Dear friends in Christ,

For several weeks we have been hearing challenging portions of the gospel of Mark concerning what it means to be a disciple.

Each time that Jesus predicted his passion, death, and resurrection, his followers said something that indicated that they were not listening. After the first passion prediction, Peter took Jesus aside and berated him. Peter, who had just confessed that Jesus is the Messiah, seemed to be focusing on an earthly kingdom rather than a heavenly one. Jesus responded by commanding his followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. He told them that whoever wants to save their life will lose it, and whoever wants to lose their life for his sake and the sake of the gospel will save it. After the second prediction, the disciples started arguing about who is the greatest. Jesus taught that the first will be last and the last will be first, and he also said that those who welcome children in his name welcome not him but the one who sent him. He warned them not to put stumbling blocks in their own path or in the paths of the “little ones” who believe in him. Following the third prediction, James and John asked that they be allowed to sit next to him, one at his right and the other at his left, when he comes into his glory. The other disciples berated them for asking this question, quite possibly because they wished they had asked it first. Jesus stated that in order to be great, they must become least, that in order to be first, they must become servants, and that he came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

We have heard about the rich man, who asked what he needed to do to inherit the kingdom of heaven. He asserted that he had followed the commandments from his youth, yet he went away grieving when told to sell all his possessions, give the money to the poor, and follow Jesus. His many possessions prevented him from being able to do what Jesus had asked. We also encountered blind Bartimaeus, who shouted out to Jesus for mercy, even when the crowd tried to quiet him. Jesus heard his persistent pleas and called him. The demeanor of the crowd changed as they urged Bartimaeus forward, and he threw off his only named possession, his cloak, before approaching Jesus. When asked what Jesus could do for him, Bartimaeus requested that he be able to see again. His requests for mercy and for sight were granted, and Bartimaeus followed Jesus on the way.

When we compare and contrast all these stories, we get a better picture of what it means to be a disciple. It means to follow Jesus, even when we do not understand, even when we get it wrong. It means setting aside those things that cause us to stumble and making sure that we do not put stumbling blocks in the paths of others who seek to follow Jesus. It means welcoming those who are disenfranchised or marginalized. It means not only seeing people as neighbor but behaving as neighbor to them. It means asking ourselves the
question that Jesus asked of James and John and of Bartimaeus—what we want Jesus to do for us—and taking a long, honest look at what our answer says about us.

How can we, individually and as members of the Body of Christ that we call the Church, live out our call to be followers of Christ? How can we take to heart Jesus’ teaching regarding service leadership? What needs exist in our community that we are being called to address? What are the stumbling blocks that we need to remove? May God grant us vision as we work together to answer these questions as we grow in our discipleship.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Anne

Office Hours
Regular office hours for Reverend Anne at Union Congregational are a moving target in this busy season for both Union Congregational and St. Luke’s Lutheran Churches. Please feel free to contact Reverend Anne at anne.knighten@gmail.com or 951-529-2088 or 307-684-2958 if you would like to set up an office visit.

UCC Administrative Contacts: To contact the Church Council, please call Ron McPhee, Moderator, at 307-217-1456. To contact the Church Secretary/Clerk, call Kathleen McPhee at 307-217-1455.

THE MISSION OF UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

In Jesus’ name, Worship God, Study Scripture, Joyfully Help those in need

Moderator’s Report
Union Congregational is moving forward with Buildings and Grounds projects. We have found the 5-Year B&G Plan a valuable tool in keeping us on track. Thank you, Barb, for keeping the Plan updated and Thank you, Larry, for the accomplishments UCC has made in checking off items on the list. The ceiling above the parsonage stairway has been remodeled to eliminate the low ceiling….tall people will no longer need to duck and Reverend Anne will soon be able to get the rest of her bedroom furniture upstairs into the master bedroom. We look forward to repaving the parking lot next spring and the 2022 budget will be adjusted accordingly. And take a look at the UCC sign on the corner of Bennett and Lobban….it now proudly proclaims “Reverend Anne Knighten, Minister.”

We are moving forward with plans for Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas. Yes, these joyful times will soon be upon us. Enjoy the beautiful fall days now as you plan for family visits and activities during the Holidays.

Ron McPhee, Moderator

November Sunday Worship Schedule:

November 7, 2021 – Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost
First Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 17:8-16
Reading of the Psalm: Psalm 146
Second Scripture Reading: Hebrews 9:24-28
Gospel Reading: Mark 12:18-44
November 14, 2021 – Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost
First Scripture Reading: Daniel 12:1-3
Reading of the Psalm: Psalm 16
Second Scripture Reading: Hebrews 10:11-25
Gospel Reading: Mark 13:1-8

November 21, 2021 – Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost (Reign of Christ)
First Scripture Reading: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
Reading of the Psalm: Psalm 93
Second Scripture Reading: Revelation 1:4b-8
Gospel Reading: John 18:33-37

November 28, 2021 – First Sunday of Advent
First Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16
Reading of the Psalm: Psalm 25:1-10
Second Scripture Reading: I Thessalonians 3:9-13

What's Happening at Union Congregational in November?
- Men’s Breakfast, Wednesday, November 3, 8 a.m.; St. Luke’s Lutheran
- UCC Women’s Fellowship, Wednesday, November 3, 1:30 p.m.
- Prayer Shawl Ministry, November 4, 1 p.m., St. Luke’s Lutheran
- Worship Committee Meeting, November 5, 10:00 a.m.
- Council Meeting, Tuesday, November 9, at 2 p.m.
- Women’s Fellowship Cleaning Day -Fellowship Room. Saturday. Nov. 13, 9 a.m.
- Bible Study, TBA
- AA meets every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday at noon to 1 p.m.;
- AlAnon meets every Monday, 7 p.m.
- TOPS meets at 8 a.m. every Thursday morning

Thank you, Don and Donna -
Two beautiful side chairs have been donated to UCC by Don and Donna Scantling for use in the church sanctuary or office. The chairs are currently gracing the church office. Thank you, Don and Donna!

