



APRIL 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

Easter Sunday

Rummage Sale

Mental Health
Sunday

Youth Mission Team
Flower Sale

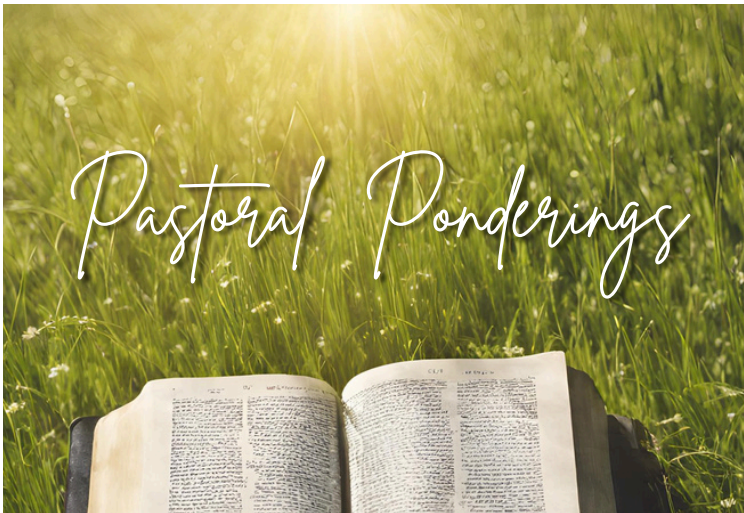
Egg My Yard

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
OCONOMOWOC**

📍 815 S. Concord Road

📞 262-567-4461

✉ uccoffice@oconomowocucc.org



by Pastor Matt

The calendar is moving us closer to the heart of the matter—Easter Sunday is April 5 this year. We're all lookin' for a little Good News, so it can't come soon enough. But between here and there lies a part of the story we'd rather skip: the clink of silver and betrayal under cover of night. The last meal in the upper room. The anguished prayer in the garden. The trial, the mocking, the leaders dodging responsibility. And the crowd—longing for a display of power, then shouting for Jesus' death when he refuses to play the part.

Easter is close enough to touch, but the road to it runs straight through what we might call a swamp of ugly. Its truest name is death. It's a reality many of us spend a lifetime trying to avoid. Sometimes it terrifies us; sometimes it arrives quietly; sometimes it even feels like relief. It comes through what we can't control—disease, accidents, genetics—and through what we can—our fears, habits, and choices. After the Last Supper, Jesus enters the Garden of Gethsemane. Every instinct must have been telling him, Run away!. Instead, he prays, "Not my will, but yours be done." He chooses to walk into that swamp, into the heart of death itself. He knows his future is in God's hands—and that authentic life cannot be found by avoiding death or by overpowering it with human strength.

The theologian Andrew Root puts it this way: the church is not a community that exists to prove how good or moral it is. The church is a people willing to face death for the sake of life. Christianity, at its core, is about entering into death—personal and social—to encounter the God who brings life.

This is not easy. The power of death can freeze us. or send us chasing illusions. But the story doesn't end there. Against every fear, the church dares to say, "Christ is risen!"



That defiant hope echoes down two thousand years. It sustains refugees walking miles toward safety. It lifts those caught in addiction. It shelters the vulnerable and begins the slow work of healing deep divisions. In the resurrection, God is making all things new.

This is the good news we've been waiting for. But we only grasp its power if we're willing to walk the road that leads to it.

So come. Walk the story with us all the way to its surprising, life-giving end. Join us this Easter Sunday as we gather to celebrate the risen Christ—and discover again that even in the face of death itself, God makes all things new.

Moderator Musings

by Deb Bursinger



Back in January, many of you likely developed resolutions or goals for 2026. How are you doing on those resolutions now that we are almost 3 months into the year? Often by this time, many of us have already decided to scale back or completely dispose of them. It is hard to keep focused on those goals when we are only accountable to ourselves and when other priorities of daily life intrude.

The Leadership Team engaged in robust and thoughtful conversations about the Team's goals for 2026 during our February and March meetings. We were challenged to establish SMART goals - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. We met that challenge in developing the following goals for the Team:

1. Encourage the church's Ministries to identify one to three goals by May 1, 2026. We will continue to support the Ministries in implementation of the goals through regular communication between the Leadership Team and the Ministries regarding their progress on meeting those goals.

2. Encourage the WISE (Welcoming/Inclusive/Supportive/Engaged) team to develop an action plan.

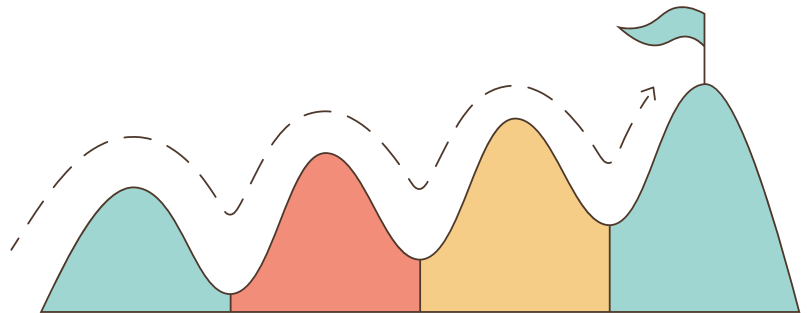
3. Establish priorities and oversee implementation of the work projects to repair and upgrade the church's facilities, systems, and property. In all phases of this process, keep the congregation informed of the progress.

