

July 2025

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
319 DOWNTOWN PLAZA
FAIRMONT, MN 56031-1776

Nonprofit
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Fairmont, MN 56031



First Congregational UCC
319 Downtown Plaza
Fairmont, MN 56031



WHEELCHAIR
ACCESSIBLE



*First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Fairmont, Minnesota*

Rev. Cory Germain
Minister

Christina Hainy
Administrative Assist.

Joyce Jorgenson
Choir Director

How to reach us....

Church Office
507-235-5382

Hours: Tuesday—Friday
9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

E-mail

uccsecretary319@gmail.com

Web Site Address

www.fairmontucc.org

Rev. Cory Germain
Office Hours:

Monday 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Tuesday 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday 12:30 p.m. through
evening meetings & activities

Thursday 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Rev. Cory's phone: 507-399-8282

Worship Hours

Worship 10:00

Sunday school starts in Sept.

Communion the second
Sunday of every month.

July 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 10:00 Lakeview Communion	2 5:30 Mission Board 6:00 Worship Board	3 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	4  Office closed	5
6 10:00 Worship Baptism of Emerson & Jamison Hueper	7	8 6:00 Facilities Board	9	10 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	11	12
13 10:00 Worship <i>Communion</i> 11:15 Adult Sunday school	14 9:00 Council agenda items DUE 5:30 Hospital Foundation	15 10:00 Goldfinch Communion	16 5:45 Church Council	17 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	18 9:00 August newsletter items DUE	19
20 10:00 Worship Baptism of Maverick Grefe	21	22	23	24 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	25 11:00 August newsletter assembly	26
27 10:00 Worship <i>Blessing Box collection</i>	28	29	30 5:30 Free Community Meal	31 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)		

The Reverend's Ruminations - July 2025

Sunny summer greetings, fellow flexible Congregationalists! Now that we've cooked breakfast on the lawn, baked and served pies, run from (or marched in) parade-disrupting raindrops, held a chapel service on our lawn, and moved our annual shared "worship in the park" indoors because of extreme heat, maybe we can have a few weeks of "normal" worship services and activities — whatever that actually looks like during July in Minnesota?! I hope you've been able to adapt and find enjoyment in your summer so far.

Unfortunately, the second half of June has thrown more at us than just hot or rainy summer weather. We have encountered the unprecedented and horrific news of the assassinations of Rep. Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark, and the shootings of Sen. John Hoffman and his wife Yvette. Shock and sadness have been powerfully present across our state and nation as we contemplate the demented audacity that would lead a person to commit such a heinous crime against dedicated public servants. Much has been said and written about this traumatic event in the days since, but I'd like to share a few sentences that were penned the very same weekend by Rev. Kelly Gallagher, Associate Conference Minister, and Rev. Sara Morse, Moderator of the Minnesota Conference UCC, as the Conference's Annual Meeting was wrapping up:

"Please know that as you read this – you are not alone. These acts of violence and hatred are meant to amplify division, fear, and isolation. As the body of Christ, it is more important than ever to believe and proclaim that we are not alone – that we must fight to keep our connections to one another, that we need each other to survive. And now more than ever, we must acknowledge that loving your neighbor is a spiritual practice that needs to be strengthened, even in a time such as this."

Our First Congo church family is a safe place to come together and unpack the emotions caused by such events, and spend time together in prayer: for the grieving family members of the Hortmans, for the strength and recovery of the Hoffmans, and for the spiritual well-being of our state and nation as we come to grips with the feelings of division and disparity that have become so prevalent as to manifest themselves in physical violence. We, as Americans, are better than this — and we are certainly not in this alone. God knows our grief and feels our anxiety. God is ready to hold us, support us, and encourage us as we seek to be people of true love and mercy.

