

March 2025



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

Nonprofit
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Fairmont, MN 56031

First Congregational UCC
319 Downtown Plaza
Fairmont, MN 56031



WHEELCHAIR
ACCESSIBLE



*First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Fairmont, Min-*

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 11:00

Communion the second

Sunday of every month.

March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 4:00 Baby shower for Emma Hueper
2 10:00 Worship with Blake Potthoff 11:00 Sunday school	3	4 10:00 Lakeview Communion 6:00 Worship Board	5 Ash Wednesday 12:00 Ecumenical Worship Service at St. John's UCC 5:30 Ash Wed. Evening Service 6:15 Mission Board 7:00 Choir	6 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	7	8 5:00 Retirement Party for Larry Lasch at Blazer Bar & Grill
9 Daylight Savings Time begins! 10:00 Worship Communion 11:00 Sunday school 12:00 Youth Fun Day	10 	11 6:00 Facilities Board	12 5:30 Lenten Service 6:00 CE Board 6:00 Diaconate Bd. 7:00 Choir	13 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch) 5:30 Hospitality Board	14 	15
16 8:30 All-Church Breakfast (HH) 10:00 Worship 11:00 Sunday school	17st. Patrick's Day 9:00 Council agenda items and April newsletter items <u>due</u>	18 10:00 Goldfinch Communion	19 5:30 Lenten Service 6:00 Church Council 7:00 Choir	20 First Day of Spring 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	21	22 9:00 Women's Coffee & Conversation at Lakeview's Community rm
23 10:00 Worship 11:00 Sunday school	24	25 11:00 April newsletter assembly	26 5:30 Lenten Service 5:30 Free Community Meal 7:00 Choir	27 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Ch)	28	29
30 10:00 Contemporary Worship Blessing Box Noisy Sunday 11:00 Sun. school	31					

The Reverend's Ruminations - March 2025

As I hurriedly write this month's "ruminations" ahead of my departure for a short vacation in warmer climes, the winds are blowing what little snow we've recently received, and the temperatures are preparing to plummet once again back to the subzero highs from which we've seemingly just escaped. We're still far from "normal" precipitation amounts this winter, but I guess every little bit should help our soil moisture in the long run.

No matter your opinion of this year's winter wonderland iteration, we always seem to find ourselves looking longingly toward the next (better?) season around the bend. I hate to break it to you, but spring is probably still a ways off; so perhaps it's appropriate that we will soon enter the forty solemn days known in the church as **Lent**. Lent will begin on Sunday, March 9th and continue until the joyous resurrection celebration of Easter (forty days not counting Sundays).

Around this time each year, I make mention of the fact that many Christians choose to give up the comfort of a favorite food, drink, or habit in order to gain a better understanding of our Savior's suffering and temptation in the wilderness. Have you done so, whether long ago or in recent years? It can be a challenging, yet worthwhile endeavor to confront such temptations in your own life; but don't beat yourself up if you happen to slip a bit. The point is to realize how pervasive temptation can be in our lives, and try to overcome at least one during Lent.

A few years ago, I shared snippets from an interesting article about the importance of the Lenten season by Rev. Sarah Phillips on crosswalk.com, and I thought they would be a good reminder again this year:

"...Unlike the childlike joy associated with the season of Advent, with its eager anticipation of the precious baby Jesus, Lent is an intensely penitential time as we examine our sinful natures and return to the God we have, through our own rebelliousness, hurt time and again. Lent is also an opportunity to contemplate what our Lord really did for us on the Cross – and it wasn't pretty. But ultimately, the purpose of Lent does not stop at sadness and despair – it points us to the hope of the Resurrection and the day when every tear will be dried" (Revelation 21:3).

So how do we "do" Lent? One of the most important aspects of Lent is confession – although not in the foreboding sense that you may be picturing from some old movie. As Rev. Phillips says, "... [the forty days of Lent] are set aside to really examine areas of recurring sin in our lives that prevent us from being conformed to God's Will... The goal is to honestly examine your life in light of God's Word and to make a commitment to change in any areas you have not submitted to the Lord." None of us have yet managed to fully live up to Christ's example, so just be honest as you examine your Christian walk, and then look for ways to make improvements – incremental as they may be.

