



NOVEMBER 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

Rummage Sale

Commitment Sunday

Tree of Hope

Holiday Bake Sale

Live Nativity & Prayer
Walk

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
OCONOMOWOC**

📍 815 S. Concord Road

📞 262-567-4461

✉ uccoffice@oconomowocucc.org



Pastor Matt Schneider-Adams

November brings an end to all kinds of things. Leaves on trees. Baseball season. Your lawn's weekly tax on your disposable time. Any last fantasy that summer is still even vaguely nearby. The amazing colors of the leaves on the trees are themselves a sign of a death, the end of the growing season, and the coming dormancy.

Endings can be wonderfully healing, like the ending of a bad relationship. Endings can be devastating, like the loss of one you have loved deeply for a long time. In the 21st chapter of Luke Jesus talks with his disciples about the coming time when the end comes to the Jerusalem Temple itself. Even the thought of such a thing was deeply disturbing to any faithful Jewish person, and certainly to Jesus' disciples. "Teacher, when will this happen, and what are the signs leading up to it?"

"Lots of bad things will happen, deceptive people claiming to be the Messiah, blaring 'I am he, now is the time!' Don't believe them! When they talk about wars and insurrections, do not be afraid, because these must happen first. Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes, famines, plagues, and signs in the skies." In Matthew 24 he says that these are actually birth pangs for something entirely new.

Let's hold right here. Lots of devastating things are happening in the world right now, from hurricanes to grotesque genocide, to the fraying of democracy, to the unraveling of sick people's medical care. The dark "end of days" scenarios play out on our screens and steal our sleep.

But, our solace does not lie in escaping to a bunker in the hills. As Jesus said, these are birth pangs. They bring significant pain to millions both here and across the earth. They stand in witness to a muscular human sin. But, also, they are not the end. The end is in God's hands. The power that creates stars on the edge of existence, the power that raised Jesus as the first-fruits of the redemption of all creation, this power has a purpose. And that purpose is life, joy, making all things new – NOT destruction. Focusing on the fear locks us into reaction.

But there are simple ways to erode that fear. Get outside and walk. For real. Pray in silence, and just listen to the sounds of creation. Go barefoot on the ground for a few minutes (It's not frozen yet!). Play a board game with your people. Read the scriptures – the parables of Jesus, psalms – or a good fast novel. Eat together with people. Bump up the volunteer hours. Engage with others to serve your community. These, and more like them, can reset our humanity, our peace. But they all involve laying down digital triggers, and taking up basic connection in the real world. 5 minutes will shift the balance. 30 minutes is better. An afternoon will be amazing.

Yes, there is a lot to be concerned about. And yes, avoidance is no solution. But re-grounding in the presence and real-world grace of God is not only possible, it is necessary to fuel the daily work of hope. God gives us the tools. When we use them, the scary gets smaller, and the goodness in this life grows clearer.

Moderator Musings

Being the Moderator gives me a unique view of church operations. I have the opportunity to see just how hard our church staff work. I review the many Ministries and Committees that are working day in and day out to further our church's missions. And I watch the budget numbers to make sure we have the money to pay our staff salaries and various expense invoices. It is 2026 budget time and rather than think about changing leaves and Packer football I am instead thinking about revenue/expense lines and pledging.

By this time you should have received your individual pledge cards and time/talent sheets. Please give both of these documents prayerful consideration. The church does not move forward without both your financial and time gifts. We all are impacted by rising prices. So is the church. If you can increase your pledge, great! If you can't we can all certainly understand. If you can't give financially maybe you can help by volunteering to teach church school, serve Fellowship, or usher on a Sunday. Every gift, whether financial or in time, is greatly appreciated.

As my sainted mother would say, every gift given to the church is another jewel in your heavenly crown.

Yours in Christ,

Chris Mol
Moderator, First Congregational UCC

Commitment Sunday



This year's annual Stewardship campaign will culminate on Sunday, **November 9th** during the regular church service. Prior to that the Stewardship Ministry is planning:

Promoting investing in the church both with your pledges but also with your time. Both are valuable and needed.

During the church service on Sunday, **November 9th** bringing your gifts forward in faith and gratitude.

The Stewardship Ministry is hoping that we can all "Invest in our Timeless Mission". We are all part of the church mission that runs from Jerusalem 2,000 years ago to present day Oconomowoc. That mission needs to be tended to and addressed one day at a time. Help First Congregational UCC do God's work both within the church and outside its four walls. Give prayer consideration to your 2026 pledge and time & talent sheet.

