

Northern Voice Newsletter

2026 Summer Edition - May, June, July



A Journey of Calling: Stepping into Commissioned Ministry

Dear Hubbard UMC Family,

As the snow has now melted, the lakes are shimmering, and the woods begin to awaken, we are once again reminded of the beauty of transformation. Spring is a season of new life, and this year, it feels particularly fitting for me to share my own personal journey of transformation—the journey toward becoming a Commissioned Elder in the United Methodist Church.

What is a Commissioned Elder?

In the United Methodist Church, becoming an elder is a two-step process. The first step is **Commissioning** (Provisional Membership), and the second is **Ordination** (Full Membership).

Commissioning marks the point where the Church affirms a candidate's call, and the Bishop sets them apart for a life of ministry. Commissioned Elders are "provisional" members of the Annual Conference, serving while under mentorship and continuing their residency and theological education. Oftentimes, a person is still going through seminary training during this period of time. In my case, I have already completed my Master of Divinity (MDiv). I do, however, still attend various continuing education courses such as Clergy Leadership Academy, Clergy Wellbeing courses, and various boundaries and ethics trainings, et. al...

The Journey Steps

The journey to this point is long and intentional, focusing on shaping a pastor to serve the connectional church. In my case, I have been on this journey for approximately 14 years. I began my journey later in life, (in my 40's) as a Licensed Local Pastor, not intending to go through the ordination process. But God had a different idea in mind for me...

The process starts out the same, but the education requirements are much different, and an LLP's authority is limited and must be renewed annually. By contrast, Elders hold permanent ministerial standing and possess broader authority beyond their specific appointment. The process to becoming a **Commissioned Elder** and subsequent **Elder** is as such:

- **Discerning the Call:** It begins with a deep, internal calling, confirmed by the local church (that's you!) and the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.
- **Background and Training:** Candidates complete psychological evaluations, background checks, and specialized trainings in anti-racism and sexual ethics.
- **Education:** A Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree - or equivalent - from a seminary is required, including specialized studies in Methodist doctrine, history, and polity.
- **The Board of Ordained Ministry:** After a rigorous review of their written theological work, interviews, and sermon samples, candidates are recommended for commissioning.

Celebrating the Call

Commissioned Elders agree to serve "without reserve," taking authority to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and order the life of the Church. They are, quite literally, missionaries to their assigned communities.

Invitation

I invite you to join my family and I on Wednesday, June 17th, 2026, at 7:00pm at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud, MN., as I am Commissioned as a Provisional Elder during the ***Celebration of Life as Clergy*** Worship Service. The service will also be live-streamed and recorded for those of you who are unable to attend or would like to view it at a later date. (We will share the link when it becomes available)

Friends, as we look towards summer, I invite you to pray with me and for me as well as all those pursuing this sacred path. Your support, prayers, and partnership in ministry are what has made this journey possible so far. I look forward to sharing this journey with you, as well as the final step of Ordination in the near future.

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future." — Jeremiah 29:11*

Pastor Lauren



2026 Love Offering

Each year, churches in the Minnesota Annual Conference take a Love Offering for missions. The offering is brought to Annual Conference.

The theme of the 2026 Annual Conference session is "Created to Serve Joyfully."

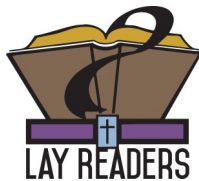
Our Love Offering is not simply charity, but a shared ministry, a way of joining God's work in the world. Bishop Lanette Plambeck shares, "This offering is more than a tradition. It is a tangible expression of our connectional life and our shared commitment to Christ's mission. When we give, we participate in ministry that reaches far beyond what any one congregation could do alone."

The funds from this year's offering will go to

- Midwest Mission
- Love Boldly Mental Health Ministries Grants
- The Endowment for Ministerial Education
- The Minnesota Conference's Emergency Response Fund
- Volunteers in Mission Scholarships.

Our Love Offering will be traveling, along with our delegates, Deb Haagenson, Marion Hansen, and Pastor Lauren, to Annual Conference on June 16-18 to be included in a special celebration of mission giving.

To support the Love Offering, write your check to Hubbard UMC and designate Love Offering in the memo.



Have a "little" time that you would like to volunteer?
How about reading scripture and leading prayer
for a Sunday service?

Call or text Diane - 218-255-5557



Anyone is welcome to join us,
no experience needed!

