 Lauren Farrell

29 Kameron Artley



WORSHIP MINISTRY — APRIL

GREETERS

April 4	Doris Johnson
April 14	Gay Jacobson
April 21	Joanne Detwiler
April 28	Sue Grage

LITURGISTS

April 4	Gay Jacobson
April 14	Deb Farrell
April 21	Bev Jorland
April 28	Chris Kolp

AUDIO

Esther Covert

VIDEO

Aurora Diehl

MUSIC

Leisa Bragg



CHOIR DIRECTOR

Joanna Aamodt

ALTER & COMMUNION PREPARATION

Joanne Detwiler



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@gmail.com

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@gmail.com

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: Joanne Detwiler

Board of Memorials Chair: Wendy Paul

Board of Music Chair: Linda Barber

Board of Spiritual Life Chair: Ruth Niedermann

Women's Fellowship Chair: Sue Grage

Minister/Church Relations Board Members:

Deb Farrell, Bev Jorland, Doris Johnson, Bonnie Bailey

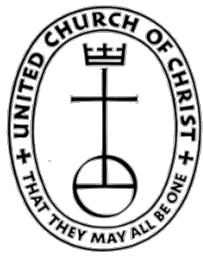
Choir Director: Joanna Aamodt

Custodian: Ryan and Joanne Pels

**Articles for the April 2023 edition of The Good News! newsletter
 need to be emailed by 11:00 AM Friday, April 26th, 2024**

APRIL

SUNDAY	1 MONDAY	2 TUESDAY	3 WEDNESDAY	4 THURSDAY	5 FRIDAY	6 SATURDAY
	<i>Easter Monday</i>					
7 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	8 6:30-8:30pm St. Mark's Worship Service	9 1:00pm Women's Fellowship	10 <u>Book Conversation</u> 6:00pm Meal 6:45pm Conversation	11	12	13
14 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	15 <i>Tax Day</i>	16 6:00pm Council Meeting on Zoom	17 11:00am Deadline for Adding to Council Agenda <u>Book Conversation</u> 6:00pm Meal 6:45pm Conversation	18	19	20
21 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	22 6:30-8:30pm St. Mark's Worship Service	23	24 <u>Book Conversation</u> 6:00pm Meal 6:45pm Conversation	25	26 11:00am Newsletter Submission Deadline	27
28 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service 6:00-7:00pm Coffee House – Ryan and Joanne Pels	29	30		6:00pm Seder Meal at Union UCC in Hackensack		



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

Return Service Requested



THE GOOD NEWS!

Community Church of Walker United Church of Christ