Your Stewardship Ministry,

Steve Zimmer, Pat Dempsey, Chris Mol

Reminder →

December-January articles are due
no later than **November 15** to
natalie@oconomowocucc.org



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, November 11

(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday 11/3)

Oriental Chicken Salad: Chopped greens, Napa cabbage, pea pods, carrots, cucumbers, grilled chicken, crispy wontons and Sesame Lime dressing, served with a cup of caramel swirl vanilla pudding.

Beef Quesadilla: Ground beef and cheese on a grilled tortilla with salsa and sour cream, served with fruit and a cup of caramel swirl vanilla pudding.

Tuesday, November 25

(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday 11/17)

Chicken Cordon Bleu sandwich: Grilled chicken, shaved ham, Swiss cheese, Dijon mustard sauce on a warm bun, served with fresh fruit and a pecan brownie.

Salmon Salad: Fresh greens and spinach, with carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, crumbled bacon, seared salmon, and lemon herb dressing, served with a pecan brownie.

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.

Welcome New Member, Linda Smith!

I was born in Milwaukee and was baptized and married by my uncle who was a Presbyterian Minister. I grew up in the Methodist church in Elm Grove. I graduated from WSU Whitewater and married my high school sweetheart. We shared 55 years together and raised 3 daughters, welcomed 3 sons-in-law, and have been blessed with 8 awesome grandchildren and one great grandchild. We traveled the United States with the girls and then went on to embrace the many lands, people and cultures of the world. My church family includes my friends at book club, bunco, the YMCA, neighbors and where I volunteer. I like to crochet, work puzzles, go for walks and dine out. I have been a visitor at this church for several years and look forward to my future here as a member of your congregation. Thank you for your kindness and warm welcome!





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.

November Singing Collection

The November Singing Collection benefits the Fisher House Wisconsin.



When a veteran or military service member receives care at the VA, the last thing families should have to worry about is how to support their loved one during hospitalization. For many families, the VA Medical Center is hours from home, and it is difficult to predict how long a stay might be. Not only are there financial sacrifices with travel and lodging, but there can also be mental and emotional burdens as families seek answers and wait for medical results.

Fisher House Wisconsin hopes to lessen these burdens so families can focus on helping their loved one heal. The Milwaukee VA Fisher House is conveniently located on the Milwaukee VA Medical Center grounds and offers 16 bedroom suites of varying layouts to accommodate single travelers or larger families, at no cost to them.

Designed with the interactions of guests in mind, guests experience the feeling of being home with a shared common kitchen, laundry room, dining room, living room, family room and a large patio and yard. Families share meals together and support each other through their joys and sorrows.

The first Fisher House opened in 1991 at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. Since then, the foundation has expanded, and over 99 Fisher Houses now operate at military bases and VA medical centers across the U.S., as well as in Germany and the United Kingdom. These Fisher Houses have provided more than 12 million days of lodging to over 500,000 families, saving them \$610 million in hotel costs and ensuring they have a supportive place to stay during their loved ones' medical treatments.



November 2 & December 7

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.



Holiday Giving



We will also be asking for families or individuals to volunteer to deliver the donated gifts to a family from December 14-17. Contact Susan Steffens (262) 227-9919 or steffens054@gmail.com) with any questions or if you are interested in helping deliver gifts to families.



sign
up

Share in the spirit of the holidays by helping those in need! Our congregation will be supporting several families this Christmas through the Waukesha County Christmas Clearing Council, and supporting seniors through Eras Senior Network. Beginning now, a virtual Giving Tree will be available [here](#) (QR Code above), indicating “wish list” items needed for donation. Opportunities are available for gifts ranging from \$10-50, so please sign up for one or more gifts. If you would like to donate a gift but prefer not to use the online sign up, please contact Rochelle Behling for assistance (262) 352-0736 or rochelle.behling@gmail.com)

All gifts should be delivered to church or Amy’s office by **December 7**. There will be a wrapping party after the service on **December 14th** to make the gifts festive. If you haven’t done this before, it’s a fun experience for the entire family!

The CCC has been helping make Christmas brighter for Waukesha County families since 1949. The CCC promotes and coordinates giving to families in need during the Christmas season, providing a clearinghouse that matches families with area groups, families, businesses, and individuals who wish to help families less fortunate in our community. In 2022, they coordinated giving to more than 2,100 families and 4,800 children. For more information visit <https://www.christmasclearingcouncil.org>.



Tree of Hope

Advent is a season for preparing our hearts for Christmas and for sharing Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love with those around us. This year, as we ADVENTure together, we invite you to help spread these gifts throughout our community through our Tree of Hope outreach.

