

The Peace Visitor



“It is hard for us to recognize it now, but Peter and Paul were introducing the first Christian family to an entirely new community, a community that transcends the rigid hierarchy of human institutions, a community in which submission is mutual and all are free.”

— Rachel Held Evans, **A Year of Biblical Womanhood**

I assume that each of us have a favorite part of church. I hope for some it is the sermon, but I know that it isn't everybody's favorite time. It might be scripture, song, prayer, silence or sacrament. For me, church is about that sliver of time before we start. I am often running around in circles trying to greet visitors and regulars in person. I collect handshakes, hugs, and pleasantries peppered with prayer requests and thanksgiving reports. For me embracing the community is my act of church and where I find sanctuary. Church for me is about community.

As I traverse the landscape of my world I get called into other circles, other pockets that people see as community. In each of those circles I know that I am part of something greater than myself. But none of those circles is like church. There is a uniqueness of purpose in church that is different. At the heart of our circle, right in the middle of us stands another member of community, God. As much as I love the work at Habitat for Humanity, the Ethics Committee of St Cloud Hospital or the Tri-County Homeless Alliance; those communities will never bring me back to center like church. I might agree that our community is like the one Rachel Held Evans seeks, where submission is mutual and all are free.

As much as I love our community and our circle I must admit that all communities are work, and sometimes our work is difficult. Bottom line, our church is work. We have entered a new period of trying to revise and re-vision how the community moves. I know that some are feeling a bit nervous and uneasy. Perhaps some might even feel abandoned or left behind. What I hope we can do it create an atmosphere where ideas and excitement thrive. This might mean some things disappear, but we might find other new things flourish. WE can be co-creators of this ongoing community we call church. In approaching this new work, and being it will take cooperation of people who might not always agree with each other but need to respect and honor our difference, I hope we can all remember that at the core of this circle the divine is with us calling us into community.

Whatever speaks to you at church, I hope you find ways to see it as it connects to community. Without each other so much of church would not happen. If your church begins as coffee hour, let that be your great Amen. If a song inspires, remember your place in the chorus. If the word speaks to you, remember that it is the word of God for the People. If the sermon says anything useful, it is from the meditations of our hearts. Church is special community and we are not alone. Let us love God and love one another.

Pastor John

March 2017

Pastor John's Theology Word of the Month:

con·se·crate [ˈkænsəˌkræt] VERB

To consecrate something is to formally set it apart for special use.

Bread was consecrated in the Old Testament (Exodus 25:30; Lev. 25:5-9) as were people (Rom. 1:1; Gal.1:15). Example: “The Church Council has decided to consecrate all their energies to this purposeful act of being the Church.”

Peace United Church of Christ February Meeting – 2-19-2017

Moderator Jon Tufte called the meeting to order.

The words of the hymn “Won’t You Let Me Be Your Servant?” were read as an opening prayer.

Jon reviewed five habits of a functional team –

Moving from “but” and “however” language to “yes, and…” language

Remembering conflict can be healthy when it’s focused on a topic, not on people or blame – build trust not fear

Providing opportunity for buy-in to processes – “what if?” not “if only…”

Supporting and challenging each other – accountability

Focusing on results

The agenda was approved with the addition of two items to New Business.

Pastor’s Report: new groups have asked to meet at the church. PFLAG has been meeting here, and they are starting subgroups for LGBT+ and Trans Alliances. Motion made (M) Rick Fine and seconded (S) Michelle Dettmann that PFLAG and affiliated support groups will be meeting at Peace UCC and have been informed of our Safe Church policies. Motion passed (P) unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report: Lisa Hanson’s report accepted as discussed. Brad Hanson will be taking over this role for the next meeting.

Financial Secretary’s Report: accepted. Council would also like to see attendance numbers report added to future reports.

Old Business:

Behavioral Code of Conduct is in progress and will be added to the revised Constitution and By-Laws that are being drafted.

New Business:

Will Sundays work for Council meetings? Yes, meetings will be the third Sunday, exempting Easter.

Petty cash procedure was discussed and will be implemented. **MSP** (Bev Tallent, Jeryl Michaels, unanimous) to have a \$200 petty cash fund with monthly (or as

needed) audit and replenishment by bookkeeper. Money will be held in a locked secret location.

Council expectations: in the absence of traditional committees for the time being, there will be a need for two types of groups – **task teams** for upcoming or one-time events and **standing teams** for ongoing things like Sunday staffing (bell ringer, ushers, etc.), calling on people and home visiting, setting up communion, and more.

