



APRIL 2025

# Branches Newsletter



**Join us for Worship Sundays at 9:30AM**

**Engage** and **Inspire** all generations to **Connect**  
with God through love and service.

## Newsletter Highlights

Spring Rummage Sale

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Easter Sunday

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Lenten Prayer Walk

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New Member Sunday

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Self-Care Sunday

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
OCONOMOWOC**

📍 815 S. Concord Road

📞 262-567-4461

✉ [uccoffice@conomowocucc.org](mailto:uccoffice@conomowocucc.org)



by Pastor Matt



Rocks, feathers, paper flames... It's a curious progression. Our Sunday services in Lent open with an opportunity to take up the work of "turnaround" – or repentance. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus proclaims, "The time has come, the kingdom of God has come near: repent (turn around) and believe (invest in) the good news!" The good news is the end goal. Turning around is the way to receive it.

Jesus brings a blatantly positive invitation to turn from ways of living that close down the energy of the Spirit within us – to turn from sin – and turn toward Christ, turn toward the energy and joy of following his path of self-giving love. Each week we bring to mind an event or word or experience from the past (near or long-term), something that wounded or broke a relationship, a trust, a reputation, a hope. We lay it at the cross. We physically turn around and go forward to our seats to follow the way of our Savior. Another name for this is confession. And, in any service of Christian worship, it is how we own our part of the human foolishness, and claim God's grace, to be able to receive the living Word that renews life within us.

This focus is what Lent is all about. Turning from what does not grow life in God's reign. Owning our part in it. Letting it go. Turning toward joy, and hope, and God's purpose in our lives.

Across the world this year, the western churches (protestant and catholic) AND the Eastern Orthodox churches, all celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on **April 20**. This is a rare event. And, the year we are having makes it even more important. In the midst of the deep cultural and political discombobulation, let's lean HARD into the power of Jesus' offering of himself on the cross for us, and into the joy of his resurrection life among us and within us.



The tomb is real, for sure. But it is empty. He is risen, and he goes on ahead to meet his people – all the curious, lost, broken, and pushed-aside – in the places where real life happens. His words are as fresh to our ears now as they were in Galilee at the beginning of his public ministry:

*"Turn around and believe the good news!"*



## Moderator Musings

### The Next Big Idea!

People sometimes ask me what the Leadership Team does. That isn't as easy a question to answer as you may think. Leadership Team is responsible for the coordinating and overall directing of church activities toward our goal of being God's children here on Earth. What direction we take to accomplish this is where the "rubber meets the road". A case in point is a recent change in a standing agenda item for our monthly meetings. For over the past year we have spent time discussing "Emphasis Points" such as proposed improvements in the worship experience (operationalizing suggestions from Spirituality Ministry) or how to make the church property "work for us" more.

Emphasis Points has now given way to a new standing agenda item, "The Next Big Idea!" The Next Big Idea concept came out of our All Ministry discussions. In a nutshell Leadership Team is looking for ways to increase church membership by better connecting to the Oconomowoc community.



Welcome Ministry does a great job of inviting visitors to consider membership but how do we, as a church, get new people to come through our doors and give our church a try? The Next Big Idea discussions are going to explore what activities the church can get involved in that reaches potential members and sparks an interest in them to give us a visit.

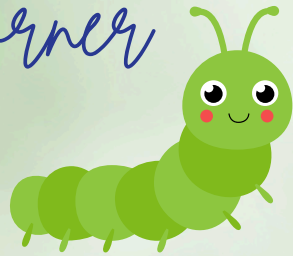
So, if you have an idea of how we can better connect with the community please share it with a member of the Leadership Team. We will kick it around at the next Leadership Team meeting and see if your vision has promise. Who knows, you may have the "Next Big Idea!"

