



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

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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..."

OCTOBER 2025



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



“Sticks and Stones”

As a child I imagine you heard your parent or someone else say to you when you were hurt by the words of a friend, family member, or loved one, *“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me”*. Those words say, in a sense, “grow a backbone”, “stiff upper lip”, “let it roll off your back like a duck”. When I heard my parents say those words, I know, their intent was that I should not take harmful words said to me personally. Just “let it go”. As an adult I understand that when harmful, hateful words are hurled at any individual or institution, often it says more about the one sending those words than the person or group receiving them.

We live in a culture where vitriolic, venomous, spiteful, acerbic, hateful words are being hurled every day, every moment on social media, news, and even in face-to-face encounters. It is as if Pandora’s Box has been forever opened, and there is no way to close it. It is now “okay” to freely, carelessly, say whatever we want with few consequences. No filter. My parents urged me to count to ten when I was angry, count to ten before I said anything or took any action. Sheila, my wife, tells me to step back, take a deep breath, pause, breathe in and out before acting.

Can we live by the credo - *“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me”* any longer? Some would argue that in fact, words do inflict hurt, harm, damage on others. They would say words hurled at another can and will do harm – sometimes long lasting. Words, like weapons, can become tools for inflicting violence upon another. When a person is battered by an on slot of words of disparagement, those words can lead to depression, diminished self-esteem, a lack of confidence, dysfunctionality, and even a desire to harm oneself. Or, the person being battered can respond in a like manner, thus escalating the hurt, the conflict – so the cycle goes on and on . . .

Core beliefs of faith are grounded in words such as “Do unto others as you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12), “You have heard it said, ‘Love your neighbor—but hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for your persecutors.” (Matthew 5:42-43), and then from Romans 12:10-21, please read these words written by the Apostle Paul and place them in your hearts –

- Your love must be sincere. Hate what is evil and cling to what is good.
- Love one another with the affection of sisters and brothers. Try to outdo one another in showing respect.
- Don’t grow slack, but be fervent in spirit: the One you serve is Christ.
- Rejoice in hope; be patient under trial; persevere in prayer.
- Look on the needs of God’s holy people as your own; be generous in offering hospitality.
- Bless your persecutors—bless and don’t curse them.
- Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.
- Have the same attitude toward everyone. Don’t be condescending to those who aren’t as well off as you; don’t be conceited.
- Don’t repay evil with evil. Be concerned with the highest ideal in the eyes of all people.
- Do all you can to be at peace with everyone.

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- Don't take revenge; leave room, my friends, for God's wrath. To quote scripture, "Vengeance is mine, I will pay them back," says our God."
- 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."
- Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil by doing good.¹

Choose your words and actions carefully. It matters! Before you speak ask, "Will my words and actions build up, or tear down?" May our words and actions be shaped by our faith – a faith that is inclusive and shaped by love of God, love of neighbor, and even love of those to whom we have difficulty with that we may increase the beloved community.

May we always seek to walk in the ways of Christ – Pastor Michael

¹ *Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation* (p. 738). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

A Special Thanks for Food Shelf Volunteers!

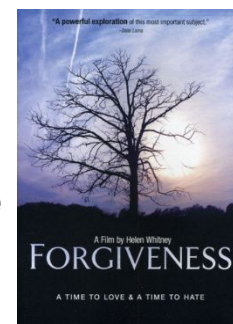
It was a pleasure, and it was exhausting, to have had the opportunity to volunteer at the Walker Area Food Shelf during the month of September. Truly, this is an opportunity for all to be neighbor to neighbor. Thanks to all who volunteered and gave their time and energy. ***A note – if you would like to volunteer with the Food Shelf in other ways, such as serving on their Board of Directors contact Pastor Michael.***



Faith Conversations

Tuesdays 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Forgiveness: A Time to Love and a Time to Hate

***Ongoing Conversations About the Complexity
and Benefits of Forgiveness***



You are invited to be a part of the conversations concerning "Forgiveness: A Time to Love and a Time to Hate" on Tuesdays beginning with a light meal at 5:30 p.m. and Video and conversation at 7:00 p.m.