As of this writing, the nation's attention has been abruptly redirected back to the Middle East, where Israel's ongoing conflict with Iran has drawn our nation into military action — bombing three sites understood to be central to Iran's growing nuclear enrichment capabilities. This is of course a tense and ever-evolving situation for the world, and even more so for those of us who serve in the U.S. military. Current conditions have not necessitated any additional activation of reserve components such as mine or Emma's, and we are very relieved that (as reported in last month's newsletter) Jamis made it home from Iraq for the birth of the twins — and is not expected to return to duty overseas at this time. We do, of course, pray for the rest of his Army unit who remain in Iraq, as well as several from my Air National Guard wing who are in that region. Let us all pray that by God's grace there can be a peaceful, diplomatic de-escalation of the seemingly never-ending conflict in this region.

Back here in Fairmont, I invite you to join us for the two remaining sessions of this summer's monthly adult Sunday School offering, ***Navigating with the Lord's Prayer***. We will be meeting after worship on July 13 and August 17 in the chapel, and would love to have even more participants. If you'd like to catch up with the first two episodes you can do so through your own **FREE rightnow** MEDIA account and then come for group discussions in July and August!

As we jump into the first full month of the church season "after Pentecost" (also known as "Ordinary Time"), our Sunday lectionary scriptures will include epistle readings from Paul's **Letters to the Galatians and Colossians** (fledgling congregations in the cities of Galatia and Colossae, respectively), while our gospel readings from now until Advent will examine the teachings of Jesus through the eye of **Luke**. My sermons during July will help you encounter the impactful teachings of two "minor" prophets from the Old Testament, **Amos and Hosea**.

See you soon as we join together to worship God at First Congregational United Church of Christ!

Yours in Christ,

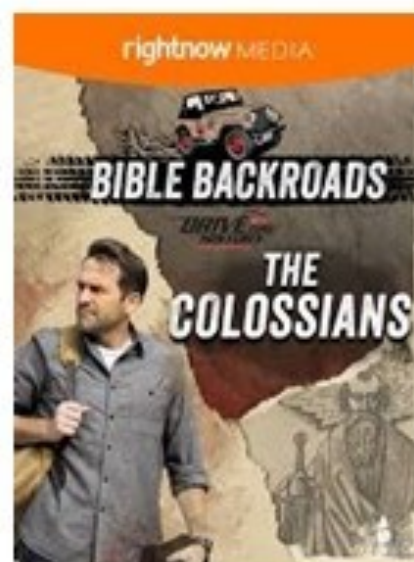
Rev. Cory Germain

rightnow MEDIA

Worship services from First Congregational UCC are available & searchable by date alongside the other great content on the free **rightnow** MEDIA website & app!

How much of the New Testament have you read, outside of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John)? There are several short books that, while quick to read, are filled with amazing lessons for Christians everywhere. Why not unpack one of them this month? From July 13 to August 3, the epistle lessons in our worship services will examine highlights from the four short chapters of Paul's Letter to the Colossians. To give you a great overview of this book, I encourage you to check out **BIBLE BACKROADS™—The Colossians:**

Dave Stotts, host of Drive Thru History®, explores the scripture, history, geography, archaeology, and impact of Paul's letter to the Colossians in the New Testament. The home base for the series is Dave's Garage™, a state-of-the-art, extended reality lair where almost anything is possible. In addition to teaching with a collection of monitors, maps, animations and artifacts, Dave treks outside his garage for special adventures throughout the Mediterranean region. Designed for all ages, BIBLE BACKROADS™ is fun, fast-paced, and educational, encouraging families to dig deeper into the Biblical accounts together.



Do you remember the freedom and adventures that you experienced during summer break in your younger days? I bet none of it was connected to a phone or video game!?! Today's kids too often experience the world around them only "virtually" through an electronic screen, rarely even getting their hands dirty. Here's your chance to pique their interest with a show—but one that will ignite their sense of adventure and lead them into the great outdoors! Check out **Off the Couch into Creation:**

The Wild Brothers have grown up in Indonesia chasing faith and adventure. Now they explore America for the first time, and discover that you don't have to be on the far side of the world to have an adventure—all you have to do is get off the couch and into creation!

[This short three-episode series comes from the full show, "Off the Couch into Creation." If you enjoy it, you can visit wildbrothers.tv or download the wildbrothers.tv mobile app to see the rest of the show!]

