

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..."

DECEMBER 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

What to do Next?



We enter the season of Advent, a new liturgical year. In the northern hemisphere, especially northern Minnesota – these will be our darkest days. Nature slows down. Various species will hibernate. Others will head for warmer climates. It will be cold – hopefully there will be plentiful moisture to restore our lakes and nurture our trees. In a sense, we all slow down. We bundle up. We gather about the fire to stay warm. Darkness. Waiting. Anticipation. It is in this season as followers of Christ that we remember, we watch, and we hope for that infant born long ago – **to be born again** in each of us – **filling us with the light that will break the darkness.**

We need that light breaking the darkness today. After the November election, for some, it felt like darkness held the day, for all it was a dawn to a new day. The words of the campaign too often were shaded with fear, fear of the other and fear of the future. The political divide between “us and them” widened. That divide was not healed or comforted. One can honestly say – “the people have spoken.” The election was accessible, free, and fair. Those who prevailed nationally lifted a vision for the days to come based on mistrust of those who have lead and disdain for decisions made. From what I understand their call is for deconstruction of the system, distrust of the bureaucrats and technocrats, seeking isolation from the world, and the exclusion of the others who seek to come to our shores.

What am I, what are we to do in the meantime – in the days to come? Reflect, learn, listen, and participate as best we are able. The task of church is to always be faithful – faithful to Jesus whose kingdom we pray for. A kingdom, realm, empire that stands on the foundation of love, built upon the walls of generosity, has windows of care, doors of radical hospitality for the outcast, for the stranger and for the immigrant. Our gates are opened to those who are persecuted, dismissed, and discarded. From our bridges we fly flags of welcome and freedom to all. And after the storm all our dwellings are covered with rainbows. And our children are safe to learn that they may freely blossom, thrive, and become who they are made to be.

Rather than close doors and build fences and locking the gates – our task is to open up and include friend, family, neighbor, and stranger. In the days, the months, and the years ahead – we will face challenges beyond our imagination, some days will be dark and will feel hopeless. I suspect there will be pain for many in our nation and in the world. But in all of it we must stand with each other and with God continuing to build up the kingdom, the realm of God. I think about Esther, who as a Jew was oppressed, hiding her identity as she stood in the king’s court – her people were in danger; she was in danger. It is written in Esther 4:12-15

¹² When Mordecai heard Esther’s reply, he wrote back the following response: ¹³ “Don’t fool yourself into thinking that, just because you are in the imperial palace, you will be the only Jewish person to escape. ¹⁴ If you insist on remaining silent at this time, vindication and liberation will come to our people through another source¹, but both you and your family will surely die. Who’s to say?—you may have come into the royal court for just this moment.” (a moment such as this)

¹ “Another source” is a circumlocution for God. One significance of the absence of any mention of God in the Hebrew text is to emphasize that even though it appears that God is not present, God is still working behind the scenes. Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible (p. 1611). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Continued from Page 2

¹⁵ So Esther sent a message to Mordecai: ¹⁶ “Bring together all the Jewish people in Susa now and fast for me. Do not eat or drink, day and night, for three days. After that, I will go to the sovereign in defiance of the law. If I die, I die.”

We cannot remain silent. May we boldly speak the words of gospel, good news, the truth and live with the light of the Christ child born in us – we wait, we anticipate, we stay alert, and we speak and act with courage! We are not alone – for we dwell in Christ!

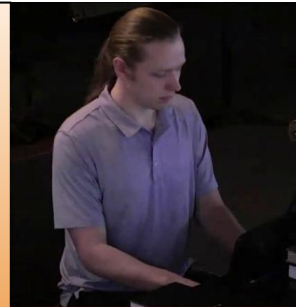
In the ways of Christ, Pastor Michael

Video and Conversation on Forgiveness

Community Church of Walker-UCC
January, time TBD
All are Welcome!

Christmas Concert at Union UCC Hackensack

Featuring
Sabbastian Wilson-Webb
Friday, Dec. 13, 7:00 p.m.



