



MARCH 2026

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

Worship Wednesdays

Preschool Sunday

Meditation and
Prayer

Bible Study on the
Gospel According to
Matthew

Egg My Yard

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
OCONOMOWOC**

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by Pastor Matt

Besides marrying into a United Methodist dynasty, my faith has been prodded and grown by several UMC voices. One of those is Ted Loder, whose prayers in his volume *Guerillas of Grace* have helped me let go of unhealthy defenses and come to God more honestly, even when that is difficult. He offers a meaningful prayer for Lent in an older volume, “*Guerillas of Grace*.” Here is the first stanza:

Catch Me Scurrying

Catch me in my anxious scurrying, Lord,
and hold me in this Lenten season:
hold my feet to the fire of your grace
and make me attentive to my mortality
that I may begin to die now
to those things that keep me
from living with you
and with my neighbors on this earth;
to grudges and indifference,
to certainties that smother possibilities,
to my fascination with false securities,
to my addiction to sweatless dreams,
to my arrogant insistence on how it has to be;
to my corrosive fear of dying someday
which eats away the wonder of living this day,
and the adventure of losing my life
in order to find it in you.

I ask you to engage this Lent as a time to give special attention to the gifts and challenges of following Jesus, a time to honestly explore the ways we get tangled in our fears and self-deceptions and then to lay them down at the cross, in order to take up the newness of life God offers to us in Jesus Christ. May God bless you with clarity, some holy discomfort in prayer, and the deepest of grace as you move through these weeks leading up to Easter.

Wednesdays

- Come along for Lenten worship with Pastor Clare Sedlacek and our friends from Dr. Martin Luther Church on **Wednesdays** – Noon at FCUCC, and 5pm at DMLC (325 S. Main, Oconomowoc).

Thursdays

- Join us on **Thursdays** at 6pm Centering Prayer, or 6:30pm Bible study on the Gospel According to Matthew.

Our midweek offerings for Lent are detailed above and elsewhere in this issue of the Branches. Please join us for one or more of those opportunities, to worship in a different format, or to pray together, or to explore more deeply Matthew’s powerful account of Jesus as Messiah, Immanuel, and Lord.

Moderator Musings

We continue to wait for a decision from the umpire regarding our insurance claim. This process has certainly taken too long and tried the patience of many members, especially those that have had direct roles in attempting to negotiate a settlement. While we continue to pray fervently for a favorable decision to be rendered soon, I feel some sense of relief and anticipation among members that this will soon be over.

Regardless of the outcome of the insurance claim, we are ready to move forward with long-overdue repairs and maintenance to our building and grounds. As we begin a capital needs campaign to address these needed repairs, members are asked to prayerfully consider your level of participation in the campaign. I hope that members can see this as an opportunity to help continue building the legacy of this faith community.

Our current church building - the second building in our congregation's history - is not just a structure. Its walls contain the voices of history. They remember the decisions made by our predecessors to keep this community alive. Our beautiful grounds convey our soul and I am thankful for those previous leaders who had the vision to recognize that this peaceful setting would be a comfort to succeeding generations.

Our longtime members speak fondly of the little white church that was the first home for our congregation. As much as the congregation loved that building, there was a recognition that the future required something new. Let us recognize that, in maintaining our current building, future generations can thrive and continue to grow our mission.

Deb Bursinger



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, March 10

(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday, 3/2)

Cranberry Turkey Melt, on grilled Sourdough bread with Cheddar cheese, Cranberry relish, and warm turkey breast, served with fresh fruit and an apple crisp bar.

Chicken Cobb Salad, with chopped greens, egg, avocado, tomato, chicken, cheese and bacon, with Cucumber Ranch dressing and an apple crisp bar.

Tuesday, March 24

(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday, 3/16)

Club Sandwich on Wheat toast with mayo, lettuce, tomato, ham, turkey, bacon and Cheddar, served with fresh fruit and a peanut butter rice crispy bar.

Baked Salmon Salad, with chopped greens, carrots, fresh raspberries, glazed pecans, Wisconsin Cheddar cheese and Raspberry Vinaigrette, with a peanut butter rice crispy bar.

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.

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.



Family Promise has volunteer opportunities for any individuals or organizations looking for ways to assist families in the program.