*Do you still need your own **FREE rightnow** MEDIA account, or would you like to share this great resource with a friend?

There are 3 convenient ways: Go to <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/FCONG>

Text **FCONG** to **49775**, or scan this QR code with your smartphone camera or code reader—>



Once logged in to your **FREE** account, you can click directly on "First Congregational UCC" near the top of the page to access the "Fairmont Worship Services" channel, or "Pastor Cory's Picks"—which is where you'll find videos I've recommended here, as well as others that interest me. Stay tuned... the list grows as I discover new picks! If you've discovered a show or video on **rightnow** MEDIA that you think others would enjoy, email me and I'll promote it in next month's column.

~ Pastor Cory



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
FAIRMONT, MN
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES FOR 6-18-25**

Members Present: Kay Campe, Cynthia Celandier, Amanda Forstrom, Christina Hainy, Catherine Johnson, Larry Lasch, and Terri Luetgers. **Members Absent:** Cindy Huset, Sue Kruse, Carol Barrick, and Abby Shoen. **Ex-officio Members Present:** Pastor Cory. **Ex-officio Members Absent:** Dara Bliesmer, Asst. Treasurer.

The Council met in Heritage Hall at 5:45 PM. Moderator Kay Campe called the meeting to order, and Pastor Cory led in prayer.

Motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on 5/21/25, was M/S/C. (Cynthia Celandier/Catherine Johnson)

Treasurer's Report Catherine Johnson reported the preliminary information from our three recent fundraisers and said that the first meeting of the Investment Advisory Committee will be in mid-July. A motion to receive the treasurer's report was M/S/C. (Amanda Forstrom/Terri Luetgers)

Pastor's Report: Pastor Cory reported on his many activities during the last month, including marching in the (rainy) IHD parade. He mentioned that Blake Potthoff lent a portable PA system for our two outdoor services in June. He will be at the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincy training and credentialing from August 4-8. A motion was M/S/C to use the budgeted continuing education money towards this event. (Larry Lasch/Cynthia Celandier)

BOARD REPORTS:

Christian Education: No summer meetings.

Hospitality: Terri Luetgers reported that they sold 175 slices of pie and 133 BBQs at the Pie & Ice Cream Social (& BBQs) on June 14th. Between the money collected at the Social and free will offering the next day, \$1950 was raised.

Facilities: Larry Lasch reported how to lower the church's utility bill was discussed at their meeting. They possibly will need to replace a men's toilet in the basement soon.

Diaconate: No summer meetings.

Mission: Amanda Forstrom said that take-out orders at the free community meals were discussed.

Worship: Kay Campe talked about the two outdoor services for June.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Stewardship: Work in progress

Nominating: Lead is Cynthia Celandier. Time to start looking for 2026 officers & board members.

Personnel: Will meet-not set up

Creation Justice: Ace Adams is the contact.

OLD BUSINESS: Council goals for the year were discussed. A motion was M/S/C to approve a Department of Human Services counsellor to provide scheduled services for one individual once or twice per week during normal office hours for a 6-month conditional trial period for a fee of \$25 per month. (Amanda Forstrom/Catherine Johnson) Pastor Cory will reach out to REM about the Silver Sneakers class that was previously approved to use the church.

NEW BUSINESS: We will be a part of Worship by the Water, Sunday, August 10th, at 11 AM, in Ward Park. No service at the church that day.

Moderator Kay Campe adjourned the meeting, and Pastor Cory closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Christina Hainy, Church Clerk



Let's Get to Know Our Church Family...

Question #4: What is your greatest accomplishment?