- A group to do visitations and give attention to At Home members and others who may need visits or extra prayer care **Jeryl, Bev, and Shirley Hoff: Champions**
- Coffee hour – invite people to bring, serve, donate – items for the freezer or people to help serve and clean up -**Rick Fine: Champion**
- Organizing pickup or drop-offs for donation items – **Champion: ???**
- Possibility of getting a flag/flags to put outside when we are having services or activities to get attention from those driving by – **Jon Tufte, Michelle Dettmann: Champions**
- Sermon talk group to get together after hearing the sermon, for discussion
- 125th Anniversary celebration year – **Champions: Entire council**
December 3, official worship service and party – Shari Prestemon from the Conference will preach
Other ideas – update history book; make videos of memories, etc; invite former members and friends to church picnic with additional activities; reunions of Youth Groups, Confirmation classes, etc. as possible through the year; gather stories, friends, and former members in multiple ways throughout the year. More discussion ongoing!
- Pastor/Parish Committee – reformatting group going forward – looking at other models and ways of communication and support
- Offices—rearrange, declutter, and streamline offices to better accommodate usage

Bring all ideas to the next meeting! March 19 following coffee hour.

BOLD were in attendance:

Moderator: Jon Tufte

Vice Moderator: Ron Seibring

Secretary: Linda Vierkant

Treasurer: Brad Hanson

Financial Secretary: Michelle Dettmann

Member at large: Curt Hutchens

Member at large: Val Broste

Trustees: Bruce Michaels

Mission: Rick Fine

TTT: Mark Hoff **Shirley subbed for Mark**

ROSE: Beverly Tallent

Deacons: Jeryl Michaels

Faith Formation: TBD

Pastor/Parish: TBD

FAITH FORMATION

Our Civility Project

Make the World More Civil, Idea #34— “If you have an issue with someone, talk to them directly, not behind their back. You’ll never be able to resolve the issue unless you bring it out in the open. And if it’s not worth resolving, then it’s probably not worth discussing-with anyone.”

This has likely been a problem since the first humans started to talk to each other, and it’s something very few people ever master. The following article is a good starting place.

Faith Formation is not just Sunday School classes or a moment of the service. It’s the day-to-day wrestling with how to be God’s people, doing God’s will in the world. I share this book to start conversations. Try on these suggestions for a week or so. A few more (of the book’s 365) are printed on the Fridays of the calendar. Then discuss your experiences. Was it obvious? Easy? Hard? Ridiculous? Did trying a particular suggestion lead to a different or interesting experience?

Talk, share, wrestle, discuss. Discuss them with neighbors in your pew the following Sunday. Start your own list. As we prepare for Easter, we can spring clean our thoughts and attitudes as well. A fresh perspective is always useful!

Let me know how it goes. —Michelle Dettmann, *Faith Formation Chair*

[Return to Civility: a Speed of Laughter Project](#), John Sweeney & The Brave New Workshop. 2007

We Have to Talk: A Step-By-Step Checklist for Difficult Conversations by Judy Ringer
Edited for space—find the full article [HERE](http://www.judyringer.com/resources/articles/we-have-to-talk-a-stepbystep-checklist-for-difficult-conversations.php). <http://www.judyringer.com/resources/articles/we-have-to-talk-a-stepbystep-checklist-for-difficult-conversations.php>

Think of a conversation you’ve been putting off. Got it? Great. Then let’s go. There are dozens of books on the topic of difficult, crucial, challenging, fierce, important (you get the idea) conversations. (In fact, I list several excellent resources at the end of this article). Those times when you know you should talk to someone, but you don’t. Maybe you’ve tried and it went badly. Or maybe you fear that talking will only make the situation worse. Still, you feel stuck, and you’d like to free up that stuck energy for more useful purposes. ...

4 Steps to a Successful Outcome

The majority of the work in any conflict conversation is work you do on yourself. No matter how well the conversation begins, you’ll need to stay in charge of yourself, your purpose and your emotional energy. Breathe, center, and continue to notice when you become off center—and choose to return again. This is where your power lies. By choosing the calm, centered state, you’ll help your opponent/partner to be more centered, too. Centering is not a step; centering is how you are as you take the steps.

FAITH FORMATION

Step #1: Inquiry

Cultivate an attitude of discovery and curiosity. Pretend you don't know anything (you really don't), and try to learn as much as possible about your opponent/partner and his point of view. Pretend you're entertaining a visitor from another planet, and find out how things look on that planet, how certain events affect the other person, and what the values and priorities are there. ... Let your partner talk until he is finished. Don't interrupt except to acknowledge. Whatever you hear, don't take it personally. It's not really about you. Try to learn as much as you can in this phase of the conversation. You'll get your turn, but don't rush things.