Women's Fellowship Christmas Party

Wednesday
December 11th - 12 noon
Sue Grage's Home - Park Rapids
Carpooling from Walker

Christmas Eve Service

Community Church of Walker - UCC
12/24 at 4:00 p.m.

All Are Welcome to this most Holy Night to a worship service filled with music, carols, and words shaped by LOVE!

All Donations go to the UCC Christmas Fund Offering



Holy Humor Sunday

Lessons and Laughter — First Sunday of Christmas
December 29th at 10:00 a.m.

This service is designed with two truths in mind. First, the Christmas season is hallmarked by joy. The angels sing. The shepherds run. The star shines. Mary cherishes. Christ is born! In response to all this good news, we sing “Joy to the World!” with grateful celebration. Second, by the time the Sunday after Christmas rolls around, all of us are usually running on empty. Therefore, this service is intentionally designed to not only provide some much needed levity and support one another, but to also lean into the holy joy of this season.

Let the Spirit of December
Ignite Your Heart, Warm Your
Soul, & Fill Your Life with Joy
& Laughter.



Community Church of Walker — United Church of Christ Council Meeting Minutes - November 3, 2024

Present: Moderator Bonnie Bailey, Pastor Michael Small, Esther Covert, Deb Farrell, Chris Kolp, Joanne Detwiler, Doris Johnson, Ryan Pels, Joanna Aamodt, Wendy Paul, Gay Jacobson.

Moderator Bonnie Bailey called the meeting to order at 11:35

Pastor Michael led us in prayer.

Review of minutes from 9/29/24: Corrections the (assessment will rise) not the insurance. Correction of spelling - Klave: Correction, the assessment was to repair of road, not just driveway, Correction PEO not POE. Linda made the motion made to accept minutes as corrected, Deb second, motion carried.

Review of written reports:

- Joanne D said that \$535 for Special Olympics was donated from Grant Raddatz.
- Money from memorials handicapped door fund will be transferred to the general fund because it was paid for out of general fund money.
- Larry Kimball will perform at the Good News Coffee House at 3:30 p.m. on November 17th donations will go to the Food Shelf.
- Wendy P moved to accept written reports as presented. Joanne D second, motion carried.

Review of oral reports:

- Ryan P reported that 9 of the 11 water problems have been completed.
- Facility use agreement for any Chartered or non-affiliated group that uses our facilities needs to be shared with WELS church that uses our building second and fourth Monday's a month.
- Shingles that are missing or damaged need to be replaced by a licensed roofing contractor to prevent interior damage to the building. We have received \$15,000 that has not be deposited. We will get \$32,000 total \$47,000 at the end of repairs.
- Ryan was given names and phone numbers of roofing contractors to find what it will cost to repair, at least enough to prevent leakage. He will contact contractors.
- Discussed ways to reduce our electrical bill. Suggestion to replace all of our lights with LED to lower our electric bill.
- Get an assessment from MN Power to ask for energy audit.
- The gutter sealed. Heat tape for the roof.

Committee Reports:

Music: Linda B.

- Committee meeting.
- December 13th Sabbastian Wilson-Webb will do a Christmas Concert at Union.
- Sabbastian Wilson-Webb will be gone on Dec 22, Jan 27, and possibly Jan 19.
- Michael will be gone Sunday January 19th. (January 17th – January 25th)

Benevolence:

- Neighbors in Need raised \$395 on October 13th.
- October 13th potato bar raised \$403 for school supplies.
- October 13th Grant Raddatz performed at the coffee house for Special Olympics \$535.
- 5th Sunday is December 29th collections will be given to the church. Christmas Eve offerings will go to Veterans of the Cross (Retired Ministers).
- Doris J. suggested that someone should keep track of donations raised at the coffee house for charities. Joanne D. will take on that task.
- Missions: Chris suggested that we should not have more than one fundraiser at a time. On Oct 13th, we had Neighbors in Need, Potato bar donations for school supplies, and Grant Raddatz for Special Olympics.

Spiritual Life: No report.

