



UNIVERSITY  
BAPTIST CHURCH

# UBC NEWS

CELEBRATING 175 YEARS  
FEBRUARY 2026

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1219 University Ave SE  
Minneapolis MN 55414

Established 1850 at Owámniyomni/St. Anthony Falls, MN

*From the Pastor*

## Be a Faithful Witness

January has been a volatile month. Three shootings by ICE officers, including two deaths in our streets. Another young person died in custody in Texas after being transported away from home in Minnesota. Nine deaths at the hands of ICE officers nationwide just since the start of January. Living in an occupied city has had deadly consequences. And none of those have been at the hands of peaceful Minnesotans.

It's almost as if we are in a time described in the book of Revelation. The army of the beast starts a war with the followers of the Lamb. The beast has all of the weapons. The beast has the power. The beast controls the money and communication and rejoices at the slaughter of the innocents. The beast even appropriates the language of the Lamb and says that his work is holy. And it appears that the followers of the Lamb don't fight back. But they do hold on to the truth. They sing songs of liberation, sometimes in hiding. They keep the faith even when they are insulted and martyred. By the end of the book, the beast and all who follow



him are defeated, imploding because evil is not sustainable. The followers of the Lamb are finally redeemed. And get this: the followers of the Lamb are called the faithful witnesses, like today's legal observers.

While I don't like the triumphalism nor the bloodshed of the book of Revelation, I do resonate with how the author describes his community and how the faithful witnesses maintain their solidarity and how they demonstrate resilience amidst a world that appears to be crumbling around them. We can take a cue from them.

Another word for "apocalypse" is "revealing." In Minneapolis and across this nation, the scales are coming off our eyes. We are seeing not only the brutality of the current regime, but also the incredible outpouring of love and support for the vulnerable in our city. People have set up makeshift emergency clinics for people who need pepper spray flushed out of their eyes or baby formula sent to a family whose mother has been abducted. People are finding ways to offer

*Continued on page 2*

*Pastor - continued*

food and rides to people afraid to leave their homes. And rather than cowering in fear, neighbors are stepping up and stepping out to protect each other—often at great risk. Our grand building has become a hub of organizing, support, and warmth in a city filled with ICE.

This is revealing the true nature of our great city. It's one in which we cherish each other, no matter what our skin color or native language. We risk our comfort, safety, and even our economic security because we know that another is in more need than us. And all of that looks a bit to me like the Kin-dom of God.

It's not just about us. We have been lifted up in prayer by congregations and individuals from across the nation and world. Not a day goes by that I don't receive some kind of note of companionship and grief and commitment from people who are praying for our city and working

to make their own safer and their government more accountable. This is a time of revealing the true nature of our country—one that cares for each other and is working hard to make a better world. Let's not forget that on January 23rd, in minus-20 degree weather, 100,000 of us marched and sang and witnessed a beautiful city filled with hope and grief. Thousands came to Minnesota, and at least 120 marches happened in cities across the nation in solidarity with our city and state.

So, as we enter February, we do so with renewed commitment, with renewed assurance that we shall overcome, together. May we continue to be the faithful witnesses that God needs in this epic moment.

In love and solidarity,

*Doug Donley*

### **New African Kanga cloths**

A second set of cloths (8 flags, a pulpit cloth, and an altar cloth) will be hanging in the sanctuary for Black History month. The Tanzanian kanga cloths were a gift to Jean Lubke from Elizabeth Moriera, Director of Project Minnesota- León; they came from her sister who had been an ELCA missionary in Tanzania. Kanga cloths contain a Swahili proverb. This set contains the phrase, "Pokea zawadi Mama upate kunienzi" (Receive this gift, mother, so you can honor me.) The altar cloth contains the fabrics from both the first and second sets of cloth.

This month, in celebration of Black History Month, all organ music is by Black composers.

Find interesting facts and resources here about Black History month:

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month>

## February Worship Schedule

Worship Theme:  
"Faithfulness: Then and Now"

### February 1

**Preaching:** Anne Supplee  
**Sermon:** "The Gospel in Gaza"  
**Scripture:** Acts 8:26-40  
**Worship Leader:** Gayla Marty  
**Ushers:** Trish Donley & Terri Wotrich

### February 8

**Preaching:** Doug Donley  
**Sermon:** "The Mystery of God"  
**Scripture:** I Corinthians 2:1-12  
**Worship Leader:** Deidre Druk  
**Ushers:** Trish Donley & Terri Wotrich

### February 15

**Joint Service at UBC with First Congregational Church**  
**Preaching:** Jane McBride  
**Sermon:** "Love Transfigures Us"  
**Scripture:** Matthew 17:1-9  
**Worship Leader:** Doug Donley  
**Ushers:** Chris Follett & Trish Donley

### February 22

**Preaching:** Doug Donley  
**Sermon:** "Restless Wrestling"  
**Scripture:** Genesis 32:22-31  
**Worship Leader:** Violet Butler  
**Ushers:** Gene Velasco & TBD



## FEBRUARY FORUMS

Forums are held 11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m., after coffee time. We do our best to provide a Zoom option for remote participants.

### **February 1—Time for sharing what's on our hearts now**

Stay for the impromptu forum today to share what's on our hearts and minds, reflecting on events of the past week and more, in a time of terror. This will be a forum for sharing rather than discussing. Guest preacher Anne Supplee will convene.

### **February 8—No forum**

Extended coffee hour.

### **February 15—All About First Congregational Church of Minnesota**

On this Sunday of joint services with our long-time friends, it will be their turn for an "all about you." This year FCC marks its 175th anniversary, one year after UBC's, so our ties go way back. Learn about Congregationalists and what makes First Church unique.

