



CIRCLE TIMES

January 2025

United Protestant Church Newsletter

Silver Bay, Minnesota

The United Protestant Church Mission Statement

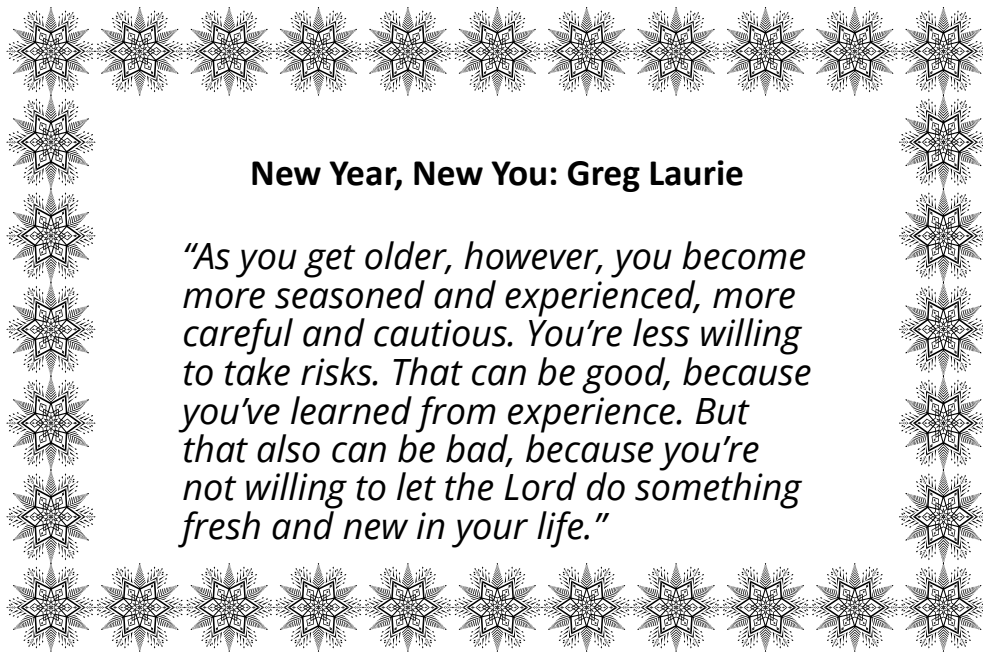
We are an open-minded Christian fellowship.

We seek to follow the Word of God and to pass God's love on to others.

Lynn Anderson, Church Secretary
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Terry Eggum, Church Council Chair
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New Year, New You: Greg Laurie

"As you get older, however, you become more seasoned and experienced, more careful and cautious. You're less willing to take risks. That can be good, because you've learned from experience. But that also can be bad, because you're not willing to let the Lord do something fresh and new in your life."



We chose the name "Circle Times" for our first U.P. newsletter 62 years ago.
It was a way of reminding ourselves that we are a united group of several denominations.
This is a much needed witness in our world filled with diversities.

Sandra Bennett of Thistle Cove Farm presents this story that was written by an anonymous author. It gives us pause to ponder the burdens of life that are weighing us down.

The first police officer reaches under the one-ton bale of hay and attempts to lift it off of me. Of course, it doesn't budge. He grabs his flashlight and shines it under the hay into my face. I blink. He yells over his shoulder to his partner, "He's alive! He's alive! Help me move the hay." Even working together two officers can't move it – not a fraction of an inch. A thousand pounds each? Of course they can't move it.

"Cut the strings," I whisper. My voice is weak. They can't hear me.

I am not going to last much longer. If they will just cut the strings, the bale will break apart, and they can drag me out of here.

"Lift, Joe, lift!"

"Just cut the strings," I mumble, "Please cut the strings."

"C'mon harder."

"It's too heavy! We can't lift it. We gotta go for help! Hang on, we'll be right back!"

I am alone again in the growing darkness. Wonderful painless, peaceful, irresistible sleep beckons. I struggle to remain conscious. One. Two. Three. Four... Where are they? How long does it take for police, fire, ambulance, to arrive? Where is the Coast Guard? Where are the Marines? Where is that one old farmer with enough common sense to just cut the strings? The desert air grows chilly as the sky darkens. I grow weaker. Dizziness overcomes me and I begin to drift off into that gray space somewhere between the living and the dead.

Help finally arrives. One of the police officers bends down so I can see his face. "Hold on! A fire engine is here. There are six men aboard."