Each Sunday during Advent, we'll focus on a different community organization. You can participate by bringing specific donation items or by offering a monetary gift. Place your contributions under the Tree of Hope in Fellowship Hall on the designated Sunday. Donations will be collected following worship each week.

November 30: Christmas Clearing Council

Help brighten a family's holiday with the gift of HOPE! Purchase one or more gifts for families in need right here in Waukesha County. You can click [here](#) (or use the QR code) to select a gift online or stop by the Tree of Hope after worship to sign up with a member of the Mission Ministry Team. All gifts are due by **December 7**.



December 7: ERAS Senior Network

Share the gift of PEACE with seniors and adults with disabilities living on fixed incomes in Waukesha County during this ADVENTure. Please consider donating \$10 gift cards from Pick n' Save or Walmart or a book of Forever Stamps. Place your donations under the Tree of Hope on **December 7** so they can be delivered the next day.

December 14: Bethany Recovery Center

Let's spread JOY (and a few undies) under our tree! Help the residents of Bethany Recovery Center by donating new underwear for women of all sizes. Drop your donation under the tree and help share some undie-niable joy this Advent season!

December 21: Helping Hands Fund

As Mary and Joseph ADVENTured to Bethlehem, they found themselves without a room. Many in our community face similar struggles today. This Advent, share the gift of LOVE by donating to our Helping Hands Fund, which helps provide emergency shelter, rent assistance, and other support to those in need during Advent and throughout the year.

December 24: YOU

Through this ADVENTure, we have given Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love to others. Now, come to the Tree of Hope and receive the greatest gift of all.....God's love and generosity to YOU.



Church Decorating

NOVEMBER 23

Decorating of our church for the holidays will take place on Sunday, November 23 following the church service. We look forward to having many helpers including families! Please plan to be a part of this wonderful joyful seasonal event, Further details will be announced as the time approaches.

Illuminated Prayer Walk and Live Nativity



**DECEMBER 5
5PM - 8PM**

FREE

Take an **ADVENTure** to the Manger



We're so excited to invite you on an ADVENTure this Christmas season as we once again present our Live Nativity and Prayer Walk on **Friday, December 5!**

This beloved event is more than a reenactment it's an ADVENTure of reflection and wonder, a chance to slow down and prepare our hearts for Christmas. Walk the illuminated path, pause at prayer stations, and encounter the beauty of the Nativity complete with live animals, carolers, and warm fellowship.

Help us spread the word! Invite your friends, family, and neighbors to join this meaningful journey. And consider being part of the story yourself by volunteering for a short hour-and-a-half shift and experience the joy of serving while still taking time to enjoy the evening.

If you attended last year, you know this isn't your typical Live Nativity. It's a sacred moment to come together as a church family and community, celebrating Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love as we prepare for the birth of Christ.

So come join us on this ADVENTure!! Walk, pray, sing, and celebrate the wonder of the season together.

[Click here to see how you can help and sign up!](#)



sign up

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 special events group. Christmas can be a very difficult time for families that have lost a loved one especially the first Christmas after their loss. Caring Connection gives a plant to families who have lost a love one during the current year to let them know we have not forgotten their loss and hopefully bring a little joy and comfort to them. We also send a Christmas card to the homebound to let them know they are not forgotten.

During the year we periodically send cards to anyone we feel is in need of a caring note. In addition we are here for any special event if help is needed. Please reach out if you are in need, we would be glad to help if we are able.

Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, November 30th 9:30AM

Every great adventure begins with preparation—and this season, we invite you to set out on a journey of hope, peace, joy, and love as we begin our ADVENTure on Sunday, November 30.

Just as every traveler gets ready for the road ahead, Advent is our time to prepare—our hearts, our homes, and our lives—for the coming of Christ and a new year walking in God's presence.

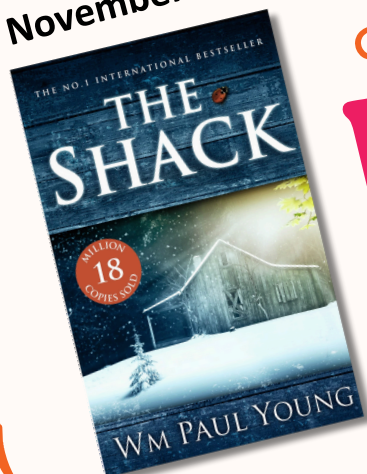
Our journey begins with a special Hanging of the Greens service on Sunday, November 30 during our 9:30 a.m. worship.