### **February 22—Mission Possible: Design Thinking for Social Change (2-hour forum, lunch provided)**

As part of the Rooted Good: Good Futures building-use discernment process, we are using an extended forum time (11:45-1:45) to play a game to introduce concepts of design thinking. We'll take a seemingly impossible mission to tackle and use this game to create a possible solution to address the problem. The Rooted Good team will take the creativity from this session to further their ideas of social enterprise for UBC. Lunch will be provided.

# February Calendar

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
10 a.m. Worship Communion 11:15 a.m. Coffee time 11:45 a.m. Forum/Journeys		11:15 am Meals on Wheels 5:30 p.m. Sacred Harp 7 p.m. Memoirs	11 a.m. Handcraft Group 11:15 am Meals on Wheels 6 p.m. Choir 7:30 p.m. Bells	11:15 am Meals on Wheels 6:30 p.m. Caregiver Support	11:15 am	9 a.m. Bible Study 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Work Day
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
10 a.m. Worship 11:15 a.m. Coffee Time 11:45 a.m. Journeys		5:30 p.m. Sacred Harp 7 p.m. Anti-racism Work	6 p.m. Choir 7:30 p.m. Bells	11 a.m. Every Meal	5:30-8 p.m. Mardi Gras Mini Golf	1 p.m. Book Group
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Lent begins	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
10 a.m. Worship 11:15 a.m. Coffee Time 11:45 a.m. Forum/Journeys 1 p.m. Council 7 p.m. Night Songs	7 p.m. Evening Handcraft Group	5:30 p.m. Sacred Harp 7 p.m. Memoirs	6 p.m. Choir 7:30 p.m. Bells	5-7 p.m. Rooted Good		9 a.m. Bible Study 1 p.m. Card Club
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
10 a.m. Worship 11:15 a.m. Lunch Congreg. Meeting 11:45 a.m. Forum/Journeys 4 p.m. Sacred Harp 7 p.m. Roots Cellar concert		5:30 p.m. Sacred Harp	Newsletter deadline 6 p.m. Choir 7:30 p.m. Bells		11 a.m. Every Meal	10 a.m. Spanish

## Pastor Doug will retire May 31

He made this announcement from the pulpit after the service on January 11

Dear Members and Friends of University Baptist Church:

This past weekend, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the date of your selection of me as your pastor. After much prayerful discernment, I'm writing to let you know of my intention to retire from active ministry, effective May 31, 2026.

As most of you know, my wife Kim retired four years ago. Since that time, I have had a major medical scare that you lovingly saw me through. While I feel relatively fine, it reinforced my belief that my time is precious. I want to travel and have adventures while my energy and health are intact.

Deciding when to leave has been very hard. I love the people of UBC and the ministry that we have shared. There are initiatives that we've completed and some that are just getting underway. I have every confidence that UBC is and will continue to be a creative and courageous community rooted in justice and working for peace, as you have been for over 175 years. I've been honored and humbled to have played a small part in our ongoing story.

I expect the coming months to be a time when we continue to celebrate this wonderful community. The council is working with our denominational leaders to secure interim leadership.

As part of my covenant with you, I will abide by the American Baptist Minister's Council Code of Ethics which states in part: "upon my resignation or retirement, I will discontinue my ministerial leadership roles with my former constituents and will not make ministerial contacts in the field of another ministerial leader without request and/or consent." In practical matters, this means that I will cease to contact people that I know from UBC for up to two years, including social media. I won't be available for weddings, funerals, dedications or baptisms. This is not intended to diminish the deep friendships that we have, but to enable the congregation to fully embrace new leadership. I'll be your biggest cheerleader from afar.

Again, I want to thank you for nurturing me and my family over these 25 years. I am immensely proud of the ministry we have shared. I look forward to continuing to connect with each of you in the coming months.

Blessings and Peace,  
Doug Donley

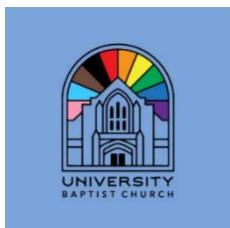


Coffee hour January 25  
(in honor of Doug's 25 years!)

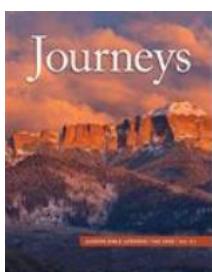
### February 22 Congregational Meeting to Vote on Pastoral Search Committee

The UBC Talent Team is working with the Church Council to identify a search committee to first hire an interim pastor. The committee will then prepare to call a new permanent pastor accessing resources provided by our denomination, American Baptist Churches USA. The entire process could take up to two years.

After we've served lunch and before we start our forum, we will take a few minutes for a congregational meeting to formally approve the slate of individuals recommended by the Talent Team to serve on our next Search Committee.

**What's Going On****Sunday Morning Worship****10 a.m. - Worship in the UBC sanctuary****10 a.m. - Or join via livestream on the [UBC YouTube channel](#)** (search University Baptist Church Minneapolis MN). You can also view any service any time on the UBC YouTube channel.**When the livestream has ended - Joys & Concerns (on Zoom)****ZOOM INFO:** Meeting ID 839 4725 7444 passcode 257750

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83947257444?pwd=cFZCWEdqUkR0RDgwT0JwT3hrQ3FpUT09>

**11:15 a.m. Coffee time in the lounge followed by forum (use Zoom info above)****11:45 a.m. Journeys Bible Study in the Char Follett Library.** Our meeting is an opportunity to read

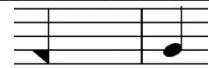
Scripture together, to learn something new, to ask questions, and to talk about your faith. No preparation is required. Please feel free to come once or regularly. See Nancy Myers or Diane Ehr for more information.