I do the math. Two big, strong cops and six burly firemen must move a ton of dead weight off me. That's two hundred forty five pounds each. No way can they possibly do that – but somehow, miraculously, they do. A couple of neighbors who have arrived at the scene stand by to catch me. They lower my limp body to the ground where I lie in a broken heap.

Why didn't they cut the strings? They could have saved a long, tortured hour.

How heavy is hay? A piece of hay is about the weight of a feather. How many pieces of hay does it take to make two thousand pounds? Lots. That package of sixteen bazillion individual pieces of hay wrapped in a gigantic bundle is a crushing weight. But separated, it would have been nothing. I feel bad saying this, because it makes me sound ungrateful – and I am very grateful to the guys who saved my life that night – but there is a point to be made here, isn't there?

Is it too big? Is it overwhelming?

Cut the strings – just cut the strings!

Are you buried under crushing burdens? Projects that are too huge? Schedules that are too complicated? Maybe you are trying to do too much at once – trying to do everything instead of doing something.

Cut the strings and cut yourself free. Do one thing at a time – and get it Done."

(Thanks to Jean Williams for suggesting this story.)

UNITED PROTESTANT CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES
December 10, 2024 6:00 pm

ATTENDEES: Ed Maki, Mike Osmundson, David Moore, Jim Martineau, David Moore, Shirley Whiteford, Terry Eggum, Ruth Eggum.

Council Chair Terry Eggum called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm and opened in prayer. Thanks to Lynn Anderson and Ruth Eggum who helped get the end-of-the-year letter out.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: None

M/M/S by Shirley Whiteford/Ed Maki to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2024 meeting. Motion carried.

TREASURERS'S REPORT: M/M/S by Terry Eggum/Jim Martineau to approve the Treasurer's report for November, 2024 for audit. Motion carried. Copies of the Proposed Budget for 2025 were distributed. M/M/S by Ruth Eggum/David Moore to approve the proposed budget for distribution to the congregation by December 22 (to comply with the 30 day requirement before the Annual Meeting). Motion carried. Mike O. reported that Beth Smuk will do the audit for 2024. He also reported that we received a \$500 Beautification Grant from Silver Bay to help with the cost of repairs to the church building.

Checking Account: \$24,480.85	Memorial Fund: \$27,537.70	
Ministry Fund: \$53,369.47	House of Love: \$3,032.35	AmazonSmile:
\$464.26	Checking SS: \$3,667.12	YTD Food Shelf: \$ 914.00
YTD Income: \$108,206.25		
YTD Expense: (\$116,067.65)		
YTD Net: (\$7,861.40)		

DIACONATE REPORT: Ruth Eggum reported that plans for the congregation-led Christmas Eve service are progressing. We have pulpit supply scheduled through January 19. 12/15-Richard Blood; 12/22-Laurie Crelly; 12/29 and 1/5-Von Borg; 1/12-Paula Gaboury and 1/19-Tom Liddle.

TRUSTEE REPORT: Mike Osmundson reported Stack Brothers of Superior, WI will look at the retrofit controls and timer on the church's boiler/furnace and come up with a quote for maintenance.

CHRISTIAN ED REPORT: No report

PASTOR TRANSITION UPDATE: David Moore and Jim Martineau reported that they have been receiving information from some of the denominations, but no possibilities for an interim pastor. They stated that the UPC Constitution does not say that the interim pastor has to be from our five denominations.

OLD BUSINESS: M/M/S by David Moore/Jim Martineau to send \$60 to Amy Wasson's friend who took the drone photos of the church. Motion carried. David will get the man's name and address from Amy and give it to Mike O. Mike O. is working on getting the needed information from the St. Cloud brass foundry, which will be making our names for the Memorial Board.

NEW BUSINESS: Committees and Boards need to have their reports for the Annual Report to Church Secretary Lynn Anderson by January 6. The Annual Meeting and potluck will be Sunday, January 26, following the morning worship service.

M/M/S by Ed Maki/Shirley Whiteford to adjourn the meeting at 5:59. Motion carried. Chair Terry Eggum closed in prayer.

The next Council meeting will be January 14, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
Minutes respectfully submitted by Ruth Eggum, Council Secretary
December minutes will be approved at the January 2025 Meeting

House of Love update

The House of Love (HoL) is our partnered mission. It is a Christian orphanage in Chiang Mai, Thailand that is a home for women and children affected by HIV/AIDS. Its mission is to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of each resident. Mark and Alise Juanes are American Baptist missionaries working with the local administrators and staff to further this ministry.

Suk San Wan Christ-sa-mas

We hope your Christmas this year is full of joy and love! This year has been full for both our family and the ministries here in Thailand. Everyone this year has been excited for Christmas and what the new year will bring.