March Singing Collection

This month, our Singing Collection will support **WildLife in Need Center**, a nonprofit organization based in Oconomowoc. Their dedicated team works to rehabilitate sick, injured, and orphaned native wildlife with the goal of releasing them back into their natural habitats where they can thrive.

As we care for God’s creation, we remember that animals are part of His beautiful world too. They depend on compassion and helping hands when they are hurt or in need.

Join us in showing love for all of God’s creatures by supporting WildLife in Need through your donations. Together, we can make a difference for the wild neighbors who share our world!

1. The Family Promise Partner Program connects trained volunteers directly with families in the shelter program to work with families on their journeys to achieve independence and sustainable housing. Family Promise will conduct interviews with interested individuals. Those selected to work with families must complete additional training. Individuals interested in this opportunity should complete this form to inquire and begin the process:

<https://forms.gle/FdRSNAVjYBh6PniZA>

2. Apartment Cleaning: Family Promise is in need of volunteers willing to clean apartments as families transition in and out of the apartments maintained by the program. If interested, please contact the Family Promise Day Center at 262-968-2321.



March 1 & April 5

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.

Caring Connection



Call to Care Prayer Chain

Hello,

I am involved with the "Call to Care Prayer Chain." I would like to tell you a little about how it works. Should you happen to need prayers for a loved one, you have 2 options:

1. The prayer chain is urgent and confidential. You can start the process of prayers by calling the church office and talking to Pastor Matt, Amy Drewa, or you can call me.
2. If there is not an urgent need, or no need to be confidential, then you can call the church office and ask to be listed in the weekly announcements and concerns in church. Occasionally, our members choose to be on both.

Our prayer group is expected to pray daily for a minimum of a week. If anyone has a desire to be on our Prayer Chain group, you may sign up on Time & Talent during the pledge time in November.

Thank you,

Sue Zajac
414-698-3575



Fellowship Table Centerpieces

A huge thank you to Cheryl, Natalie, Susan, Pam, Kim, Barb R, Peg, Peggy P, Kelly, Pat, Jill and Brenda for their creative, thoughtful and unique centerpieces this Christmas/Winter season. Our Fellowship Hall area was so festive thanks to you.

I have been decorating the Fellowship round tables, the coffee/snack table, the sign-in table, Family Room and window wells for many years and it is now time to hand over this fun job to someone else. Brenda Seroka has graciously said that she would love to take over this responsibility! I'm excited just listening to her many creative ideas!

I'm sad to give up this rewarding and fun job but it's time to let someone younger take the 'reins'!

Barb Moeller





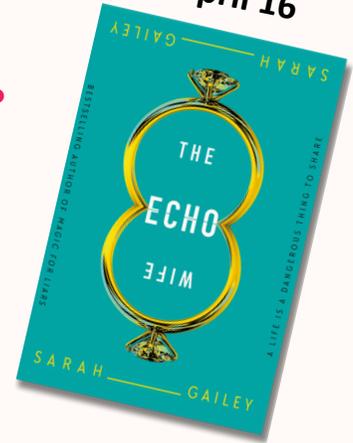
March 19



COME AND JOIN US AT OUR

BOOK CLUB

April 16



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.



Coffee with the Pastor

Tuesdays
1PM to 3PM

Join us at Roots
Café. A time for
conversation,
connection, and
community.

All are welcome!



SUPPORT THE OCONOMOWOC FOOD PANTRY

First Sunday of the month

Place donations of unexpired food and toiletries in the baskets.

Donations made during the month may be placed in the blue barrel by
the coat rack in Fellowship Hall.



Thank you for thinking of your
neighbors in need.





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, March 29.

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@oconomococucc.org or 262-567-4461.

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE 2026 YOUTH SUMMER MISSION TRIP!



Youth News

Sunday School News!

Each of us is called to love others just as much as we love ourselves. We are invited to care for our neighbors, show kindness to everyone we meet, and share what we have.

This month, our children and youth, 4th grade and younger, will explore the parable of the Good Samaritan. Through hands-on activities and meaningful conversations, they'll discover what it means to truly love their neighbor and practice simple, real-life ways they can show kindness and share what they have with others.

As we continue our Lenten journey, the Good Samaritan reminds us that Lent isn't only about giving something up. It can also be about taking something on doing more to love and serve others. So, what might you do this season to share God's love with your "neighbors," both near and far?