Together, we'll transform our worship space, adding greenery, lights, and symbols that tell the beautiful story of Christ's birth in their own special way. Along the way, we'll uncover the meaning behind these timeless traditions, sing our favorite carols, and listen anew to the gospel stories that remind us of God's promise fulfilled.

Come ready to begin the ADVENTure with your heart open, spirit eager, and eyes set on the light that leads us to Christmas.



November 20



COME AND JOIN US AT OUR

BOOK CLUB

January 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.





The Legacy Committee

Have you wondered about the Legacy Committee and its purpose?

We are a small committee that oversees two important funds in the life of our church: the Memorial Fund and the Endowment Fund.

✦ **The Memorial Fund** is usually a monetary gift given to the church in memory of a loved one who has passed away. These gifts support special projects within our church. Families may choose to designate their gift for a specific purpose or leave it unrestricted for the Committee to prayerfully decide.

✦ **The Endowment Fund** is different in that contributions may be given at any time. The principal remains invested, while the earnings are used to support the ongoing mission of the church.

We invite you to consider these funds as part of your financial planning. A gift to either fund is a meaningful way to express gratitude and thanksgiving toward God.

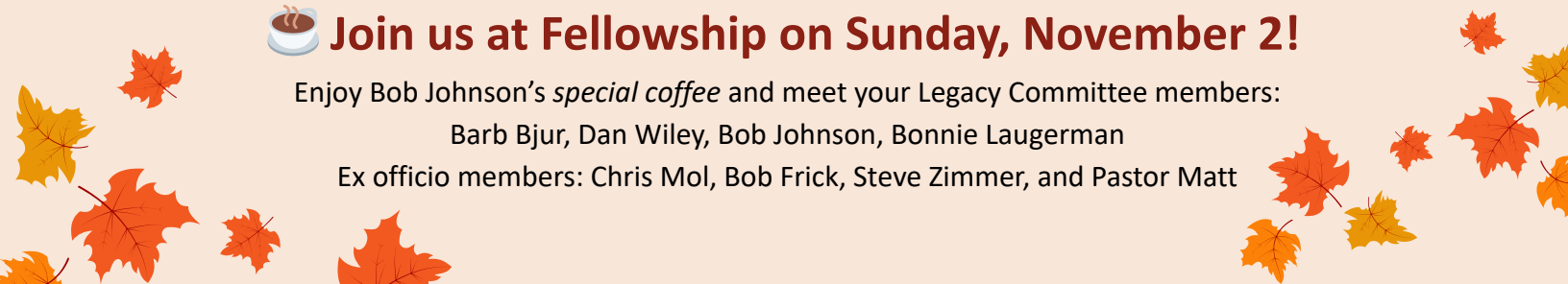


Join us at Fellowship on Sunday, November 2!

Enjoy Bob Johnson's *special coffee* and meet your Legacy Committee members:

Barb Bjur, Dan Wiley, Bob Johnson, Bonnie Laugerman

Ex officio members: Chris Mol, Bob Frick, Steve Zimmer, and Pastor Matt





HUGE Church Rummage Sale

sign up



The fall rummage sale is **Saturday, November 15!** Please stay after church this **Sunday and November 9** to help set up.

We could use volunteer help with the following items:

- After Jim Meyer's funeral, we need people to meet at church at **5PM on Nov 4** to set up tables in Fellowship Hall and move the items into the room from their holding spots. Drop by or sign up using the Sign-Up Genius above.
- Anyone interested in pre-sorting and hanging women's clothing, should meet anytime **Friday, October 31, between 10:30 am to 3:00 pm in the Unfinished Space.**
- Susan Steffens could use extra help in the Linens area. Lots of measuring to do!
- Bring in your tables and wagons/carts by this **Sunday, Nov 2.** Even card tables help!
- If muscles aren't your super power these days, we accept donations to feed the workers on the two days of set up as well as to cover the cost of classified ads.
- Grab a small yard sign for your yard after church this Sunday.

Please remind friends and family that we are accepting rummage through **Wednesday, Nov 12!** Beginning next **Monday, Nov 3**, rummage can be dropped off on the table in the entryway by the office.

Items not accepted: TVs, microwaves, concrete, asphalt, tires, motor oil, batteries, fuel oil, gas tanks, paint, hazardous waste, open items (personal items like lotions, shampoo, medical supplies, cleaning products, sanitizers), aerosol cans.

To sign up, use the Sign-Up Genius link above, or if you prefer, call or text Jill Riemann at 262-719-3823 to let us know how you'd like to help.

And don't forget — we also need a Clean-Up Crew! No matter your age or physical ability, there's a way for everyone to lend a hand. 😊

Thank yous on the next page! →

There are so many people who **work on rummage related projects throughout the year**. This seems like a good time to recognize them. When you see them, please thank them for their time and dedication to our church!