A good way to start your own examination of conscience is by praying the words of Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." After opening yourself to God with these words, then hold up your life to the Ten Commandments. Confess to God, to me as your pastor, or to an accountability partner (as suggested in James 5:16) the ways you may have sinned against God. But don't stop there, or you may really feel stuck! Thank God for the forgiveness offered through Christ's sacrifice, and then ask God for the grace to change. You may be pleasantly surprised where and when God chooses to respond in your life.

My prayer is that you will approach Lent with a renewed sense of purpose this year, and find yourself connecting more deeply to our Savior's temptation and sacrifice in the coming weeks. **Throughout the season I invite you to pause at church each Wednesday at 5:30 pm for our 30-minute Lenten services, where we will sing, pray, and share in some additional thoughts on the gospel lessons leading us toward Easter.** Also available again this year is a professionally-published daily Lenten devotional from the United Church of Christ. Those of you familiar with their Advent devotional will enjoy the variety of images offered by a broad spectrum of contributing writers. I hope that you will find it to be a helpful guide as you journey with Jesus toward the cross – and his glorious resurrection on Easter morn (celebrated this year on April 20th). See you along the Lenten journey!

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Cory Germain

fairmontucc.org

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!

Are you curious about why I make a big deal out of suggesting Lenten practices each year, why there are extra church services on Wednesdays during the early spring, or why some of your friends are giving up certain things like candy, pop, or even coffee for the next several weeks? Check out ***The Lent Experience*** for an excellent explanation of what Lent is all about:



What happens when you take 2,000 years of a Christian tradition, capture the heart of it, and reimagine it? Whether you're a veteran of observing Lent or a rookie who is jumping in for the first time, you can join thousands of people for an experience that just may surprise you.

*It's simple. You watch a short video on Ash Wednesday that kicks the whole thing off. Then, each Sunday until Easter you will watch a short video that will give you your Lent Experience challenge for the week. The challenges are based on things that have been a part of Lent for centuries. An optional participant journal is available for purchase, and loaded with everything you need to learn more about Lent and to successfully complete each week's challenge. *Even if you don't buy the journal, this is an easily-understandable look at Lenten practices.**

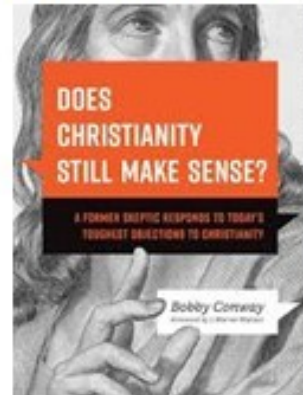
Do you have questions about the Christian faith? Who doesn't? Apologetics may sound like a foreign word, but it's quite literally defense of the faith—and it can be fascinating! I think you'll really enjoy what you uncover with ***Does Christianity Still Make Sense?***

Years after Bobby Conway became a Christian, this question haunted him. Even though by then, he was the pastor of a thriving church, it seemed as if his entire belief structure was being dismantled. Had he been duped? Perhaps you can relate to how Bobby felt. Maybe you find yourself questioning in the same way.

In this video series, Bobby discusses with his son, Dawson, four key challenges to the faith:

- *Why Are There So Many Scandals in the Church?*
- *Why, If God Is Good, Is There So Much Evil?*
- *Why Is Christianity So Exclusive?*
- *Hasn't Science Buried God?*

Join Bobby as he explores these questions while describing his own journey through doubt to a settled trust in God.



*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 2-19-25**

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

The Council met in Heritage Hall at 5:45 PM. Moderator Kay Campe called the meeting to order and led in prayer. We celebrated family by sharing about ourselves.

Motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on 1/15/25, was M/S/C. (Amanda Forstrom/Larry Lasch)

Treasurer's Report Catherine Johnson reported that we are in good shape financially at the beginning of the year only due to several members giving their year's entire pledge already. A motion was M/S/C to move \$20,000 from the checking account capital fund to the Edward Jones reserve account. (Larry Lasch/Sue Kruse) A motion to receive the treasurer's report was M/S/C. (Amanda Forstrom/Terri Luetgers)

Pastor's Report: Pastor Cory is on vacation this week. We read his report.

BOARD REPORTS:

Christian Education: No representative.

Hospitality: Terri Luetgers reported that they will be having the Pie/Ice Cream/BBQ social on June 14th during Interlaken Heritage Days. Also looking at when to serve coffee.

Facilities: Larry Lasch reported that one furnace is installed. They will be working on replacing filters and replacing the tile in the coffee room. They found an organ-repair person and are looking at making a list for fire extinguishers. We talked about each board taking a walk around the church to find the fire extinguishers, so people know where they are in case of an emergency.

Diaconate: They did not meet in February.

Mission: Amanda Forstrom said highway cleanup will possibly be on Saturday, May 3rd with more information to come.

Worship: There will be 4 types of Easter flowers this year. We are talking about having Rob Stauter from CREST speak at a service.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Nominations committee: We have 1 opening to fill on the Missions board

OLD BUSINESS: Council goals were discussed. We will be talking to St. John's UCC, working on online giving, and looking at fundraising activities (pie social being planned). Catherine will be talking to Linsey Preuss about investments. We will try to get information from the *Getting to Know Our Church Family* sheets in the newsletters. Looking at making new member handouts. We need each board to let the office know what can be included from their board.

NEW BUSINESS: Top table talk activities so far are: game night, coffee every Sunday, cribbage tournament, potluck and a quarterly women's gathering. A game night is already planned for February, & a women's coffee is planned for March 22nd. All-Church Breakfast has been added to the list.

Moderator Kay Campe adjourned the meeting and closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Christina Hainy, Church Clerk



Our goal for 2025 is to grow stronger, closer and more supportive as a church family.

During the annual meeting table talk, we came up with the below activities to move us toward that goal.

Let us know if you'd like to add to the list; if you'd like to vote for an activity; if you'd be willing to help lead an activity.

Several activities are already in the works . . . help us keep the momentum going . . . and PARTICIPATE!!

Activity	Votes		
Game Night	18	22-Feb	
Coffee Every Sunday	15		Working on Schedule
Cribbage Tournament	14		Looking for an organizer
Potlucks	11	26-Jan	
Quarterly Women's Social Gathering	10	22-Mar	Lakeview Community Room
Breakfast	9	16-Mar	
Progressive Dinner	9		
Summer Sunday in Park Picnic	9		
Twins/Moon Dogs Game Trip	9		
Silent Auction Fundraiser	8		
Campout	6		
Glow Dance Party	5		
Dodgeball/Tag	4		
Mini Golf/Golf	4		
Parade Floats	4		
Follow Up Notes to Visitors	3		
Hymn Sings before Worship	3		
Workshop on Faith	3		
Homecoming Weekend	2		
Vikings Watch Party	2		
Cleanup Day - Garage Sale	1		
Youth Meal at Annual Meeting	1		
Adult Pilgrim Fellowship	0		
Fishing Trip	0		
Quarterly Men's Social Gathering	0		