Christian Ed:

- The members had a meeting and viewed videos about forgiveness. They would like to talk with Union and see if they'd be interested in joining us to view the videos with us. There are 3 videos on Forgiveness. The committee will choose videos, contact Union, set dates.

Women's Fellowship:

- Meeting on the November 12th @ 1:00
- Lunch on November 17th following worship
- Hanging of the Greens November 20th
- Linda B moved to accept oral reports as given. Jo P. second. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Meet November 10th during fellowship to discuss ideas for our church. We need follow up on the guidance of Cindy Mueller.

New Business:

Vitalant Blood Drive January 23, 2025. Bonnie B. is in charge. Chris K and her friend, Marie will help. People can sign up online.

A new organization called RALLY Coalition <rally@whaschools.org> (Reclaiming and Advancing Leech Lake Youth) will focus on preventing substance abuse and suicide. Lauren Jennifer Buie Sumption is in charge. Meeting will be held on November 17 – 1:00 – 3:00, the meeting at the library. Wendy P., Joanne D., Chris K., will represent our church to gather information. It is being sponsored by WHA and the MN Department of Health.

New meeting for a new highway assessment that Ryan P will attend.

Holiday plans:

- December 1st First Sunday of Advent - Communion
- December 7th at 5:30 p.m. Hope Lutheran will have a Christmas Concert with free will donations going to Toys for Kids.
- December 8th 4:00 p.m. Forgiveness
- December 13th 7:00 p.m. Christmas Concert at Union UCC in Hackensack featuring Sabbastian Wilson-Webb
- Christmas Eve service will be 4:00 p.m. on December 24th. Receive offering for the UCC Christmas Fund (aka Veterans of the Cross).
- Last Sunday of December (29th) – First Sunday of Christmastide: Holy Humor Sunday.

Pastor report: Thank you for all you do. I appreciated Dan and Sue preaching so he could go on vacation.

Covid and pneumonia are going around.

Sarah Boyer lives in Bemidji. She is going to have a baby and has a baby registry on Amazon.

Jo P made the motion to adjourn after prayer. Esther C second, motion carried.

Pastor Michael prayed and meeting adjourned.

Next meeting Dec 8 after service. It was decided that Jan 12, 2025 will our first meeting of the year.

Respectfully submitted by Gay Jacobson – Clerk



For over one hundred years, **The Christmas Fund** has provided direct financial assistance to the healers in all our lives: retired and active UCC ministers, church workers, and their families. You are part of the community of **The Christmas Fund**, whether you donate at Christmastime, benefit directly from our grant or leadership programs, or simply believe in our mission to help secure the financial foundation of those engaged in the life of the church.

Please consider [donating today](#) to ensure more healers receive the loving support of the Church in their moment of deepest need. **The Christmas Fund was here for them.** And regardless of who you are or what brought you to the United Church of Christ, **The Christmas Fund is here for you.**

Your gift is more than just a testament to your belief in the values of the United Church of Christ, it is a critical lifeline for those who depend on our grant programs for care and support. Thank you again for your generosity and I offer a closing prayer for your continued safety and peace.

The Christmas Eve offering will be given to the Christmas Fund.

Advent Series: A Righteous Branch

From Worship Ways at www.ucc.org

Advent really occupies two seasons: remembrance of the Incarnation and birth of Jesus as well as anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ. Advent holds the “already” and the “not yet.” Advent affirms that the work of the Messiah is done and the work of realizing the reign of God on earth remains incomplete. When we pray, echoing the words Jesus modeled, “your kingdom come...on earth as it is in heaven,” we not only point to a future hope, we remember the Christological reality that Jesus embodied the vision of that prayer in their body.