Wednesday rehearsals at 7 pm:

May 13;
June 3 and 17;
July 1, 15, and 29

Sundays we sing

with rehearsal at 8 am:
May 3 and 17;
June 7 and 21;
July 5 and 19

As I sit here composing this article, it's going to reach a high of 80 degrees today! How appropriate for our spring/summer edition of the newsletter! Plus, we anxiously await the return of our snowbirds. We certainly hope that those returning will be joining us in choir - we have missed you!

I hope that everyone enjoyed our Hymn-sing Sunday on April 12. We will try to a couple of these each year to remind us of our church's deep roots in music and those amazing 4-part harmonies!

The choir, in my humble opinion, has been singing beautifully on Sunday mornings, filling the church with a message in song! We sing on the first and third Sundays of each month, with our rehearsal the Wednesday night prior to the Sunday we sing, at 7pm.

On a side note (pun intended), please mark your calendar for June 18, at 12:15pm. Bekah Sundsrud and I will be performing for the Noon Hour Concert Series at Calvary Lutheran Church.

In Him and with a song in our heart,

Jennie
Music Director





Please consider **VOLUNTEERING** for any of the following volunteer opportunities.

- ⇒ Ushers and Greeters - Contact Shari Perrine
- ⇒ Scripture Readers - Contact Diane Thoeke
or sign-up in Welcome Area
- ⇒ Fellowship servers - Contact Janell Saunders
or sign-up in Welcome Area
- ⇒ Tech people - Contact Jeff Hauger
- ⇒ Communion set-up and servers - Contact Joy Derr



“Interested in becoming a Member of Hubbard United Methodist Church?”

There are several ways you can do that!

- **Professing Member:** Individuals who have been baptized and have formally confessed their faith in Jesus Christ, often through confirmation or vows of membership.
- **Affiliate Member:** Professing members of another United Methodist church who wish to retain their home membership there but hold membership at a local church.
- **Associate Member:** Professing members of another Christian denomination who wish to affiliate with a local United Methodist church.
- **Online Member or Digital Member:** One who formally joins by taking vows of membership, participates, serves and engages with the church community primarily through digital means rather than in person.

If you want to know more about membership,
ask Pastor Lauren!

*Our next **Membership Sunday** will be **June 14th**!*

MISSIONS

JANUARY MISSION GIVING

MISSION COMMITTEE	\$ 000.00
DESIGNATED MISSION GIVING	
Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$ 1,250.00
Hubbard County Food Shelf	\$ <u>100.00</u>
TOTAL MISSION GIVING	\$ 1,350.00

FEBRUARY MISSION GIVING

MISSION COMMITTEE	\$ 000.00
DESIGNATED MISSION GIVING	
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$ 200.00
Hubbard County Food Shelf	\$ 250.89
UMCOR	\$ <u>100.00</u>
TOTAL MISSION GIVING	\$ 550.89

MARCH MISSION GIVING

MISSION COMMITTEE	
Hubbard County Food Shelf	\$ 500.00
Laporte Food Shelf	\$ 250.00
Menahga Food Shelf	\$ 250.00
DESIGNATED MISSION GIVING	
Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$ 1,000.00
Food Share	\$ 3,787.85
Campership	\$ <u>975.00</u>
TOTAL MISSION GIVING	\$ 6,762.85

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Minnesota Food Share Campaign. HUMC collected \$4,963.74 in cash donations and contributed 212 lbs of food items.

WAY TO GO HUMC!!

**Big
Thank
You!**

WELCOME



BACK



SNOWBIRDS



Volunteers from HUMC deliver **Meals on Wheels** to Park Rapids residents every 6 weeks.

If you are interested in becoming a delivery person for this rewarding activity, please contact Don Haagenon at 218-255-2788.

"Thank You"

to our many dedicated volunteers!

Upcoming HUMC Delivery Weeks:

May 11 - 15; June 22 - 26; August 3 - 7

**Please Consider Giving to the
Pastor Discretionary Fund Today!
The needs are great!**



CAT Results

During this past December and January worshipers were invited to complete the Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT) to better understand our church's needs and priorities for the future.

At the April 2026 Ad Council meeting, Rev. Erica Koser, Director of Strategy and Innovation for the Minnesota Annual Conference, shared the CAT results for Hubbard United Methodist Church. Fifty-five responses were received and the results were overwhelmingly positive.