Step #2: Acknowledgment

Acknowledgment means showing that you've heard and understood. Try to understand the other person so well you can make his argument for him. Then do it. Explain back to him what you think he's really going for. Guess at his hopes and honor his position. He will not change unless he sees that you see where he stands. Then he might. No guarantees. ...

Acknowledgment can be difficult if we associate it with agreement. Keep them separate. My saying, "this sounds really important to you," doesn't mean I'm going to go along with your decision.

Step #3: Advocacy

When you sense your opponent/partner has expressed all his energy on the topic, it's your turn. What can you see from your perspective that he's missed? Help clarify your position without minimizing his. For example: "From what you've told me, I can see how you came to the conclusion that I'm not a team player. And I think I am. When I introduce problems with a project, I'm thinking about its long-term success. I don't mean to be a critic, though perhaps I sound like one. Maybe we can talk about how to address these issues so that my intention is clear."

Step #4: Problem-Solving

Now you're ready to begin building solutions. Brainstorming and continued inquiry are useful here. Ask your opponent/partner what he thinks might work. Whatever he says, find something you like and build on it. If the conversation becomes adversarial, go back to inquiry. Asking for the other's point of view usually creates safety and encourages him to engage. If you've been successful in centering, adjusting your attitude, and engaging with inquiry and useful purpose, building sustainable solutions will be easy.

How Do I Begin?

In my workshops, a common question is How do I begin the conversation? Here are a few conversation openers I've picked up over the years—and used many times!

I have something I'd like to discuss with you that I think will help us work together more effectively.

I'd like to talk about _____ with you, but first I'd like to get your point of view.

I need your help with what just happened. Do you have a few minutes to talk?

I need your help with something. Can we talk about it (soon)? If the person says, "Sure, let me get back to you," follow up with him.

I think we have different perceptions about _____. I'd like to hear your thinking on this.

I'd like to talk about _____. I think we may have different ideas about how to _____.

I'd like to see if we might reach a better understanding about _____. I really want to hear your feelings about this and share my perspective as well.

COMMUNITY NEWS



AARP tax services is available at Whitney Senior Center: Wednesdays and Thursdays, Feb. 8-Apr. 13, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. No appointments, first come first served. Park in the West lot.

Calling all skilled construction workers...

Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity has a very ambitious year coming up. We have four builds and several rehab projects (part of our



Neighborhood Revitalization program) scheduled from now to November. We are looking for individuals skilled in construction to help lead small groups of people on our construction sites. The time commitment is flexible. Even one or two days a month would help us greatly! If you are interested, please contact Melanie Blake at 320-248-8256 or melanieblake@cmhfh.org.

Laundry Love is currently in need of laundry soap.

OR you are invited to come check it out for yourself! Laundry Love is held on the first and third (and fifth if there is one) Tuesday of each month from 11 AM—2 PM at Kipp's Laundromat on the corner of 9th Avenue and University Drive. There's always food and fellowship!

Start saving your quarters now for the 2nd Annual Noisy Offering on Palm Sunday!





2017 Minnesota Open and Affirming Celebration.
Saturday, April 29th
Workshops @ 11:00 AM | Lunch @ 12:15 PM |
Worship @ 1:30 PM

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God.” [1 John 4:7] The scriptures of our faith call us to be loving. We grow in and sustain our love for God and one another by gathering in sacred community. With a call from God and with the human need to be together, we gather to form the “beloved community” that is church.

On Saturday, April 29, 2017, the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ (UCC) will offer workshops and celebrate in worship with the Open and Affirming ministry settings from across Minnesota. The 2017 Minnesota Celebration, “Open and Affirming as Beloved Community,” will be held at Hazel Park Congregational UCC, 1831 Minnehaha Avenue East in Saint Paul. The day will include workshops at 11:00 AM, a time of kinship over lunch, and worship at 1:30 PM.

There will be three workshop options to choose from in the morning. “All in the Family” will include stories from panelist who are either LGBT parents or parent of LGBT children. “ONA Identity and Evangelism” will be a workshop offering ideas and concepts on messaging to the LGBT community your church welcome. “Safe Space for Youth” will be a place for youth (18 and under) to share honestly about what is like to LGBT or an ally to LGBT friends and/or siblings.

In worship we will acknowledge the various “Open and Affirming” ministry settings in Minnesota. The preachers will be the Rev. John Fiscus, pastor of Peace UCC in St. Cloud, and the Rev. Leslie Moughty, pastor of First Congregational UCC in Brainerd. Both of these pastors serve Open and Affirming congregations in greater Minnesota and bring a unique understanding of “beloved community.”

