

## Love. Hope. United.

BY Rev. Lara Crutsinger-Perry



The congregation recently participated in our Next Steps Weekend on September 24-25. Sponsored by our Building Future's Group (BFG), we brought in a stewardship consultant who met with approximately 60 members and staff of our church. A good percentage also completed a short survey. In the end, our consultant was able to consolidate a lot of information and very clearly presented the next steps on how to move forward in addressing the future of our building.

We identified our top strengths as: engagement in social justice and activism, pastor/staff, Sunday services, our inclusive welcome, the community we have built within the congregation, and our music program. We identified the following top priorities going forward: building improvements, social justice/activism, membership growth, anti-racism/anti-oppression work, faith formation and increased lay leadership. In the coming months, we will be talking more about how our building helps us achieve our mission.

Today, there is much to celebrate!

We are a financially healthy church. And have healthy relationships. Our members and friends care about our future and are engaged in the life of our congregation. We speak to a shared vision and purpose summed up in our phrase, Love. Hope. United. We are a congregation that recognizes that acts of justice are acts of worship. We gather together as a community to nurture each other and to worship God which allows us to go into our community and be the Love the world needs.

Thank you to the BFG who has helped us become aware, in real and meaningful ways, of the needs of our building but also how we are the church in and outside the building. The building is our home base. It's important and needs to be ready for future generations. But our presence in the community as agents of Divine Love is our calling.

The good news is that we have the opportunity and the means to do both!

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## MODERATOR MUSINGS

BY Joan E. Knapp, Council Moderator



New beginnings!

For some January 1st is a time of new beginnings, but for me the start of school in September has always been an important new beginning! Even though I no longer teach or am a student, Labor Day continues to remind me of new beginnings. So it is for most Congregations as well. Not only do students and teachers go back to school, but many members and friends return to attending church and church activities regularly after summer vacations.

This fall our church has many new beginnings besides the usual ones. Our Next Steps Weekend featured Rachel Maxwell, a Stewardship Consultant, who listened to us talk about our dreams and desires for our building and our congregation. She met with Pastor Lara, staff and Council Members Friday night. Then on Saturday morning, members attended listening sessions with Rachel. The focus of her visit was to identify recommended next steps as we consider how to move forward with the future of our building and property.

Our 2022 Stewardship Campaign – Stepping Out in Faith (October 9-30), will connect our core values with our ministry as a church and congregation. Through the Building Futures process, as a Congregation, we identified our core values as:

- faith/worship sustainability
- community building
- accessibility
- justice
- environmental stewardship
- safety

The Stewardship Committee's goal is demonstrating how our resources of time, talent, and treasure (money) reflect and amplify these values. The ministries and committees have been tasked with answering some questions which they will share with the Congregation as part of this campaign. Stay tuned to find out more!

During the last weekend of October (28-29), we will have the Sacred Conversations to End Racism Workshop. In preparation for this workshop, a small group has been meeting, reading, and reviewing resources recommended by Dr. Velda Love, the facilitator and creator of the Sacred Conversations Curriculum. She will be preaching at our combined 9:30am worship service on Oct 30. This workshop

is part of our ongoing Uprooting Racism Team effort as we learn more about our own bias and work to dismantle our own racism.

These are some of the new beginnings this fall for our church! Imagine the wonderful possibilities we have! Imagine the opportunities available to us! This is an exciting time to be a part of The United Churches of Olympia! I hope that you've joined (or will join) in some of these activities. Remember, together we are an evolving Christian community seeking justice in the way of Jesus.

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## MUSIC AT UNITED

BY April Kuhr, Music Director

What a difference a year makes. At this time last year, we were worshipping only on Zoom. The choir was rehearsing outside. While worshipping online enlarged our sense of community and connection and made us realize that we can stay connected electronically, our sense of community is deepest when we are together in the same space.



The one thing that people seemed to miss the most was singing together. While researching for Hymn Sing Sunday, I was inspired to learn that when a group of people sing together, in addition to breathing together, their heart beats synch up. The sense of connection that we feel through congregational singing is not just emotional. It is actually visceral, making it all the more meaningful. Singing truly connects us. No wonder we love singing in church so much and have missed it over the past few years.

