

Tower Notes

February 2020

**United Protestant Church
(UCC)**

in Morgan Park
830 88th Avenue West
Duluth, MN 55808
218-626-2570

office@unitedprotestantchurch.org
facebook.com/unitedprotestantchurch

Pastor

Rev. Paul VanAntwerp
218-349-0143
pastor@unitedprotestantchurch.org

Worship Schedule: Sunday at 10:30 AM
YOU ARE INVITED TO WORSHIP WITH US EVERY WEEK

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| February 2 | Worship Service 10:30 AM
Communion, Food Shelf
Second Offering - Fuel Fund |
| February 9 | Worship Service 10:30 AM |
| February 16 | Worship Service 10:30 AM
Second Offering - Fuel Fund |
| February 26 | Worship Service 10:30 AM |

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

*"All you need is love.
But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt."*

Charles Schulz

The following messages were prepared by Pastor and Moderator for the Annual Meeting.

Pastor's Commentary

Not a numbers guy, really... and at any rate it's hard to quantify the Spirit I've felt here in the past year - fresh and light, in comparison to last year at this time. We're praying and playing and caring and sharing quite well. I thank God for that. This year, we have seasoned ourselves with the spices God has given us, and responded to our hunger for a new experience to consume our Spirit. Abstract and colorful words? You betcha! After all, when you're doing a new thing, not a lot of specifics will suffice.

Context: It is important to recall that our church was created back near 1920 with a corporate sponsor as our benefactor. We were created as a Protestant church for the employees of the steel mill - as another part of an intentional community built by U.S. Steel. We sustained ourselves with a population that felt a desire, if not a responsibility, to attend weekly worship and to belong to a church.

Times change. Communities change. We've had a dedicated few that sustained the church during this transition. For them, we hold the Christ light and give prayerful thanks! By their effort, they have gifted us the opportunity that we have now.

A year ago, I could not tell you that it was God's will that this church grow and thrive. At the time, six months on the job, my "honeymoon" period was rapidly ending and I was facing the natural product of a church where a small group of people had been doing beyond the lion's share of decision-making and effort to keep things going. I sought, with a Pastor's vocation of research and prayer, to prepare this place for the potential growth waiting in the wings of this community. There was resistance, of course, from those that were used to the "way things were" but the majority of our community held strong in spirit, believing in hope.

See, if at one time we can name that we were "the Protestant Church for the U.S. Steel Community", we can accept that at the time we were a community church for a specific class, culture, and race of people. And now, we must also acknowledge that the class, culture, and racial background of our community have drastically changed. By my experience engaging this community (as I was charged to do in accepting this position), I can tell you that it is a community hungry for faith and connection. It is a community that longs to see our open doors and welcome.

And here I lift up what I shared in our New Members Inquiry meeting a few weeks ago: we are a "United Protestant Church" with a mission to welcome and include members of the Protestant faith all across the spectrum of faith traditions, cultural backgrounds, and socio-political values. As I shared in my sermon two weeks ago: "we have both Bernie and Trump supporters among us." This echoes our denominational ties, as well as my commitment as an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ (UCC), echoing one of their maxims: "No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

So many different people! Can we get along? Honestly, it remains to be seen, but my instinct is "you betcha!" To this end, I challenge the long-term members to welcome new members with love and inclusion, trusting that God, as presented in the Gospel message, seeks for all of us to be equal. I challenge new members to realize they are participating in a new and exciting thing that God is doing.

I make it my practice to focus on the "yes" instead of the "no", and to look toward the present and prepare for the future rather than to linger in the past. At one time we thought we might be near to closing our doors. At present, we are growing... slowly but surely. I have been told that the last Christmas service was the largest in over twenty years, and that this is the first time in a long time we have had new members welcomed two years in a row. That's nice to hear, but I want to circle back to my introduction and tell you that it is the Holy Spirit in the place that matters the most for me. Positive energy. Engagement of faith. The Holy Spirit at work and thriving. That is what matters to me.

So to summarize: the ecclesiastical work of the year ahead is to adjust our organizational structure and our default behavior of over twenty years in order to welcome active participation of new members from our community in the day-to-day ministry and operations of the church. Our work ahead is to prepare for the growth that I truly believe will happen. Does it look like that church of old? No. But I thank God for the people who sustained us, that God brought us to the gift of this present moment.

