

May 2024

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:

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.

Friday 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

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

Worship Hours

Worship 10:00

Sunday school 10:00

Communion the second

Sunday of every month.



May 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 5:30 Mission Bd 6:00 Worship Bd 7:00 Choir —————Meals on Wheels delivery—————	2 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	3	4 2:00 Spring Highway Cleaning Backup Date
5 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School	6	7 10:00 Lakeview Communion 7:00 Facilities Board	8 5:30 Diaconate Bd 5:45 CE Bd 7:00 Choir —————Meals on Wheels delivery—————	9 Ascension Day 1:00 TOPS (Ch) 5:30 Hospitality Bd	10	11 7:30-3:30 First Aid & CPR training (HH)
12 Mother's Day 10:00 Worship/ Sunday School Communion	13 9:00 Council agenda items due —————Meals on Wheels delivery—————	14	15 5:45 Church Council 7:00 Choir	16 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	17 9:00 June newsletter items due	18
19 Pentecost/ Senior Recognition 10:00 Worship/ <u>Last Day</u> of Sunday school 11:15 Adult Sunday school (FS) Wear RED!	20	21 10:00 Goldfinch Communion	22 7:00 Choir	23 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	24 9:00 June Newsletter items due	25 AM HH reserved-baby shower PM Sanctuary reserved-wedding
26 10:00 Worship Blessing box	27 Memorial Day 	28	29 5:30 Free Community Meal 7:00 Choir	30 9:30 Bible Study 11:00 Newsletter assembly 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	31	

The Reverend's Ruminations - May 2024

Wow, where did April go? I kind of thought that since we celebrated Easter on the final day of March, April would slow down and allow us to catch our breath. Unfortunately, that didn't start out quite the way I'd hoped. The pace of my Holy Week activities and commitments must have worn me down and made my body susceptible to infection by the COVID-19 virus throughout the week following Easter. It's still hard to tell where we might encounter this insidious bug among our travels and interactions, but it's still out there! The results were at least a little milder than the last time I had it in August of 2022. Luckily(?) I was already planning to attend a 4-day Air National Guard drill the first weekend of April, and had arranged with Jen Kahler to preach in my absence... I just didn't realize that I'd be sick at home and missing that too?! I will need to make up those 4 days, but will try not to let that impact my ministries here to the best of my ability.

By the time you read this, we will have confirmed three young ladies into full membership with our congregation, and on May 19th will recognize two of our young men who will be graduating from high school in the days ahead. We'll also be thanking our Christian Education crew that Sunday for their tireless efforts to ensure a great season of Sunday School. It's hard to believe that summer is quickly approaching, but stay tuned for information regarding Vacation Bible School, camp opportunities, and likely some special fellowship/learning activities for members and friends of all ages in the months ahead!

Over the last month or so, we encountered an issue where our church's online domain name somehow expired without our knowledge (or warning from the provider). We apologize for the inconvenience of our website becoming unavailable, but have just regained ownership of the *fairmontucc.org* domain name and are now beginning work on what we hope will actually be an improved version of this important resource for timely and accurate information about our church. In the meantime, please check our church Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/firstcongofairmontmn>) for special announcements about upcoming activities.



April may have passed without much "fanfare" in terms of church holidays, but our continued observation of the Easter season throughout the fifty days following the glorious celebration of Christ's Easter resurrection is an important annual part of our faith journey. As my sermons since Easter have followed the recollections on the early church's activities found in the book of Acts, the continuing Sundays "of Easter" are intended as a reminder that the gift of God's only begotten Son is not just a momentary party, but an opportunity for continued growth and connection to Jesus' selfless sacrifice on the Cross.

The church's season of Easter concludes with the mysterious and powerful arrival of the Holy Spirit on **Pentecost Sunday** — this year observed on May 19th. It is often referred to as the "birthday of the church," the moment at which the disciples are endowed with both the mission and the power to go out into all the world to spread the gospel message.