February 1 - GRACE GIFTS: 1 Corinthians 15:1-15

February 8 - TEACHABILITY: Psalm 1

February 15 - FORGIVENESS: Genesis 45:3-11, 15

February 22 - TRANFIGURATION: Luke 9:28-36

**Meals on Wheels–February 3-6 (Tuesday-Friday first full week of the month)** Meals are picked up around 11:15 a.m. and the route in SE Minneapolis usually takes less than two hours. We're always looking for substitute drivers. If you have questions, please contact Marie LaFrance at [marielafrance46@gmail.com](mailto:marielafrance46@gmail.com).**Sacred Harp Singing–Tuesdays, 5:30-7:30 p.m. and Sundays (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>), 4-6 p.m.** at UBC in Room 303. No experience or talent necessary!

fa sol

**Memoir Writing Group–February 3 & 17 (every other Tuesday), 7 p.m.** Prompts include *Firsts*, and *Who is your ideal reader (as opposed to your inner critic)?* or whatever you feel called to write about. If you have questions, please contact Trish Donley at 612-386-2856 or [patricia.donley63@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.donley63@gmail.com).**ZOOM INFO:** Meeting ID: 517 697 6753 Passcode: 602794

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5176976753?pwd=NG15ZINlbDcwUEIzTWFmLzRyZm5OQT09>

**UBC-FCC Daytime Handcraft Group–February 4 (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday), 11 a.m.** at Marilyn Burns's home. If you are interested and want to be on a distribution list, please let Marilyn Burns (from FCC) know at [mbsnoobear@mac.com](mailto:mbsnoobear@mac.com).**Bells and Choir Rehearsal–Wednesday evenings** in the church sanctuary or lounge. Please see the calendar on page 3 for the current rehearsal schedule.

**More of What's Going On**



**Caregivers Support Group—February 5 (1<sup>st</sup> Thursday), 6:30 p.m.** UBCers who care for a parent, family member, or friend meet for support. If you have questions, please contact Chris Follett at [chrisf2828@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisf2828@yahoo.com)

**ZOOM INFO:** Meeting ID 829 0006 6861 Passcode 942930

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82900066861?pwd=RUQ1eGhYN1RzWTJCR0VTNG1JNFVsUT09>

**Bible Study—February 7 & 21 (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday), 9 a.m.** We will continue to discuss Luke 16-17. New and occasional members are always welcome. No special background, skill, or preparation is required. If you have questions, please contact Diane Ehr at [dianeehr82@gmail.com](mailto:dianeehr82@gmail.com).



**ZOOM INFO:** Meeting ID: 517 697 6753 Passcode: 602794

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5176976753?pwd=NG15ZINlbDcwUElzTWFmLzRyZm5OQT09>



**Clean-up Day at UBC—Saturday, February 7, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.** Come prepared to clean, organize, patch, do minor repairs or paint a few rooms that will be rented out in the near future. Bring work gloves, wear ratty old clothes and comfy shoes. It may get dusty in some areas as we prepare to paint, bring a mask if you like. Please let us know if you plan to attend so we have adequate childcare and food. If you plan to attend or if you have questions, please contact Robbie Steele at [rstelee651@comcast.net](mailto:rstelee651@comcast.net) or 612-877-2257.

**UBC Anti-Racism Work—Tuesday, February 10, 7 p.m.** Join us as we plan this year's activities and priorities. All are welcome!



**ZOOM INFO:** Meeting ID: 517 697 6753 Passcode: 602794

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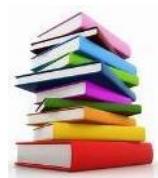
**Every Meal—Thursday, February 12 AND Friday, February 27, (usually the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday), 11:15 a.m.-1 p.m.** at Marcy Arts Elementary School in SE Minneapolis. Volunteers are needed to deliver meal bags to student backpacks. If you are interested, please contact Chris Follett at [chrisf2828@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisf2828@yahoo.com)

**Annual Mardi Gras Mini Golf (and tacos and donuts and music)—Friday, February 13, 5:30-8 p.m.** at First Congregational Church, 500 SE 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.

We will play our 9-hole mini golf course all around the church and eat tacos and freshly-made donuts. The Roasters (with Tim Gustafson of ULCH) will play traditional New Orleans jazz, Cajun rhythms, and original songs for your dancing and listening pleasure.



Volunteers needed! We need folks to help with all kinds of things—from flyering the neighborhood and setting up to greeting guests and serving food. [Sign up here](#)



**Grace in Contemporary Literature by Women Book Group—February 14 (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday), 1 p.m.** The book this month is *The Love of My Life* by Rosie Walsh. If you have questions, please contact Chris Follett at [chrisf2828@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisf2828@yahoo.com).

**ZOOM INFO:** Meeting ID: 517 697 6753 Passcode: 602794

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5176976753?pwd=NG15ZINlbDcwUElzTWFmLzRyZm5OQT09>

**More of What's Going On**

**Night Songs—Sunday, February 15, 7 p.m.** at University Lutheran Church of Hope, 601 13th Avenue SE. Come to an evening of music and poetry featuring the choirs of University Lutheran Church of Hope, First Congregational, UBC, and Vocal U. The night sky will be projected onto the sanctuary rafters. Sit in the pews or bring pillows/blankets and lie on the floor to take in the view. This family-friendly event is a beautiful way to embrace winter. All are welcome. *The event is free but RSVP is required at <https://Nightsongs2026.eventbrite.com>* A free-will collection will be taken at the event in support of the Nutritious U Food Pantry and music programming at ULCH. Parking will be tight—carpool, if you are able. If the event sells out, tickets not claimed by 6:45 p.m. may be offered to a day-of “rush” line.