Sadly, singing remains the most high-risk activity for Covid transmission. The Re-Opening Committee has worked diligently to create Covid-safe practices for the congregation and the choir to worship and sing together. We appreciate your willingness to continue to mask up while singing.

This Summer, we examined our connections to the earth and to each other through our "Grounded Series". We were blessed by special music from our talented musicians: **Cheri Kelley, Laura Fairbanks, Dan Meuse, Zed Heo, Donna Lotton, Anne-Elise Fischel, Anne Edge, Paul McCann, Paul Nelson, Chas Dreyfus, Gary Loyd, Mary Olney-Loyd, Deb Reynolds, Bunny Hooper, and Ellen Lundberg.** Thank you all for sharing your gifts and making worship more meaningful.

The Choir welcomed new and returning members with enthusiasm at our first rehearsal on September 7. While some members have stepped back, we have gained six new members since April. We sang a fond farewell to our dear **Al Walters** on August 20. Al's memorial service brought to life and committed to memory, his love of life, humor and gentle spirit.

We are incredibly grateful to our tech team—**Severin Gardner, Robert Kam, Doug Robb** and **Jeremiah Sather** for their dedication and assistance—both in house and transporting equipment to outdoor worship sights. They provide a seamless platform for worship in any location. Thank you all.

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## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE MINISTRY (CLM)

BY Joanne Conner, Chair



Summer was a busy time for our church which gave the Congregational Life Ministry many opportunities to celebrate.

To kick off the summer, we welcomed ministerial intern, Nate Humphreys with cake and coffee. On the same day we congratulated three of our high school graduates (*L-R, pic below right*), **Matthew Scott, Rowen Satre,** and **Sam Skjervold**, who are on their way to college. We gave them a proper send off with gifts, balloons and cake.



On Father's Day, beloved former pastor, **Mark Dowdy** (*below left*) was honored with the title, "Pastor Emeritus". It was a special day for Mark and many of our congregation who know and love him. Fond and funny memories were shared throughout the service and the gathering afterwards which included, of course, cookies and delicious ice cream topped with strawberries.



July brought great weather which opened the door for a summer picnic at Burfoot Park (*below*). Our summer study featured our connection to the Earth so church services held in our beautiful outdoors were especially poignant. After church, Congregational Life Ministry served up picnic food with burgers, veggie burgers, hot dogs, a mountain of potato salad, and cookies making a perfect summer spread.





We wrapped summer up with our annual church retreat, held at Pilgrim Firs. Due to COVID, the full retreat was cancelled for the last two summers so we were ready to reconnect, recreate, and refresh together.

Fall brings new beginnings for CLM. We look forward to welcoming new and old friends and celebrating our community in Christ together.



L-R: Lisa Carroll, Joanne Conner, Sue Poler, and Dee Corwin, members of CLM.



**Retreat Pictures** Top Left: Group photo  
Lower Left: **Olinda Corin & Inge Freund** Top right: **Lisa Carroll, Sandee Sennes, Jinny Beekmann and Jacky Crow** Lower right: **Scott and Shawn Andrews**

## MANAGEMENT TEAM MINISTRY (MT)

BY Jude Van Buren, Chair

This has been a busy summer for Management Team Ministry members and volunteers.

Interior Work - Our new custodian, **Keegan Wulf** has been cleaning and making repairs around our church over the past several months. A contractor has repaired and replaced several lighting fixtures downstairs



increasing energy efficiency, and the refrigerator in the main kitchen was serviced and is now functioning again. The boiler will be repaired again in a couple of weeks to ensure heat is available when the days start to get chilly.



Pew Removal – Some damaged Sanctuary pews were removed in June and replaced with better pews from the rear of the room. This procedure opened up the rear of the Sanctuary and allows easier access for wheelchair and stroller use by congregants. **Jeff Loyer, Jon Jantzen, Jeff Hogan, Lisa Carroll and Keegan Wulf** (picture left) were the team that accomplished this work. Pew remnants were recycled and reused and hardware was kept for future use.

Exterior Maintenance - **Dean Paulsen** spent many days cleaning out, repairing and improving many of our gutters and drains near the lower parking lot. A contractor recently replaced the drain along the mural wall which had disintegrated leading to a small lake outside the social hall doors during heavy rains.