You probably remember much of the story: The disciples are all gathered again in an upper room, having fellowship with one another, but also wondering "what next?" Suddenly, they hear the voice of God, and each of them understands it in their own language. They also see the presence of God in fire, not the burning bush Moses once saw, but tongues of fire above their heads. And the voice of God says to them, "*You can't stay here in this place; you must go out far and wide into the world, to teach and heal.*" Called and empowered by God's Word and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they went out to lead people from separation to oneness — truly the birthday of the church and the example by which we are to minister in this broken and hurting world around us today.

So beyond an occasion to wear red to church on May 19, what significance does Pentecost have on our Christian lives? Well, we're called to cultivate a conversation — with God and with others! Prayer should be a constant in your life, but if it's not as frequent as it should be, now is the time to respond to that "still small voice" that you (much like the first disciples) are hearing in the unique language of your own life. God wants to hear from you and have you respond when spoken to! And once you've opened up your prayer life, it is your opportunity to engage with others. That doesn't have to mean an awkward, out-of-the-blue theological discussion with a stranger in the local convenience store! It could be as simple as more time spent with a young family member, a little extra engagement with a neighbor down the street, or offering a hand of welcome and invitation to a friend you haven't seen in awhile. As our UCC denomination is fond of saying, "God is still speaking." Will you listen and respond?

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Cory Germain



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
FAIRMONT, MN
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES FOR 4-17-2024**

Members Present: Abigail Anderson, Amber Brummond, Kay Campe, Amanda Forstrom, Christina Hainy, Cindy Huset, Dave Huset, Catherine Johnson, Jane Kotewa, Larry Lasch, Abby Shoen, and Wendy Ziemer. Ex-officio members present: Pastor Cory, Dara Bliesmer. Guests: Confirmands-Sophia Brummond, Blakely Weber, and Ella Ziemer (absent).

The Council met in Heritage Hall at 6:00 PM. Moderator Kay Campe called the meeting to order, and Pastor Cory led in prayer. The confirmands were introduced, and we took a moment to “celebrate generosity” for the confirmands and their faith journey.

Motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on March 20, 2024 was M/S/C (Larry Lasch/Abigail Anderson).

Treasurer’s Report: Catherine Johnson reported that our spending is very close to our budget in all areas. A motion to receive the treasurer’s report was M/S/C (Abigail Anderson/Christina Hainy).

Finance: The facilities board will keep track of vendors’ contracts except for assistant treasurer. The at large member, treasurer and moderator will meet to look at the vendor: assistant treasurer’s contract.

Pastor’s Report: Pastor Cory has been keeping busy in the community with Legion Honor Guard and a Student Government Day presentation at the Legion.

BOARD REPORTS:

Christian Education: Abby Shoen reported that there is confirmation for three confirmands on April 28th. We also have two high school seniors this year. Sunday, May 19th is the last day of Sunday school. Camp dates were also discussed.

Hospitality: Wendy Ziemer said they reviewed the Facility and Property Use document and discussed the Pie Social.

Facilities: Larry Lasch reported that they discussed the Facility and Property Use document and that they will cancel service with Plunkett’s. We need to purchase a vacuum and find someone to mow with the lawn mower stored at church. An updated rate change was submitted by cleaners.

Diaconate: Dave Huset had nothing to add to their board minutes.

Mission: Amanda Forstrom said the Spring Highway Cleaning is coming up and that Meals on Wheels will be delivered May 1-15. We donated 101 lb. of food to MN FoodShare.

Worship: Cindy Huset said that for the upcoming pulpit supply they are looking for a praise group. Also, ushers will encourage the acolytes to wear robes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: We are still looking for a Vice Moderator.

OLD BUSINESS: Discussed doing congregational work evaluations by each board, advertising the free pianos on Facebook, getting a photo/description in for each board of the month, and editing the Facility and Property Use document. Talked briefly about the MN Conference UCC Annual Meeting and the IHD and Car Show on June 8.