Yours in Christ,  
Chris Mol  
Moderator, First Congregational UCC








## Custodian Corner



Welcome back...  
(or should I say "I'm back")

I'm going to begin where I began a few months ago. Bugs, Bugs, Bugs,   ... They're back, but again have they ever left? Box Elders have taken over the main entry upstairs. I've been vacuuming and sweeping trying to keep up. Hopefully when the weather warms, they will stay outside.

We are entering a busy spring season. I would like to put a reminder out there to be cautious with the candle cups used for Easter service. The dried wax and sometimes the wet wax, spill on the pew seats and floor. Thank you in advance.

I would also like to ask, if you have a spill on the carpet. Could you please use paper towels or a rag to just blot it. No wiping or scrubbing needed. We don't want to rub the stain (usually coffee) into the fibers. Just blot and leave me a note, if not in an obvious location.

Thank you, Amy, for doing just that on the hot cocoa spill. I was able to get it so it's barely visible. Thanks to all for helping me to keep our building looking its best!

Happy Spring! Enjoy!

-Sue



Join us for  
**Easter**  
Sunday

**Sunday, April 20 at 9:30AM**





All are invited to have lunch and socialize at Rockwell's Restaurant (Shorehaven north Campus)  
The 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each Month  
Menu Options are \$15 each

## Tuesday, April 8

*(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday 3/31)*

**Chicken Parmesan Sandwich** on a bun with Marinara sauce and Mozzarella cheese, fresh fruit and a Blondie bar.

**Roasted Beet Salad** with spring mix greens, feta, red onion, glazed pecans and Balsamic Vinaigrette, and a Blondie bar.

## Tuesday, April 22

*(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday 4/14)*

**Turkey Burger** with lettuce, tomato, onion and Cheddar cheese, with roasted garlic mayo, Fries, and a chocolate chip cookie.

**Salmon Caesar Salad**, with chopped Romaine, Parmesan cheese, tomatoes, croutons, and a chocolate chip cookie.

### Reserve your spot for a good time!

See Sue Zajac during Fellowship or call/text her at 414-698-3575. At each meal your cash will be collected by Sue Zajac (or designee) in order to make one payment for the group. Sorry no checks or credit cards—CASH ONLY.



## Caring Connection

Caring Connection is a network of volunteers from our congregation who direct God's healing message to church family members in need. Anyone is invited to participate in this meaningful mission, living out their faith through a variety of caring opportunities. The ways you can help are by sending cards, assisting at funerals, giving a meal, praying, knitting a shawl, delivering flowers at Christmas time, driving members to church and/or visiting those who are home bound or in a retirement community.

### This month we are highlighting our Card Ministry Group.

A church staff member sends cards from the Church for grief, illness, birthdays (70+), anniversaries (40+), births and thinking of you cards. Other Caring Connection members send Christmas Cards, birthday and anniversary post cards, sympathy cards at 3, 6 and 12 month intervals following a family death and also thinking of you cards to members who are experiencing health or other issues. Cards are also sent to those that are in retirement communities or are homebound.

The Caring Connection Card Ministry is continuing to direct God's healing message to our Church family.



## Mission and Outreach

### Singing Collection



Every time we worship, loose coins in the offering are donated to a Mission Partner. The coins in the metal plates make a “joyful noise,” so we call this our Singing Collection.



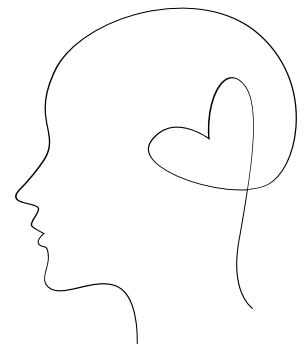
**UCC Mental Health Network**

Welcoming • Inclusive • Supportive • Engaged

### April's Singing Collection

We are all familiar with what it means for a person to be wise. What does it take for a congregation to be WISE? And what does that acronym mean? WISE stands for Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged. It is an official designation of the UCC Mental Health Network. Our congregation is scheduling various events to ensure that we all are better informed about what mental health is and what we can learn to help ourselves and be supportive of each other

In January, a speaker from NAMI (National Association for Mental Health) came to our church and spoke about suicide prevention. Watch for future experiences and information! The singing collection for April will be designated for WISE speakers and events.