Summer Yard Clean Up - Volunteers worked for 3 hours on a brilliant July Saturday on grounds clean up and yard waste removal. A great team assisted including: **Dana Nojima, Lynette and Mark Hunter, Leslie Cushman, Jennifer Molfetta, Brett Rude, Dean and Valorie Paulsen, Therese Sprunger, Danita Ross and Jude Van Buren**. We pruned, raked leaves, weeded and discussed what future projects were needed to keep the grounds looking fresh and inviting.



**Therese Sprunger and Jude Van Buren** weeding along Capitol Way.



**Dana Nojima** trimming a tree along Capitol Way.

Additional work has been on-going thanks to several volunteers on weed whacking the berms and trimming the hedges on 11th Avenue, including **Mark Hunter, Dean Paulsen and Dana Nojima**. Finally, thank you to **Dan Lundberg** for mowing the grounds and tending to the irrigation system every summer. Many thanks to everyone for all of this great work to spruce up our grounds!

Our Ministry met with our architect, Garner Miller, who has been working with the Building Futures Group (BFG) upon request of the BFG Chair **Dana Leavitt** who spent the summer on firefighting demands. We have been researching electrical issues of the church as they relate to



the heating systems, due in part to the continual repairs needed of our boiler system. Mr. Miller was extremely helpful in providing documents and information that have been developed over the years to understand and research the facilities' issues of our aging church. The Ministry will be working with members of the BFG and with the finance team to determine what steps are needed to further understand and plan for the church's short term electrical and heating needs.

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## UNITED CHURCHES AWARDED SECURITY GRANT



BY Jane Appling, Rental & Events Coordinator

While not quite as much fun to talk about as fixing the boiler, safety and security are just as important for a comfortable, welcoming church. Especially after the downtown unrest we've seen in the last couple of years, we've become aware that some basic security issues need some attention at United. So earlier this year, staff and Management Team members conducted two security self-assessment exercises, and then applied for federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) funding to help address some of our needs. We were pleased to learn last month that United Churches has been awarded a two-year NSGP grant of \$149,720, to improve

the security of our facility and the people who use it.

Administered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at the federal level and the Department of the Military's Emergency Management Division at the state level, the NSGP program helps non-profits, including houses of worship, to be better prepared for incidents of domestic terrorism. Some of our local concerns are about more routine issues, but our security assessments helped us identify four areas of concern that seemed to fit well within the grant eligibility guidelines. We consulted with vendors to identify and get rough cost estimates for projects to respond to these concerns, and then included these four projects in our grant application:

- **Security Systems and Access Control.** Implement an integrated security system, including expanded security camera coverage, an integrated alarm system, intercom communication from entrances, and keypad access systems at main entrances and some interior doors.
- **Doors.** Replace or refurbish exterior doors, to ensure secure closing and locking on exit and to improve impact- and intrusion-resistance. Repair sanctuary doors to ensure secure locking.
- **Bollards and Barriers.** Install parking bollards with chains at entrances to church parking lots, to better define perimeters and control access. Install concrete planters between main glass entry doors and the street, to disrupt potential vehicle attack.
- **Training and Awareness.** Provide in-person training/consultation with key leaders to assist in developing security procedures, and ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) or

comparable training for ushers and other key people who will train others, lead congregational practice exercises, and provide leadership in actual emergency situations.

Once the grant contract is finalized later this fall, we'll need a small working group to refine the proposed workplan and ensure that funded projects are carried out over the next two years. If you're interested in getting involved, or have questions about these projects, please contact **Jude Van Buren** or **Jane Appling** ([rentals@theunitedchurches.org](mailto:rentals@theunitedchurches.org)).

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## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS MINISTRY

### Coat Drive for Community Youth Services – Fall 2022

BY Judy Mason



Donations of new and clean, gently used, gender and color neutral, warm and waterproof coats in sizes appropriate for teens to young adults can be dropped off in the United Churches office **until October 16**. Community Youth Services provides shelter and counseling to run aways and other homeless youth and their families, mental health crisis support, coordination with schools, foster care at Rosie's Place and even teaches independent living skills to young adults. CYS funding sources do not cover buying warm clothing so public donations are crucial. You can drop off your coats in the church office Mon-Thur or in

the Narthex on Sundays. If you need a pickup, please call **Judy Mason** or the church office. Thank you for your generosity!