- September 30 "Intimate Woundings" – A mother abandons her children for selfcare she seeks reconciliation between her children and family
- October 7 "In The Lives of Nations" – Nations apologize for past actions
- October 14 "Germany – Facing the Past"
- October 21 "Bitburg – A Necessary Grief" – President Regan prematurely tries to forgive
- October 28 "Rwanda Confronting Evil" – Genocide, reconciliation, forgiveness?

You may choose to participate online through Zoom. Click the hyperlink below to join.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86400824710?pwd=DU5ifjvrglqDeL5N5likr1rmSzru8C.1>

Meeting ID: 864 0082 4710

Passcode: 315554

CCOWUCC Council

Unapproved Church Council Minutes September 21, 2025

Present: Deb Farrell, Pastor Michael Small, Bonnie Bailey, Chris Kolp, Joanne Pels, Ryan Pels, Esther Covert, Gay Jacobson, Doris Johnson, Joanne Detwiler, Sheila Hunter, Bev Jorland, and via Zoom Linda Barber.

Meeting called to order by Moderator Bonnie Bailey at 11:42 a.m., then Pastor Michael offered a prayer.

Reading of August 17, 2025, Church Council Minutes

- Two corrections were made to last month's minutes: wording on Benevolence report. Doris Johnson reported that there was a change in recipient for the September 24th fundraiser from the Minnesota Autism Program who is under investigation. Donation will be postponed.
- Corrected wording on audit from "back" (statements) to "bank."

Motion to accept minutes with these two corrections made by Deb Farrell, seconded by Gay Jacobson. All in favor.

Oral reports all accepted after motion made by Gay Jacobson, seconded by Joanne Detwiler

Old Business:

Trustees

Ryan Pels reported that check had been given to roofers for their work. Mark Olson has a message about dishwasher and circuit breaker, but hasn't replied, so another electrician may be contacted, perhaps Shawn Zubke.

- Discussed problems with handicapped door being closed too soon to allow wheelchair access if only one person seeking access.
- We also discussed lighting upgrades, replacements, there is a need for labels to make lighting control more efficient.

Potato Bar will be 9/28 with donations made to WHA schools

Audit – Doris Johnson and Bonnie Bailey are working on audit. Discussion of possible forms to aid in ease and accuracy of audits, such as a schedule for payments of musicians. Audit is not finished, but Doris Johnson and Bonnie Bailey will continue to work on the Audit.

Constitution and Bylaws - Pastor Michael Small is looking for a "boilerplate" to revise By-laws and Constitution

Benevolence – Doris Johnson said benevolence is looking for a recipient for the last 5th Sunday collection on November 30, 2025

Women's Fellowship - Esther Covert reported that a large donation of backpacks and clothing were donated to Community Church from Bill and Wanda Ingebretson which were then donated to WHA. A request was made for snacks for WHA elementary students and snacks and coffee supplies for WHA teachers. They will be supplied during the 2025-26 school year. An additional 24 backpacks were donated to the Laporte Elementary School.

New Business

- Keys have been cut for the Storage Boiler Room Door in case it is accidentally locked
 - o Keys also cut for outside doors
 - o Pastor Michael Small is going to order Lockbox for key storage

- Fellowship Christmas Party will be on December 9th at 1 p.m. and all are invited.
- A reminder that volunteers are needed for the Vitalant Blood Drive 01/22/2026 – 12:00 p.m.
- Sheila Hunter will ask a local indigenous woman about doing the Christian Education forum concerning indigenous traditions on Sunday, November 26th following worship
- Advent Christmas decoration of the church will be November 21st at 10:00 a.m.