Rev. Paul VanAntwerp

Message from the Moderator

We started out this year with a part time Pastor doing full time work. Pastor Paul has been very good for us with lots of new ideas for opening the church to the community. He has the kind of energy that we've needed!

Many new things have happened this year.

*A committee was formed to organize the historical documents of our church. Documents, papers, pictures had been scattered in lots of different places in the church. We are now attempting to put names to faces and dates to events. Any help with this would be appreciated.

*A much needed cleaning was done under the choir loft. If you haven't looked there lately, you'll be surprised to see that things are organized and easy to find.

*Representatives from AA came and talked to us regarding our consent to hold meetings at our church. These meetings are needed in our area, so we were excited to be able to have our church available for them. They currently meet every Tuesday and Thursday nights in our fellowship hall.

*We started a "Grills On" event every Wednesday starting at 5:00. We have lots of community folks coming to this bringing something to share if they have it, or just themselves. There's always an overabundance of food! With winter, this event has morphed into a potluck.

*This year our church was the space that was used to hold the "Make Every Child Smile Toy Drive" which had previously been held at the Iron Mug. We had about 300 folks walking through our doors picking up toys for the children.

*Weekly reminders of upcoming events are now available by email and hard copy. I look forward to receiving this reminder. Thanks to Clarice and Paul!

*Our church kitchen was used by a group of us for making donuts and Christmas cookies. The donuts were made earlier in the year, the Christmas cookies were made just before the Bill Bastian concert and sold at the concert. Along with our normal annual events, you can see that it's been a very busy year.

It seems that our church is showing a real presence in our community, not only with these added events, but with the spirit of our sharing. Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard this past year. I can see good things ahead for us. God be with us all.

Karen Robnik, Moderator

AROUND UPC

Joys and Concerns

*Connie Weast passed away January 1 in Rogers, MN. Pastor Paul participated in a private service for the family on January 10.

*Jane Moran is recovering after a carbon monoxide scare.

*Lucille Kolberg has been ill with an infection.

*Remember those who are unable to be with us.

*If you would like prayer for yourself, family or friends, you may contact Sue Linde, 626-1272, and she will begin the prayer chain.

Memorials

**A generous gift of money was given to UP Church by Dennis Make in memory of his wife, Lois, who passed away in 2019. Dennis is a very good friend of Dick & Sue Linde.

**A special thank you to Steve Wilson of Tower, MN, for his generous gift of money in memory of grandparents Glen & Amber Welch.

Baking Day: Doughnuts & Cookies

February 10, 9:00 am

All who like to make doughnuts & bake cookies are invited to join in the fun and fellowship.

2020 Financial Report – year to date (as of 1/31/20)

Income:	\$ 3,551
Expenses:	<u>5,144</u>
Difference:	\$ - 1,592

Thank You

*Our sincere thanks to Ed & Arlene Leese of Virginia, MN for their continued support of UP Church. We appreciate their thoughtfulness.

*Kathy & Kevin Behm, Marna & Mike Fasteland, and Dick & Sue Linde took down decorations and cleaned in the Sanctuary after the Christmas holidays.

*Thanks to all who came out on January 26 to conduct church business at the Annual Meeting, and to enjoy the potluck lunch after.

*UP Church received a beautiful photo of the church, taken after the Thanksgiving weekend storm, from photographer Charles Howard Smith. Shari has included a copy of the photo in the Sunshine cards she sends out.

*Dick Linde & Ernie St. George have kept walks and steps cleared of snow. And, thanks to Jason Rengo & Kevin Behm - they used a skid-steer to push back ridges put up on the sidewalks by the plows, and the huge snow-banks that were taking over the parking lot.

Welcome!


Judi Gaskill, Zach Geissler, Collette Illy, Sheldean Ion, Kathy Lee, Shirley Letica and Tim Olson were welcomed as new members or reaffirming members on January 19.

Congratulations

Amber Erickson recently received a Master's Degree in Social Work from Augsburg College.