No UCC Birthdays in November
No UCC Anniversaries in November
ANNOUNCING A DAY OF FACE-LIFTING. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 9:00 a.m.

How about joining Women’s Fellowship as they give the UCC Fellowship Room a FACE-LIFTING?? They plan to “Scrub the Tubs (totes)” for outdated items, categorize the shelves for supplies, label the totes for contents and plan for application of Cosmetics in the form of wall displays of historical photos as well as current bulletin boards of UCC activities. The day will require sharp discernment of items to be repurposed; creative minds to apply Cosmetics and strong arms for Toting the Totes to new locations.

It’s Budget Time!!!

Committee Chairmen, please email your 2022 budgets to ucucc@vcn.com and mcphee@vcn.com prior to the November Council Meeting on November 9. Thanks!

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY   November 4, 1:00 p.m.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Nov. 4 at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church to talk about how to provide soft, comforting prayer shawls to those in need, where each stitch represents a prayer. If you can knit or crochet—or want to learn how—or can tie on fringe, we need you. If you have yarn, knitting needles, or crochet hooks you can donate, we need you. Come and see how to put your love into action through prayer and yarn! Contact Reverend Anne if you have any questions.

Mission Committee

Union Congregational has been matched by the Crisis Center with a new Adopted Family for December 2021 through November 2022, a single mother with one child. Christmas gifts for this family will be appreciated; information on sizes and interests will be provided.

UCC will again be joining the American Legion in cooking and providing Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day for Meals on Wheels recipients as well as a meal at the American Legion Hall for those who will otherwise be alone on Christmas Day.

If you would like to volunteer at the Bread of Life Food Pantry, please call Kelly Norris (620-0631) at the Food Pantry.

Worship Committee

Hanging of the Greens in the Sanctuary will be Sunday, December 5, following Worship Service. The Worship Committee will provide a soup-and-sandwich lunch for the decorators.

Plans for a joint weekly Bible Study with St. Luke’s Lutheran during Advent led by Reverend Anne is planned. Details will be provided.

Thanks very much to John Egan for providing music for Worship Services through October. John will also serve as our musician for some Sundays in November/December.

Updates to Prayer Chain:

- Dick Reiman is recovering at Elkhorn Rehabilitation Center in Casper.
- Bjerke’s niece’s husband Allen is improving with treatment for West Nile Virus and has been able to return to his home. Recovery will continue to be a slow process.

Thanks to everyone for keeping the prayer chains going.
The meeting was called to order by Moderator Ron. Present were Council Members: Ron McPhee, Dick Reimann, Deane Bjerke, Don Scantling, Barb Millett, Judy Firnekas and church secretary, Kathleen McPhee. The meeting was opened with prayer.

The Minutes of the August 10 regular Council meeting and Minutes of the August 15 Special meeting were approved as emailed to the Council. The Treasurer’s Report based on the financial statements as of August 31 was accepted by the Council. Committee chairs were asked to submit 2022 budget requests for discussion at the November Council meeting.

The Council approved placing the generous memorial donation from the Osborn family in memory of Doug and Ruth Osborn into the Memorial Fund account to facilitate the use of the donation for special projects that otherwise might go unfunded. The Committees and Women’s Fellowship will be notified of the availability of the funds upon approval of the special projects by the Council.

Buildings and Grounds. The updated 5-Year Plan for Buildings and Grounds was reviewed. Simon Construction plans to pave the parking lot next spring for the submitted bid of $30,000+; with a possible increase of 5%. Bids on landscaping the church grounds and for seasonal services will be solicited. Specific instructions are to be given for snow removal, with more emphasis on keeping the sidewalks cleared at all times and less on plowing the entire parking lot except for Sunday mornings and special events.

Mission Committee: UCC has been asked to provide volunteers for the Food Pantry for the noon to 1 p.m. shift. Volunteers must be trained by Father Doug and dates for the volunteer services will be assigned.

Worship Committee: A sofa and a pair of matching living room chairs were purchased from the Community Outreach for use in the parsonage. The Council approved reimbursement for the purchase.

Old Business: Upgrading the speed for wi-fi from Spectrum was discussed. Further information from Spectrum is needed to insure proper service.

New Business: The church sign on the lawn at the corner of Lobban and Bennett is to be updated with Reverend Anne’s name as minister.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord’s Prayer.

Please send committee reports and articles to be published in The Spirit to ucucc@vcn.com or to mcphee@vcn.com by the 24th of each month to allow us to get our newsletter out by the 1st of each month. Thanks!

Established October 12, 1884, Union Congregational Church has continuously served God, our parishioners, and the community from the days before the Johnson County Cattle War to the present time. The church looks forward to being of ever-increasing service in the future.
The Spirit Of Union Congregational Church