Our middle and high school youth will wrestle with that very question throughout March. Using the lectionary scriptures, they will explore how to live out their faith in practical ways within our community and beyond, discovering together what it looks like to love their neighbors in today's world.

In addition to Sunday School, children, youth, and adults are invited to Journey Through Lent by participating in our weekly prayer station. Each week, a new interactive prayer experience will be set up in the Sunday School Hall. Bring your Lenten Passport or pick one up at the station and receive a stamp each week as you mark another stop along your Lenten journey.

We look forward to growing, serving, and journeying together this season!

Youth Group

In February, our youth groups had an absolute blast snow tubing at Sunburst! There was plenty of laughter, friendly competition, and lots of time to hang out together. It was a great chance to strengthen friendships, welcome new faces, and enjoy the winter fun as a group.



Now it's time to switch gears! **On March 8**, all youth in **3rd–12th grade** are invited to get their bowling game on at Mapleway Bowl! We'll kick off the afternoon by coming together to make Easter cards for some special friends, then head out for bowling and more time to connect and have fun.

Friends are always welcome to join us. The more, the merrier! Be sure to RSVP to Amy Drewa at amydrewa@economowocucc.org by **March 5** if you (or your youth) plan to attend.

We can't wait to see you there!

Youth News

Adult Mission Trip Opportunity

Do you enjoy working outdoors? Having purpose in your work? Enjoying fellowship and community? You are invited to attend the Daycholah Center's Work Weekend!

Where: Daycholah Center on Green Lake in Ripon, WI
 When: The weekend of May 15-17 (Friday-Sunday)
 The Center says it best: "The work weekends are a time to roll up your sleeves and help care for camp, tackling projects big and small that keep our grounds, cabins, and waterfront beautiful and welcoming. Whether you're planting flowers, painting cabins, splitting wood, or helping with seasonal cleanup, there's a task for every skill level. In between work sessions, enjoy good food, great company, and time by the lake. It's a meaningful way to give back, connect with others, and be part of the ongoing story of Daycholah Center."

There is no cost for volunteers and includes lodging and meals. A free-will donation is welcomed to help offset hospitality costs. If you are interested in attending please email or text Sara Moldenhauer at moldenhauer08@gmail.com or 262.719.7934

Mission Trip Fundraiser

Our 2026 Youth Mission Team has officially kicked off fundraising for an incredible international journey to Costa Rica! This year, our youth will serve alongside local pastors and youth, sharing God's love and supporting communities in meaningful, hands-on ways.

It is always our goal to make mission trips affordable and accessible for every student who feels called to serve. Through creative fundraising opportunities and the generous support of our church family we can make that happen together!



Let our Mission Team help make your Easter extra special! We'll fill plastic eggs and "egg" your yard or surprise a friend or family member's yard for some Easter fun. Eggs can also be picked up after worship on March 29.

Stop by the Mission Table in Fellowship Hall to place your order and check out the flyer for details.

Our popular flower fundraiser returns with beautiful, high-quality plants from Shady Lane Greenhouse! Choose from flats, 4½-inch annual pots, planted porch pots, hanging baskets, and more. You can even purchase a gift certificate if you prefer to shop directly at the greenhouse. Visit the Mission Table after worship to place orders, purchase gift certificates, or pick up an order form. Orders are due April 19 and will be available for pickup on May 8 or after worship on May 10.

Consider investing directly in our mission trip by purchasing a Stock Share in our Youth Mission Team. Shares are available in any amount \$5, \$20, \$50, or more. Your investment helps a young person serve where God is calling them, creating experiences that can be truly life-changing.

We invite you to prayerfully consider supporting our Youth Mission Team. Thank you for partnering with us as we prepare to serve, grow, and share God's love in Costa Rica!

Youth News

Confirmation

Our Confirmation journey is in full swing, and what an exciting season it has been! In February, our confirmands gathered for a fun-filled day of learning as we explored the Holy Sacraments. From thoughtful discussion to an interactive scavenger hunt around the church, the day was filled with laughter, discovery, and meaningful moments together.

This month, we'll dive into the history of the United Church of Christ and our own congregation's story. It's always powerful for our youth to see how they are part of something much bigger, a living, growing faith community that has been shaped by generations before them.