Karen Short, Katie Stevens, Lynn Zwaska, Mickey and Rob Kellner - distribute the donations we get year-round to the appropriate tables in the Unfinished Space. They've been doing this work for years now and it's made an incredible difference in taking some of the burden off the set-up crew.

Rich Perschon and Faith Gruss - feed the workers on the big Sunday Set Up days.

Pam and Mick Van Every - sort and organize the kitchen rummage area between sales. Mick also works with youth from the Alternative High School in our church to help provide them with opportunities to earn volunteer hours many of them need. AND, he is the hanger/bag/box organizer and garbage man!

Carolyn Crom and Marty Wiley - spend a lot of extra time organizing and researching the pricing of the beautiful boutique items. They also rope their husbands, Lloyd and Dan into helping with hauling tables, boxes, etc.

Susan Steffens and Barb Moeller - organize the linen area well before most are working on the sale. They measure them to figure out what size bed they fit. It's a big job!

Pat Evans, Sue Zajac, Barb Bleeker, Elaine Ludwig, Pat and Jenny Czerniak - hang and size oodles of women's clothing.

Cindy Meckl - does anything we ask of her and posts items on Marketplace. She just sold the older upholstered church chairs in 24 hours for over \$400!

Sue Weber - feeds the recycling bin for weeks after each sale.

Natalie Gruentzel - makes all communications look great and sends us (me!) a reminder when we're not on top of the things we need to be. :)

Deb Schuyler - drops off/picks up signs with the city of Oconomowoc. Helps spread the word on social media.

Amy Drewa - promotes the sale on the church electronic sign, clears out/puts back together the classrooms & keeps the shoppers fed.

Bob Frick, Bob Johnson, Dean Koenigs, Ken and Bryce Lau, Dave Lupton, Rich Steffens and Jim Zajac - are the go-to guys in terms of picking up donations whenever we need them.

Rosie McMickle, Sue Zajac and Erica Kiser - distribute yard signs for weeks on end

Gary and Pat Witkowski - pick up/drop off OJWC clothing racks

Brett Dailey (sometimes with other family members) - distributes and returns the large and heavy rummage signs you see around town

Dennis - from St. Vinnys, brings us items they are ready to toss that he believes just need the right buyer, trying to keep things out of landfills and helping to fill gaps in our donations to make our sale look full of buying possibilities.

Kris and John Kyle - take soiled items to help animals at HAWS

Randy Bourdo - donates a dumpster, saving the church hundreds of dollars!

If you were omitted on this list, please accept my apology and feel free to let me know. It is never my intention to slight anyone. **You're all AMAZING.**

Coffee with the Pastor

Tuesdays
1PM to 3PM

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

All are welcome!



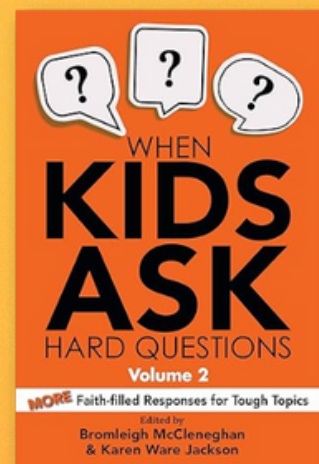
Parent BOOK CLUB

Kids can ask tough questions—about grief, injustice, gender, faith, and more. As parents, grandparents, and guardians, it can sometimes feel overwhelming to know how to respond.

We invite you to join our Parent Book Club as we read *When Kids Ask Hard Questions, Volume 2*. Together, we'll explore how to navigate these important conversations with our children—grounded in honesty, empathy, and Christian love.

We will meet monthly with flexible options; in person, online via Zoom, or through a text group or Google Chat.

Before we get started, we'd love to gauge your interest. If this sounds like something you'd like to be part of, please [click here](#) or scan the QR Code.



Illuminated Prayer Walk and Live Nativity



Take an **ADVENTure** to the Manger



Perfect for families & children of all ages!

First Congregational United Church of Christ - Oconomowoc
815 S Concord Road, Oconomowoc, WI 53066

DECEMBER 5th | 5PM - 8PM

CHILI • HOT CHOCOLATE • COOKIES • CAROLS



For more information: www.oconomowocucc.org/christmas

Annual Christmas Pageant



As we prepare for Advent and embark on the journeys of the holiday season, we invite you to Journey with us for our Annual Christmas Pageant on **Sunday, December 14 during the 9:30 a.m. worship service.**

This year, our children and youth will come together once again to offer a heartwarming and inspiring pageant, celebrating the true story of Christmas.