This is always a fun time of year in Chiang Mai, thanks to two generous partners we are able to have Christmas parties on campus for both the House of Love and the House of Blessing preschool. It is not a typical party like you would expect: someone generally shares a message or Bible lesson for the children, worship songs, and then of course gift giving. This year however, we are looking for ways to help all the kids we work with to cultivate a heart for giving no matter how much they have.

Cultivating a Heart for Giving

At the preschool Christmas program the kids each received gift bags which included items such as chips, candy canes, dried noodles, cookies, a small toy, and some Thai snacks. Of course the kids were still ecstatic; several proudly showed off their bags and pointed out the dried noodles and said they now had something to give to their parents. Another asked for an extra candy cane so they could give it to their brother at home. Hearing all of this, my heart melted - these kids did not just want to receive, they wanted to give as well. I truly believe there is joy built into us with a desire to give. Even when we don't have a lot we still have a desire to give and in doing so, we become more connected to each other. I don't believe this desire to give is a simple evolutionary trait but rather something that God built into our DNA to help us to be closer as families and communities.

At the House of Love, the kids had an opportunity to give as well. The staff helped the kids prepare gift bags which they took to the neighbors nearby and wished them a Merry Christmas (pic in the header above.) Most of the neighbors are Buddhist so it was a good opportunity to build some relationships. Then, for the third year in a row, the Christmas party reached beyond the kids who live in the group home - we also invited children and their families whom we are working with in families or extended family. I'm going to be honest, last year there was a little bit of tension between the kids who still live at the House of Love and those who live with families. This year, however, felt very different and it was exactly what we had hoped for; the kids celebrated together like it was a family reunion. They ran around and played together, sat together at dinner, and were genuinely excited to see each other. I loved to see kids introduce their parents to their friends. While many of the families we work with are single parents, only two are two single fathers. These two widowed men lost hope and thought they could not take care of their children so they came to the House of Love for help. Now, we have been working with the fathers for the past two years. A year after bringing the kids back, they have both found new hope and gained resilience to challenges. One of the fathers had come straight from work and was clearly exhausted but his youngest daughter was watching out for him and brought him food before giving him a big hug. He didn't have to come, we picked up his girls from school but he still wanted to be at the party with them. By the end of the evening he was volunteering to join up on stage with a dance activity. It seems like two very small things but just a few years ago he didn't think he could be a father. We are seeing transformation, not just in the kids but in families as well! Praise God.

Photos not available

College
students
singing
Christmas
songs.

Christmas at
the House
Of Love

Taking 5

Below you will find the Taking 5 scripture and prayers for this month. You are encouraged to take 5 minutes each day to read the scripture closely, pray the prayer attentively, and spend the remaining time in prayerful silence, seeking out God's presence and prompting in that time. Thank you for being part of this important discipline for our church and for you.

Note: the origin of these Taking 5 scripture readings are from Rev. Paul Scaringi who has given us permission to reprint them.

The week of January 5th

Scripture: Hebrews 2:16-18

Prayer: As I begin this new year, Eternal God, help me see Jesus walking with me and to remember that he is able to help and lead me through my days. Amen.

The week of January 12th

Scripture: Psalm 29:9-11

Prayer: Great God of creation, I pray I would find in the whirl of my life today your voice and join with others in giving glory to you. Amen.

The week of January 19th

Scripture: Psalm 40:1-3

Prayer: Help me to wait patiently for you, Loving Lord. Lift me up this day and give me a new song within my heart and mind that I may praise you. Amen.

The week of January 26th

Scripture: Matthew 4:18-20

Prayer: I ask, dear Lord, for you to open my eyes so I may know your presence this day and hear your calling for me. I pray for grace to follow you. Amen.



Parish Nurse Notes

Dedie Moore Retired R.N.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
John 1:1*

*In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth...and God saw that the light was good.
Genesis 1:1*

Starting a new year we often think of beginnings. Making changes we think we should, frequently making resolutions that are promptly forgotten except for brief moments when we feel guilty about not following through. One of the Advent readings I read gave me a different take on this.

“Jesus came and departed. But his resurrection means that everything in God’s kingdom is alive; in every moment there is something happening. He may soon send a messenger to knock. When the door is opened, he will say, ‘Listen, do this and that; tell the people in the house to watch out for this or that.’ For those who listen for Christ’s coming, a knock sounds over and over again. The things that come forth are not necessarily highly spiritual. Sometimes they are very simple things. For instance, we may be told, ‘Don’t neglect your bodies. Don’t you know your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? (I Cor. 3:16).’ “Why do you eat so much food? It is not only your souls that matter, but your bodies too.” (From Watch for the Light, essay *Action in Waiting* by Christoph Blumhardt.)

