

From Pastor Moira's Desk... Twenty Years

Twenty years ago, on January 20, 2002, I accepted the call to be the pastor and teacher at Trinity UCC Shiocton (ish) and St. John's UCC Cecil, my first call. I went back to California, packed up everything, and drove a moving truck with two cats (Iona & Kieran), towing my car, across the country. We moved in to the apartment on Valentine's Day in 2002, and then I flew back to New Mexico for my ordination on February 24th, getting stranded in Minneapolis overnight because of a snow storm.

Returning to Wisconsin I intended to officially begin work on Sunday March 3rd. But, God and the weather had other plans. I actually began work with a funeral on March 1st (for Asolda Runge), and then there was a snow storm that cancelled worship for my first Sunday. As I lay in bed that day, with a little bit of a cold from standing in the snow at the cemetery for the graveside portion of the services, I wondered what I had gotten myself into.

In Wisconsin, I learned, they name significant snowstorms. That year the storm that cancelled worship on my first ever Sunday as a pastor was called Ephraim. I had just enough Hebrew to know that Ephraim was one of Joseph's sons born to him in Egypt and translated it means "for God has caused me to prosper in the land of my affliction". What was God trying to tell me? Was Wisconsin going to be the land of my affliction? Well, it turns out that the name of the storm had nothing to do with the book of Genesis, and everything to do with the town in Door County, Wisconsin, so on we went.

And here we are, twenty years later. After sixteen years, two churches became three, and still here we are, in the same place, thriving, working on living the gospel not as an idea, but as the core of who we are. None of us should be here. The wider church doesn't understand why we don't just merge up or something, but each of these places has their own vital ministry, the work that God has called them to in their particular place.

Lots of folks, colleagues in ministry, say things like "oh, you're still there?" or ask "when are you going to get a better church?" because in their eyes bigger must mean better. They don't understand the idea of contentment, of knowing where you belong. Knowing your place isn't a bad thing, and staying long enough that you're

watching the first baby you ever baptized grow into an amazing young man and make the dean's list at college is quite an incredible thing. Knowing the names of the people's dogs, and grandbabies who live far away, and who can't eat mushrooms, and who doesn't like chocolate (yes, those people exist), and having the trust credit that goes with having been here is a gift that cannot be underestimated.

It's rarely easy, but it's always worth it. The Peace Corps used to say "the toughest job you'll ever love", and that could well be said of parish ministry.

So how do you measure this time, these years?

20 years; 2 decades; 240 months; 1,030 weeks; 7,305 days; 175,320 hours

Of course there are other ways of measuring the time:

about 500,000 miles driven (our parish is kind of a triangle with sides measuring 20 miles, 11 miles, and 23 miles), but folks go to hospital in places from Green Bay to Appleton to Milwaukee to Rochester, MN); 76 baptisms; 52 weddings; 152 funerals; more than 1,100 sermons preached (Sundays plus special occasions)

And then there's the uncountable things that measure time, the glorious, the hard, and the mundane: hands held; babies cradled as they enter this world; foreheads gently stroked as folks leave this world; hospital waiting rooms sat in; visits in homes and workplaces and schools and coffee shops and more; prayers; parties; confirmation classes; anniversaries and renewals of vows; Bible studies; meetings; fundraisers (how many kettles of soup, potato pancakes, raffle tickets, dish washing, and more have filled these years?); phone calls (if I could count those I'd need to lie down); tears shared; laughter; clothes sorted and canned goods stacked to give away; dreams and heartache shared; frustrations and fears heard and honored; septic tanks, light bulbs, damaged trees, hail storms, furnaces, elevators, sump pumps, construction projects, demolition projects, and more.

Twenty years ago I was sure of a lot of things. I had big dreams and ideas about who the church should be, and could be. I knew where we were going and how we were going to get there. Twenty years later, I'm really only sure of two: whatever tomorrow holds, God will get there first & we will get through it all together.