We are looking for children and youth to fill a variety of roles—both speaking and non-speaking—and we welcome volunteers to help with costumes, lunch/snack setup, and supervising children on the day of the pageant.

We will be rehearsing **Sunday, December 7, 10:00 a.m.–1:30 p.m.** with lunch provided for all lead and speaking roles and **Saturday, December 13, 12:00–3:00 p.m.** for all participants.

Sign-up using the QR code above, and find some time this season to join us on this ADVENTure of faith, fun, and community!

We can't wait to see our church family come together to create another memorable Christmas Pageant. For questions, contact Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org.



Christmas - Winter Centerpieces

This Christmas and winter season we are coming together as a church family to decorate our Fellowship Hall tables. Together we can make this area look festive! Join us in making a centerpiece. They can be simple, colorful, different, cute, funny, or imaginative. It is all about having fun working together at this special time of year.

WHO

Each centerpiece can be made by a family, a couple, individually, friends, Boy Scouts, Youth Group, etc.

WHAT

Create and design a homemade centerpiece for one of the Fellowship tables.

WHEN

The finished project should be put on one of the round tables on November 23rd.

WHERE

The completed centerpiece will be displayed on a Fellowship Hall table from November 23rd to early February.

IDEAS

- Search online for ideas
- Create your own Christmas or winter theme
- Re-do an existing centerpiece you may already have
- No Santas, etc. (these will be out until February)
- Make the centerpiece to match the size of the table placemat
- Make sure it has a 360° view for all to see
- Ask someone to join your group
- Be creative and have fun!
- Visit the Dollar Tree, Re-Sale shops, and our rummage sale for ideas and supplies

Ready to Join in?

Once you have your idea all set, please sign-up in Fellowship Hall or contact Barb Moeller at **262-490-7988 (text)** or email **gtmbjm@aol.com**.



Women's Annual Christmas Party

Thursday, December 18

Arrive at **5:00PM** for cocktails, dinner served at **6:00PM**

Rosecrans Pub at Shorehaven

The menu choice is Fresh Baked Atlantic Salmon: Lightly seasoned and oven baked, topped with a light Chardonnay Dill Sauce or Beef Tenderloin Tips in gravy with mushroom and onions, served with mashed potatoes and glazed carrots. Tiramisu for dessert. Meals include salad, rolls, tea & coffee.

The cost is \$22, cash or check ONLY, if you live there, it can be charged to your room.

Cocktails are separate, please bring cash.

This year we will be making donations to the food pantry or the Hebron house for helping men, women & children. To reserve your spot, please reach out to Carolyn

Crom at **262-567-9093** or **ckcrom@yahoo.com**.

***Christmas is right around the corner,
it's always a fun start to the holiday!***

Youth News

Sunday School News!

Last month, our children and youth had a special opportunity to serve communion for World Communion Sunday. They felt truly blessed and honored to be part of this sacred meal. We are grateful to everyone who graciously welcomed their participation. Many of our young participants shared the deep feelings they experienced while serving, noting moments where they sensed the Holy Spirit moving around them. They were inspired by the experience and are already eager to do it again!

Throughout October, our children in 4th grade and younger explored the Fruits of the Spirit, learning ways they can share love, joy, peace, and kindness with everyone they meet. Meanwhile, our middle and high school youth engaged in thoughtful discussions about their fears, discovering how God's presence brings comfort and courage in every situation.

As we enter this season of thankfulness, we often reflect on the blessings of family. In November, our younger children will dive into the story of Moses, exploring its lessons through fun activities, games, and creative projects that help them understand what the story means for us today. Our middle and high school youth will take part in a Thanksgiving series focused on Jesus' teachings about humility, exploring the deep connection between gratitude and humility in our daily lives.

We are truly thankful for the opportunity to walk alongside each child and youth on their faith journey. May God fill your hearts with countless blessings during this season of thanksgiving!

-Amy Drewa

Important Dates:

November 30- No Sunday School to celebrate the Hanging of the Greens



Youth News

Confirmation

This October, our confirmands gathered for their first session, embarking on an exciting journey of faith and self-discovery. Together, they began exploring their roots, reflecting on their personal faith, and discovering where they are on their own spiritual paths. They also delved into the Bible and enjoyed building friendships through fun games and interactive activities.

In November, the adventure continues as they head to Daycholah, a UCC retreat center in Green Lake, for a confirmation retreat with youth from across Wisconsin. It promises to be a weekend filled with faith-building, relationship-building, and a little relaxation along the beautiful shores of Green Lake.