“Jesus is the kingdom of God. In his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus is the quintessential demonstration of the rule of God in the form of self-giving love, and he is the true covenant partner, embodying active human faithfulness unto death. His life is the concrete embodiment of divine and human fellowship marked by Jubilee justice, which is the compassionate justice and mercy of which Micah 6:8 speaks. In him, God has entered the cosmos in a definitive fashion, overthrowing the politics of death that stands behind the ways of much of our world. His resurrection, among other things, is a vindication of his way of life, a way of life that death cannot master.” — Christian T. Collins Winn, *Jesus, Jubilee, and the Politics of God’s Reign*

Advent calls our attention away from resurrection to incarnation. The Word becomes flesh. Love has skin and bones. Hope moves like oxygen coursing through arteries and veins to reach from and through the heart. Peace breathes in and out while joy functions like muscle, getting stronger the more we exercise it. Advent is ready to give birth to the kingdom of God enfleshed, alive, and ready to be nurtured into maturity.

During the four Sundays of Advent, we receive inspiration from the prophet Jeremiah and turn to the New Testament epistles for our focus texts.

*“In those days and at that time I will cause a **righteous Branch** to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.” Jeremiah 33:15 NRSV*

December 1: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 | “For All the Joy”

December 8: Philippians 1:3-11 | “Praying with Joy”

December 15: Philippians 4:4-7 | “Again...Rejoice”

December 22: Hebrews 10:5-10 | “Abolish to Establish”

“But love is always new. Regardless of whether we love once, twice, or a dozen times in our life, we always face a brand-new situation. Love can consign us to hell or to paradise, but it always takes us somewhere. We simply have to accept it, because it is what nourishes our existence. If we reject it, we die of hunger, because we lack the courage to stretch out a hand and pluck the fruit from the branches of the tree of life. We have to take love where we find it, even if that means hours, days, weeks of disappointment and sadness.

The moment we begin to seek love, love begins to seek us. And to save us.”

— Paulo Coelho, *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept*

Book Conversation in December

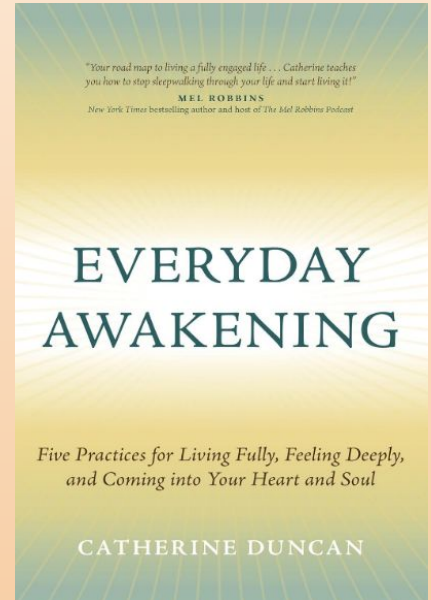
Soup - 6:00 pm

Conversation - 6:30 pm

12/4/2024 2nd Practice: Call Out to Something Greater

Come back to the present moment and breathe.

- As you come into your heart and soul, reach out and talk to something beyond you. In your mind or heart, either silently or out loud, say whatever comes into your heart.
- If no words come, you can try any or all of these:
Thank you. Please forgive me. Be with me. Pour your healing spirit through me. Fill me with your love and light and peace. Help me open to your presence, your wisdom, your guidance. Lead me and guide me every step of my path. Protect me and my family. I pray for my family and friends. Be with me. Thank you.



12/11/2024 - 3rd Practice: Grow Your Trust

What Is Your Relationship with Trust? (Part 1)

This journaling exercise invites you to consider what you currently think about the idea of trust.

- Begin by sitting comfortably. Spend a few minutes focusing on your breath. Breathing in and breathing out, let your body relax and soften. Release any tension you may be holding in your body.
- Now take a piece of paper or a journal and spend a few minutes on the following questions. Just write what comes to you, without censoring yourself.
 - o When was a time in your life that you felt trust? What did this trust look like?
 - o What did it feel like? What is your relationship with trust now?
 - o What keeps you from trusting now? What gets in the way?
- When you're finished, just sit with what you wrote. Let go of any judgment that may arise and simply hold your answers.

12/18/2024 4th Practice: Embody Love

Self-Love Affirmation

Put your hands on your heart area and take a deep breath. Feel into your heart area. Take another deep breath.