After the closing prayer given by Pastor Michael Small the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Next meeting will be October 19, 2025 at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bev Jorland, Clerk CCOWUCC



“Listening Session” for LGBTQ+ Folks and Allies

PRISM is a new state-wide voice for gay persons and allies. Oby Ballinger, a former UCC minister-- is the Director of this new organization. PRISM is sponsoring a “listening” session in Brainerd at our sister UCC church – First Congregational Church UCC on Monday, October 6th from 6-8 p.m. Food and refreshments will be provided. The conversation will focus on what is it like being LGBTQ+ here in 2025? Where do we find community? For additional information and/or to sign up for the event, please talk Pastor Michael.

***Bruce Carlson, MD, PhD
Speaks on His Recent Book***

“Your Aging Body and How to Care for It”

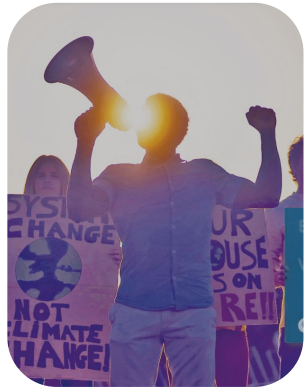
Sunday October 26, 11:30 a.m. following worship

The Christian Education Board is excited to hear Bruce Carlson to speak about our “Aging Bodies”. Bruce (and his wife Jean) are long-time residents of Ten Mile Lake and active members of Union UCC in Hackensack.

“Your Aging Body and How to Care for It” is written in understandable language, this book describes the ways in which our body changes with age and outlines some practical ways to counter many of these changes. It begins by discussing the aging process in general terms and why some people seem much younger than others of the same chronological age. After a presentation of general characteristics of the aging body, subsequent chapters focus on what lies behind the aging of specific parts of the body and how the reader can counteract or slow down the aging process through lifestyle changes. The text illustrates how some seemingly quite different aging changes, for example skin wrinkles and high blood pressure, are due to very similar underlying mechanisms. Although not focusing on disease, the book deals with a number of conditions, e.g., hypertension, arthritis, Type II diabetes and Alzheimer's disease, which affect many older adults. A concluding chapter pulls together many of the details presented earlier in the book and offers some practical advice for navigating the aging process.

As both a professional anatomist and a gerontologist, the Bruce is well qualified to write a book on the aging body. Forty years as a professor at the University of Michigan Medical School, he served as Chairman of the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology and also the Director of the Institute of Gerontology. For several decades he conducted research on the aging of muscle. He is a past-president of the American Association of Anatomists and of the Association of Anatomy, Cell Biology and Neurobiology Chairpersons.





Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering Received October 12th

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States.

The Neighbors in Need offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries.

In 2025 the Neighbors in Need Offering supported 26 grant recipients across the UCC who were engaged in projects of direct service and advocacy.

The Neighbors in Need Offering will be taken on Sunday, October 12th.

Thank you for your support and generosity!

Antonio Arce Presents Special Music October 26

We are so excited to have Antonio Arce do special music on Sunday, October 26th. Antonio left his homeland of Argentina to come to the United States in 1993. Most recently he has been the Distance Learning Coordinator at Leech Lake Tribal College for the past four years.

Music also is a huge part of Antonio's life. He has developed his own style of playing and singing despite not knowing notes and guitar chords in either Spanish or English.

Antonio says, "I was so excited to just play that I never learned the names of the chords. This is the way I've played all my life."

"Music is a connection," Antonio says. "When you understand the words and the melody you can connect". Looking forward to hearing, meeting, and knowing Antonio.



