

**GRANITE FALLS
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
210 Ninth Avenue
Granite Falls MN 56241
Change Service Requested
THE ENCOUNTER
July 2017 Issue No. 7**



CHURCH LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

**PASTOR: REV. DAN MAIDEN
OFFICE ASSISTANT: DANIELLE FARLEY
ORGANIST: JOAN LUNDELL**

**MODERATOR: SPENCER KVAM
TREASURER: JANIE ATOR
CHOIR DIRECTOR: JEFF IVERSON**

NEWSLETTER EDITORS: PASTOR DAN MAIDEN

CHURCH ADDRESS: 210 NINTH AVENUE, GRANITE FALLS, MN 56241

CHURCH E-MAIL ADDRESS: uccgf@mvtvwireless.com

CHURCH PHONE: 320-564-2442

PASTOR DAN'S E-MAIL ADDRESS: revmaiden@msn.com

HOME PHONE: 320-379-1051 CELL PHONE: 941-932-0163

G.F PASTOR'S HOURS: 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 PM WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY & BY APPOINTMENT

OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

**WED. & FRI.—GRANITE
TUES. & THURS. —MONTEVIDEO**

WEB SITE: www.granitefallsucc.org

July

JULY RESPONSIBILITIES					
	July 2	July 9	July 16	July 23	July 30
Usher	Hazel Carter	Hazel Carter	Hazel Carter	Hazel Carter	Hazel Carter
Usher	Darrell Carter	Darrell Carter	Darrell Carter	Darrell Carter	Darrell Carter
Fellowship	Diane Bakker	Bea Read	Terry VanDerPol	Keith/Deb Koerlin	Helen Stukel
Liturgist	Helen Stukel	Sue Selden	Terry VanDerPol	Steve Zumhofe	Sharon Anderson
Clean Up	Tom/Linda Bukowski	Ron/Marty Bergman	Mike/Shelly Gaffaney	DuWayne/LaVonne Koenen	Gail Rohlik
Clean Down	NA	NA	NA	NA	

Please have the church cleaned by the listed date.

CIRCLE OF STONES



WHEN: Thursday, July 6th @ 7pm

WHERE: Pearl Lenzen's house

WHO: Women of the church and friends

WHAT: Bring a Bible, any translation.

DRIVERS NEEDED:

Your next opportunity to drive
will be the week of

Our **UCC**

D@YD Coordinator

is Pearl Lenzen and Helen
Stukel is on the **D@YD Board**.

THANK YOU TO these

JUNE Drivers:

Cindy & Cheri Fjermastad
Lynn Holmstrom
Sharon Anderson
Joel Benniga
Pearl Lenzen

ENCOUNTER Deadline

Deadline for articles for the
August ENCOUNTER is
JULY 20.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

January 2017 Income	\$5,164.00
January Expenses	\$4,785.82
Year-to-Date Balance	\$378.18

July CALENDAR

Sunday	July 2	9:00am	Worship/Communion
Thursday	July 6	7:00pm	Circle of Stones at Pearl Lenzen's
Saturday	July 8		Chapman/Hall Wedding
Sunday	July 9	9:00am	Worship
Sunday	July 16	9:00am	Worship
Sunday	July 23	9:00am	Worship
		10:15am	Stewardship Meeting
		10:15am	Memorials Meeting
Sunday	July 30	9:00am	Worship

JULY BIRTHDAYS

July 2	Darrell Carter
July 8	Karla Slettedahl
July 10	Julia Kvam
	Bev Nordang
July 11	Janelle Kompelien
July 16	Dick Anderson
July 17	Hazel Carter
	Tom Bukowski
	Jacob Anderson
July 18	Peggy Kvam
July 23	Pat Putnam
July 26	Alison Ator
July 27	Karen Schmidt-Dill

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

July 2	Jeff & Sheila VanOverbeke
July 11	Bill & Sue Krinke
July 19	Helen & Gene Stukel

WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READINGS

July 2	Genesis 22:1-14; Psalm 13; Jeremiah 28:5-9; Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42
July 9	Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67; Psalm 45:10-17; Zechariah 9:9-12; Psalm 145:8-14; Romans 7:15-25a; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
July 16	Genesis 25:19-34; Psalm 119:105-112; Isaiah 55:10-13; Psalm 65:1-8, 9-13; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
July 23	Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24 Isaiah 44:6-8; Psalm 86:11-17; Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
July 30	Genesis 29:15-28; Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; 1 Kings 3:5-12; Psalm 128; Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52


To the members of Granite Falls United Church of Christ for being a 5 for 5 Congregation of the United Church of Christ in 2016. 5 for 5 Congregations support Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support, and the Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, Christmas Fund, and Strengthen the Church Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ.

Thank You
so much!



FINANCIAL SCHOLARSHIP NOTICE

Requests for financial scholarships for the academic year must be received by October 15, 2017. Scholarships are available for camp registration, education, leadership and special training needs. The Memorial, Bequests and Special Gifts committee will meet on October 30 to consider and allot funds. All church members and friends are encouraged to apply. Applications are available in the church office. Please put them in Hazel Carter's mailbox.



UCC MEMBERS & FRIENDS PHOTO ALBUM

The Worship & Membership Committee is in the process of making two copies of a Members & Friends Photo Album for our Church. The prints for the albums will be made from digital images. The Committee is asking members and friends to help by doing one of the following...

- * Email a recent photo to the Church: uccgf@mvtwireless.com
- * Sharon Anderson will take your photo after Sunday morning worship and email it to the Church
- * Bring a recent photo to the Church and it will be scanned and returned to you

Thank you,

Worship & Membership Committee members: Sharon Anderson, Joel Beninga, Peggy Mooney, Helen Stukel, Vicke Zumhofe with help from Sue Selden

Changing Congregational Trends

By Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

Every five years *Faith Communities Today* provides a marvelous service to all churches through their very thorough survey of religious congregations across the United States. Sociologist David A. Roozen and his colleagues have developed ways to monitor the pulse of congregational life.