NEW BUSINESS: Our website is down due to an expired domain name. We are working on fixing this. First aid and CPR training will be on Saturday, May 11th. Future council meetings will take place at 5:45 PM.

Moderator Kay Campe adjourned the meeting. Pastor Cory closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Christina Hainy, Clerk

Celebrating Generosity

There's always a way to share your generosity with your church family – join us in Celebrating the Generosity shown to our Church Family and our community in the last month . . . and the month to come.

- Sunday
- Nomads
- Bible Study
- All Church
- Christian Free Community
- Hospitality Community
- Goldfinch Communion
- Newsletter & helpers
- Readers, Ushers, Greeters
- Acolytes
- Church Service Broadcasts
- Gorgeous Altar Flowers
- Special Music
- Prayer Chain
- HyVee & Fareway Receipts
- Free Little Pantry
- Confirmation – 3 wonderful young ladies
- Confirmation Celebration for all
- Highway Cleanup



School
Breakfast
Education
Meal
Board Free
Meal

- Beautiful Music
- Meals on Wheels Food Delivery
- Five for Five Offering – Strengthen the Church
- Visitations
- Memorials
- Lawn Care
- Cleaning
- First Aid/AED training
- Starfish Aid
- Counseling
- Finance
- Board Members
- Choir
- Staff
- Children
- Visitors
- Musicians
- Teachers
- Pastor
- Our Church family and the love they share for each other
- One step closer to our website being up



We are so fortunate to have a Church Family with such diverse passions and generous souls! Be sure to take note of the generosity you see on display and give a little “thank you” to those who give so generously!

Thank you all for sharing your time, talents, and treasures! Looking forward to what's to come . . .

MEMORIALS

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
31-Mar	Memory of Linda Meschke		Dean & Donna Grotte
31-Mar	Memory of Linda Meschke		Pat & Randy Rowan
31-Mar	Memory of Tranna Urban		Steve Urban
10-Apr	Memory of Linda Meschke		Dolores Gronewald
5-Apr	Honor of Bill Cowing's Birthday	Starfish	Virginia Riedesel



Altar Flower Signup: If there is a Sunday that has a special meaning to you and you would like to provide the flowers, please sign up on the calendar by the coat closet. Write your name and who the flowers are in memory/honor of. Please know that we appreciate you sharing your special memories/days with us! Contact Dolores Gronewald with questions at (651) 249-6236.

Hy-Vee & Fareway Report as of of 21 April 2024

During the last 4 weeks, \$15,997.74 (8.00%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were received. After 20 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$81,076.19 (40.54%) toward the 17th goal which is now \$200,000.

During the same time, \$5,067.61 (3.38%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 55 weeks, Fareway is at \$63,057.78 (42.04%) toward our 5th \$150,000 goal.

This program started the first of March 2011, so any slips from then until now can be used. Any Fairmont Fareway and Hy-Vee food store register slip can be used. Even slips from Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh (Gas), Coffee Shop, Food Service, and Pharmacy help us toward the goal. Delivery slips/sheets 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.

Reported by;
Jim Bock

Meet our Board of the Month: Hospitality board



Board members (left to right): Tara Thedens, Terri Luetgers, Donna Grotte, Wendy Ziemer, Sherry Larson, & Jon Neitzel (not pictured)

There are currently 6 members on the board. We meet once a month to discuss various upcoming events like the community meal and Pie Social. We discuss church kitchen issues and are available for any questions that may arise. We also enjoy serving coffee and treats the 1st Sunday of the month to the church congregation after service.



Fellowship Opportunities:

All-Church Breakfast: Sunday, May 19th from 8:30–9:30 AM! Serving: French toast, Breakfast potatoes and scrambled eggs.

Nomads & Women’s Coffee will take a break during the warm weather. We will start back up in the fall! If you are interested in hosting or helping with either event, let the office know!