**UBC-FCC Evening Handcraft Group (formerly Knitting Group)—February 16 (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday), 7 p.m.** at Chris Follett's home. Bring your embroidery, knitting, crocheting, or whatever project! If you have questions, please contact Chris Follett at [chrisf2828@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisf2828@yahoo.com)



**Card Club—Saturday, February 21, 1 p.m.** at Jean Lubke's home. This group meets monthly to learn card-making techniques, share ideas, and make beautiful greeting cards. Due to the limited space and the need to prepare materials, registration is needed for each month's session. If you are interested, please contact Jean at [jeanlubke01@gmail.com](mailto:jeanlubke01@gmail.com) or 651-295-7525.

**Roots Cellar—Sunday, February 22, 7 p.m.** RJ Cowdery (Ohio), Katie Dahl (Wisconsin), and Hope Dunbar (New Jersey) may be from three different states, but they all share a knack for razor-sharp lyrics, wicked humor, compelling vocals, and unflinching truth-telling. They each tour the country individually, but are teaming up for this powerhouse triple bill. Tickets are \$20, available at <https://events.humanitix.com/cowderydahldunbar>



**Spanish Conversation Group—February 28 (4<sup>th</sup> Saturday), 10 a.m.** at HarMar Barnes & Noble. Join folks from UBC and First Congregational Church to practice your Spanish. If you have questions, please contact Deidre Druk at [deidredruk@aol.com](mailto:deidredruk@aol.com).

**Mark Your Calendar**

**March 29** – Palm Sunday Brunch  
**April 5** – Easter  
**May 31** – Doug's last day  
**June 7** – Annual Meeting

**UPCOMING ROOTS CELLAR CONCERTS**

**Saturday, March 14, 7 p.m.**  
Root River Jam  
  
**Saturday, April 11, 7 p.m.**  
Crys Matthews

## Fighting Injustice

Once again, Minnesota has been in the international spotlight as federal agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) have flooded the metro area and other cities across the state, picking up people of color without warrants and in violation of Constitutional rights and due process, transporting and flying them to detention facilities in Texas and likely other locations. Three citizens peacefully resisting the occupation have been shot, two of them in Minneapolis killed this month—Renee Good on January 7 and Alex Petti on January 24. Vigils and rallies have ensued, including an estimated 100, 000 who marched in Minneapolis on January 23 for a national Day of Truth and Freedom. Dozens of clergy flew in from all directions to take part in civil disobedience, including arrests at the Whipple Building near MSP. UBC continues to be a beehive of student groups' activities. Pastor Doug and many of our members are engaged.

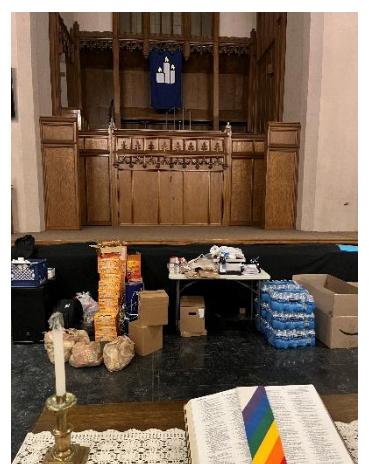


Photo #1: Jim Ketcham and Doug at the airport January 23 protesting ICE with other clergy. #2: Sign making at UBC. #3: Supplies collected for mutual aid. *Photos by Doug Donley*



Many UBCers were at the protest in downtown Minneapolis, including Robbie and Betsy.  
*Photo of Robbie by Betsy*

### "The White Witch of Narnia\*"

The great evil is  
"deathly white, white as salt."  
"proud, and cold, and stern."  
This illegitimate tyrant terrorizes  
Those in new worlds after destroying their own.

But goodness is on the move, with bells and whistles.  
"This is no thaw...This is spring."  
Warming hearts lead to fires of justice.  
We do not win without battle - each using their own tools.  
We will see ice melt away.

\*This is not a poem about Narnia

—Laura Justin, 4 January 2026, Minneapolis, MN

January 25, 2026

Hello! Our church, First Baptist Church in Columbia, MO, is part of the THRIVE cohort. We are sad and angry at the abuse of Minnesota residents by agents of the federal government.

Several of us from our church's Racial Justice & Inclusion Team (Julie Walker, Mychel Varner, and I) met Pastor Donley and Denise Roy at the THRIVE cohort meeting in Washington, DC, a year or so ago. Today we were texting with our senior pastor, Rev. Kristin McAtee, and discussed the hundreds of clergy gathering in the Cities. That gave us an idea—we'd like to pray as a church for your congregation. Would that be ok? We have no doubt that many of you are out in the streets, delivering food, safeguarding schools, providing solace and advocacy.

We already pray generally for safety, justice, and reunited families, but are there specific things we can pray for you? Partnering with your church will help us communicate to people here what is really happening. At a vigil last night at Unity Unitarian Church in St. Paul (I participated online), one of the pastors called for #EyesNotLies. The specifics of your congregation's experience will help us be witness to truth.

I ache for all of you. My husband's a Minnesotan, and we went back for 4 years to care for his dad. My brother-in-law and his wife live in St. Paul and he's a Big Brother to a young man from Africa. I have friends all over the metro. My sister-in-law just retired from the City of Minneapolis. It's so hard for me not to be there!