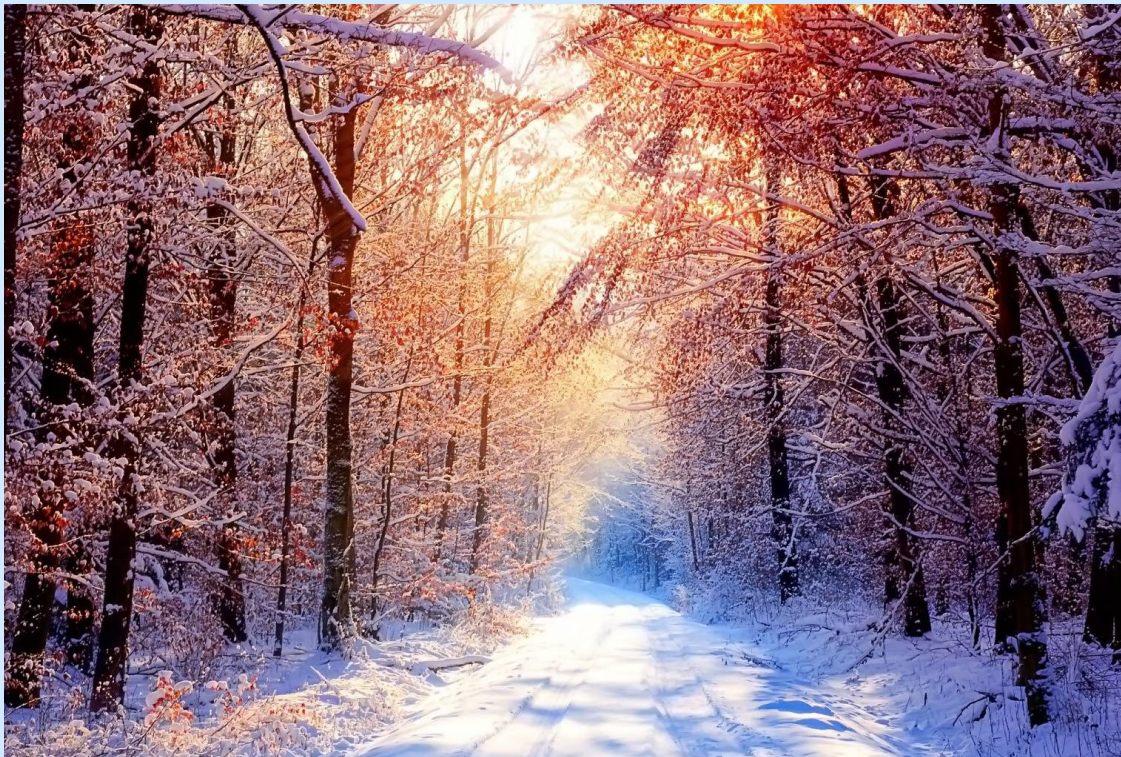
Getti ng to Know Ou r Chu rch Family...the questionnaires are still coming in! Grab one in last month's newsletter or off the table by the offices. Fill in just a few answers if you want & turn it in! Results will be shared in coming months!!

Our deepest sympathy and prayers to:

- The Anderson family on the passing of Wanda Anderson.
- The Tonne & Jaskulke families on the passing of Melva Lou Tonne.
- The Vetter family on the passing of Jeff's dad, Greg Vetter.

Sent by Cheryl Anderson in a letter dated January 28, 2025:

Wanda Harder Anderson, 102, of Mesa, Arizona, died October 13, 2024. Born in Fairmont, Minnesota in 1921, she graduated from Macalester College in 1948 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business. She worked for the American Red Cross for over 20 years, traveling the country as a Disaster Specialist. Preceded in death by her beloved husband of 54 years and a son, she is survived by two daughters, five grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.



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 Kay Campe with questions at (507) 236-9097 or kayanncampe@gmail.com.



CE NEWS:

Sunday, March 9th is a Youth Fun Day, starting at noon.



MISSION MINUTE:

The Blessing Box for March is for the Minnesota Food Drive. Our donations help Heaven's Table Food Shelf. The funds are partially matched. There will be receptacles by the front and back doors for any food donations.



GMCC's Minnesota FoodShare began its work in 1982 as a campaign advanced by congregations to restock food shelves in the 7-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The effort was so successful, and the need so evident, March Campaign became a statewide initiative just one year later and is now in its 44th year.

Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign, the largest grassroots food and fund drive in the state, brings together organizations, businesses, faith communities, and individuals to help stock and support the capacity of nearly 300 food shelves.

To date, GMCC's Minnesota FoodShare has distributed over \$18.5 million dollars via the FoodFund. 100% of the donations designated to Minnesota FoodShare during the March Campaign go into the FoodFund and are distributed to participating food shelves.