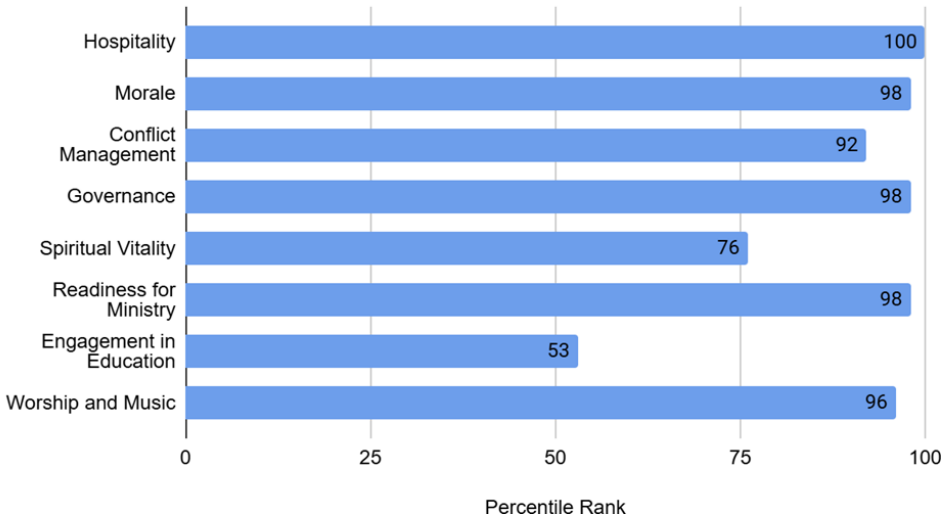
Overall satisfaction with how things are in our church was at 83%. Some of the key drivers of satisfaction included:

- Our Pastor helps us accomplish our mission by bringing out the best in everyone.
- Persons who serve as leaders in our church are representative of the membership.
- Our church prepares our members for ministry by helping them discern their gifts.
- Our Pastor makes things happen.
- The whole spirit in the congregation makes people want to get as involved as possible.

Our church was noted to have high satisfaction and high energy, defining our church as *transformational*.

Transformational churches are sources of new meaning and purpose for their members. Our results across most performance areas ranked consistently high. Our percentile rank compared to other churches who have taken the CAT is as follows:

Performance Index Percentile Rank



When HUMC worshipers were asked where they wanted additional energy placed, these were some of the top priorities identified:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
- Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships (for example, small groups, nurtured friendships, shared meals, etc.).
- Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life.

The above information is intended to provide a summary of the Hubbard United Methodist Church CAT results. Thank you to those who took the time to complete the CAT survey. Your care and concern for our church is incredibly valuable. In the weeks to come, we will need to engage our worshipers further to discern how best to address priorities identified so our church continues to be a source of meaning and purpose.

Thank you,

Deb Haagenon
Ad Council Chair



May

Terry Kimball	1
Denny Boulden	7
Rob Hallstrom	9
Steve Christenson	11
Jim Cook	12
Betty Davis	13
MaryAnn Kjenaas	21
Jim Wheeler	22
Nancy Knowles	24
Tack Tacker	24
Emily Kjenaas	25
Daniel Sanson	25
Rose Christenson	25
Rod Nordberg	26
Marcus Knowles	27
Mark Larsen	27
Marilyn Wilson	27
John Strom	28
Bridgett Cook	29
Derek Carlson	31

June

Nancy Jordheim	1
Pat Gordon	4
Isaac Sundsrud	5
Avaunne Hed	8
Judy Fedje	9
Liz Merrick	13
Mary Hutchins	13
Laura Spolum	14
Neal Aronson	15
Steve Hill	17
Janell Saunders	21
Jean Aronson	24
Alan Fietek	24
Diane Thoeke	25
Jim Pieper	27
Kaylyn Anderson	27
Jeff Lund	28

July

Meghan Johnson	3
Stu Hamilton	6
Sally Wizik Wills	6
Linda Larson	7
Dale Captain	8
Merrie Ellen Bergeth	9
Bob Wills	14
Terry Seter	15
Lois Captain	17
Glynn Davis	17
Jan Pieper	20
Sandee Edelman	20
Ken Stellmacher	23
Alice Strom	25
Diane Balk	29
Evelyn Davis	29
Marie Nordberg	30



ANNIVERSARIES
to Celebrate

May

Jeff & Linda Lund	3
Steve & Betsy Hill	20
Jim & Nadine Wheeler	20
Bill & Kathie Schmieg	28

June

Bob & Sue Heggen	10
Doug & Avaunne Hed	11
Bob & Andrea Otto	11
Don & Diane Balk	13
Roger & Maggie Jorgenson	15
Steve & Nita Schultz	22
Bob & Sally Wizik Wills	26

July

Bob & Betsy Roman	10
Ken & Renee Manlove	11
Dave & Diane Thoeke	12
Ken Stellmacher & Mary Claire Hansen	13

Greetings Hubbard United Methodist Church,

The Finance Committee meets several times throughout the year to review financial reports and make financial recommendations to the Administration Council. We would like to report that our church is very strong financially. Offerings have kept pace with our budget needs. Several factors have contributed to our good financial report. Your generous gifts through pledges and offerings have helped keep a good income flow. We are pleased to report that your special offerings and a large grant from a past member's estate will allow us to give a Love Offering at the MN Annual Conference of \$10,000 to be added to individual offerings from the congregation. We also made a gift of \$10,000 to World Vision via Wellspring. The Ad Council also agreed to add \$5,000 to the Mission Committee budget.