In peace and grace, Pastor Moira

Church Council "Preliminary" Minutes
January 11, 2022

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Menning with Pat Schomisch, Gary VanderLinden, Dallas Waterstradt, Connie Wheeler, Trevor Rohloff and Pastor Moira Finley present.

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Pastor Moira Finley.

A motion was made by Dallas Waterstradt and seconded by Gary VanderLinden to accept the minutes from last month. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Pat Schomisch and seconded by Connie Wheeler to accept the Financial Secretary's and Treasurer's reports. Motion passed.

Pastors Report

Conducted Virtual and In Person Worship Services, 1 Funeral
Attended church meetings

Committee Reports

- Membership: We have 2 people that are looking to join our church. Pastor Moira is speaking with them.
- Christian Ed: The next meeting is Tuesday, February 1 at 6:30 pm.
- Worship / Music: The next meeting is Sunday, May 15 after service.
- House: The boiler parts came in and the maintenance was done.
- Stewardship: February, we are collecting for the Food Pantry to restock shelves.

Old Business:

- We have 2 members that will be on the ballot for the council.
- We researched a quote for the church insurance and have found one that Pastor Moira's other 2 churches have and is better in price (saving about \$4,000 per year) and good quality insurance. The new insurance, Hastings Mutual, will be starting March 1, 2022. Motion made by Pat Schomisch and second by Connie Wheeler, motion approved.

New Business:

- The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 23, 2022 after worship service.

- There is a tree along the fence by the utilities that we will be monitoring if it needs to be pruned or taken down. May need a professional to look at it in the spring/summer to be able to determine the outcome.
- We are looking into having a rotation or someone to help unlock and lock the church on Sunday when Keith is unable to attend due to weather.
- There will be a Special Congregational Meeting on May 22, 2022 to discuss the church by-laws, quotes on the plaster project, and a garden for vegetables. Listening/Conversation meetings will be held on May 1, May 8, and May 15 after the worship service. Please plan to attend.

Prayers and Thank You's:

- Prayers for Peace UCC Shawano as they have a new pastor.
- Prayers for Bob's dad who is unable to visit his mother at the home due to Covid.
- Many THANKS to Bob Menning and Gary VanderLinden for their years of service on the Church Council. They added an extra year of service due to the Covid pandemic. You both have brought so much knowledge to our church and have helped in so many ways. We know that you will continue to be here for our church council members as we transition into new positions. Thank you!!

A motion was made by Connie Wheeler and seconded by Dallas Waterstradt to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.

Next Council Meeting will be Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Women's Guild News

The Guild does not meet in January. Our next meeting is

Wednesday February 2nd, 2022 at 1:30pm with Pastor Moira doing devotions & serving.

Come and join us ~ all are welcome!

**Thank you to everyone who stayed to attend our
Congregational Annual Meeting on Sunday January 23rd.**

Thank you to outgoing Council members

Bob Menning & Gary Vander Linden

and to incoming Council members Lizzie Tesch & Trevor Rohloff

Parish Celebrations

*If your special day is incorrect,
please let Pastor Moira know.*

February Birthdays

1st ... Leo Halvorson
2nd ... Aubrey Stevens
3rd ... Lindsay Seefeldt
6th ... Maggie Seefeldt
Hadley Seefeldt
9th ... Jim Rucci
Bonnie Vander Linden
11th ... Crissy Zuleger
13th ... Bradley Holz
Trevor Rohloff
Ryan Schomisch, Jr.
14th ... Adam Holz
15th ... Steven Felton
17th ... Stephany Beottcher
25th ... Sue Biese
26th ... Nate Seefeldt
27th ... Steve Seefeldt
Keegan Hooyman
Raphi Jochman

February Anniversaries

February 7th
Duane & Carol Henke

February 14th
Ralph & Helen Sassman

Scripture Readings

Sunday February 6, 2022

Fifth Sunday of Epiphany

Psalm 138

Luke 5.1-11

Sunday February 13, 2022

Sixth Sunday of Epiphany

Psalm 1

Luke 6.17-26

Sunday February 20, 2022

Seventh Sunday of Epiphany

Psalm 37.1-11

Luke 6.27-38

Sunday February 27, 2022

Transfiguration Sunday

Psalm 99

Luke 9.28-36

Wednesday March 2, 2022

Ash Wednesday

Worship

Trinity ~ 5pm

Black Creek ~ 7pm

Isaiah 58.1-12

Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21

Reader & Greeter Schedule

If you are not able to make it on your assigned day, please let Connie Wheeler & Pastor Moira know. Greeters also help serve communion.