### Microshelter Construction

BY Betsy & Jeff Loyer

The United Churches is building Microhouses again... 17 to be exact. These are an upgrade from our previous "Microshelter" builds, which include a real door and window, insulation, drywall, metal roofs, and electricity. They are being built and will be located at the new Quince Street Village (between Quince and Plum Streets, near I-90). Several other Faith Communities are helping build the 17 Microshelters. The City of Olympia is covering the cost of materials. The build began August 31, in mass production style, building five shelters at a time and will continue through October. If you are interested in helping out with the build, both construction and/or painting, please email **Betsy Loyer** or contact the church office. Many thanks to **Jeff Hogan, Chas Dreyfus, Jeff Loyer, Peter Cook, Therese Sprunger**, and **Sylvia Ortiz** from our church who helped with this project.





Above: **Jeff Hogan** and **Jeff Loyer** at the job site.



Upper Right: Microshelters are painted with cheery colors and have lockable doors and electricity.



Lower Right: Microshelters were erected in an assembly line process so they require a large footprint during construction.

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## UPROOTING RACISM COMMITTEE

BY Kathleen Clark, Chair

The Uprooting Racism Team' role is to provide a coordinated approach to eliminate racism across United's programs, communications, processes, and congregational community. Our main focus this year is to bring an intensive anti-racist training to our congregation. We are doing that through the national United Church of Christ's [Sacred Conversations to End Racism](#) curriculum.

This workshop builds a common analysis and shared vocabulary for people of faith to dismantle racism in our hearts, our churches, and the wider world. Through in-depth study into the historical myths of race, participants are called upon to examine all implicit and explicit beliefs about what we think we know, to truly grasp the immoral impact racism has had, and continues to have, on every system in this country. Anti-racist work involves an inward interrogation of biases, prejudices, internalized white supremacy and internalized racism, micro-aggressive insults and assaults, and overt racist behaviors.



The workshop is an invitation to join this sacred journey of bringing restorative racial justice into our lives, our church, and our community. Dr. Velda Love, Minister of Racial Justice, United Church of Christ, National Ministries will lead the Sacred Conversations workshop here at our church on **Oct. 28 and 29**. Register [here](#) or login to Realm and click on the link for Upcoming Registrations.

The October workshop is financially sponsored through United’s Social Justice Endowment Fund. In preparation for the workshop, we have convened a small Sacred Conversations Workgroup. Members include **Paul McCann, Jude Van Buren, Karen Conover, Dave and Jennifer Carmer-Hall, Eleanor van Noppen, Jan Van Pelt, Marcia McLaughlin, Peggy Smith, Kathleen Clark, and Pastor Lara**. They are doing an intensive study of their own ancestry and racial bias through required reading and shared discussion. They are working with Dr. Love to tailor the workshop for our congregation. We hope you will be able to join us!

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## ART COMMITTEE NEWS

BY Jennifer Molfetta, Administrator

Barb Boyd showed her artwork in the Fireside Room from June to September this year. Barb is an artist, musician, social worker, and long-time member of The United Churches. She creates her art from within, using a free form style. Barb was a Grand Prize Winner for the drawing of her “Pentecost Spirit Doves” (*below*) at the Grays Harbor County Fair.

If you are interested in displaying your artwork or serving on the Art Committee, please contact me at [jennifer@theunitedchurches.org](mailto:jennifer@theunitedchurches.org) or 360-943-1210 x100.