As of March 31 we have income of \$233,325 and expenses of \$145,820 leaving us with a net income of \$87,504. Keep in mind that this includes the large gift that we received in March. Even so, our expenses are right on budget. The Finance Committee will be developing a budget for our next fiscal year in August with the help of the committees that have line items in the budget. Your upcoming pledges are a great assist to us in that budget process.

Thank you for your continued financial support and I ask for your prayers for us as we plan for next year.

Richard Anderson, Finance Committee



Come Pedal with Us!

The Hubbard Bike Group invites you to join us this summer. Whether you typically ride 3 or 25 miles, you are most welcome.

We meet Mondays at 4:00 pm and Fridays at 9:00 am at area trailheads - Park Rapids, Nevis, Hackensack and more.

After our ride, we enjoy fellowship and a meal at local restaurants.

Watch for locations and details in our church bulletin.

See Kaylyn Anderson for more information.



A Note from the Missions Committee

THANKS FROM THE MISSION TEAM

To all members and visitors who stop by after Sunday Services for the “Coffee Hour” and its delicious refreshments, please accept our hearty and heart-felt THANK YOU for the monetary contributions you place in the basket located at the head of the goodies table. Whether you leave pocket change or some nice paper bills, be assured that these gifts add up to be an important part (almost 40%) of our Mission Team’s budget. Remember, **all of these donations go to the outreach activities of the Mission Team.** They have allowed us, this past year, for example, to send meaningful sums to causes such as: wildfire relief in California and Bemidji; disaster relief in the U.S. and internationally; the Minnesota United Methodist’s annual Love Offering; Park Rapids’ Toys for Boys and Girls and Tots; local food shelves in Laporte, Menahga and Park Rapids; and obtaining supplies for kits (which are put together by HUMC folks) to be sent to benefit victims of disasters – natural or otherwise.

We also give a big THANK YOU to everyone who so generously and loyally donated treats of all kinds which cover the goodies table each week and those who serve the beverages and snacks as well as set up before, and clean up after, these “coffee hours.”

Advance notice: we are hoping to have a church-wide kit-filling project in June. This would be in connection with the Midwest Mission organization, with whom we have successfully worked on previous events. We will probably doing “Personal Dignity Kits.” Watch for more details soon.

Dave Thaelke, Missions Chair

A Note from the Trustees

Spring Clean-Up Day Saturday - May 16 at 9:00 am

The time is fast approaching for the HUMC Buildings and Grounds Clean-Up.

A list of inside jobs will be provided. Outside work will include: flower gardens, gathering and hauling of fallen limbs, and fertilizing.

Please mark this day on your calendar. The treats are always noteworthy!!





United
Women
in Faith

The United Women in Faith meet the
1st Wednesday of the month at 1:00 pm
All are welcome!

“Climate Care”

How do we care for that part of Creation that has been entrusted to us? As summer approaches and we spend more time outdoors, take time to consider the health of the trees, plants etc. in the space you are in.

A quick “climate check” can tell you a lot and perhaps suggest items that need attention.

- * Are pine needles and leaves on other trees green and healthy (feeling supple to the touch)? We haven’t had much for moisture this winter so perhaps they need a little moisture.
- * Are plants thriving or are weeds taking over? Is it time for a Prairie Garden to provide plants for butterflies and bees? (you don’t have to mow it!)
- * Are there things you can do to reduce your impact on nature? i.e. more green space, recycling, mulching etc.

The UM Creation Justice Movement has an excellent program called Movement Café that explores multiple aspects related to our relationship with our world and opportunity to connect with others for ideas.

Our UWFaith Minnesota web page has a link to our lending library that has many Climate-related books you can check out for free - www.UWFaithmn.com

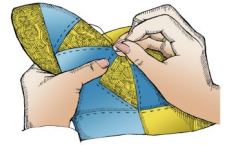
Think about picking one “thing” and making a difference this summer.

Marion Hansen, UWF President





Care And Comfort



Threads of Love

Make A Joyful Noise!

