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Brookings United Church of Christ

COMMENTS FROM THE MODERTOR

As we enter the second month of church life without a full-time pastor the search for a replacement, it seems could be a two- or three-year process. Much patience will be needed during this process which is something I have never been very good at. For me two or three months would seem an acceptable period of time, not two or three years. During this time of waiting, searching and discernment I think it would be good to reflect on how we do church and explore possible changes that would engage more people of every age group. Judging from church attendance in America it is fairly obvious that the way the institution has been operating with business as usual it has not been meeting the spiritual needs of the people in this postmodern world. While everyone may have opinions what we need are viable options that can be considered for expanding the role and purpose of church that will aid in our own personal transformation and also that of our community and the world. Please take some time in the coming weeks and months to pass on possible options that in your opinion would help this church expand and grow into an always uncertain future.

From my files a commentary written by the late Marcus Borg-

Churches are to be communities of transformation. This means being communities of resocialization. Most of us have been socialized into modern American culture. To be Christian is to be resocialized into a different understanding and way of life—to live in relationship to another Lord and vision. Being Christian does not mean being Anti-American, but it does mean that Christian identity and loyalty matter more than national identity and loyalty.

Another central function of the church is that it exists for the sake of the world. It does not exist for its own sake. It is grounded in God, who “so loved the world,” not God who so loved the church, and Christians in particular. The church is to be a mediator, and instrument of God’s passion for the world’s well-being. So, it is important to be a part of the Christian community—not because it is a requirement for salvation, but because of the church’s role as a community of transformation. God does not need the church. But Christians do. God can get along without the church. We cannot.

...Marcus Borg, Jesus, 308

**“Whoever
you are,
wherever
you are on
life’s jour-
ney, you
are wel-
come here”**

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Musings of a Traveling South Dakota Nebraska Iowa Conferences Minister of the United Church of Christ

Celebrating the Beauty of Nature and Milestones in the South Dakota Conference.

By Rev Roberto Ochoa

“Give thanks to the Lord for God is good; God’s love endures forever.” Psalm 107:1

My Dear Friends of the Iowa Nebraska South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ and beyond,

The greatest gifts I get, serving as the Conferences Minister are the invitations by our UCC congregations, Associations, and camps to experience with them their joys and celebrations of milestones and/or special gatherings...like a family camp.

This past week, I was invited to attend the 100th anniversary of the building that serves as the United Church of Edgemont in South Dakota on July 19th. However, I couldn’t attend because I committed myself to be present at another church across the state in the east river. I intended to make a video greeting for United Church on behalf of the South Dakota Conference, to send congratulations, when I decided to locate the church on the map (I am still learning where our UCC churches are located within our conferences). I learned that Edgemont is less than an hour and a half away from Placerville UCC Camp in Rapid City. It so happened that I was planning to attend a weeklong family camp beginning the weekend before United Church’s celebration. So, I decided I would go and worship with United Church one week before and celebrate with them a week early.

In my research on Edgemont, I was pleasantly surprised that the town has a community dinner theatre and was presenting a comedy production about “cows and moos”. And since I love community theatre, I decided to arrive the Saturday evening before and was fortunate enough to purchase the last dinner ticket. When I was escorted to my table shared by three other folks, two of them introduced themselves as Scott and Jane Ann. When they asked me what brought me to Edgemont, I told them I was there to visit United Church and identified myself as the conference minister. Being the small town that it is, it turned out that Jane Ann Henderson is a long-time member of United and Scott Corbett is the President of the Community Faith Board. Community Faith being the joint ministry in Edgemont between United Church (which is UCC and United Methodist) and Trinity Lutheran (ELCA) that worships together and share a pastor.

I had the pleasure of learning more about the story of Edgemont from Jane Ann and Scott and enjoying the energetic and hilarious presentation of Tim Kelly’s “Here Come the Cows or...Never Say Moo in Mesa”. I was impressed that the Edgemont Theatre has been producing summer theatre in the community for 26 years. The founders, which I believe are related and known as Deanne, Linda, and Suzanne, turned out to also be members of United Church. And the steak dinner that came with the production was pretty awesome as well. The Edgemont Theatre can be found on Facebook and if you happen to be in their neck of the woods, I encourage y’all to check them out.

When I attended worship the next day, I felt like I knew half the congregation already because of the theatre experience. I was well received and presented them with a certificate of recognition. Pastor Chris Baesler was out of town, so I missed meeting him, however I was blessed to receive the message from one of the lay preachers Don Andersen that resonated with me, about trusting God as the “Sower” of our hope and faith. After service, I was able to meet many of the members over coffee and treats.

I also want to take this moment to express my gratitude to Ms. Debbie Andersen from United Church for reaching out to conference and for the invitation to the celebration. Congratulations United Church for the 100th anniversary of your building and may you continue blessing Edgemont as Community Faith Church through the love of Christ and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

After my visit with Community Faith, I was able to make that beautiful drive through the Black Hills of South Dakota on my way to Placerville UCC Camp, with all its jaw dropping beauty, and finally got to visit Mt Rushmore, where I discovered pictures and videos just do not do it any justice. I just watched in awe and took it all in, on a really hot day of 102 degrees.