UNITED PROTESTANT CHURCH

February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Worship 10:30 Communion Fuel Fund Food Shelf	3 Lectionary Study 6 pm	4	5 Office 10-2 Grill's On 5-7	6 AA Meeting 7 pm	7 Office 10-2	8
9 Worship 10:30	10 Baking Day 9 am Lectionary Study 6 pm	11 Council 7pm Trustees & Diaconate 6pm	12 Office 10-2 History Work Day Grill's On 5-7 Choir 6 pm	13 AA Meeting 7 pm	14 Office 10-2 Valentine's Day 	15
16 Worship 10:30 Fuel Fund	17 Lectionary Study 6 pm Presidents' Day	18	19 Office 10-2 Grill's On 5-7	20 AA Meeting 7 pm	21 Office 10-2	22 Ruby's Pantry 11:00 am
23 Worship 10:30	24 Lectionary Study 6 pm	25	26 Office 10-2 History Work Day Grill's On 5-7 Choir 6 pm	27 AA Meeting 7 pm	28 Office 10-2	29 Leap Day
March 1 Worship 10:30 Communion Fuel Fund Food Shelf	2 Lectionary Study 6 pm	3	4 Office 10-2 Grill's On 5-7	5 AA Meeting 7 pm	6 Office 10-2	7
8 Worship 10:30 Daylight Saving Time begins 2 am	9 Lectionary Study 6 pm	10 Council 7pm Trustees & Diaconate 6 pm	11 Office 10-2 History Work Day Grill's On 5-7	12 AA Meeting 7 pm	13 Office 10-2	14

Coming Up in February

- February 2 *Communion, Fuel Fund, Food Shelf
- February 10 *Baking Day: Doughnuts & Cookies, 9 am
- February 11 *Council Meeting, 7:30 pm, Trustees & Diaconate 6:30
- February 14 *Valentine's Day
- February 16 *Second Offering - Fuel Fund
- February 17 *Presidents' Day
- February 22 *Ruby's Pantry at Mission Creek Church, 11 am-12:30 pm
- February 29 *Leap Day

Looking Ahead to March

- March 1 *Communion, Fuel Fund, Food Shelf
- March 4 *Women's Fellowship, 1:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
- March 8 *Daylight Saving Time begins, 2:00 am
- March 10 *Council Meeting, 7:30 pm, Trustees & Diaconate 6:30 pm
- March 15 *Second Offering - Fuel Fund
- March 17 *St. Patrick's Day
- March 28 *Ruby's Pantry at Mission Creek Church, 11 am-12:30 pm



Monday, 6:00 pm: Bible Study Join Pastor Paul for a first look at the Lectionary texts for the following Sunday. This is a time for questions and conversation in our lives of faith - and your participation greatly assists in creating a meaningful sermon on Sunday.

Wednesday (2nd & 4th) 6:00 pm: Choir Practice Choir performs the following Sunday. Everyone who likes to sing is welcome to join in. Let Karen Robnik or Pastor Paul know if you have a favorite piece of music you would like to hear.

Wednesday, 5'ish-7'ish: Grill's On! Bring something for the grill or a side dish, a friend or neighbor, and enjoy the fellowship.

Weekly Email Update Each Friday, UP Church sends out a church-wide email including reminders of upcoming events and a note from Pastor Paul. Interested in receiving this? Send a note to the office. Also, paper copies of the updates available on Sunday mornings in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall.

Church Contact List: Let us know if you have a new home address, phone number or email address, so we have up-to-date information for the directory. Also, if you have any additions, deletions or other changes you would like made to the directory or birthday/anniversary list, please leave a message in the office.



February Birthdays

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 7 Cari Elliot | 10 Hanna Johnson | 12 Greyson Conito |
| 18 Mary Jo Nickila | 19 Amber Erickson | 20 Keith Erickson |
| 21 John Nickila Jr. | 22 Elloree Raine Conito | 25 Karen Moe |
| 26 Paula St. George | 27 Scott Herrington | |

February Anniversaries

- 12 Sue & Dick Linde

Learn more at facebook.com/unitedprotestantchurch

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United Protestant Church Vision Statement

The United Protestant Church aspires to be a vibrant Christian congregation that is sustainable and welcoming to all, putting its faith into practice through its outreach activities. The church strives to be the center of the community's mind, body and spirit through its ministries and the programs it offers.

February 2020

*100 Years
1917 - 2017*

*Love is patient and kind;
it is not jealous or conceited or proud;
love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable;
love does not keep a record of wrongs;
love is not happy with evil,
but is happy with the truth.
Love never gives up;
and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.*

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