"I hope people will "feel joy" when they see the new banners!" So says Sue Harmon, who designed the two long quilted banners now hanging behind the altar, reflecting the colors of a rainbow and celebrating the rich heritage of music at HUMC.

"I think of the rainbow as a symbol of joy and hope, of God's promise to His people," said Sue, explaining that this project had been years in the making, after Pastor Lauren Hauger had approached her three years ago about a quilt for the front of the sanctuary.



"I envisioned something bright and colorful," said Pastor Lauren. "They are! To me, the rainbow represents the vast diversity of God's creation and Christ's reach across all boundaries of race, culture and humanity. The musical notes evoke a feeling of praise and worship of the Creator, reflecting the church's commitment to music, which is such a part of worship at Hubbard," she explained.

Each long banner (nine feet by 20 inches) stands alone but in reality is part of one entity. "I drew the design, cut and pieced the individual elements of art, and then sewed them onto the fabric background. I used hand dyed cotton fabrics, in a graduation of colors, that are made by Cherrywood Fabrics in Brainerd. After Sue finished sewing the banners, they were quilted by Charlotte Peterson of Park Rapids, a long arm quilter. (Note: a quilt is made up of three layers: the quilt top, batting for the middle, and a fabric backing.)



When searching for a name for the new banners, because each quilt must have an identifying label; Sue turned to HUMC's Threads of Love Quilters, who suggested the phrase, "*Make a Joyful Noise*," as found in both Psalm 100 and Psalm 98. The quilters also helped put the finishing stitches on the banners.

*"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth:
make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise."*

"I have a passion for quilting," admitted Sue, who has made a number of quilts for HUMC, including for Lent, Advent, Christmas, Pentecost, Holy Communion, and most recently, one for use at Funerals or Celebrations of Life.

"I can't imagine not quilting," she says with a smile. Sue has been quilting since 1975, and at one time owned her own quilt store. She is also well known as a certified quilt appraiser.

Hubbard Pines Memorial Garden

Our memorial garden exists because Sharon Jacobson, and her associates, had a clear vision of what could be. The result of that vision is a beautiful setting in the shadow of Hubbard United Methodist Church.

So let us be reminded of who is encouraged to make it part of their plans: short and long-term. This includes the Columbarium niche, holding one or two urns; a plaque on the Wall of Remembrance; interment with a horizontal ground marker; and scattering of ashes.

Memorial Garden Eligibility

- Past or present HUMC member and their families.
- Past or present "affiliated or associated" members and their families, meaning members of other UMC churches or other Christian churches.
- Past or present pastors and their families.
- Past or present participants of HUMC.

The requirements are very open. Please consider the Hubbard Pines Memorial Garden options when making end-of-life decisions.

Hubbard Pines Memorial Garden Committee

Dignity Quilts: Blankets of Love

"Those we love don't go away; they walk beside us every day."

The Threads of Love Quilters recently completed a blue and gold Dignity Quilt for Crystal Brook Senior Living, one that "appears to glow softly" according to one member who was involved in piecing the quilt.

Sue Harmon used a variety of design elements to create the pattern, with members of the Threads of Love Quilters doing the piece work and Charlotte Rollie of Park Rapids, doing the final quilting.

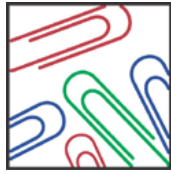
It was presented to Crystal Brook on April 28, with members of HUMC who reside at Crystal Brook invited to participate in the blessing and presentation of the quilt.

Since the Threads of Love Quilters was organized in 2007, its members have made a number of Dignity Quilts for local funeral homes and assisted living or nursing homes.

"A dignity quilt is a way of showing respect for the deceased," explained Sue. "It is used to cover the body when someone dies, is placed on a gurney and then transferred to a waiting vehicle."

Recently a Dignity Quilt made in 2010 for a local funeral home was returned to HUMC for cleaning and restoration.





FROM THE
CHURCH
OFFICE

Northern Voice- Newsletter Deadline

The Northern Voice newsletter is published quarterly.

Our next Northern Voice will be **Fall 2026**,
for the months of August, September, October.

The article submission deadline is **July 15th**.

UPCOMING *Events*

Spring Clean-Up

Saturday - May 16

Blessing of the Quilts

Sunday - June 7

Threads of Love Spring Luncheon

Tuesday - June 9

New Member Sunday

Sunday - June 14

Minnesota Annual Conference

June 16-18, 2026

Pastor Lauren's Commissioning

June 17, 2026 7:00 pm

River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud

2026 Leadership Institute

September 30 - October 2, 2026