- Say out loud the following affirmations:
 - o You are loved.
 - o You are cared for.
 - o You are okay.
- Breathe for a minute and then repeat these affirmations a few more times. Be present with what you are feeling.

Did You Know?



Our Church's History

1981-1982

Rev. Johnson's surgery during this year slowed his activities somewhat, yet because of his love of the church and its future, he set goals for the church to grow and be strong in every possible way. He stressed "Leadership". Encouraged persons in leadership positions not only to do the work they are assigned, but to see that work as an expression of Christ's love to the church and to the community. All of us who represent the church in any way should see ourselves as ambassadors for Christ and should ask "What would Christ say or do if He were in my place?". We are followers of Jesus and seek to do His will and speak His love at all times. We need to set goals for the church and parish. To grow, a church must continually ask, "How can we better serve the needs of people?". A healthy church is one that looks at the needs of the people, makes an agenda and works in harmony to carry out the plan. We must continue to be visible to the people of the area. We are a parish here to service the needs of all people. Our churches (Walker and Hackensack) are looked upon as "Community Churches" where persons who have no ties to a Church can come in their times of need. At times this might create some problems, but over the long run, we will discovered that our "Open Door" policy is not only good for us and our Church but it is a positive way we can reach out and share Christ's love with others. When persons or groups come to us for help, they do so because they believe we will listen, we will grow and remain alive and strong. If we turn away, we will slow but surely die. The church must be in a constant training and growing process, if we are to do the work we are called upon to do. We are a people who seek to know and do the Will of Christ. This requires a study of the scriptures, sharing of our knowledge, growing in Faith, Love and Understanding. Members who served on the Inter-Church Board for the year 1981-1982 were Rhoda Pope, Don Jensen, George Parrish, and Verlee Cline from Hackensack and from Walker they were Nancy Jacobson, Dorothy Hagen and Bruce Haugen. The goal for the choir - Music Every Sunday! With the helping hands of those who so nicely helped the music department reach their goal were - The choir, Sweet Adelines, the Walker Barbershoppers, Holden Street Quartet, Lake City Junior Choir, soloists from our church and other churches, and special music by our summer visitors. The church was fortunate in having talented musicians like Florence Garven, Eleanore Adamek, Ann Winegar, Louise Donahue and Vanetta Backman and our choir director, Elaine Brown. Rev. Murdate Leyseth, Conference Minister, visited Hackensack and Walker on August 6th. This was a combined meeting of both churches at Community with a Potluck supper. The second annual "Country Store" was held October 31st proceeds amounted to \$1,400,00. These funds were used to purchase ceiling fans for the church. A new piano was purchased which added to the Sunday Services as we now have both piano and organ. The proposed landscaping and tree planting of the church property was completed (by Dorothy and Henry Hagen). This was such a nice improvement in the area surrounding the church. New robes for the acolytes were given by Loris and Helen Hanson and Bruce and Ruby Haugen. Loris and Helen also gave the roller for the aisle cloth used at weddings. Loris also built and installed the bulletin board. The Deacons for this year were as follows: Charles Dempewolf, Milt Uglem, Clyde Richards, Jake Licke, Clifford Bilben and Steve Bilben. The "Summer Congregation" gave their help to the men of the church by ushering. This clearly showed that they regarded Community as their church. It was this year the Women's Fellowship organized the Sunday Greeters. This was an interesting and unusual year in Released Time Classes and Sunday School. Released Time had about 75 students enrolled. Even though there were discipline problems in some grades, splitting the classes into smaller groups helped solve the problem and on the whole, the classes were all good. The dedication and devotion to duty of the teachers from both churches made the work done this year a job-well-done. Sunday school at Community did not have a superintendent, therefore the Sunday School had problems of keeping children in Sunday School after the Christmas Program, they simply disappeared. Eventually it just dwindled out. This was very disappointing to every one concerned. With Elaine Brown and her daughter Cindy Hillberg, a beautiful and meaningful Christmas program was given. As the year progressed, young parents were encouraged to bring their children to Sunday School and keep them coming all year. An Adult Bible Study Class was introduced and the time was changed to 9:30 am. The UCC material for Sunday School has been rewritten so that it is more interesting and easier to teach. The committed this years was Florence Garven, Chairman, Jackie Harris and Bonnie Muedeking. With Dr. Thomas C. Donahue, Chairman, Jim Leek, Al Garven, Helen Francis, Jim Muedeking, and Babe Reid as Trustees, the following projects were completed: Renovating and repair of the Bell Tower, installed ceiling fans in the church, installed new main electrical service switch in the church, installed new circulating pump for the two heaters in the entry of the church, replaced countertop and sink in the parsonage, changed some of the plumbing on the parsonage wood furnace so as to heat water for the hot water heater more efficiently.