Thank you for all you are doing as individuals and as a congregation.

Joining our hope with yours,

Lynne Lampe

## Notes of solidarity

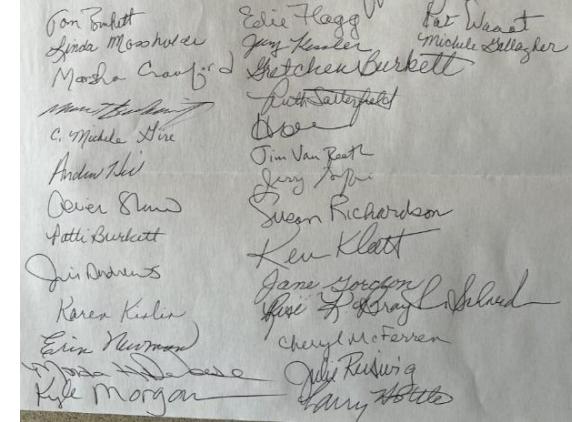


the United Church of Granville

Dear brothers and sisters in Minneapolis.

The Renée Nicole Good shooting is riding heavy on our hearts from this distance. It must be so much harder for you. These are days in which the arc of the moral universe doesn't seem to bend toward justice, but away from it. Our spirits are with your churches, the good people of Minnesota, and especially your neighbors of color who are being persecuted. Our prayers go out to the families of those who have died and to those who have killed that their hearts might be brought into the light. We continue to work with you in service of the coming kingdom of God.

With the love and hope of Jesus,  
your friends at the United Church of Granville



Dear Doug,

January 23, 2026

I am the pastor of First Baptist Church, Pottstown, Pa, a sister AWAB church. Our congregation has been watching the events in Minneapolis closely with broken hearts, care and concern for you and your congregation.

I write to tell you that we have sent to your congregation an oil lamp from The Wolfard Glassblowing Company; we have one in our worship space that we light each time we gather to worship. It reminds us of the Light of God's presence in our midst and our call to be light to the world.

We are sending you this same candle as a light of hope in these dark times, and as a reminder that your light as a congregation is seen and felt. It also comes with the prayer that God's Light will continue to fill you all with hopeful power, compassionate presence and God's peace. We pledge to continue to lift University Baptist in our prayers along with the people of Minneapolis in these important days. May your witness to the Light among us continue to burn bright with God's justice and love.

On behalf of First Baptist,

*Marcia Bailey, Pastor  
Laura Alden, Moderator*

**Joint service at First Church January 18**

First Congregational Church hosted UBC on January 18. (We, in turn, will host them February 15). The bell choir performed several pieces, one with a moving solo by Elwyn Fraser.

After the service a group from both churches protested on the 35W bridge. (Top two photos).

After reconvening in the sanctuary, Doug and Jean hosted an "All About UBC" in which Doug explained the Four Fragile Freedoms of Baptist tradition and both Jean and Doug gave a brief history of our church. (Photo bottom right.)

(The following is adapted from Walter B. Shurden, *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms*

**Bible Freedom**

The Bible is foundational to us as individuals and as a congregation. Every Christian has the freedom and right to interpret and apply Scripture under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The wisdom and counsel of the larger congregation should nurture individual believers as they seek to interpret and apply Scripture.

**Soul Freedom**

We are each accountable to God individually without the imposition of creed or the control of clergy or government. This is sometimes described as the "priesthood of all believers."

**Church Freedom**

Baptist churches are free to determine their membership, leadership, doctrine, and practice. This is sometimes known as "autonomy of the local church."

**Religious Freedom**

Everyone should be able to worship (or not) as they feel led without unnecessary interference by the government. The separation of church and state affords an important constitutional protection of religious freedom for all.

## **Stories from Our History**

### **Working with Refugees**

by Mindy Lee

One of the greatest gifts that I have received as a member of UBC has been to work with refugee resettlement. UBC has a history of being involved with refugees in Minnesota. I remember hearing of Faye Kommedahl helping Hmong women learn English, and Don and Char Follett helping settle a Ukrainian refugee family.

Sometime in the spring of 2002, Joel Luedtke from Refugee Services at the Minnesota Council of Churches talked to us about Karen refugees from Myanmar/Burma who were coming to Minnesota to be resettled. They were Baptists, and Refugee Services was looking for Baptist congregations to sponsor refugee families. I remember feeling at the time like that was way more than our church could take on, but I also remember a meeting where Vicki Wilson spoke forcefully and eloquently about why we should do this, and so I got on board. Soon we found out that a mother and 6(!) school-aged boys would be coming, and we started to figure out how we would support them. Because I had been so involved in my kid's school, I felt like helping the kids get enrolled in school would be a good place for me to help.

There were a few of us that helped bring the family to the enrollment center in St. Paul. This was very early in the resettlement of Karen people in Minnesota, so there were very few translators. They needed to be enrolled in elementary, middle, and high schools, and this was very close to the start of the school year. I remember being in awe of the whole process - the boys were tested for their English proficiency, which was almost nonexistent, and the staff at the enrollment center would try to get health histories for each of the boys with minimal translation help. Sometimes there would be someone who spoke Thai, and they would have some ability to communicate to the boys' mother,

since they had been in a Thai refugee camp. The whole time, I thought about how incredibly overwhelmed I would be to be in the same position, and how much trust was necessary to hand over important documents to a stranger and have faith that the stranger is acting in your best interest.