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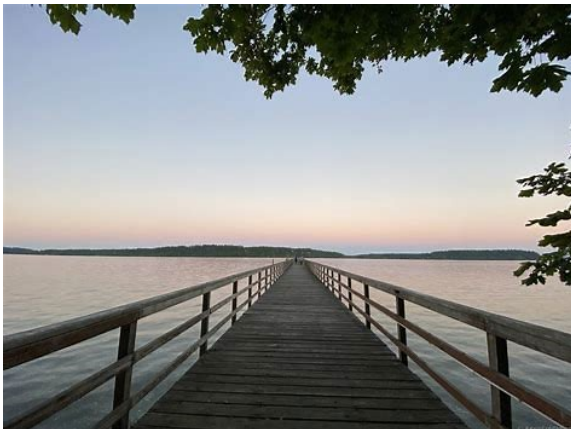
## SOUND VIEW CAMP

BY Pam Anderson, Council Clerk

The Presbytery of Olympia owns and operates Sound View Camp on its 90-acre property at the tip of the Key Peninsula. This beautiful piece of land includes a spectacular nearshore complex that includes barrier beach, lagoon, feeder bluff, saltmarsh, tideland and other habitats. For the past 4 years, the Presbytery has been negotiating with the Nisqually Land Trust to grant a conservation easement that would protect the site from future development, but allow continued use for the outdoor camping, religious, and educational ministries of the Presbytery. The process may be completed by November of this year!



The agreement is supported by the Nisqually Tribe, which also provided seed funding for the project. The Presbytery hopes this venture with the Nisqually Land Trust will open doors to future engagement with the Nisqually Tribe.



The youth group at The United Churches has used Sound View for retreats over the past few years. In addition to its summer residential camping program Sound View offers a beautiful rustic setting for small group retreats and also offers camping opportunities for families or friends who just seek a few days away in a natural setting. Keep in mind that scholarships are available for camping or leadership training at Sound View.

For more information, email Pam Anderson, or visit the website at <https://www.soundviewcamp.com>

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## REOPENING TASK FORCE

BY Therese Sprunger & April Kuhr

The Reopening Task Force met in August to discuss adjusting our protocol according to the infection risk levels posted by the Washington State Department of Health. Members of the task force: **Frank Westrum, Scott Andrews, Peggy Charlesworth, Therese** and **April**, have researched extensively and worked diligently to compile these safety protocols for United. We hope that the risk will remain low so that this Task Force will no longer be needed. The graph below lists the guidelines for church groups moving forward and can be adjusted with new federal, state and local health guidance.



## United Church's Covid Infection Rate Procedure Guidelines

This chart is a United-specific compilation, based on information from the standards set forth by the following benchmark agencies: CDC, Washington State Health Department, CovidActNow, American Choral Directors Association, National Association of Teachers of Singing. As well as other Houses of Worship, Colleges and Universities and singing organizations nationwide.

Stage	Determination	Protocols
<b>Very High</b>	United Churches' Case Numbers are  <b>Very High</b>	<b>Masks:</b> Required in building at all times <b>Distancing:</b> 6' social distancing suggested <b>Singing:</b> Not allowed; no wind instruments
<b>High</b>	Thurston County's CDC Community Level is  <b>High</b>	<b>Masks:</b> Strongly recommended in the building <b>Distancing:</b> 3' suggested – use only red and yellow stickers from sticker system. <b>Singing:</b> Singers must be masked at all times; wind instruments ok if testing is negative within 24 hours.
<b>Medium</b>	Thurston County's CDC Community Level is  <b>Medium</b>	<b>Masks:</b> Recommended in the building <b>Distancing:</b> As comfortable – using red, yellow, green sticker system <b>Singing:</b> Singers must be masked at all times; wind instruments ok if testing is negative within 24 hours.
<b>Low</b>	Thurston County's CDC Community Level is  <b>Low</b>	<b>Masks:</b> Recommended in the building <b>Distancing:</b> As comfortable – using red, yellow, green sticker system <b>Singing:</b> Singers must be masked at all times; wind instruments ok if testing is negative within 24 hours.

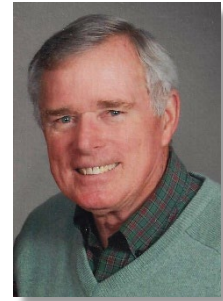
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## ENDOWMENT BOARD UPDATE

BY Jim Watts, Chair

The United Churches has five endowments whose total value as of August 31, 2022 was \$630,600. The value of each endowment was:

United Churches General Endowment	\$386,300
Patsy Humphres Children's Endowment	43,000
Madge Raney Endowment	51,400
Social Justice Endowment	76,400
Creative Spiritual Growth Endowment	73,500
Total	\$630,600