Everett Hanning	Building my '32 car to race
Zach Ashland	Designing a screwdriver handle
Dolores Gronewald	Raising my family to be productive & Christian; much volunteering over years including church.
Sandi Smith	I haven't done it yet!
Tim Campe	My children
Marcia Musser	Being a nurse
Cheryl Ashland	Still going to accomplish it
Cynthia Celandier	It was more of a recognition or honor. I was recognized as MN multilevel school counselor of the year, 2018
Kay Campe	Being a Mom
Ellen Germain	Raising functional adults who are good people
Carol Barrick	Besides my family
Lela Hanning	Raising our 3 children with Everett
Margo Weaver	1993 Starting a program - Healthy Families - Faribault & Martin Counties - to support families with challenges to prevent child abuse & neglect.
Randy Musser	Fire Chief in Fairmont & delivering a baby in a blizzard

**Our goal for 2025 is to grow stronger, closer & more supportive as a church family!! There's still time to turn in your questionnaire!
Get one from the table by the office.**

MEMORIALS

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
3-Jun	Memory of Byron Phillips		Denice & Neil Smith
3-Jun	Memory of Byron Phillips	Capital/Building	Carolyn & Larry Thompson
3-Jun	Honor of Pat Cowing's birthday	Starfish	Les Heinrich

Hy-Vee & Fareway Report as of Report as of 22 June 2025

During the last 9 weeks, \$39,679.04 (19.84%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were received. After 28 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$127,393.46 (63.70%) toward the 18th goal which is \$200,000.

During the same time, \$7,567.73 (5.05%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 117 weeks, Fareway is at \$127,974.97 (88.32%) toward our 5th \$150,000 goal. It could take 21 weeks to reach the 5th \$150,000 goal.

This program started the first of March 2011, so any slips from then until now can be used. Slips from 2013 were received during this period of time. Any Fairmont Fareway and Hy-Vee food store register slip can be used. Slips from Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh (Gas), Coffee Shop, Food Service, and Pharmacy help us toward the goal. Ten delivery sheets were turned in and can also be used. Thanks to all who bring/mail the slips to the Church, or mailing them or dropping them off at my house. Even the very small amounts help.

Reported by Jim Bock

A letter from Mike Wolter & Lucille Willette to Chaplain Germain & First Congregational:

Sincere thanks for having the field service open to the public at your church. We appreciated your efforts and found your service inspirational. Thank you!

MISSION MINUTE: July Blessing Box Heaven's Table Food Shelf Backpack Program

The Backpack Program is available at all Martin County public elementary schools. Between September 2024 and May 2025 13,452 bags were distributed, an increase from the previous year of over 2,000 bags.

Each bag is designed to provide weekend food for the student. They contain 2 breakfast items, 2 dinner/meat items, 2 drinks and 4 snacks. There is no cost to those receiving the bags ensuring access to easy-to use, healthy foods for all the children. Dedicated volunteers pack bags for weekly pickup by social workers and other school volunteers who then discreetly place them in the student's backpack. Total cost of this program for the 2024-2025 school year was \$38,200.

July Free Community Meal

The Free Community Meal for July 30th is hosted by Facilities Board. Starting at 5:30 PM, they are serving hot dogs, beans, chips, cookie and beverages.



Thank you

from the Hospitality Board to everyone who helped make pies, worked at the Social, donated ingredients, or ate pie & ice cream or BBQs!

You are very appreciated!

Wednesday Community Worship at the Park

is every Wednesday at 6:30 PM, rain or shine, at the Sylvania Park Bandshell until September 3rd. There will be a live worship band with meaningful messages from area pastors.



Setting up online giving to First Congregational UCC, Fairmont

See the links on our church website, fairmontucc.org,
or
Scan the QR code



Or use this web address:

<https://firstcongucc.churchtrac.com/give>

You will be taken to our ChurchTrac page where you will be asked to sign in or create an account. ChurchTrac will link you to Stripe, the secure payment system.

Giving can be done through your checking account or by credit card.

Our receipts need a home!!

We are looking to upgrade our **box for collecting Hy-Vee and Fareway receipts**. If someone has a nice box with a lid, please bring it in to the church office! Hobby Lobby & other craft stores have some boxes with lids available too. Thanks!!