I volunteered at the elementary school that three of the boys attended in St. Paul, thinking that it would help their transition to see a familiar face occasionally. There were some early challenges - the second grader was suspended for a day for hitting another student, and his mom and I had a tearful conference with the principal. However, watching these boys and their mom adapt to such a drastic change was nothing short of amazing. I took them to their first conferences, and in the car the boys were saying what must have been from their alphabet lessons at school, "I like apples," "I like iguana," and laughing. Then one of the boys said, "I like beautiful," and in the moment it seemed so poignant and eloquent.

Deidre was in contact with their mom, Tin Aye, for quite a while, and occasionally they would visit our church. I helped a couple of other Karen families get settled in St. Paul, along with so many from church who lovingly furnished apartments, brought food, and drove people to appointments. I was on an advisory committee for Refugee Services for a few years and was impressed to see how quickly we went in the Twin Cities from having very few translators and services for the Karen, to see them becoming more established. I recently saw an article in the New York Times about the Hmong in Minnesota, and there was a quote, "The Hmong didn't choose Minnesota; Minnesota chose the Hmong." Being able to have even a small part in that ministry of welcome and hospitality has been an incredible gift.

## How to help refugees right now

A little background: The Trump administration has initiated Operation PARRIS in Minnesota as a test case. This impacts refugees who have arrived in the U.S. but do not yet have green cards, meaning they have likely arrived in the period between the election and the inauguration. This affects 5,600 refugees in Minnesota. These people have been fully vetted and waited years to come here. Operation PARRIS is calling for them to be vetted again, and now these people, who are here legally, are being targeted by ICE.

Along with aid of food and rent support, a big need right now is to help people fill out legal paperwork (power of attorney, temporary guardianship for children, etc.) in the event that they are detained. It is especially helpful, but not necessary, to be a notary public. Alight will train and pair you with a translator if necessary. If you are interested in helping, or know someone who is, please use this link. [Volunteer with Alight](#)

Feel free to contact me or Alight if you have questions.  
<https://www.wearealight.org/>

Mindy Lee  
mjcl@comcast.net

## Community and ICE Out Resources

If you are looking for ways to support the Minneapolis community during this time of upheaval, there are many groups supplying food, rental assistance, protest support, and more. Here are some you might want to consider:

- [Stand with Minnesota](https://www.standwithminnesota.com/) (<https://www.standwithminnesota.com/>) - a great hub for ways to volunteer, donate, and connect.
- [Every Meal](http://everymeal.org), ([everymeal.org](http://everymeal.org)) a group we have supported for years, is now offering free food to any family at the schools they service, not just the families who have signed up for the extra weekend food deliveries.
- [CLUES](http://clues.org) ([clues.org](http://clues.org)) which has many programs that support immigrants

## UBC's 175th anniversary activities continue

Our congregation celebrated 175 years in 2025 with our Founding Day service and ice cream social on July 13 and a block party on October 12. We enjoyed an illustrated presentation on the history of our buildings and locations by Professor Kristin Anderson in September. We had some amazing timeline panels installed in the hallway. We were blessed by the presence of old friends for our All Saints service on November 2. Later in November, we got a guided tour of our current building with architectural historians Lauren Anderson and Shannon Smith, who are working on our application to the National Registry of Historic Places. Just before Thanksgiving, a group of UBCers joined with other congregations for a wopila dinner at All Nations Indian Church, honoring our ties past, present, and—we pray—into the future.

Our anniversary year is not over! As we enter 2026, we continue to learn. Chris Follett is the lead on two publication projects. One is a historical account focusing on our last 50 years, a sequel to the histories written in 1950 and 1975. The second is a collection of memoir essays about UBC, written by a bunch of current and former members. We aim to complete both these projects in 2026. There is still time to contribute to the memoir collection! Contact Chris if you have a manuscript or an idea.

When our publications are done, we will move into the work of organizing our archives still at UBC and sending boxes to the Minnesota History Center to be catalogued and join our 19 boxes already in residence there.

The year 1851 was a watershed, the year of a fateful, flawed treaty with the Indigenous people of this land that led directly to what is called the Dakota War, fought concurrently with the U.S. Civil War. We are still living with the long tail of those painful events. This year, as our friends at First Congregational Church of Minnesota observe their own 175th anniversary, we will learn more about our history, too. FCC and UBC have been kindred spirits for a very long time and are still engaged in social justice for our times, a hallmark since our origins.

*Gayla Marty, chair  
175th Anniversary Committee*

## Welcome New Members Elwyn and Lynnette Fraser!



Elwyn and Lynnette Fraser, long-time soloists in the UBC Chorale, made their membership official on January 4. They both submitted declarations of faith, and UBC president Jean Lubke introduced them during the service. Elwyn and Lynnette are professional musicians with day jobs besides. They have thrilled us with their beautiful music in countless services and other concerts and twice enacted the holy family on Christmas Eve with their son Elyas. Elwyn was the first volunteer for the 175th Anniversary and co-chaired the block party in October. We are so blessed to formally welcome the Frasers to our UBC family!

*Photo by Laura Justin*

## Lent 2026 - Toward a Progressive Christianity

Lent begins on February 18. Each Sunday, starting on February 22, we will look at a different aspect of how we might live into a life-giving theology that can give us hope.

### LENT I

**February 22** "Restless Wrestling" Genesis 32:22-31

The Bible is a living conversation, not a static rulebook. What leads people into rigid religion? Is it that we were taught that the Bible fell from the sky, polished and perfect? We can wrestle with the scripture and trust that God can handle our questions far better than our silence.

### LENT II

**March 1** "Love That Won't Let Go" Luke 15:11-24

God is love, not a distant evaluator. Not a soft, sentimental love, but a fierce, feisty, healing, justice-seeking love. This kind of love leans in when the world falls apart.