March Partners in Ministry:

Diaconate: Dave Huset

Usher: Dave Huset

Readers:

2nd: Sandra Smith

9th: Eric B. Johnson

16th: Margo Weaver

23rd: Cynthia Celander

30th: Abigail Anderson



April Partners in Ministry:

Diaconate: Eric B. Johnson

Usher: Eric B. Johnson

Readers:

6th: Carol Barrick

13th: Ellen Germain

20th: Carol Barrick

27th: Kay Campe



Please submit good news to the newsletter to share with our church family! Honor roll, Dean's list, participating in club or team activities, etc. We **love** to hear what is happening in each other's lives! Email the office at uccsecretary319@gmail.com, call (507) 235-5382, or stop in!



Thank you, Dolores Gronewald, Joanne Eisenbarger, Cindy Anderson, Kathy Jorgensen, Sherry Voyles and Margo Weaver, for assembling the February newsletter!!

- Christina



The Worship board is making plans for our church's Easter Celebration. We are once again planning to adorn the sanctuary with flowers for Easter Sunday. If you wish to purchase a flower, we ask that you either sign up on the sheet provided at the back of the sanctuary or call the church office (235-5382) to order.

The plants will be in 6-inch pots with wrap and a bow.

The cost will be:

\$18 for an Easter lily , a Cyclamen, or a Calandiva,
& \$40 for a Hydrangea.

You can either drop payment in the offering plate or mail to the church (319 Downtown Plaza, Fairmont, MN 56031). Be sure to indicate with your payment **your name & type of plant for which you are paying.**

THE LAST DAY TO ORDER IS SUNDAY, APRIL 6th.

We look forward to Easter and your gift of flowers.

-The Worship Board



**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS ON
SUNDAY, MARCH 9TH.
REMEMBER TO "SPRING FORWARD"
ONE HOUR!!**

**Pop tabs for the
Ronald McDonald House:**

Truman 2nd grade is collecting pop tabs as a fundraiser for the Ronald McDonald House. A collection bucket for tabs is in the back of the Narthex.



it's
TWINS

join us for a baby shower honoring

EMMA HUEPER

Saturday, March 1, 2025 at 4 PM

1st Congregational Church 319 Downtown Plaza, Fairmont
rsvp to Ellen at 507.525.8626
registry: www.babylist.com/list/emma-hueper





Congratulations to the family of Astrid Rose Massey on her baptism on Sunday, February 16th! Parents are Destiny Massey and Isaiah Stich. Grandmother is Beth Massey.



Congratulations to Nick Thate and Kaylean Thingstad on the birth of their son, Cooper Daniel Thate! Cooper was born on February 5th. He was 8 lb. 1 oz. and 19 inches.



St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 102 N. Park St, is having a **benefit soup lunch for Heaven's Table Food Shelf** on Friday, March 7th from 11:00 AM—1:00 PM. Cost is \$8 or free will offering.

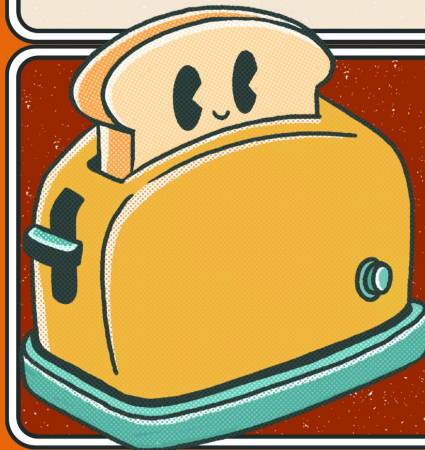


THE OFFICE IS LOOKING FOR **STICKERS** FOR MAILINGS TO SHUT-INS. SEASONAL, HOLIDAY-THEMED, RELIGIOUS, & HAPPY ONES ARE PREFERRED!! THANKS!



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH FAMILY,

IT'S TIME FOR BREAKFAST. 😊



**SUNDAY,
MARCH 16TH
8:30-9:30 AM**

**IN HERITAGE
HALL**

MENU BY JON

DON'T MISS IT!





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://firstcongoucc.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.