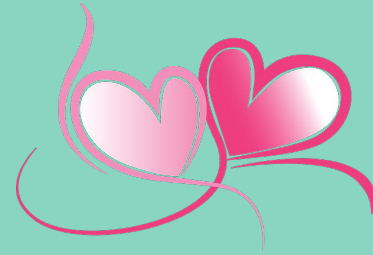
DECEMBER DATES TO CELEBRATE

Birthdays

- 10 Nathan Kalli
- 12 Rev. Michael Small
Vern Bader
- 14 Larry Johnson
- 18 Tim Johnson
- 21 Denis Black
- 25 Earl Niedermann

Anniversaries

- 27 Steve and Chris Kolp
- 28 Jack and Kathy Hopen



WORSHIP MINISTRY — DECEMBER

GREETERS

- December 1 TBA
- December 8 TBA
- December 15 TBA
- December 22 TBA
- December 24 TBA
- December 29 TBA

LITURGISTS

- Joanna Aamodt
- Bev Jorland
- Chris Kolp
- Deb Farrell
- Joanna Aamodt
- Sonja Huber

SPECIAL MUSIC

- Chancel Choir
- Tim and Shelli Johnson
- Bell Choir
- Bell Choir
- Multiple
- Sabbastian Wilson-Webb

AUDIO

Esther Covert

VIDEO

Aurora Diehl

MUSIC

Sabbastian Wilson-Webb



CHOIR DIRECTOR

Joanna Aamodt

ALTER & COMMUNION PREPARATION

Jo Pels



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Church Moderator: Bonnie Bailey

Vice-Moderator: Bev Jorland

Clerk: Gay Jacobson

Treasurer: Deb Farrell

Financial Secretary: Joanne Detwiler

Historian: Chris Kolp

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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: Jo Pels

Women's Fellowship Chair: Sue Grage

Minister/Church Relations Board Members:

Deb Farrell, Bev Jorland, Doris Johnson

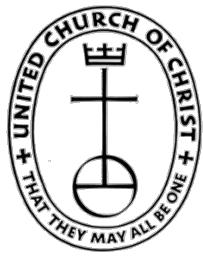
Choir Director: Joanna Aamodt

Custodian: Ryan and Joanne Pels

**Articles for the January 2024 edition of The Good News! newsletter
 need to be emailed by 11:00 AM Friday, December 20th, 2024**

DECEMBER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
10:00am Worship Service Church Council meeting after the service			<u>Book Conversation</u> 6:00pm Soup 6:30pm Conversation			
8 10:00am Worship Service Church Council meeting after the service	9 6:30-8:30pm St. Mark's Worship Service	10	11 12:00pm Women's Fellowship - Christmas Party <u>Book Conversation</u> 6:00pm Soup 6:30pm Conversation	12	13 7:00pm Christmas Concert at Union UCC - Sabbastian Wilson-Webb	14
15 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	16	17	18 <u>Book Conversation</u> 6:00pm Soup 6:30pm Conversation	19	20 11:00am Newsletter Submission Deadline	21
22 10:00am Worship Service Fellowship Time after the service	23 6:30-8:30pm St. Mark's Worship Service	24 4:00pm Christmas Eve Service	25	26	27	28
29 10:00am Worship Service - Holy Humor Sunday Fellowship Time after the service	30	31				



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