We can hardly believe how quickly this year is moving! It has been such a joy to witness these young people grow in confidence, curiosity, and faith in such a short time. God is certainly at work in and through them.



Camp Scholarships

I know it's only March but it's time to start registering for Church Camp! The UCC has two amazing church camps in Wisconsin: [Moon Beach](#) and [Daycholah](#). 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 is something for everyone. Options for all ages and interests, including parent-and-me camps and family camps. Whether you're looking for adventure, faith formation, or meaningful friendships, our church camps offer it all.

We are very blessed that our church is able to offer scholarships to all youth campers who complete a service log. This is a wonderful way to support participation and ensure every child has the opportunity to experience camp. Please click [here](#) to access the log.

For more information or if you have any questions, feel free to contact Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org.

Come support our church camps, have some fun, grow in faith, and make new friends. We can't wait to see you at camp!

HEARTS & HANDS

Celebrating ALL of God's Children

Fall 2026

Fall Registration is NOW Open! We have classes for ages 25 months - 4K!

August Friday Fun class "What's in My Garden" is open for registration!

To sign up for any of our classes, see our website:

<https://www.heartsandhandspreschool.org/programs>

FYI: To register for any of our classes, you will need to download and sign up for our classroom app, Brightwheel.

Learn more here



Thank you



THANK YOU Rich Steffans!

Rich has fixed our classroom door so it no longer grabs our rug while opening or closing. He also replaced our faucet and tightened our valves that were all leaking. Thanks RICH for always being willing to lend a hand!!

THANK YOU Sue Weber!

She has faithfully cleaned our classrooms on a daily basis since the beginning! We couldn't do it without her! Thanks SUE!

HEARTS & HANDS

Celebrating ALL of God's Children



We had a great couple of days sledding! New this year, we brought our hot cocoa bar outside with us! The kids and parents LOVED it!



Preschool Sunday

March 1st is Preschool Sunday!
Come join us and help us celebrate!



A few of our preschoolers came into class with hearts in their hair! So cute and adorable!



Friday Fun

Come join us for one of our Friday Fun classes! These classes are open to ALL children ages 25 months - 4 years old. For more information or to register, see our website: <https://www.heartsandhandspreschool.org/programs>

2025-2026 Friday Fun Class list

Class Topic	Dates	Length	Tuition	Notes
Love	February 20th- March 20th	5 weeks	\$150	This 5-week session will explore all that Love has to offer. God's love and those who love us will be some of the topics covered.
Celebrating God's Creation	April 10th- May 8th	5 weeks	\$150	This 5-week session takes the children through the creation story. God created day & night God created water, air, wind, clouds & sky God created flowers & trees God created birds & insects God created animals & people

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Coffee with the Pastor: March 3 (1PM - 3PM)

Worship Wednesday: March 4 (Noon at First Congregational, 5PM at Dr. Martin Luther)

Mediation and Prayer: March 5 (6PM)

Bible Study on the Gospel According to Matthew: March 5 (6:30PM)

Youth Group: March 8

Coffee with the Pastor: March 10 (1PM - 3PM)

Ladies Luncheon: March 10 (11:15AM)

Worship Wednesday: March 11 (Noon at First Congregational, 5PM at Dr. Martin Luther)

Mediation and Prayer: March 12 (6PM)

Bible Study on the Gospel According to Matthew: March 12 (6:30PM)

Confirmation: March 15

Coffee with the Pastor: March 17 (1PM - 3PM)

Worship Wednesday: March 18 (Noon at First Congregational, 5PM at Dr. Martin Luther)

Book Club: March 19 (1PM)

Mediation and Prayer: March 19 (6PM)

Bible Study on the Gospel According to Matthew: March 19 (6:30PM)

Coffee with the Pastor: March 24 (1PM - 3PM)

Ladies Luncheon: March 24 (11:15AM)

Worship Wednesday: March 25 (Noon at First Congregational, 5PM at Dr. Martin Luther)

Mediation and Prayer: March 26 (6PM)

Bible Study on the Gospel According to Matthew: March 26 (6:30PM)

Habitat for Humanity: March 28

Coffee with the Pastor: March 31 (1PM - 3PM)

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

Amy Drewa, Director of Children & Youth amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org

Karl Kay, Music Director karlkay@execpc.com

Cindy Meckl, Hearts & Hands Preschool themeckls@gmail.com