April 6 & May 4

### Food Pantry Sundays - First Sunday of Every Month (but welcome anytime)

The first Sunday of every month, you are invited to bring items for the Food Pantry and put them in the baskets at the entrance to the sanctuary. These donations are delivered to the Oconomowoc Food Pantry during the week. Items that the Food Pantry accepts are:

**Non-perishables:** food items, Baby items - diapers, wipes, baby food, formula;  
**Personal hygiene items:** soap, shampoo, tampons, sanitary pads, deodorant, toothpaste, laundry detergent, toilet paper.

**Please be sure before you donate that all perishable items are within their use dates and have not expired.**





## ≡Welcome≡ New Member Sunday

Pastor Matt and the Membership Committee will hold an informational meeting for those interested in learning more about our church and for those interested in becoming members of our church family on **Sunday, April 27th at 10:45AM** in the Church music room.

*Please contact the Church Office at 262-567-4461 to let us know if you are planning on attending to ensure that we have enough supplies.*

On **May 18th** New Member Sunday will be held during which time those interested in becoming members of our church family will be warmly welcomed into our membership. *Please contact the Church Office if you are interested in attending the May 18th meeting and/or in becoming a member.*

### VOLUNTEER TO BE A



## Buddy

The purpose of "Buddies" for new members of our church is to assure that new members feel welcomed for the first months of their membership. We would like Buddies to accompany new members at the time of their being received into the church family on New Member Sunday and take them to and sit with them during Fellowship hours following church services.

Buddies will be available to answer questions and address concerns of new members. They will invite new members to attend church activities and events.

The Buddie's significant role will be to serve as companions for the first six months following New Member Sunday to assure that new members feel welcome and know that they are an important part of our congregation.

To volunteer to be a Buddy, please contact Linda Davis at [pldavis.pd@gmail.com](mailto:pldavis.pd@gmail.com) or 207-985-9186. It is a wonderful way to get to know new members.



APRIL  
27

# SELF-CARE SUNDAY

MEET IN FELLOWSHIP HALL AT 10:45 AM

Transform your day into a rejuvenating escape by experiencing four dynamic self-care sessions tailored **for kids, teens, adults, and seniors**. Each activity runs for 15 minutes, followed by a 5-minute break before moving on. Grab your family and embrace the opportunity to unwind, create, and nourish your mind, body, and soul!

**ZENTANGLE   CHAIR YOGA   MEDITATION   COOKING**



Dive into the art of Zentangle—a meditative drawing practice that invites you to explore patterns, doodles, and abstract designs.



Experience a series of stretching exercises and mindful poses. Enjoy the flow, improve your flexibility, and set a positive tone.



Immerse yourself in a guided meditation that calms your thoughts and centers your spirit as you seek a moment of stillness.



Stir up some fun in the kitchen with our quick and engaging session focusing on eating health on a budget.

**A DAY FOR  
EVERYONE!**

**Attire:  
Comfy Sunday**

Hosted by your WISE Committee.

Questions? Contact Tom Stone at [tnbstone@gmail.com](mailto:tnbstone@gmail.com).



## Lenten Prayer Walk

Join us on Sunday, April 13 from 10AM-3PM as we explore the Stations of the Cross around the church property.

We begin with the celebration of Palm Sunday as Jesus makes his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem and journey through the final days on the cross and beyond. This prayer walk will begin near the west end of the upper parking lot (near the large cross). It is a self-guided experience on unlevelled terrain that's about a quarter of a mile long.

We look forward to participating in this journey. If you have any questions please contact Amy Drewa at

[amydrewa@economowocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@economowocucc.org).