*Happy birthday to Kim
Skog on July 26th!*



July Partners in Ministry:

Diaconate: Kris Fuller

Usher: Ellen Germain

Readers:

6th: Cynthia Celander

13th: Abigail Anderson

20th: Ellen Germain

27th: BonnieSue Bennett



August Partners in Ministry:

Diaconate: Kris Fuller

Usher: Ace Adams

Readers:

3rd: Sandra Smith

10th: Amanda Forstrom

17th: Margo Weaver

24th: Marilyn Forstrom

31st: Dolores Gronewald



Promo Video: Please send **10 second video clips of church events** to Abby Shoen at her email, abby.shoen43@gmail.com. Abby is graciously planning to compile them into a promotional video for our church!

If you would like to provide treats and coffee after a church service, please sign up in the binder on the back table of the sanctuary. Please ask a hospitality board member (Terri Luetgers, Rebecca Lunz, Sherry Larson, Donna Grotte, Jon Neitzel or Tara Thedens) if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Lorie Zoeller, Kathy Jorgensen,
Dolores Gronewald & Margo Weaver,
for assembling the June newsletter!

-Christina



The newsletter is available (in color) on the church website. Upcoming events, birthdays & anniversaries and the church calendar are updated there as well. Check it out!
fairmontucc.org



FREE HOTDOG

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Community Meal

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
319 DOWNTOWN PLAZA**

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 30TH
STARTING AT 5:30 PM
TAKE-OUTS AFTER 5:50 PM**



**SERVED BY
THE FACILITIES BOARD**

fairmontucc.org

**MENU:
HOT DOGS
BEANS
CHIPS
COOKIE
BEVERAGES**

Here is a delicious Heavenly Delight recipe that was most recently served at the Swine Derby. It is a favorite of all that try it and always sells out first! Enjoy!

Bacon Peanut Butter Cheesecake Brownies

Ingredients:

Brownies:

4 ounces unsweetened chocolate, melted
2/3 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs
2 cups sugar
1 1/2 cups flour
1/2 tsp. salt

Peanut Butter Cheesecake:

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup Skippy creamy peanut butter
1 egg
14 ounces sweetened condensed milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract



Topping:

1 cup milk chocolate chips
1/4 Skippy creamy peanut butter

Final Topping:

4-6 slices bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled
Coarse sea salt

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9 x 13-inch baking pan with nonstick foil. In a bowl, stir the chocolate and oil. Whisk in the eggs and sugar. Fold in the flour and salt. Spread in prepared pan. In a mixer, beat cream cheese and peanut butter. Add an egg, sweetened condensed milk, and vanilla. Pour over brownie batter evenly. Bake 30 minutes. Cool.

Microwave the milk chocolate chips and peanut butter in a measuring cup until smooth and drizzle over the cooled brownie. Sprinkle the crumbled bacon and sea salt over the top. Keep in the fridge. Enjoy!

Birthdays

July 3 Catherine Johnson
July 4 Judie Orr
July 9 Pauline Cruz
July 10 Julie Elliott
July 11 Sydney Hainy
July 12 Pat Rowan
July 14 Margo Weaver
July 15 Marilyn Forstrom
Kevin Moller
Emily Cain
July 17 Haley (Harder) Green
July 18 Shelby Marks
July 19 Joy Rachuy
Abby Shoen
Sandra Smith

July

July 20 Kelly Moller
July 21 Alex Neitzel
July 24 Nicholas Thate
July 25 Robbin Celander
July 26 Cheryl Ashland
Dolores Gronewald
July 27 Renae Vetter
July 28 Whytnie Goerndt
July 31 Melissa Neusch
Courtney Grefe

Anniversaries

July 6	Lyle & Charlene Norris	62 years
July 9	Jason & Amber Brummond	14 years
July 13	Roger & Marian Buchan	68 years
July 14	Jon & Terry Riggs	35 years
July 20	Tracy & Jessi Kotewa	23 years
July 21	Brad & Vonnie Cone	24 years
July 22	Lorin & Joy Pollock	30 years
July 24	Jeff & Renae Vetter	38 years
July 25	Tony & Jenna Smith	10 years
July 26	Matt & Brittany Goerndt	11 years
July 27	Mark & Rita Craven	51 years

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed or is incorrect, please notify the church office.