### LENT III

**March 8** "Love on the Margins" Luke 10:27-35

Those pushed to the margins teach us who God is. Justice is the lens through which we understand our faith. If those harmed by religion aren't thriving, then our faith isn't thriving. Marginalized folks are not to be simply tolerated, they are theologians of their own experience. Their wisdom reshapes our understanding of God.

### LENT IV

**March 15** "Is My God Better than Your God?" Psalm 95

Other religions reflect God and humanity's search for meaning. God is bigger than our certainty. Curiosity of another tradition is a sign that faith is alive.

### LENT V

**March 22** "First or Last Place?" Matthew 19:16-30

Salvation is about becoming whole, not escaping this earth or even death. Salvation becomes practiced in community rather than earned by belief. It shows up in tending our wounds, dismantling harmful systems, and learning to live as if the world actually matters to God.

### Palm Sunday

**March 29** "An Insurrection of the Heart" Matthew 21:1-11

Jesus is love in human form. He lived like us, hurt like us, pushed us to be better. He confronted systems others feared. He told the truth when it cost him.

### Easter

**April 5** "A Revolutionary Hope" Matthew 28:1-10

### Lenten group activities at First Congregational Church

#### Drumming Circle.

Jean Chagnon will lead a drumming circle—Sundays, February 22, March 8, and March 22, 3-4:30 p.m. No drumming experience is necessary.

#### On Tyranny Book Discussion

**Group.** Sarah Almén will facilitate a discussion on Zoom about Timothy Snyder's *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. Mondays, February 23 through March 23 (except March 9), 6:30 p.m.

**Silent Prayer Group.** Mary Jean Korsmo and Don Brasted-Maki will lead (mostly) silent prayer in the sanctuary on Tuesdays, February 24 to March 31, 7 p.m.

#### Bad Faith Documentary

**Discussion Group.** A small group will gather to watch the film *Bad Faith* in person and on Zoom, Thursdays in March, 6 p.m. Pastor Jane and Paul Fate will lead a discussion.

**Sign up [here](#)**

## Palmer Grant Update

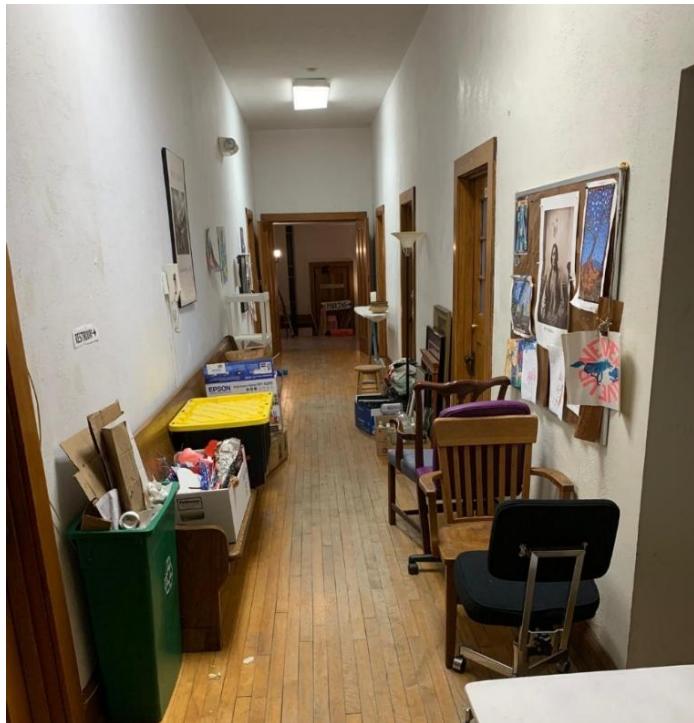
UBC received a \$40K Palmer Grant from the American Baptist Foundation to help us continue to discern the best future use of our beautiful, old building.

Part of the grant requirements were that we participate in a Rooted Good: Good Futures Accelerator discernment process. The team (Doug Donley, Laura Justin, Carrie Lubke, Jean Lubke, Claire Mavity, and Zena Hamilton) meet monthly for two-hour in-person sessions facilitated by a team member. The purpose is to determine if there is a social enterprise that would combine the values and interests of the congregation with the needs of the community and the capabilities of our property.

Our Feb. 22 extended forum will include lunch provided by the grant and a systems-thinking game, which will inform the Rooted Good team's next steps.

The grant also paid for work days to help clean up, spruce up, and repair the church to help get it ready for the maximum number of renters. On January 10, we had 18 folks help clean out, sort, and purge many spaces of the church - just in time to rent out the remaining spaces!

We will have another work day on Saturday, February 7, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Again, lunch and snacks will be provided by the grant. This month we will tackle other repair, prepping, cleaning areas. **If you are able to join us, please let Robbie Steele or Jean Lubke know, so we have sufficient food.** See also page 7 for more info.



We had a very successful clean-up day on January 10! We were able to drop off the first 10 (of 80!) cans of old paint at the hazardous waste site, recycle a large box of old electronics, fill the church dumpster with trash and non-salvageable junk, and rearrange the now-empty spaces, adding more storage and allowing us to rent out some of the space that had been cluttered. A big thank you to Robbie, Jean and the great group of volunteers!

*Photo by Maura Dunst*

## Hymnal Project Update

Thanks to all your help evaluating hymns for the past five months! Between Sunday services, hymn sing forums, a Saturday workshop, and small groups of reviewers, we have evaluated 285 of the 308 possible hymns (122 in the blue hymnal and 186 from inserts we've used in the past few years and other hymns recommended)!! Of the 285, we've eliminated 78 hymns - mostly because they were already in the black hymnal, but a few that almost none of us liked (mostly random chant pieces).