WOMEN'S COFFEE & CONVERSATION



SATURDAY, MARCH 22ND
9:00 - 11:00 AM

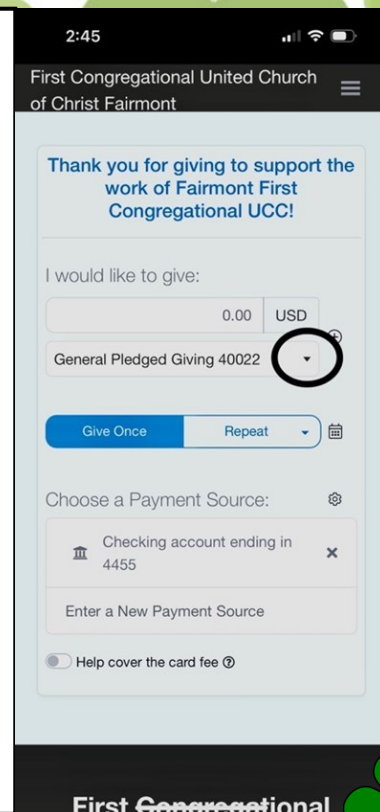
Lakeview Care Center
Community Room (in new building)
610 Summit Drive

fairmontucc.org

Tip for using Online Giving

When you give online, you can use the small arrow
circled on the photo on the right. Tap/Click the
arrow to choose between 5 categories for your
offering:

1. General Pledged Giving (if you pledge)
2. General Giving
3. Starfish Fund
4. Capital/ Building Needs Fund
5. The Blessing Box offering of the month



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL'S
Free Community
MEAL

Wednesday, March 26
5:30 pm

First Congregational UCC
319 Downtown Plaza
Fairmont, MN

Served by the
Worship Board

ALL are
Welcome!!



MENU:

Meatballs
Potatoes & Gravy
Salad
Cupcakes
Beverage

fairmontucc.org

Creamy Dill Pickle Soup (Zupa Ogórkowa)

This is a traditional Polish soup that Sydney Hainy cooked for the 2024 Glows Parade Soup Supper fundraiser.

Ingredients:

- 30 g (2 tablespoons) unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium carrot, diced small
- 2 celery stalks, diced small
- 250 g (½ lb.) pickled gherkins, diced small (optional: grate)
- 100 ml (½ cup) pickle juice
- 450 g (1 lb.) potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1.25 liters (5 cups) vegetable stock
- 200 ml (1 cup) sour cream
- 30 g (½ cup) fresh dill, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste



Instructions:

1. In a large pot or Dutch oven, melt the butter over medium heat and add the onion, carrot and celery stalks. Cook for 5-6 minutes until the veggies soften slightly.
2. Stir in the pickled gherkins, pickle juice, potatoes and vegetable stock. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 20 minutes or until the potatoes are fork-tender.
3. Mix a ladle of soup in the sour cream to temper it, then whisk this mixture in the soup. Stir in the fresh dill and season to taste.
4. Serve with extra fresh dill, sliced dill pickles and rye bread (or your favorite crusty bread).

Recipe from [skinnyspatula.com](https://www.skinnyspatula.com).

March Birthdays:

Mar 1	Greg Grotte	Mar 12	Jayden Huset
Mar 2	Barb Bock	Mar 14	Jim Grotte
	Dave Wallien		Tatum Garlick
	Sophia Brummond	Mar 15	Darwin Kuhlers
	Sadie Quade	Mar 20	Brad Cone
Mar 3	Bill Thompson	Mar 24	Michael Meschke
Mar 6	Ann Hartmann		Deb Thate
Mar 8	Erin True		Clint Forstrom
	Ivy Barnes		Presley Wegner
Mar 10	Tabb Meyer	Mar 27	Rorik Cain
	Koda Massey	Mar 28	Blakely Weber
	Kira Massey	Mar 29	Jennifer Weaver
		Mar 30	Amy Derrera



March Anniversaries:

Mar 3	Robert & Alexis Thate	7 years
Mar 17	Vince & Angela Vaughn	11 years
Mar 29	Jim & Judie Orr	40 years

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