



Congo Comments

FEBRUARY 2025

The Congregational
United Church of Christ,
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

Dear Congo UCC Community,

Lent arrives late this year. I'm okay with that because it increases the likelihood of springlike weather on Easter. But for now, it means that all of February will fall within the liturgical season of Ordinary Time. During Ordinary Time, we focus on the sort of spiritual growth that is appropriate for any season. Our worship life together this month will include spending time with the Golden Rule, Christ's refreshingly succinct guideline for social ethics that appears in most world religions and even secular philosophies. We will explore the Parable of the Prodigal Son, considering both the joys and challenges of reconciliation. And we will look at two Bible stories that offer quite different perspectives on prayer, helping us think about the role that prayer plays in our own life.

I find myself with less to share than usual. Perhaps this means that February will be a chance for us to slow down and take a holy rest between the busyness of the Holidays and the discipline of Lent. Thank you for all that you do to support the ministries of our church. I wish you a restful and Spirit-filled month.

With you on the Journey,

Pastor Michael

Dear Beautiful People of Congo UCC,

My heart sings with joy as I anticipate serving with you as your new settled pastor. It was lovely to meet many of you on December 22. I am still basking in the glow of your genuine warmth and affirmation. The welcome and inclusiveness that are core to your mission as a congregation is something the world needs desperately right now and are two of the reasons I felt a connection with you during my recent search process. One of my mantras that you will hear me say often is “everyone has a story and every story is sacred”. I look forward to the sharing of our stories as we minister together with the Detroit Lakes area and wider community.



Here are few details about me:

I am a newlywed! My beloved Mark and I were married on August 17, 2024 after a 5+ year courtship. Mark works as a special education paraprofessional in the St. Paul school district and plans to find a similar job in DL.

I have two delightful daughters who are the light of my life. Ellie, age 24, lives in Boston after graduating from Simmons University in 2022 with a degree in Social Work. Hannah, 21, is a junior at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN studying nursing.



Ellie and Hannah



Axis and Ellie

Mark also has a child named Axis, 21, who works in child care in St Paul.



Our silly 2 year old rescue dog, Nova, rounds out our family. Nova is part rascal, part lovebug and I am her most favorite person which delights me every day.

Mark and I are excited to find a home in Detroit Lakes. I enjoy gardening, walking Nova, theatre (both being on stage and an audience member!), reading a good book and sharing a cup of coffee or tea over conversation with new and old friends.

I have been ordained in the United Church of Christ for over 30 years. I still wrestle with the fact that I am old enough to have been in parish ministry for that long! I have served churches of all sizes in Oregon, Wisconsin and Minnesota. I have served at Plymouth Congregational Church in downtown Minneapolis for the last 8 years. For some time now I have felt God nudging me into something new. As I began my search process I trusted that I would know when and where to say “Yes!”. After feeling an immediate connection with your search committee and being drawn to your hospitable ministries, I knew God was leading me to you.

I am looking forward to a long, mutual relationship with you, sharing God’s love with one another and the world. See you in June!

Blessings,

Pastor Beth Copenhaver

February Birthdays

2/1 Ronald Row
2/2 Greg Johnson
2/4 Rikki Given
2/6 Virginia Zetah
2/9 Mike Nustad
2/10 Ruthy Davis
2/13 Sue Geihl
2/14 Evan Fankhanel



2/20 Walter Kulberg
2/21 Bob Singler
2/23 Colleen Bares
2/23 Marv Enslin
2/28 Gregory Vareberg
2/29 Sharlene Legenhausen



FEBRUARY GREETERS and USHERS

- 2 – Lynn Anderson and Patti Kay VonWillard
- 9 – Joel Jacobs & Ruthy Davis
- 16 – Susan Gjersvig
- 23 – Andy and Lori Nustad

FEBRUARY ALTAR ARRANGEMENT

- 2 –
- 9 –
- 16 –
- 23 –

FRIENDSHIP TIME for FEBRUARY Courtesy Group 1 – Group leader: Lynn Anderson

- 2 – David Moen
- 9 – Mary Amundson & Myra Thornby
- 16 – Andy and Lori Nustad
- 23 – Lynn Anderson & Stewart Thompson

SUNDAY MORNINGS

- 10:00 a.m. – Worship in Sanctuary
- 10:20 a.m. – Christian Education
- 11:00 a.m. – Friendship Time in Fellowship Hall

DIACONATE

Wednesday, February 12 at 10:30 a.m.

SPAGHETTI DINNER fundraiser for TEACHAITI

Sunday, February 16 at 11 a.m.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Wednesday, February 19 at 4:30 p.m.