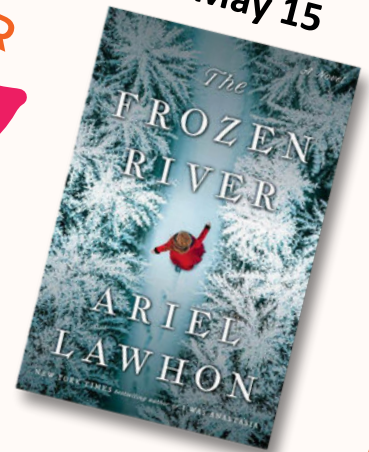
April 17



COME AND JOIN US AT OUR

# BOOK CLUB

May 15



Socialize and form friendships by joining us for an immersive experience at Book Club. Book Club gives you a chance to get to know people you may never have had contact with otherwise! We enjoy reading and respectfully discussing a broad range of viewpoints as we seek to grow in our understanding of our Lord and one another. Join us to gain knowledge, creativity and community. Everyone in the Book Club gets a chance to pick a future book of the month. Come help us discover something new!

**Join us at 1:00PM in person or Zoom next month. If you prefer Zoom please contact Jean Vercauteren for details.**

**All are welcome to join for any book and discussion.**





# HUGE Church Rummage Sale

**Saturday, April 12**  
**8:00AM - 2:00PM**



All church members are invited to help set up the sale on **Sundays, March 30 and April 6 after the church service. Lunch will be served, so sign up today!**

Any time you can help set up during the two weeks prior to the sale is much appreciated.

Please complete the sign-up genius!

*sign up*



## **Areas of greatest need:**

- We have a new opportunity for someone to become the room ambassador for the girls room.
- As food prices soar, we can use monetary donations to help cover the cost of feeding the volunteers on the two set up days and on the day of the sale.

Rummage donations can be dropped off Monday through Friday from nine to one or by contacting Jill for alternate times. Encourage your friends and family to donate to our rummage sale in this way as well.

*Contact Jill at 262-719-3823 if you need access to the building after hours or to sign up if you prefer not to use the sign up genius.*



# 2025 Youth Mission Trip

## Destination

Join us as we travel to east Asheville, North Carolina to assist with the cleanup efforts from Hurricane Helene. Helene hit western North Carolina with record breaking rainfall causing flooding, mudslides and devastation in her path. Let us join in the relief efforts with our time and gifts to bring God's grace and hope to a hurting community by rebuilding homes and helping families re-establish their lives.

**July 20-26, 2025**

## Included

- ✓ 6-night stay at a local school
- ✓ Daily breakfast, lunch and dinner
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Work based projects
- ✓ Nightly Worship and Activities

## Highlights

- ✓ Engaging with the Community
- ✓ Building new and growing old relationships
- ✓ Learning new skills
- ✓ Life altering experience
- ✓ Serving God and building your faith



## Estimated cost is \$800 without fundraising

Spaces are limited for this one-of-a-kind experience. Reserve your spot today and get ready to see what God can do with your skills and time.



### REGISTER TODAY

<https://forms.gle/xqDuTvkFv2pNjeaM7>

### OR SCAN THE QR CODE





# FRUITS



# of the Spirit



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

*for children 3 years old -4th grade*

### July 8-10

1PM - 4PM

[Click here](#)



to register or scan  
the QR code



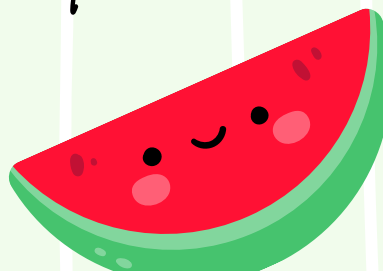
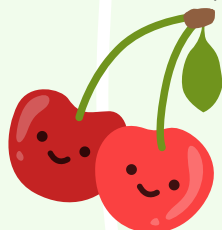
Let us grow together with the Fruits of the Spirit through fun games, engaging activities, craft projects, music, worship, and snacks! Together we will grow in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control and learn how to share it with others!

SO.....