Working with this group has been an absolute joy, and we are thrilled to see where their faith journeys will take them. Please keep our confirmands in your prayers as they continue to explore, question, and grow in their faith.



Youth Group News

Our Youth Groups are buzzing with energy this fall! In October, our High School youth spent an afternoon serving at the Wildlife in Need Center, helping clean cages and prepare for the arrival of new animals ready for rehabilitation. Meanwhile, our Junior Youth had a blast creating festive jack-o-lanterns and enjoying some fun fellowship time together.

Looking ahead to November, our Junior Youth will gather on November 9 to help set up for the Rummage Sale. This is always a favorite event—they get to discover unique treasures while lending a helping hand! Our High School Youth will meet on November 16 for an evening of fun, fellowship, and delicious s'mores around the fire.

These gatherings are wonderful opportunities for our youth to build friendships, strengthen their faith, and enjoy meaningful experiences together. If your youth, grandchild, or friends would like to join in the fun, they are more than welcome! Registration is easy just [click here](#) to sign up.

Youth News

Mission Trip

We're thrilled to announce that our 2026 Summer Youth Mission Trip will take us international.....all the way to Germany!

Every four years, it's been a cherished tradition here at First Congregational UCC to offer an international mission experience, giving every youth the opportunity to take part in one of these life-changing journeys during their high school years.

Next summer, we'll embark on an adventure of faith and service as we travel to Germany to explore the UCC's long-standing partnerships and serve in a variety of meaningful ways. While details are still coming together, we know this trip will lead us to a community where God is calling our gifts and talents to make a difference.



This opportunity is open to all youth entering 9th grade through graduating seniors in 2026.

If you're interested in attending or would simply like more information as plans develop, please [click here](#) to sign up.

Signing up now helps us plan and estimate group size, so even if you're just considering it, please add your name today! Final registration will take place after the first of the year.

For questions or more information, contact Amy Drewa at amydrewa@economowocucc.org.

Mission Trip Fundraisers



Rummage Sale Food Booth

Our Summer Youth Mission Team will be hosting a Food Booth during the Church-Wide Rummage Sale on **Saturday, November 15!** Come hungry and enjoy a delicious lunch while you shop. All proceeds from the food booth will go directly toward supporting the team's 2026 Mission Trip to Germany.

It's the perfect opportunity to fill your bags and your belly while helping our youth prepare for their international adventure of faith and service! Be sure to invite your family and friends to stop by, browse the treasures, and grab a bite to eat. If you'd like to donate items to the food booth, please [click here](#).

Youth News



We're thrilled to announce the return of a beloved tradition....our BIG One-Day Holiday Bake Sale! Mark your calendars for **Saturday, December 13, from 9:00–11:00 AM** and join us for a morning filled with sweet treats, holiday cheer, and community spirit. Every cookie, bar, and tart helps support our 2026 International Summer Youth Mission Trip!

Spread the word and invite your friends, family, and neighbors for it's the perfect way to kick off the season and stock up on holiday goodies while supporting a great cause.

Want to help make this event even sweeter? We're looking for bakers to fill our tables with homemade holiday favorites!

Golden Whisk-ers: Gather a team of friends or family and bake 10, 20, or 30 dozen treats.

Silver Whisk-ers: Fly solo and bake 2–5 dozen on your own.

Our goal is to feature 25 different kinds of cookies, bars, tarts, and candies creating a festive display that's a feast for the eyes and the taste buds! You can bake at home or reserve the church kitchen (limited spots available so please contact the church office to sign up).

Sign up in Fellowship Hall or email Amy Drewa at amydrewa@economowocucc.org.

As we journey through Advent and look ahead to our summer mission trip, may the spirit of Christmas and generosity fill our hearts and our cookie trays!

We're also seeking volunteers to help with set-up, serving, and clean-up. Every helping hand makes a difference! [Click here](#) or use the QR code to see how you can help.



HEARTS & HANDS

Celebrating ALL of God's Children



Eleanor Updates

Eleanor continues to do well, and the goal is to be home by Halloween! What a beautiful miracle she is! Keep those prayers coming!!

[CaringBridge page](#)

[Apparel shop](#)

[GoFundMe page](#)

Whatever prayers and support you can give this family is much appreciated!