February 6, 2022 ~ Communion

Reader Randy Miller
Greeters Steve Schomisch
Pat Schomisch

March 6, 2022 ~ Communion

Reader Connie Wheeler
Greeters Connie Wheeler
Cailey Wheeler

February 13, 2022

Reader Jan Rohloff
Greeters Jan Rohloff
Trevor Rohloff

March 13, 2022

Reader Vi Brown-Luebke
Greeters Gary Vander Linden
Bonnie Vander Linden

February 20, 2022

Reader Robin Schmidt
Greeters Robin Schmidt
Carol Schmidt

March 20, 2022

Reader Sue Biese
Greeters Mike Rohloff
Connie Rohloff

February 27, 2022

Reader Tanner St. John
Greeters Tanner St. John
Todd St. John

March 27, 2022

Reader Roberta Lorenz
Greeters Mike Dickinson
Sally Dickinson

Covid-19 Procedures for Worship & Gatherings

- ♥ **Face Coverings** ~ masks or face shields are HIGHLY ENCOURAGED (for everyone over age 5) regardless of vaccination status;
- ♥ **Distancing** ~ keep social distance as best as possible;
- ♥ **Offering** - there are plates at the sanctuary doors;
- ♥ **Respect** ~ respect others in our community by wearing a face covering and keeping distance when talking with folks you don't live with

Lent Begins ~ Wednesday March 2nd

The season of preparation for the miracle of Easter will begin with Ash Wednesday worship on Wednesday March 2nd at 5pm at Trinity & 7pm at Black Creek. There will be at home Lenten devotionals available with your March newsletter (on Sunday February 27th). We are resuming mid-week Lenten worship as well so stay tuned for more details.

St. John's United Church of Christ Financial Secretary's Report ~ DECEMBER 2021

	12/5/2021	12/12/2021	12/19/2021	12/26/2021	12/30/2021	Direct Deposit	Total
Checking deposit	3588.00	2848.00	2529.50	5777.00	2351.00	300.00	17393.50

Member Giving Towards Budget

	12/5/2021	12/12/2021	12/19/2021	12/26/2021	12/30/2021	Direct Deposit	Total
General Fund	2078.00	2848.00	2499.50	4267.00	1450.00	300.00	13442.50
Total Member Contributions	2078.00	2848.00	2499.50	4267.00	1450.00	300.00	13442.50

Other Income (in & out funds and income for designated purposes)

	12/5/2021	12/12/2021	12/19/2021	12/26/2021	12/30/2021	Direct Deposit	Total
Building Fund	10.00						10.00
Christmas Fund			10.00		200.00		210.00
Endowment Fund				10.00	101.00		111.00
Stained Glass Window Fund	1500.00		20.00				1520.00
Plaster Project				1500.00	600.00		2100.00
Total Other Income	1510.00	0.00	30.00	1510.00	901.00	0.00	3951.00

Total Checking Deposit	3588.00	2848.00	2529.50	5777.00	2351.00	300.00	17393.50
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St. John's United Church of Christ Treasurer's Report ~ DECEMBER 2021