**KIWANIS EARLY RISERS
PANCAKE SUPPER**

PROCEEDS TO SUPPORT
OUR CONSTRUCTION OF A

PICNIC SHELTER

FOR CEDAR CREEK PARK - WEST

ALL YOU CAN EAT PANCAKE SUPPER
Pancakes • Sausage • Fruit • Milk • Coffee

Monday, May 6th, 2024

4:30 - 7:00 PM

Five Lakes Centre
400 S State Street • Fairmont



Adults

PreSale: \$7.00

At the Door: \$8.00

Children 12 & Under

PreSale: \$4.00

At the Door: \$4.50



Old cell phones & inkjet printer cartridges collected also!

HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!

*"Mother love is the fuel
that enables a normal human
being to do the impossible."*

Marion C. Barry



*Mothers Day
Bargains.com*

May Diaconate: Sue Eisenbacher

Usher: David "Ace" Adams

5th: Reader: Dolores Gronewald

12th: Reader: Marilyn Forstrom

19th: Reader: Carolyn Thompson

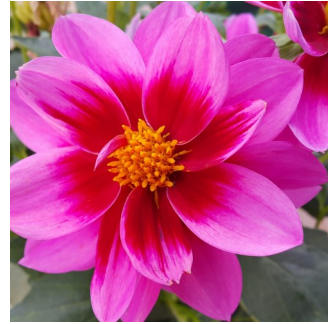
26th: Reader: Ace or Deb Adams

June Diaconate: Kris Fuller

Usher: Ellen Germain/Jon Neitzel

Congrats

To Blakely Weber, Ella Ziemer
and Sophia Brummond!! They
were confirmed on Sunday,
April 28th.



sacred
re-imagining
2024 Annual Meeting

Are you interested in attending the MN Conference UCC Annual Meeting? It will take place Friday, June 7 and Saturday, June 8 at the College of St. Benedict. Talk to Pastor Cory if you would like more information!



Outdoor Ministry

Minnesota Conference
United Church of Christ

Minnesota Conference UCC Faith Formation & Outdoor Ministries Assessment

Please help the Minnesota Conference better support and equip your local congregation's ministry. The Conference needs to hear from you as we assess and reimagine our Faith Formation and Outdoor Ministries.

Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts and experiences with us. Whether you have participated in several Conference events and gatherings or have never participated, we need to hear from YOU!

To participate, scan the QR code:



Rev. Kevin Brown
Associate Conference Minister
kevinb@uccmn.org
Rev. Sheri Nelson
Outdoor Ministry Director
sherin@uccmn.org
122 W. Franklin Ave. Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55404





PAPER BAGS WANTED!

The church office is looking for paper grocery bags for holding paper recycling. If you have extra, please take them to the office or set them in the coffee/ copy room.

Thank you!!

With Sincere Appreciation



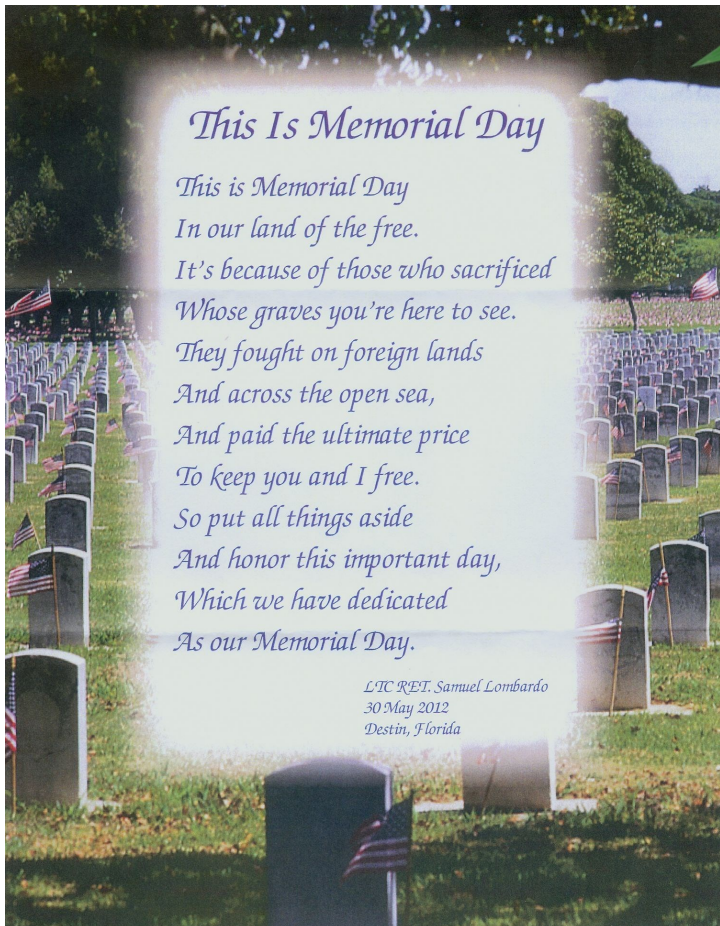
Jennifer Lynn (Weber) Grefe
March 3, 1966 ~ March 3, 2024



