

Northwest Word

Northwest Wisconsin Association
United Church of Christ

May 2024

Munnik to be Installed June 2

Licensed Minister Lesley Munnik will be installed as Pastor of Truax United Church of Christ on Sunday, June 2 during its 9:00 A.M. worship service. Associate Conference Minister will preach for the occasion. Clergy are invited to bring robes and red stoles for the celebration, which will be held at the church, located

at 1008 50th Street in Eau Claire.

Munnik has served the church for 1 ½ years, and also began serving as Pastor at First Congregational UCC in Bloomer six months ago.



Northwest Association Annual Meeting Held

Reconnecting and Looking Ahead shaped the theme of the 62nd Annual Meeting of the Northwest Wisconsin Association of the United Church of Christ. 74 delegates and clergy (60 in person and 14 by Zoom) took part in the gathering, which was held at First Congregational UCC in Eau Claire on April 20.

The Reverend Dr. Stephanie Perdew, Director of the Damascus Project of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Conferences, offered the Keynote speech. A good look at quality data, she suggested, leads her to believe that gloom and doom projections for UCC congregations are not necessarily true. She offered statistics which indicate that decline in the two conferences in which she works has slowed since the COVID-19 pandemic, and not accelerated. Patterns have changed in church attendance; many who attended every Sunday now go to two or three Sunday services a month. Most of the people who affiliated with a church but rarely attended worship still give generously. A five percent increase in new members would halt the declines of recent years. A church of sixty members needs to gain only three new people to halt its membership decline.

Yet the struggles for local congregations to look outside their walls for mission (and the

conflicts that come with such change) remain with us.

Dr. Perdew offered stories from the Lincoln, Nebraska UCC congregations where she grew up. One congregation managed to find new ministry in a changing city after a nearby factory closed by finding new ministry with the Latino people who came to work in meatpacking plants. Another, which had changed locations to get closer to suburban neighborhoods, had three different pastors in a few years as they grieved the loss of their old building. Only now, after some help from their conference's staff, are they finding a new direction.

Association Secretary Rev. David Huber reported that the Association's finances are in good condition. Delegates approved a budget of \$36,300 for 2025, and Association dues remain at \$4.50 per member.

Rev. Kathleen Remund completed her term as the Association Moderator, and Steve Ottman, a layperson from St. Paul's UCC in Ellsworth, will take her place and serve in that role through the 2026 Annual meeting.

The Hancock United Church of Christ was welcomed into membership in the Northwest Association, moving its connection to the UCC from the Northeast Wisconsin Association.

Jones to Lead Weekly Text and Sermon Talk

Associate Conference Minister Michael Jones invites Wisconsin Conference pastors and Wisconsin Conference UCC preachers of all kinds to a monthly ZOOM meeting beginning on Tuesday, May 7 at 12:00 noon. Sessions will feature an open discussion on texts, topics and ideas for sermons. Those seeking ideas are also invited. All are welcome who use the Revised Common Lectionary, the Narrative Lectionary, or choose their own texts. Here's the ZOOM Link:

<https://us06zoom.us/j/84946216649>
Meeting ID: 849 4621 6649

Rev. Kate West to be Installed June 1

The Reverend Kate West will be installed as Pastor of First Congregational UCC of Wisconsin Rapids on Saturday, June 1. The church, located at 311 2nd Street South in Wisconsin Rapids, invites visitors to dress casually for the 1:00 P.M. service and the family-friendly street fair to follow. Clergy are invited to wear robes and "their favorite" stoles.