Building Fund	Beginning Balance	\$18789.27
	Deposits	\$10.00
	Interest	\$0.67
	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
	Ending Balance	\$18799.94
Memorial Fund	Beginning Balance	\$9685.47
	Deposits	\$0.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
	Ending Balance	\$9685.47
	Organ Fund	Beginning Balance
Deposits		\$0.00
<u>Disbursements</u>		<u>\$0.00</u>
Ending Balance		\$4455.00
General Fund		Beginning Balance
	Deposits	\$13763.50
	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>(\$132668.54)</u>
	Ending Balance	\$20220.52
	Boiler/Furnace Fund	Beginning Balance
Deposits		\$0.00
<u>Disbursements</u>		<u>\$0.00</u>
Ending Balance		\$1800.00
Stained Glass Fund		Beginning Balance
	Deposits	\$1520.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
	Ending Balance	\$35000.00
	Plastering Fund	Beginning Balance
Deposits		\$2100.00
<u>Disbursements</u>		<u>\$0.00</u>
Ending Balance		\$2100.00
Totals		Beginning Balance
	Deposits	\$17393.50
	Interest	\$0.67
	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>(\$132668.54)</u>
	Ending Balance	\$92060.93

Feel free to continue sending your contributions by mail if you are more comfortable doing so. You can mail them to:

**St. John's UCC
PO Box 264
Black Creek, WI 54106**

If you have questions, please be in touch with our financial secretary, Lizzie Tesch or Treasurer Dallas Waterstradt

YTD Membership Giving	\$101,047.81
YTD Expenses	(\$97,737.30)
Net Amount*	\$3,310.51

*** excludes contributions and disbursements for special offerings**

February 2021

How to reach Pastor Moira: phone 715-851-3080
email pastormoira73@gmail.com

Pastor's Office Hours
Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays
Please call/text to make sure

Sunday Schedule: Trinity ~ 8:45am Worship
Black Creek ~ 9:00am Education Hour & 10:15 am Worship
Cecil ~ 7:00pm Worship

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Key to locations: BC = St. John's Black Creek T = Trinity C = St. John's Cecil ALC = Ascension Lutheran Church Navarino </div>		1 7pm BC Christian Ed	2 1:30pm BC Women's Guild 6:30pm BC Choir	3	4	5 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Choir is listed, BUT it may or not be happening depending on the covid situation. Please stay in touch for more details. </div>
6 Communion T&C Scrip Trinity Annual Meeting 11:30am BC Confirmation	7	8 9am ALC Pantry Board 2pm T New Hope Circle 6:30pm BC Council	9 6:30pm BC Choir	10 5:30pm T Council	11	12
13 BC Hall reserved C Consistory after worship	14 Happy Valentine's Day	15	16 5-7pm ALC Pantry 6:30pm BC Choir	17 9am C Closet work day	18	19 9-11am ALC Pantry
20 11:30am BC Confirmation	21 President's Day	22 Noon-3pm C Closet distribution	23 6:30pm BC Choir	24	25	26
27	28	March 1	March 2 1:30pm BC Guild Ash Wednesday Trinity 5pm Black Creek 7pm	March 3	March 4 World Day of Prayer	March 5 Tomorrow... Communion T & C SCRIP First Sunday of Lent Confirmation

February
2022

"The purpose of this congregation is to be a faith community promoting the kingdom of God through worship, teaching, and action ... get ready!"

St. John's United Church of Christ
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Wisconsin Conference UCC
www.wiucc.org

United Church of Christ
www.ucc.org



Year of Giving ~ Food Pantry

One in six families, before the pandemic, struggled with what is called "food insecurity", meaning they aren't entirely sure where their next meal will be coming from. The pandemic, job losses, inflation, and more have made the struggle even harder. Too many children go to school without enough food, and too many others have to make tough choices between paying for their prescriptions or buying food. Your generous donations to area food pantries will help provide support to families that are struggling. You can donate non-perishable food items. If it's something you would eat, it's something another family would be grateful to have. You can also make cash donations so food pantry volunteers can shop for items they need most.

Please consider buying:

cereal, breakfast bars & granola bars
non-condensed soup (like Chunky brand),
peanut butter & jelly (we don't get enough jelly donated, ever)
canned meats like tuna, chicken & SPAM
ready to eat things like ravioli & chili
hamburger, chicken & tuna helpers
fruit & shelf-stable fruit juices