*A friendly smile
A casual touch,
These are the things
That mean so much,
To know you are with us
In our time of sorrow,
Sharing our prayers,
Today and tomorrow,
God gives us comfort
In the form of good friends,
May His peace be with you,
His love never ends.*

*The family of
Jennifer (Weber) Grefe*

*Amber, Jason & Family
Robert & Family
Britney, Matt & Family*



This Is Memorial Day

*This is Memorial Day
In our land of the free.
It's because of those who sacrificed
Whose graves you're here to see.
They fought on foreign lands
And across the open sea,
And paid the ultimate price
To keep you and I free.
So put all things aside
And honor this important day,
Which we have dedicated
As our Memorial Day.*

*LTC RET. Samuel Lombardo
30 May 2012
Destin, Florida*



to Cindy Anderson, Kathy Jorgensen, Joanne Eisenbarger, Margo Weaver, and Dolores Gronewald for assembling the April newsletter!!

FREE COMMUNITY MEAL

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29TH
SERVING AT 5:30 PM
1ST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
319 DOWNTOWN PLAZA

STARRING:

HOT DOGS
BAKED BEANS
CHIPS
COOKIES
WATER



**SERVED BY THE
FACILITIES
BOARD**

**EVERYONE IS
WELCOME!!**

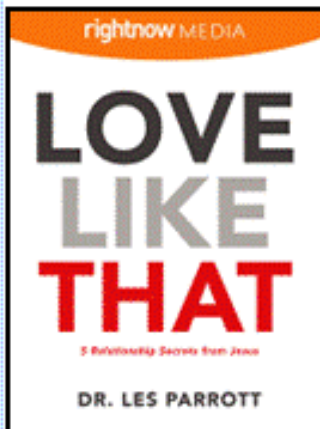
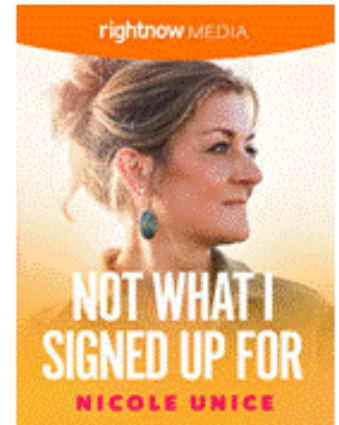
rightnow MEDIA

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

Ah, *LIFE*... it can be as unpredictable as spring weather in Minnesota!?! That's maybe an upbeat way of phrasing a little bump in the road, but what about when a painful, challenging situation arises and there appears to be no end in sight? Sarcastic platitudes don't quite cut it anymore, and you may feel as if your life is going off the rails.