The results of the congregational evaluations were interesting - and typical of a good Baptist church: there were only 7 hymns where everyone rated both lyrics and music a 4 or 5; and 64 hymns where we had folks rating 1 or 2 and others rating 5. If the average was more than 3, the hymn was included.

Of the remaining 207 hymns, about 60% needed some word editing. The word edits mostly fell into 5 categories: 1 - removing references to atonement theology (ex. died for our sins); 2 - removing binary language (ex. brothers/sisters, mother/father), except maintaining the male pronouns when referring to Jesus in human form; 3 - removing monarchical and colonial language (ex. Lord, king, throne, Master); 4 - removing most "thee, thy, thine" and replacing with "you, your, yours" or other words when the poetry allowed; and 5 - removing references to dark as evil and light as good.

We have invited our UBC composers to create hymns for our new hymnal instead of putting out a wider call.

We are to the stage when we are working on obtaining copyright permission, digitizing the hymns, and categorizing and obtaining data (scriptural references, composer, lyricist, etc.) to be ready to create multiple indices. We have selected a format, font, and printer. We will use the same black-owned union-shop printer that Maura has used for our signs. And the Calvin grant budget is big enough so the hymnals will have hard covers!

We are hoping to have the copy to the printer by May to have our new hymnals to start our next program year in September.

- Jean Lubke

## UBC Social Media: A Lot to Like!



Are you following UBC on Facebook and Instagram? If not, look us up and hit that follow button! And while you're at it, would you please "like" the posts you see? In addition, give a thumbs up to our videos on YouTube and subscribe to the [UBC channel](#).

The algorithm behind what social media shows you operates with a bit of a snowball effect: the more likes a post gets, the more feeds it will show up in. Next time you see a post from UBC, give it a like so that more people can see the great work we do here!

## Financial Secretary's Report

Our pledge income to date is very healthy due to many folks paying their entire pledge at the end of the calendar year. Patrick has worked his magic to get our rentals up to nearly 100%. Our miscellaneous income budget item includes 15K in new funding/fundraising, of which more than \$4800 came from the recent Give to the Max/175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary push.

In addition to the regular distribution, the Foundation contribution includes funds to cover the facilities supervisor and marketing positions.

<b>Operating Income 2025-26</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Expected</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Over (short)</b>
Pledge Income	47	\$207,933	\$121,294	\$148,700	\$27,405
Rental Income	18	\$80,000	\$46,667	\$44,930	(\$1,736)
Misc income*	7	\$31,500	\$18,375	\$13,365	(\$5,010)
Subtotal		<b>\$319,433</b>	\$186,336	\$206,995	\$20,659
Foundation Contribution	27	\$118,811		-	
Total Operating Income	100	<b>\$438,244</b>			

We received \$1,013 so far for the January/February special offering for American Baptist Churches USA

- Chris Follett, Financial Secretary

### SPECIAL OFFERING FOR January/February American Baptist Churches USA

Our outreach mission focus for January and February is for ministries within the ABCUSA that are not already receiving funds through the UBC budget. This includes Retired Ministers and Missionaries Fund and One Great Hour of Sharing. Thank you for your help in supporting these important national ministries.

You can drop your designated offering in the offering plate, send a check to the church, designate a gift directly from your bank, or use our online portal for giving on the UBC website, [www.UBCmn.org](http://www.UBCmn.org).

Thank you for your ongoing outreach support!!

*Kim Donley and Karole Graham,  
Outreach Team Co-Coordinators*

### 2025-26 UBC Wish List

These are items that don't fit in the budget but would be really nice to have. Please contact Financial Secretary Chris Follett if you would like to donate toward these items.

1. A big welcoming banner on the northwest side of the building visible to people driving or walking on University Avenue (\$300)
2. Upgrade or replacement of our playground equipment
3. New bell-table covers (\$3,000)
4. Wiring and electric stoves for apartment and lounge kitchen (\$6,000)
5. New furniture (couch, chairs, etc.) for nursery (\$3,000)
6. Additional benches under the crab apple tree (\$2,500)



## February Birthdays

- 1** Ben Justin
- 2** Anielka Picado Montiel
- 4** Belén Diaz
- 5** Gayla Marty
- 8** Chris Follett, Harriet Johnson (#95)
- 12** Jonathan Lubke, Susie Sanchez
- 18** Trish Donley
- 19** Drew Cramer
- 20** Michael Lubke
- 24** Anne Johnson
- 25** Kathleen Tice
- 26** Karole Graham



You know that pile of (working) pens you have in your junk drawer or desk? We could use any you don't want! Drop them off on the narthex table and the ushers will put them in the pew racks.



Scan this QR code to be directed to our web page where there are a variety of causes to donate to.

## A note from former member Joyce DeBoe

Dec. 16, 2025  
Merry Christmas from the Bluegrass State. Each week Doug's email newsletter arrives with UBC going on: the 150th anniversary celebrations, familiar names, new names, visiting plans, new board and they live. All to move UBC ministries into the future. How exciting!

My Louisville church stands near Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where current leaders like ~~discreet~~ <sup>attendances</sup> at our church and CBF progressive church. As with UBC our building is quite large, yet provides opportunities for ministry thru AAA meetings, City Wide Book Club, community concerts, pickle ball and basketball.

Back in the day Nedra Bishop worshipped here and was a staff member. Ask Diane about Darrell Adams, one of our members.

Peace and Love to all!

Fondly, Joyce DeBoe  
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