The “Open and Affirming” program within the UCC comes from a 1985 General Synod Resolution calling on all settings of the church to adopt statements of “openness” and “affirmation” towards gay, lesbian and bisexual people. A later General Synod in 2003 also called upon the church to acknowledge and celebrate the gifts transgender individuals bring to the church.

Hazel Park Congregational UCC is located in east St. Paul at the intersection of Van Dyke Street and Minnehaha Avenue. The church building is fully accessible with off-street parking and child care will be available. This event is sponsored by the Open and Affirming Ministry Team - Minnesota Conference UCC.

Lent and Easter Schedule

March 15-April 12

Soup and Stories for the Soul Series—6:00 PM Soup, 6:30 PM Story

March 15 The Missing Piece / Jonah 4 / Self

March 22 Smoky Night / Acts 8:26-40 / Others

March 29 Our Tree Named Steve / Ruth 1: 15-18 / Faithfulness

April 5 If You Give a Moose a Muffin / Numbers 21:4-9 / Consequences

April 12 A Sick Day for Amos McGee / 2 Kings 4:38-41 / Overcoming Obstacles

April 9 Palm Sunday 10:00 AM

April 13 Maundy Thursday Tenebrae 7:00 PM

April 14 Good Friday Combined Worship First Presbyterian Noon

April 15 Easter Vigil 6:00 AM—6:00 PM Sign-up Sheet available soon!

April 16 Easter 10:00 AM Service



“A children's story that can only be enjoyed by children is not a good children's story in the slightest.” — C.S. Lewis

Soup & Stories for the Soul: A Multigenerational Lenten Series

Join us on Wednesdays during Lent for Soup & Stories for the Soul.

6:00 PM Soup

6:30 PM Story — We will explore a different theological question or topic through the medium of a picture book. Come with the wonder and wisdom of a child and see faith in a new way.



Our book friends gather for a photo. Come hear their stories each Wednesday during Lent.

Remember to keep us up-to-date on your address and other contact info.

Did we miss your birthday on the calendar? Let us know!

Thought of the Month

If you had to be trapped in a TV show for a month, which show would you choose? Consider the setting, the characters, the lifestyle, etc.

From *The Conversation Piece: Creative Questions to Tickle the Mind*

Remember to let us know if you are ill or hospitalized. The hospital can't let us know you are there, due to HIPAA and other privacy concerns. The only way we know to put you on the prayer list and come visit is if you call the office and leave us the information.

Also, let us know if you **wish** to be put on the prayer chain or the prayer list in the bulletin. We want to know how much information you are comfortable sharing.

Thanks so much!



Are you able to visit or send a note to members who are homebound or living in long-term care?

They would love to hear from you.

Marlys Burke

218 22nd Ave N
St. Cloud, MN 56303

Genny Manea

330 13th St N, Apt 35A
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

Dolores Honl

2000 15th Ave SE # 217
St. Cloud, MN 56304

Dorothy Matakis

2511 15th St N
St. Cloud, MN 56303

Bev Killeen

1115 4th Ave N NS 227
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

Gary Naegeli

Edgewood Sr. Living
12450 Cloud Dr NE, #128
Blaine, MN 55449
763-754-1723

Leif Larsen

1790 W Mill Street
Paynesville, MN 56362

Peace United Church of Christ,

Thank you for the wonderful gifts of warmth and comfort.

Sandy (Anna Marie's Alliance)



FROM THE MAILBOX

The Sunshine Report—Joys and Concerns

Doris Busse—get well following a hospitalization

Orrin & Marian Davis—sympathy on the death of Orrin's brother



PEACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

402 – 8th Avenue South
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Staff

Minister: Rev. John Fiscus

Secretary: Michelle Dettmann

Choir Director: Roger Towler

Organist: Mark Ochu

Custodian: WACOSA

Conference Minister: Rev. Shari Prestemon

Cell: (320) 428-8686

Office: (320) 251-6289

Church Office Hours: Tu-F, 2 – 5 PM

E-mail: pastorfiscus@gmail.com

Peaceucc1908@yahoo.com

Associate Conference Minister: Rick Wagner

Church Council

Moderator: Jon Tufte moderatorpucc@gmail.com

Vice Moderator: Ron Seibring

Treasurer: Brad Hanson

Financial Secretary: Michelle Dettmann

Council Secretary: Linda Vierkant

Members at Large: Curt Hutchens, 1 TBD

Trustees: Bruce Michaels

Mission: Rick Fine

TTT: Mark Hoff

ROSE: Beverly Tallent

Deacons: Jeryl Michaels

Faith Formation: TBD

Pastor/Parish: TBD