From the Desk of Michael Jones, Associate Conference Minister

Dear Northwest Association,

The Northwest Association Meeting was held on April 20 at First Congregational UCC Eau Claire, and I want to take the space to express thanks to so many! Thank you to:

- First Congregational UCC Eau Claire and its pastor, Rev. Mark Pirazzini for hosting;
- The group that prepared the delicious lunch from First Congregational UCC Eau Claire;
- The First Congregational UCC Eau Claire Organist, Chancel Choir, Chancel Choir Director, and Chancel Choir Accompanist for their beautiful music and worship;
- The First Congregational UCC Eau Claire volunteers who helped with everything from registration to sound and tech;
- The leaders of the NWA, including our moderator, Rev. Kathleen Remund, Vice-Moderator Steve Ottman, Worship Planning Team, Annual Meeting Planning Team, and Executive Committee;
- Jeff Pommerening for creating the slides, running them, and helping with planning;



- All of those leaders in the NWA who wrote reports for their various committees and divisions;
- The Associations Task Force NWA representatives who led our discussion: Rev. Lisa Bodenheim, Jill Christopherson, and Rev. Phil Milam;
- Rev. Lisa Bodenheim for putting together a beautiful worship liturgy;
- -Rev. Wanda Veldman for putting together the Annual Meeting Reports;
- Mike Whiteley for giving a wonderful Catalyst presentation;
- All of those that attended the meeting in person or online;
- All of those who were on the ballot or nominated from the floor to fill positions in the NWA;
- Rev. David Huber for taking minutes and notes as the secretary during the whole gathering;
- Rev. Stephanie Perdeu for giving an inspiring presentation on the future of the church.

I probably have missed someone or some group, but I give my heartfelt thanks for all that everyone did to make the Annual NWA Meeting possible. As always, it was good to see so many of you.

Blessings,
Michael

Minnesota Conference Offers Interim Ministry Training

The Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ has teamed up with the Interim Ministry Network to offer a course in *Effective Transitional Leadership Training*.

The course will begin with a three-day training session on June 10, 11, and 12 at the Minnesota Conference’s office, located at 122 West Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis. The following 12 months of instruction will take place virtually as a cohort group with a facilitator.

The cost is \$200, and organizers have announced that the normal Damascus Project discount code for Wisconsin and Minnesota Conference members is not available for this session.

The Reverend Chris Hart, an authorized minister of the United Church of Christ and an Interim Ministry Network Trainer, will lead the session.

Clergy, authorized ministers, and Members in Discernment who have an interest or a sense of calling to transitional leadership are encouraged to enroll. The course will equip authorized ministers to serve in transitional settings and to serve well in times of transition no matter where they may be.

The course is endorsed by the Interim Ministry Network.

The \$200 costs include the training, all course materials, three lunches, snacks, and beverages along with the 12-month facilitated virtual cohort group on the Damascus Project Network.

Eligible Northwest Wisconsin Association folks are encouraged to talk with Associate Conference Minister Michael Jones if they are interested and to ask about Continuing Education grants.

Save this Date for Emmanuel UCC—Greenwood’s 150th

Emmanuel United Church of Christ in rural Greenwood will celebrate its 150th Anniversary on Saturday, July 20. The congregation, located at the corner of Century Road and County Road O, will gather for an 11:00 A.M. service, followed by a celebration dinner. A guest preacher will be announced soon. Call Lois Timmler at 715-267-6577 to make a reservation for the for the special occasion.

Stewardship Notes

One of the dangers of having a lot of money is that you may be quite satisfied with the kinds of happiness money can give and so fail to realize your need for God. If everything seems to come simply by signing checks, you may forget that you are at every moment totally dependent on God.

C.S. Lewis

Discussion Starters: Below is a conversation starter for Michael Jone’s Sermon and Text Talks on May 7. Courtesy www.agnusday.com.

OBVIOUSLY JESUS' PRAYER DIDN'T WORK. HE ONLY ASKS FOR TWO THINGS: GLORY FOR HIMSELF AND SAFETY FOR THE DISCIPLES AND THEN— HE GETS KILLED AND THEY GET MARTYRED!

BUT JESUS' GLORY IS THE CROSS, AND THE CHURCH'S MISSION HAPPENS.