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
Thankfulness	November 7th-21st	3 weeks	\$90	This 5-week session takes the children through the discovery of thankfulness :What does it mean to be thankful? What are we thankful for? What is Thanksgiving? Why do we celebrate Thanksgiving?
Christmas Friday Fun	December 12th	1 week	\$40	Join us for a special day of Christmas Fun! Christmas crafts and Christmas cookie making! This class will run from 9-noon
Winter	January 9th-February 6th	5 weeks	\$150	Celebrate winter and all that makes it wonderfull
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

HEARTS & HANDS

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MUFFINS FOR MOMS

WE LOVE THIS ANNUAL TRADITION OF MAKING MUFFINS AND INVITING MOMS TO CLASS! HERE ARE THE RECIPES WE USED. THE KIDS HELPED MAKE THEM (SO THEY'RE EASY TO MAKE) AND BOTH RECIPES WERE DELICIOUS!



INGREDIENTS

- 3 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 2 (15 oz) can pumpkin puree
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup oil
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar (white or mix of white and brown)

Pumpkin Muffins

Makes at least 24 muffins

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Line muffin tin with liners or grease with nonstick spray.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and pumpkin pie spice.
3. In a large bowl, whisk pumpkin puree, oil, eggs, and sugar until smooth.
4. Add dry ingredients to wet mixture and stir just until combined. Don't overmix.
5. Fill muffin cups about $\frac{3}{4}$ full using a scoop or spoon.
6. Bake for 30–35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.
7. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Note: we put the leftover streusel topping from the blueberry muffin recipe on top of these also!

HEARTS & HANDS

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INGREDIENTS

Batter

0.75 cup salted butter, melted, half a stick of butter
 2.25 cup granulated sugar
 0.75 cup oil (we used grapeseed)
 6 large eggs
 6 cups all-purpose flour
 6 teaspoons baking powder
 3 teaspoon vanilla extract
 2.25 cup milk (we used whole milk)
 1.5 teaspoon salt
 6 cups blueberries (fresh or frozen)

Streusel Topping (made enough for 60 muffins!)

1.5 cup salted butter, softened
 2 cup all-purpose flour
 1 cup granulated sugar
 0.5 teaspoon salt

Blueberry Muffins

Makes at least 36 muffins

INSTRUCTIONS

Prep: Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Line a muffin tin with baking cups or lightly grease each cup.

Mix Wet Ingredients: In a large bowl, whisk together the sugar, melted butter, oil, eggs, and vanilla until smooth.

Add the milk and whisk again to combine.

Mix Dry Ingredients: In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt.

Combine: Add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture. Stir gently with a spatula or wooden spoon just until most of the flour is incorporated. A few streaks are fine!

Prep Blueberries: Toss the blueberries with 2 teaspoons of flour to help keep them from sinking. Gently fold them into the batter.

Rest: Let the batter rest for 15 minutes to help the muffins rise tall.

Fill Muffin Cups: Divide the batter evenly among the muffin cups, filling each about $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Top with a few extra blueberries if you like.

Make Streusel: In a medium bowl, combine the softened butter, flour, sugar, and salt until crumbly. Sprinkle about 1 tablespoon of streusel over each muffin.

Bake: Bake for 22–25 minutes, until the tops are golden and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Cool: Let muffins cool in the pan for 5–10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Or enjoy them while still warm!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Coffee with the Pastor: November 4 (1PM - 3PM)

Confirmation Retreat: November 7 - 9

Work Saturday: November 8 (9:00AM)

Stewardship Sunday: November 9

Youth Group: November 9

Ladies Luncheon: November 11 (11:15AM)

Coffee with the Pastor: November 11 (1PM - 3PM)

Rummage Sale: November 15 (8AM - 2PM)

Youth Group: November 16

Coffee with the Pastor: November 18 (1PM - 3PM)

Book Club: November 20 (1:00PM)

Church Decorating: November 23 (after worship)

Ladies Luncheon: November 25 (11:15AM)

Coffee with the Pastor: November 25 (1PM - 3PM)

Thanksgiving - Office Closed: November 27 - 28

Hanging of the Greens: November 30 (9:30AM)

Coffee with the Pastor: December 2 (1PM - 3PM)

Live Nativity & Prayer Walk: December 5 (6PM - 8PM)

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal: December 7 (11:00AM)

Ladies Luncheon: December 9 (11:15AM)

Coffee with the Pastor: December 9 (1PM - 3PM)

Holiday Bake Sale: December 13 (9AM - 11AM)

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal: December 13 (Noon)

Christmas Pageant: December 14 (9:30AM worship)

Wrap Sunday: December 14 (after worship)

Coffee with the Pastor: December 16 (1PM - 3PM)

Ladies Christmas Party: December 18

Christmas Eve Worship: December 24 (4PM & 11PM) Office Closed

Christmas Day: December 25 (Office Closed)

New Years Brunch: December 28

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