Last year, I shared my experiences with family camp at Placerville and I had committed to return to experience the full week with the families, all of them affiliated with the UCC throughout South Dakota and beyond the state. The downright joy these families of spending a week time with one another warms my heart. Camp activities, outdoor and indoor for all ages, competitive tournaments, talent/no talent show, some really goofy songs and bodily movements/dancing, great meals, balanced with daily inspirational lessons and evening vespers, and just taking in the stars at night...help renewed my spirit. The week ended with a Christian musical presentation by the Red Sea Pedestrians Worship Band which just rock the chapel with the Holy Spirit. (They will be in Sioux Falls, SD providing the music for the Youth Led Worship Service at JAM on Friday, Sept 18th).

Every time I have a camp experience, the more convinced I get on how important they are to build our spiritual selves to become one with God’s creation and with each other. I invite you to visit any of our camps affiliated with our conferences – Placerville in Rapid City, SD; Kamp Kaleo by the River, Burwell, NE; and/or Pilgrim Heights, Montour, IA and treat yourself and/or families a time to get away and enjoy the beautiful nature God provides for us all.



Musings of a Traveling South Dakota Nebraska Iowa Conferences Minister of the United Church of Christ. (cont)

I ended the week with celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Joint Parish of Beresford and Centerville United Church of Christ. Pastor Rev Janel Fillingsness Bak led a spirit filled and a full house worship of celebration and song that marked The Past, The Present, and For All Time the hope and assurance of God’s presence for all generations. I was honored to bring greetings on behalf of South Dakota Nebraska Iowa Conferences and offer a prayer; as well as celebrating communion alongside Pastor Janel. A luncheon afterwards of fried chicken, Swedish meatballs, mashed potatoes, salads, and desert topped of a great day of celebration. Congratulations Joint Parish of Beresford and Centerville UCC for sixty years of ministry and may God continue blessing your ministries to your communities in the love of Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit, always.

When I consider the turmoil that is happening in our nation and our world, I am so grateful for the resiliency and commitment of our UCC churches to strive to build a better and just world for all. *"Give thanks to the Lord for God is good; God’s love endures forever."*

See you on Sept 17-20 in Sioux Falls for the Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) and Confirmands/Youth Rally of the Iowa Nebraska South Dakota Conferences of the UCC, hosted by First Congregational and Spirit of Peace UCC’s.

Bendiciones y Paz,
Rev Roberto

Just to let everyone know the Brookings Area Indivisible Group meets at BUCC the 1st Thursday and the 3rd Monday every month at 6:30.



August 2026						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Adult Study 9am Worship 10am	3 Coffee and Conversation 10-11	4	5 Something to Chew On 6:00	6	7	8
9 Adult Study 9am Worship 10am	10 Coffee and Conversation 10-11	11	12 Something to Chew On 6:00	13	14	15
16 Adult Study 9am Worship 10am	17 Coffee and Conversation 10-11	18	19 Something to Chew On 6:00	20	21	22
23 Adult Study 9am Worship 10am	24 Coffee and Conversation 10-11	25	26 Something to Chew On 6:00	27	28	29
30 Adult Study 9am Worship 10am	31 Coffee and Conversation 10-11					

August Birthdays & Anniversaries



August Birthdays

7 Becky Ebel
13 Linda Langner
13 Bruce Watts
18 Laura Gloege
22 Jayson Edmonds
25 Lisa Johnsen
30 Donovan Gloege

August Anniversaries

1 Doug and Mary Ward



8 Points of Progressive Christianity

1. Proclaim Jesus Christ as our Gate to the realm of God;
2. Recognize the faithfulness of other names for the gateway to God's realm;
3. Understand our sharing of bread and wine in Jesus' name to be a representation of God's feast for all people's

4. Invite all sorts of conditions of people to join in our worship and in our common life as full partners including, but not limited to:

- * Believers and agnostics
- * Conventional Christians & questioning skeptics
- * Homosexuals & heterosexuals
- * Females and males
- * The despairing and the hopeful
- * Those of all races & cultures, and
- * Those of all classes & abilities

5. Think that the way we treat one another & other people is more important than the way we express our beliefs;

6. Find more grace in the search for meaning than in absolute certainty, in the questions than in the answers;

7. See ourselves as a spiritual community in which we discover the resources required for our work in the world:

- * Striving for justice & peace among all people, and
- * Bringing hope to those Jesus called the least of his sisters & brothers.

8. Recognize that our faith entails costly discipleship, renunciation of privilege, & conscientious resistance

BE A BLESSING
PRAY OFTEN. BE KIND. GIVE THANKS.
DO GOOD. HAVE COURAGE.
LEAD WITH LOVE. PRACTICE PEACE.
BE THE LIGHT. WORK FOR JUSTICE.
ENCOURAGE OTHERS. BE JOYFUL.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

UCC.org

**SOMETIMES THE MOST
POWERFUL IMPACT
YOU CAN HAVE IN THE
WORLD IS SIMPLY
CHOOSING TO BE
KIND!**