*Come and see  
where God's Fruit Grows!*

**First Congregational UCC**

815 S. Concord Rd  
Oconomowoc, WI 53066





Order prefilled candy  
eggs to surprise your kids,  
neighbors, & friends.  
Let our bunnies do the  
work for you!

## FUNDRAISER

book your  
spot today!

Eggs can be hidden in your yard the night before Easter OR you can  
pick them up at church to hide yourself on Sunday, April 13.

25 eggs

**\$30**

50 eggs

**\$45**

75 eggs

**\$60**

For more information or to place an order, please call or email  
Amy Drewa at [amydrewa@oconomocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@oconomocucc.org) or 262-567-4461.

**ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE 2025 YOUTH SUMMER MISSION TRIP!**





Rain  
or Shine

# 8th Annual Bald Eagle Car Show



**Saturday, June 14, 2025**

**10 am - 2 pm**

**First Congregational UCC Grounds**

**9 am cars & bikes arrive**

**Food • Beer • Music • Raffles**

**Bikers Welcome**



**GUARANTEE A DASH PLAQUE**  
**PREREGISTER BY June 7, 2025**  
**CONTACT:** Andy Meckl 262-720-1876  
**EMAIL TO:** TheMeckls@gmail.com  
First Congregational UCC of Oconomowoc  
815 S. Concord Road, Ocon., WI 53066  
[www.oconomowocucc.org](http://www.oconomowocucc.org)

*Fundraiser for  
Youth Mission Trips  
in memory of  
Rich Behling  
"The Bald Eagle"*

## Platinum Sponsors



**Sobelman's**  
**PUB**  
**-N-**  
**GRILL**



**Gold Sponsors**  
Groskopf Construction

## Youth News

### Youth Group (3rd - 12th grade)

It's spring and it's time to spring into youth group! Join us as we spring into action to help with our **Church Wide Rummage Sale on Sunday, April 6 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.** We will help sort through all the rummage sale items and set things up. The youth love to help with this event not because they can find a new treasure but because they can come together with their church family and friends to help our church! Participants are welcome to bring their friends and family to this event. To make sure we will have enough lunch for everyone please respond to Amy Drewa at [amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org) by **April 3** if you will be attending! We look forward to seeing you there!

### Mission Trip

Our Youth Mission Team is continuing their fundraising efforts for their 2025 Mission Trip! This year over 15 participants will be traveling to Asheville, NC to assist with the cleanup efforts from hurricane Helene. We will help in whatever way God and community calls us to do. From light construction work to building relationships, we are excited to serve.

It is always our goal to make these mission trips affordable for all who attend. With our fundraising efforts and the generosity of our church members we can do so. This month we are offering a few more opportunities for you to support our youth mission team.

Has this warmer weather helped you to think about planning your flowerpots for this summer? Again this year our youth mission team will be having our Plant Sale selling a variety of flats, 4 ½ inch annual pots, planted porch pots, hanging baskets and much more!



These beautiful and high-quality flowers are from Shady Lane Nursery and are available for you to order and support our Youth Mission Team. Stop by the Mission Table in Fellowship Hall after church now through **April 20** to place your order. All orders will be available for pickup on May 9 or after worship on **May 11**.

We are continuing to sell Stock Shares. Please consider to become an investor in our 2025 Summer Mission Trip by purchasing a share of stock. After worship at the Mission Table, we are selling shares of stock for any amount (\$5, \$20, \$50 or more). By purchasing a share, you are helping a participant serve in a way God has called them that could potentially be life altering. By purchasing a share of stock, you will receive an invitation to a Stock Share Holders Breakfast which will be held in the summer. We pray that you will prayerfully consider Investing in our Youth Mission Team today!



During our Annual Rummage Sale on **April 12** our Youth Mission Team will be offering a food booth. They will be selling some delicious BBQ, hot dogs, chips, and drinks. So please stop by and support them.