During the first eight months of 2022, the market value of these endowments decreased by nearly \$106,000. Part of this decrease, \$8,500, occurred because the Creative Spiritual Growth Endowment Board withdrew these funds from its endowment and donated \$1,500 to Habitat for Humanity, \$2,000 to Sidewalk, \$1,000 to the Thurston County Food Bank, \$2,000 to Olympia Mutual Aid Partners; and gave \$2,000 to the church to help fund the temporary services of seminarian Nathaniel Humphreys this summer. After adjusting for this withdrawal, the endowments had a net loss in market value of about \$97,600, a decrease of about 13.3 percent during the eight months. The Board is a long-term investor and history shows such a strategy will eventually recoup this loss in market value.

Each year the Joint Board and the Creative Spiritual Growth Endowment Board determine how much can be distributed from each endowment. Any unused spending authority approved by the Boards in previous years is carried forward and available for future distribution. In August, the Joint Board approved the withdrawal of up to \$11,358 from the Social Justice Endowment to fund the church's Uprooting Racism Team's workshop on Sacred Conversations to End Racism to be held in October. After this withdrawal is made, about \$177,400 will be available for future distribution.

United Churches General Endowment	\$98,300
Patsy Humphres Children's Endowment	9,600
Madge Raney Endowment	10,800
Social Justice Endowment	29,000
Creative Spiritual Growth Endowment	29,700
Total	\$177,400

In addition to the endowments discussed above, the Joint Board also manages two other funds. 1. The McNall Scholarship Fund (\$37,700): in March \$1,000 was withdrawn to fund a scholarship; after adjusting for this withdrawal the market value of the scholarship fund decreased about 13.3 percent during the last eight months. 2. The Invested Cash Account (\$191,600) in which we invest cash that is in excess to church's immediate needs. Most of this cash is invested in bonds and short-term fixed income securities which produce interest to support our operating budget. During these past eight

months \$4,321 in interest has been withdrawn and transferred to this year's operating budget; another \$4,000 in interest will be transferred before the end of the year.

You may contribute to any of the endowments and the McNall Scholarship Fund in a variety of ways. You may include a bequest in your will or you may purchase a Gift Annuity from either the UCC Foundation or the Presbyterian Foundation. When you purchase a Gift Annuity, you receive a tax deductible contribution in the year of purchase and a steady stream of income for life; upon death, the residual value of your annuity goes to the endowment or fund you designate. And finally, you may make a contribution at any time. If you have any questions, please contact me.

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## UNITED IN PICTURES



*Upper Left:* **Pastor Lara** and participants at our Queer Brunch in June.

*Upper Right:* One of our outdoor services at Squaxin Park.

*Left:* Bonfire sing-a-long at the Retreat at Pilgrim Firs in August.



# Prayer for Faithful Stewardship

By Therese Fink Meyerhoff

Good and gracious God,

I thank you for the beauty of the Earth and all creation.

Help me to hear always the call to be a good steward of your gifts, the caretaker of all you have entrusted to us on Earth.

Let me always recognize, cherish and enjoy the goodness in all creation.

Teach me reverence for every person and all living things.

O God, help me to use your gifts wisely and share them generously.

Whisper in my heart the reminder that I am but a temporary guardian of your abundance; I am called to pass your gifts on to the next generation.

Let all I do be a reflection of your love and care.

Amen.



**LOVE. HOPE. UNITED.**

**The United Churches of Olympia**

<http://www.theunitedchurches.org>

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**Office Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 9:00 am - 3:00 pm**

**Church Staff**

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**Church Council**

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Joan E. Knapp – Moderator	Pam Anderson – Clerk	
Kathleen Clark – Vice Moderator	Jean Fuller – Treasurer	
Kerby Avedovech	Jinny Beekmann	Dave Carmer-Hall
Jeff Hogan	Jen Laine	Char McMullen
Celia Nightingale	Jude Van Buren	

**Volunteer Ministry Chairs**

Joanne Conner, Chair – Congregational Life  
Betsy Loyer, Co-Chair – Community Connections



All are welcome at the United Churches regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, ability or finances. We hope you will find an opportunity to join us this week! Please email or call the church office for more information.

**Come Worship with us on Sundays at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.**