The 2015 report captures both continuity and change among U.S. congregations. Perhaps the biggest change since 2010 was the dramatic decline in multi-religious activity be churches reported in *Sunday is Not a Presidential Primary*. Here are some of the other findings.

Roozen and his colleagues have developed ways to monitor the pulse of congregational life.

Growth and change go together

“In a rapidly changing world,” the report says, “thriving congregations are nearly ten times more likely to have changed themselves than are struggling congregations.” So churches that grow have to change, but there is no assurance in the uncertain religious landscape of today that a particular change will be effective. This may be one reason the “willingness to change to meet new challenges” has dropped from 74 percent to just under 62 percent in the past ten years.

Change and conflict go together

For many years these surveys have shown two recurring themes. First, churches willing to change, especially in worship, are more likely to grow. Second, where there has been a major conflict in recent years, the church is not likely to grow. This report concludes that there is a subtle interplay between change and conflict that cannot be avoided but must be understood and engaged. Here is what happens. Change is required for growth. Change leads to conflict. Conflict, if not kept to manageable levels, leads to decline. There is no escaping that change creates tension and a sense of loss by some people. Those pursuing change do well to recognize this reality and do those things necessary to lessen the degree of conflict change produces. Churches must get over their aversion to any conflict while taking great care to pace and interpret change sensitively

Growth and spiritual vitality go together

It turns out that the debate about whether churches should focus on reaching more people or growing spiritual vitality among current members misses the point about how growth and spiritual vitality relate to each other. A growing church is more likely to be more spiritually vital, and a declining church is more likely to be less spiritually vital. Fewer than 20 percent of declining churches reported that they had high spiritual vitality while almost 36 percent of growing churches reported high spiritual vitality. The likelihood is that those things churches do to reach new people also enrich current members, and those things churches do to deepen the spiritual vitality of current members make new members more likely.

Worship changes often lead to growth

“Whatever a congregation’s sense of innovation in worship,” says the report, “one thing has remained constant over our 15 years of surveys—namely the strong relationship that changing worship has to both growth and spiritual vitality.” It appears that in the last five years fewer churches are making such changes. When asked if a congregation had changed the style of any of its worship services in the past five years or added a new service with a different style, those reporting no change or only a minor change jumped from 68 percent to 78 percent from 2010 to 2015, and those adding a new service of a different style dropped to just over 4 percent.

Young adults are increasingly scarce in churches

While over 20 percent of the U.S. population is 18-34 years old, the report finds that only 10 percent of congregations reach that level of participation by young adults. While this has historically been a group less represented in church, today’s young adults are less religiously affiliated or even interest than in past times. No one doubts the challenge facing churches seeking to reach younger generations. What may be surprising is that only one in ten congregations make reaching young adults their priority but, for those that do, they are five times more likely to have a thriving young adult ministry than churches for which it is not a priority.

Laity reach other laity

While only 14 percent of congregations say their laity are quite or very involved in reaching new people, the more laity are involved in recruitment, the more likely growth is and, as the report puts it, “the effect is dramatic.” Of the churches that grew two percent or more in the past five years, fully 90 percent of them said that laity have “a lot of involvement” in reaching new people.

Distinguish yourself in the community

A consistent finding from the beginning of this survey is that churches that are seen as different in some way from other churches are more likely to grow. Do your members tend to think your church is about like other churches in your community? If the answer is positive, there’s a good chance your church is not growing. Churches can see themselves as distinctive without arrogance or superiority. They are not saying they are necessarily better or that all churches should be like the. Rather, such churches believe God has called them to a distinctive ministry for their time and place.

The Pastor's Quarter



“Where do you see God?” This question was amongst my notations from the annual conference of the United Church of Christ. It seems to be such a simple question. Then again, if we were to start talking about our sacred places, we might find numerous responses. So too, when you think about our prayers on Sunday morning, our shared ministries we give precedence to some words over others. Perhaps some of our older members would be able to share as to why one church chose to use trespasses and another church, debts. What are the meanings behind the words? Might it be that we want to distinguish ourselves from the holy other?

These ponderings continued as the speaker began to talk about immigration. Talk about sacred languages! Have any one of us asked why prayers and readings are read in English first, and then in Spanish, should someone speak another language? What if we asked one of our guests to offer their prayers first, and then the words we know so well? What would it be like to be the only speaking Spanish?

In some Christian communities, there is an emphasis on speaking in “tongues”. However, the early church was cautious that the interpretations might benefit the one who spoke such raptures. Admittedly, having served in several denominations, I want to honor our traditions yet create space for new ways of being. This is the reason that I added the “Response”, so that you might hear the voices of faithful and spirited children of God. Might we experience what it is like for so many people in our communities?

Of course, words can take meaning all of their own. Perhaps you may remember the game that we played when we were young. Someone would whisper in the ear of the person next to them. As the words were passed on around the circle, the words take a life of their own. Sometimes the words resulted in laughter. Sometimes the words made no sense. And likely, there were times when someone probably changed the words just to get a laugh.

There are other ways that we can engage in dialogue, such as reflective listening. It's rather simple. After listening to someone who has shared something with you, take a moment to think about what they said. It may lead to an affirmation. “Yes, you heard what I said.” Or someone might say, “That's not what I intended”. Needless to say, it takes a lot of time and energy - in a world that wants quick answers and solutions.

Might we take time this summer to engage in conversation family and friends, as well as reaching out to those you do not know as well. When you think about, the early church was founded by those who shared their stories, as well as those who made time to listen.

Praise be to God!

Pastor Dan