## Youth News

### Sunday School

Last month our middle and high schoolers worked hard to help put the worship service together for April 6. They talked in great depth about the scriptures they had chosen along with other parts of the service. They also gathered items and baked bread. It was a lot of fun working with each of them and I'm so excited for them to execute what they've put together and to help with the service. We look forward to you joining them and showing your Christian love and support!

As we continue our journey through Lent our children and youth will focus on the different events that occurred leading up to Easter. They will engage in the different stories through activities that will help bring the stories to life; but also relatable so they too will be prepared for that Holy celebration of Easter at the end of the month.

Our middle and high school youth will be busy this month! They will lead us in worship on **April 6**. On **April 13** together during Sunday School they will engage in the Lenten Prayer Walk on our church grounds and come back together to discuss. Please dress accordingly for that Sunday. As a church family we will all join in worship on **April 20** to celebrate our Risen Savior! Then on **April 27** we will explore more of the Easter story.

This Sunday School year is going by way to quickly!!! Having this opportunity to watch our children and youth grow in their faith and to get excited about it each week is beyond heartwarming! Thank you to all the amazing parents and grandparents who nudge their children, grandchildren and youth to explore their faith deeper by coming to Sunday School.

We are also extremely blessed to have some amazing teachers who are so willing to engage in the lessons more deeply by sharing their faith journeys and God's word with our children and youth. I look forward to hearing what the children and youth discover about this Lenten journey!



### Church Camps

It's crazy how quickly summer is approaching!! Have you finalized your summer plans for your kids yet? If not, or you're looking for something else for them to do, have them come to Church Camp!! The UCC has two amazing church camps in Wisconsin: : [Moon Beach](#) in St. Germain and [Daycholah](#) in Green Lake. Registration has opened for all campers. If you are interested in attending make sure to register before your favorite camp gets filled up. Between the two camps there are a variety of options for all ages and interests as well as parent and me or family camps! Check out the links and register today! If you **register by April 30 you will receive a 5% discount!** Come and support our church camps, have some fun and meet new friends!!!

We are very blessed that our church can offer scholarships to all youth campers who fill out a service log. Please [click here](#) to access the log. If you have any questions, please contact Amy Drewa at [amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org)

# HEARTS & HANDS

Celebrating ALL of God's Children

*Now Registering!*

**Now Registering for Summer and Fall 2025.**

We have classes for ages 25 months - 4K!

See our website for all of the details:

[www.heartsandhandspreschool.org](http://www.heartsandhandspreschool.org)



**Keep in mind that church members get 20% off tuition!**

*Preschool Giving*

**Here are the totals of what the preschool has given to others through the years:**

Tithing (the preschool gives 10% of the tuition it collects back to church): **\$81,184.83**  
Scholarships: **\$20,591.25**

Church Member Discount (church members get 20% off of their tuition): **\$10,650.75**  
Family Discount (10% tuition discount to those who enroll more than 1 child at a time): **\$2,542.55**

**Total: \$114,969.38!**

WISH List: Music mallets for our outdoor playground music equipment.



One of our preschool families had a baby 2 months ago that is now in need of a heart transplant due to a congenital heart disease. The family has set up a [CaringBridge page](#) to follow Eleanor's progress.

They would love any and all prayers they can get. From the latest post: *"Eleanor is so strong and it's inspiring to see how well she is able to persevere. She's a bulldozer that keeps pushing through every challenge set before her."*

Here are 2 other ways you can help if you are interested: Eleanor's Aunt Megan and Aunt Rachel put a lot of effort into creating a beautiful "Eleanor's Army" logo and organized an [apparel shop](#). If you're interested in supporting Eleanor check out the link below. They can be picked up in Oconomowoc or shipped (select your preference at checkout). They even did multiple graphic options suitable for men, women, or children!