CLEARLY, I NEED TO EXPLICITLY DEFINE MY TERMS WHEN I PRAY!



www.agnusday.org

JOHN 17:1-11

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Northwest Association Pulpit Supply List May 2024

Churches should be fair and forthright in agreeing upon honorarium and travel expenses for persons they invite to provide pulpit supply. The WI Conference Division of Church and Ministry suggests a minimum of \$150 plus mileage reimbursed at the IRS rate for **2024, 67 cents per mile**. *Note: 2024 minimum \$175.*

Where a church has two points and two services, consider an additional \$75 plus mileage.

Conference staff persons serve local congregations in a variety of ways. Honoraria are not accepted, and travel costs are covered by the Conference travel budget. Except in emergencies, Conference staff cannot provide pulpit supply; however, the staff welcomes opportunities to preach for special occasions or to meet with members of the congregation.

Please note: Persons licensed to the NW Association and ordained pastors are authorized to administer the Sacraments.

EAU CLAIRE TO TWIN CITIES AREA:

Jill Christopherson (licensed to the NW Association) 2113 7th St, Eau Claire, WI 54703-2825
715-514-7361 christopherson.jill@gmail.com

Rev. Jim Clausen, 1289 Lake View Ave., Winona, MN 55987
320-267-3225, james.clausen@ymail.com

Rev. Bill Clyma 81840 University Avenue West, Apt. 304, St. Paul, MN 55104
763-415-0779, pastorbill111@outlook.com, (will travel 75 mi.)
(NOTE: Rev. Clyma will not be able to accept requests until June 23, 2024)

Rev. Elizabeth Hazel, 1060 Marian Lane, Park Falls, WI 54552 (will drive 3 hours)
715-744-2373 morrinhazel@pctcnet.net

Rev. Carol J. Heckmann, 1789 County Rd EE, White Bear Lake, MN 55110
651-269-4950, autumnsky1353@gmail.com. I am willing to travel 2 hours.

Rev. Sandee Kosmo, 3214 Chasewood Lane, Eau Claire, 54701
715-834-2112 skosmo14@msn.com

Ann Larrabee 817 Hamilton St. Wausau WI 54403
715-216-6119 bookworm1952@hotmail.com

Rev. Norm Luecke, 301 Alvey St, Bruce, WI 54819
925-639-1652, normluecke@yahoo.com, (Available June-Sept: willing to travel 2 hours.)

Rev. Kent Meyer, 170 Emerson Ave. E # 106, West St. Paul, MN 55118
507-458-0757, revkmeyer@gmail.com

Rev. Missy Miller, 1431 Moon Beach Dr., St. Germain, WI 54558
715-218-0100, mmiller@ucci.org

Stephen P. Ottman, 733 First Street, Plum City 54761
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Rev. Mary Runyon, 722 Powell Street, La Crosse WI 54603
865-724-7702, maryhaysrunyon@gmail.com S of Eau Claire Will travel 90 miles from La Crosse

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Heather Rushfeldt, 201 Church Ave, Amery, WI 54001-1284,
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Patti Steevens, 1809 E. McMillan St, Marshfield, WI 54449
715-650-1761, patti-steevens@hotmail.com Will travel the state, generally not available in Jan or Feb.

Susan Vornholt, 301 Oak Street, Neillsville, WI 54456
715-797-4031 svornholt@yahoo.com

Rev. Charles Wolfe, 680 Walnut Street, Prescott, WI 54021
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Rev. Vicki Wunsch, 618 Ross Ave., Wausau, WI 54403,
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Robert Lynn, N1963 Crestview Place, La Crosse WI 54601
608-799-4421, lynn.roberto@gmail.com (willing to travel one hour from La Crosse)

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Rev. James Mohr, 35 Hewett St., Neillsville WI 54456,
715-743-7626, jmohr13@outlook.com *Note: I would be available to drive to any place South of Wausau,
East of La Crosse, and Southeast of Eau Claire.

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