This reminded me again that God cares about our bodies and how we care for them. But even more, how God is with us helping to make good choices, to care for the bodies and world He has gifted to us. Even what may seem like small changes bring us closer to God when done for and with God. To love and appreciate who we are and the bodies we have been given, even if they do not fit the cultural ideal.

Let us all be ready with lamps trimmed and ready, ready to open the door and listen and act.

GLAD meets the second and fourth Mondays at 6:30pm on Zoom. North Shore Mental Health Group meets the third Tuesday at 6pm at UP and on Zoom. Contact me at 218-220-2048, or email dediedavid@yahoo.com for more information. Also check our North Shore Mental Health Group on Facebook for resources.

SEARCH COMMITTEE—DECEMBER UPDATE

The Search Committee met Dec. 15th.. Paula and Amy have scheduled meetings with Rev. Jackie Saxon from the American Baptist Church Transition Ministry and the Disciples of Christ/The Christian Church transition leader. Rev. Richard Blood joined the committee, he is the representative from the Presbyterian Church. Reverend Blood was very helpful with guidance and perspective in regard to employing an interim pastor. He recommended that we contact local ministers for suggestions and contacts. He also described the role of an interim pastor.. Rev. Blood will return as our guest minister on January 26th. He has agreed to meet again after Fellowship Hour. Rev. Paul Taintor was also present. He is prayerfully considering the interim position.

The Search Committee is reaching out to ministers from local communities.

Search Committee: Paula Poaletti Holden, Chair, Amy Wasson, Secretary, Lynn Anderson, Maggie King, Jim Martineau, David Moore, Jean Williams

What's up now with U.P. folks!!!

Keep these folks in your thoughts and prayers:

Ellen and Karsten Hogenson, Phyllis Pearrow, Ray Burge, Kay Colby, Irene Johnson, Mike and Peg Osmundson, David Gustafson, Rebecca Snook, Serine Ege, Deanne Reiten, Agnes Gilson, Jean Wagner, Ruth Koepke, Carol Bakken and Allison Oja of our congregation as they deal with health-related changes and recoveries.

All the caregivers.

January Birthdays

Kris Small	7
Leona McMahon	11
Brenda Larson	13
Marlin Bakken	16
Deanne Reiten	17
Mary Jo Taintor	20
Peggy Osmundson	22
Jeff Miller	23
Eileen Scaringi	28
Vera Johnson	28
Dick Steward	31



*Happy
New Year*

**Thank you to all of
our guest ministers.**

Paul Taintor
Von Borg
Sara Lund
Richard Blood
Laurie Creilly
Paula Gabourg
Tom Liddle
Ken Ribe

January Anniversaries

Amy Wasson and Jeff Miller 1
David and Sandy Wakefield 24

Wednesday Morning Bible Study 9:30 am

Our Bible study resumes on January 8th.

Please join our discussion.

We are using a DVD study titled
An Unlikely Advent by

Rachel Billups.

We will complete the 4th section of
the book.

On January 15th, we will begin a 6 ses-
sion DVD study of *The Gospel of John*

By Amy Jill Levine.

Everyone is welcome.

Prayer for Forgiveness

Forgive us, Father,
for we have sinned.
Heal us, Lord,
throw our shame to the wind.
Show us, Holy Spirit,
the error of our way.
Bless us, dear God,
with a fresh new day.

Lynn Anderson



For those who would like to support
the UPC ministry electronically,
please scan this code to access our
website's online giving page: Note:
There is a fee associated with using
this application.

Check out our website:

<https://>

www.unitedprotestant.org.

You can download the latest
newsletter and sermon as well
as keep up to date with what
is happening here at UPC.

January

2025

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year	2	3	4
	Lynn in office Wed & Thurs 1:30 -4:00 pm					
5 Sunday Worship 10:30 am Communion	6	7	8 WMBS 9:30 am Prayer Shawl 2:00 pm	9	10	11
12 Sunday Worship 10:30 am	13 GLAD 6:30 pm	14 Boards 5:00 pm Council 6:00 pm	15 WMBS 9:30 am	16	17	18
19 Sunday Worship 10:30 am	20	21 NSMHG meets 6:00 pm	22 WMBS 9:30 am Prayer Shawl 2:00 pm	23	24	25
26 Sunday Worship 10:30 am Annual Meeting Potluck	27 GLAD 6:30 pm	28	29 WMBS 9:30 am	30	31	

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