Last, there is also a [GoFundMe page](#) in Eleanor's honor

***Whatever support you can give this family is much appreciated!***



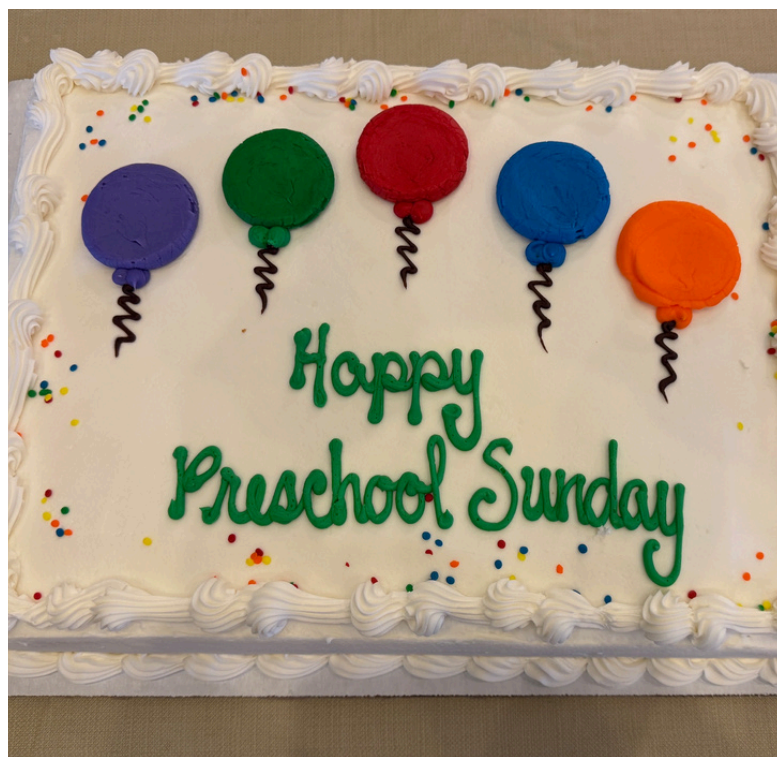
# HEARTS & HANDS

Celebrating ALL of God's Children

## Preschool Sunday

We had so much fun during Preschool Sunday on March 16th! It was great to welcome in preschool families and see all of our teachers. To top it off, all enjoyed the yummy cake during Fellowship Hour!

LET'S  
CELEBRATE



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Worship Wednesday:** April 2 (12:00PM)

**Faith & Conversations:** April 2 (1:15PM)

**Joint Worship at Dr. Martin Luther Church:** April 2 (5:00PM)

**Coffee & Conversations:** April 6 (8:45AM)

**Youth Group:** April 6

**Bible Study:** April 7 (6:30PM)

**Ladies Luncheon:** April 8 (11:15AM)

**Worship Wednesday:** April 9 (12:00PM)

**Joint Worship at Dr. Martin Luther Church:** April 9 (5:00PM)

**Rummage Sale:** April 12 (8:00AM - 2:00PM)

**Palm Sunday:** April 13 (9:30AM)

**Prayer Walk:** April 13 (10:30AM - 3:00PM)

**Book Club:** April 17 (1:00PM)

**Maundy Thursday:** April 17 (7:00PM)

**Easter Sunday:** April 20 (9:30AM)

**Ladies Luncheon:** April 22 (11:15AM)

**Membership Committee Meeting:** April 27 (after worship)

**Self-Care Sunday:** April 27 (10:45AM)

FOR MORE INFO VISIT US AT  
***WWW.OCONOMOWOCUCC.ORG***

## **STAY CONNECTED AND FALL INTO CHURCH WITH US**

Rev. Matt Schneider-Adams, Senior Pastor [pastor@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:pastor@oconomowocucc.org)

Amy Drewa, Director of Children & Youth [amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org)

Karl Kay, Music Director [karlkay@execpc.com](mailto:karlkay@execpc.com)

Cindy Meckl, Hearts & Hands Preschool [themeckls@gmail.com](mailto:themeckls@gmail.com)

April articles are due no later than **Tuesday, April 15** to [natalie@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:natalie@oconomowocucc.org)