"The Hill We Climb" (excerpt)

- Amanda Gorman

*When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished
We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one
And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine*

*but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures,
colors, characters and
conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between
us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our
future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division*

OCTOBER DATES TO CELEBRATE

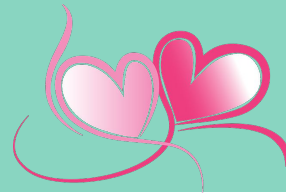
Birthdays

3 Shelli Johnson
 8 Paul Artley
 25 Emily Paul
 26 Lori Koch



Anniversaries

3 Rev. Michael Small
 and Sheila Hunter
 4 Kris and Sarah Koch
 17 Kam and Lori Koch
 29 Larry and Doris Johnson



WORSHIP MINISTRY — OCTOBER

GREETERS

October 5 Sonja & Ken Huber
 October 12 Earl & Ruth Niedermann
 October 19 Joanne Detwiler
 October 26 Gay Jacobson

LITURGISTS

Chris Kolp
 Sonja Huber
 Deb Farrell
 Joanna Aamodt

SPECIAL MUSIC

Community Choir
 The EmBELLishments
 Sue Grage
 Antonio Arce

AUDIO

Sam Batson

VIDEO

Aurora "Ace" Diehl

MUSIC

Sabbastian Wilson-Webb



CHOIR DIRECTOR

Joanna Aamodt

ALTER & COMMUNION PREPARATION

Doris Splichal



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is a monthly newsletter publication of the
Community Church of Walker United Church of Christ
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Secretary: Sabbastian Wilson-Webb

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

Church Moderator: Bonnie Bailey

Vice-Moderator: Gay Jacobson

Clerk: Bev Jorland

Treasurer: Deb Farrell

Financial Secretary: Jo Pels

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: Jo Pels

Women's Fellowship Chair: Gay Jacobson

Minister/Church Relations Board Members:

Deb Farrell, Bev Jorland, Doris Johnson

Choir Director: Joanna Aamodt

Custodian: Ryan and Joanne Pels

**Articles for the November 2025 edition of The Good News! newsletter
 need to be emailed by 11:00 AM Friday, October 24th, 2025**

OCTOBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	1 WEDNESDAY	2 THURSDAY	3 FRIDAY	4 SATURDAY
5 <i>World Communion Sunday</i> 10:00am Worship Service w/ Communion 11:00am Fellowship	6 6:00-8:00pm "Listening Session" for LGBTQ+ Folks and Allies at First Congregational Church, Brainerd MN	7 <u>Faith Conversation</u> 5:30pm Meal & Video 6:00-7:00pm Conversation 7:00pm Bell Practice (The EmBELLishments)	8	9	10	11
12 10:00am Worship Service 11:00am Fellowship	13 6:30-8:30pm St. Mark's Worship Service	14 1:00pm Women's Fellowship <u>Faith Conversation</u> 5:30pm Meal & Video 6:00-7:00pm Conversation 7:00pm Bell Practice (The EmBELLishments)	15	16	17	18
19 10:00am Worship Service 11:00am Fellowship 11:30am-12:45pm Church Council	20	21 <u>Faith Conversation</u> 5:30pm Meal & Video 6:00-7:00pm Conversation 7:00pm Bell Practice (The EmBELLishments)	22	23 5:30pm Cambria Ahrendt Rehearsal Dinner at CCOWUCC	24 11:00am Newsletter Submission Deadline 3:00pm Cambria Ahrendt Wedding at CCOWUCC	25
26 10:00am Worship Service 11:00am Fellowship 11:30am Bruce Carlson Presentation	27 6:30-8:30pm St. Mark's Worship Service	28 <u>Faith Conversation</u> 5:30pm Meal & Video 6:00-7:00pm Conversation 7:00pm Bell Practice (The EmBELLishments)	29	30 <i>Pastor Michael in Pacific Northwest until Nov. 4th for sister Anna's installation as Pastor</i>	31	



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Return Service Requested

A photograph of a forest with tall, dark tree trunks and vibrant yellow and orange autumn foliage. A white rectangular box with rounded corners is centered over the image, containing the text "THE GOOD NEWS!". The box is flanked by two vertical white bars on each side.

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