Not What I Signed Up For is more than just an exasperated phrase you may find yourself screaming, alone in your car; it's a video study you should check out this month on **rightnow** MEDIA:

*Life can throw us off-kilter. Maybe you've found yourself in a season that you never would have expected. In this six-session study based on the book **Not What I Signed Up For**, Bible teacher Nicole Unice invites you into the biblical story of Joseph—a man who lived an unexpected life and trusted God through it all. Grow in understanding God's faithfulness even through your trials, know his love right in the middle of your suffering, and stand firm on his trust even when things remain paralyzingly uncertain.*



Be honest. How many times have you fallen short at being a good friend, a wise parent, or a self-giving spouse because you didn't love—truly love—at the highest level? It's tough. We're bound to fail. The bar is so high, especially if you aspire to love like Jesus. But it's not impossible.

As followers of Jesus, we're meant to radically love those around us and give the world a glimpse of what God is like. But this is easier said than done. What does it actually mean to love like Jesus? And why do we so quickly get bogged down in our own selfishness, sin, and futile efforts?

In the 6-part Bible study series, ***Love Like That***, Dr. Les Parrott examines Jesus's life and character traits to give practical definition to what it means to love like Jesus. The Holy Spirit invites us to trade detachment, exclusivity, judgment, fear, and self-concern for mindfulness, approachability, grace, boldness, and self-giving. He empowers us to love like Jesus, and frees us to experience genuine joy.

*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

This yummy dessert recipe for May was shared by Abigail Anderson.



Strawberry Jello-Pretzel Dessert

1 lb strawberries

8 oz cool whip

3/4 cup sugar

2 1/2 cups pretzels

1 stick butter

8 oz cream cheese

6 oz strawberry jello

2 cups water

- Pre-heat oven to 350° F. Combine Strawberry Jello with 2 cups boiling water and stir until completely dissolved. Set aside to cool to room temperature.
- Crush 2 1/2 cups of pretzels in sturdy Ziploc bag, using a rolling pin. Pretzels should be broken into bite size pieces.
- In a medium pan, melt 8 Tbsp butter then add 1/4 cup sugar and stir. Mix in crushed pretzels until they are evenly coated. Transfer to a 13x9 glass casserole dish, pressing the pretzel mix evenly over the bottom of the dish and bake for 10 min at 350°. Remove from oven and cool to room temperature.
- While pretzel mix is cooling, use a hand mixer to beat 8 oz cream cheese and 1/2 cup sugar on med/high speed until mixture is fluffy and white. Fold in 8 oz Cool Whip until no streaks of cream cheese remain. Spread mixture over cooled pretzels, making sure to go all the way to the edges of the dish to create a seal. (you do not want the jello to leak on the pretzels.) Put dish in the refrigerator for 30 mins.
- Clean and slice 1 lb fresh strawberries and stir them into your room temperature Jello. Pour and spread strawberry Jello mixture evenly over your cooled cream cheese layer and refrigerate until it is set. (approx 2 - 4 hours)
- Cut into squares and enjoy!

May Birthdays:

1	Kamara Cone	16	Dylan Celander
4	Louis Goerndt	19	Dr. Alice Maday
6	Jodi Kuhlers	20	Anne Wenz
9	Justin Thedens Grace Kotewa	21	Jim Chipman
10	John Roiger	23	Maia Goerndt Reagan Shoen
12	Andrea Thate	24	Lisa Meschke Paxton Rachuy
13	Sherry Larson	25	Lorie Zoeller
15	Larry Thompson Carolyn Thompson Hanna Johnson	31	Cory Hainy



May Anniversaries:

May 1	Kevin & Kelly Moller	42 years
May 3	Kris & Wendy Ziemer	27 years
May 3	Michael & Kara Rowan	10 years
May 6	Larry & Carolyn Thompson	58 years
May 6	Randy & Marcia Musser	47 years
May 9	Tom & Kathy Jorgensen	54 years
May 17	Izzy & Pauline Cruz	39 years
May 25	John & Sherry Larson	50 years
May 28	Dave & Sue Eisenbacher	13 years
May 30	Dave & Karen Cone	27 years

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