GREEN TEAM MEETING

Thursday, February 20 at 10:30 a.m. on zoom

FOR March CONGO COMMENTS:

If you have something to share in the next *Congo Comments*, please mail it to the church, drop it off in the church office, or email it to **dlcongo@msn.com** by **Monday, February 24.**

Office Hours: Tue & Thurs: 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.;
 Wed 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
 Phone: 218-847-4609
Church office: dlcongo@msn.com
Pastor Michael Fritz: pastordlcongo@outlook.com
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David Moen, Moderator
 Andy Nustad, Vice Moderator
 Jonathan Rogstad, Clerk
 Gini Kleingartner, Financial Administrator
 Gary Kleingartner, Custodian
 Bonnie Guyer Graham, Office Administrator
 Pastor Michael Fritz

Spaghetti and Meatball Dinner on February 16th

There will be a free-will offering to support TeachHaiti.

Last year we were able to sponsor two students for a year of education and a daily meal. We would like to continue our support

When? Sunday, February 16 following the worship service.

Everyone is invited and guests are welcome.

Sponsored by Congregational Life and Christian Education Boards



Roma Jacoby has a new address

Kay Hartness called the church to share Roma's new address. Kay says Roma would love to receive a card from her Congo friends.



Isabel Pederson & Roma Jacoby

This past month has been a busy one for Roma as she moved from Winchester, where she had been for the last nine years to Lincoln assisted living. The new facility offers more assistance than Winchester, but a smaller apartment. Her daughter, Jennifer, and son-in-law Doug came for a week and got her settled in. She knew a few people there and she is meeting more people each week.

This past week she ran into Isabel at the clinic. They had a nice visit and both shared, They miss their church families and look forward to seeing them in the future.

Christian Education

Attention Birders and Nature Enthusiasts: Teddy Davis has picked the topic for the next couple of months of Sunday School: Birds in the Bible. Teddy and the other children are wanting to learn scientific and religious facts about the birds. There are several books to use as references and a list of questions to be answered. The internet is also an excellent source. If you need or want ideas for an art project, just ask. It is not necessary to have an art project each week.



These are the birds included in our reference books: Pigeons (including Doves), Pelicans, Quails, Vultures, Eagles, Ostrich, Sparrows, Roosters and Hens, and Ravens. Other birds mentioned in the Bible are Hummingbirds, Peacocks and Robins. These three are legends passed down through time rather than specific verses. If the list is missing your favorite bird, just add them!

The following is the schedule for February and March:

Jan 26 – Carol Nustad – Owls
Feb 2 – Stacy Davis
Feb 9 – Shar Legenhausen – Swallows
Feb 16 – NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
Feb 23 –
Mar 2 – Nancy Hayle and Nancy Swedberg –
March 9 –
March 16 – NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
March 23 –
March 30 –



There will be a signup sheet in the Narthex on Sunday, Feb 2.
You may also email Carol Nustad to volunteer or for more information.

Becker County Food Pantry

Throughout FEBRUARY we encourage everyone to give **LIQUID DISH SOAP** to the *Becker County Food Pantry*. You can drop them off at the church.

In January we gave 8 dental kits, 14 toothbrushes and 13 egg cartons.
Thank you for your generosity!

Thank you to everyone who volunteered at the Food Pantry in January.



Church Council meeting notes

A dozen people have expressed interest in renewing monthly breakfast fellowship for men & women. We are now at the point where we can use organizers. Please let Rev. Fritz know if you are interested in joining or being an organizer.

- A roster of keyboardists is being built.
- The Sunday School students have expressed an interest in studying “birds of the Bible”.
- Congregational Life is proposing, in partnership with Christian Education, a dinner to support TeachHaiti after services February 16.
- Ushers and greeters are being scheduled right now for January thru March.
- Thirty pledges have been made for over \$112,000,
- The Trustees are performing upkeep on the defibrillator and looking for information.
- Is there interest on holding a class on operating the defibrillator?

What’s the Financial Temperature?

The month of December calls for fourth quarter expenses leaving a deficit for the month. Grim! Grim!

Fortunately, there are funds reserved from previous months to pay the year ending expenses. So..., we begin a new year with a positive hope. Thank you for continuous support as we look forward to 2025. Along the way!!

“Because of YOU, Our Church Saves Lives!”
STEWARDSHIP 2024

Marv Enslin, Board for Stewardship

	December 2024	Year to Date
General Offering	\$ 9,350.93	\$137,209.00
Loose Offering	316.00	2,652.72
We Care	0.00	295.21
MnKota Recycling	0.00	38.37
Disaster Relief	0.00	390.00
Salad Luncheon	.00	.22
Interest Income	.34	19.58
Total Revenue	\$9,667.27	\$140,605.10
Total Expenses	\$17,964.63	\$161,622.63

Annual Meeting was Sunday, January 26

The 2025 annual meeting was held at the Detroit Lakes Congregational Church today followed by a potluck. All good! – Kathy Coyle

David Moen commented that it was a good meeting – nice, short, and simple. Jonathan Rogstad noted that the meeting was efficient – and the dinner was a lot of fun.

Gini Kleingartner shared the budget for next year, and noted that expenses for next year will be a little higher. Check the linked annual report for details.

<https://bit.ly/annualreport25>

Thanks Matt Davis for the photos!