4. Form a Long Range Planning Committee in accordance with Article 10, Section C, paragraph 5 of our Constitution.

Further, we discussed that there are some underlying values or objectives that will be considered in all of our actions and discussions including, deepening engagement with our community, fostering growth in member engagement, and emphasizing the importance of our Relational Covenant in all communications.



We will depend on all of you to help us achieve these goals. We are also accountable to you to achieve our goals and will provide regular updates on our progress. Please feel free to contact me or any of the Leadership Team members to discuss the goals and our progress.



Caring Connection



The Prayer Shawl Ministry arm of the Caring Connection functions with the support of volunteers who make the individual wraps, to be shared with whomever needs warmth, loving support or handheld courage. Knit (or crocheted) with love being the only requirement, volunteers are invited to drop off the wraps in the church office or put them in the music room closet. Team volunteers replenish, and seasonally rotate, the supply on the rack just outside the sanctuary.

Members and guests are invited to take a wrap, for themselves or for someone they know would appreciate it. Over the many years we have been providing this outreach, our church family has shared *several hundred* shawls/wraps with individuals and groups, to include cancer centers.

Shawl wraps or lap covers are reminders that someone cares!



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 14

(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday, 4/6)

Avocado Cheeseburger with melted Cheddar, roasted garlic mayo, lettuce, tomato, onion, fresh fruit and a caramel brownie.

Chicken Caesar Salad with chopped Romaine, tomatoes, Parmesan cheese, croutons, grilled chicken and side of Caesar dressing, with a caramel brownie

Tuesday, April 28

(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday, 4/20)

Crispy Chicken Club, on toasted Sourdough with mayo, lettuce, tomato, Cheddar, fried chicken, bacon, and a peanut butter chocolate chip cookie

Beef Taco Salad, chopped greens, onions, tomatoes, cheese, taco beef, crispy tortilla strips, side of salsa ranch, and a peanut butter 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.

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.

April Singing Collection

April’s Singing Collection is for the Lake Area Free Clinic in Oconomowoc. Since the doors opened in July, 2001, the Lake Area Free Clinic has welcomed individuals and families who lack health/dental insurance and/or whose income is at or below the federal poverty level. Many of these individuals work full-time, but are either not offered health insurance, or cannot afford the premiums.

Adolescents 16 years or older that live in Waukesha Co. or within the boundaries of the Oconomowoc Area School District are also eligible. Services cover a wide range of services such as preventative care, labs, radiology, chronic disease management, dental exams, root canals, same day emergency dental care, etc. The list goes on!



Since their opening, the Lake Area Free Clinic has served more than 21,000 patients with medical or dental needs and provided over 110,000 patient visits. All the medical professionals donate their time to the clinic. Over 168,000 hours have been volunteered! Let’s give generously this month to this amazing clinic that has helped so many of our Lake Country friends and neighbors!



April 5 & May 3

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.



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.



HUGE Church Rummage Sale

**Saturday, April 25
8:00AM - 2:00PM**



All church members are invited to help set up the sale on **Sundays, April 12 and 19 after the church service. Lunch will be served, so sign up today!**

The link below will also let you sign up to help sort and price the two weeks prior to the sale and the day of the sale.

Please complete the sign-up genius!

sign up



Areas of greatest need:

- We need a Room Ambassadors for the Infant Room and the Boys Room. We could also use some help in Artwork and Frames.

If you cannot help with your time, we welcome funds to help offset the cost of feeding our volunteers, for classified advertising and for the many supplies we use during the sale.

Please spread the word and encourage your friends and family to donate their used items to our sale. If they need a pick up we will do our best to make it happen.

Yard signs will be available for pick up after church on **Sunday, April 12.**

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.



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



Place your order at the Mission table in Fellowship Hall or scan the QR code.

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE 2026 YOUTH SUMMER MISSION TRIP!



2026 Youth Mission Team Flower Sale

Profits from this sale go to our 2026 International Youth Mission Trip to Costa Rica.



**Gift certificates
new this year!**



Place your order or purchase your gift certificate at the Mission table in Fellowship Hall or scan the QR code below.

*Orders are due **April 19** and will be ready for pick up on **May 8**.*

All flowers are from Shady Lane Nursery



Rain or
Shine

9th Annual Bald Eagle Car Show



Saturday, June 20, 2026

10a.m. - 2 p.m.

First Congregational UCC Grounds
815 S. Concord Road, Oconomowoc

9 a.m. cars & bikes arrive

Food · Beer · Music · Raffles



Bikers Welcome



\$10 Entrance Fee

DASH PLAQUE & GOODIE BAG

CONTACT: Andy Meckl 262-720-1876

EMAIL: TheMeckls@gmail.com

First Congregational UCC of Oconomowoc

815 S. Concord Road, Ocon., WI 53066

www.oconomowocucc.org



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

Platinum Sponsors



Gold Sponsors

Groskopf Construction

Oconomowoc Realty



BREAK THE STIGMA



The WISE Committee presents

MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY



APRIL 26TH
DURING 9:30AM WORSHIP



Oconomowoc Community Choir will be joining us for worship with special music.

Youth News

Sunday School News!

We begin this month by celebrating the holy joy of Easter together in worship on Sunday, April 5. There will be NO Sunday School on Easter, as we gather as a church family for this special day. The worship service will be filled with excitement and maybe even a surprise! Easter-themed worship bags will be available to help keep children engaged and add to the fun. We can't wait to celebrate this joyful day with everyone!

Following Easter, our 3-year-olds through 4th graders will explore how Jesus called His disciples. We will dive into a variety of stories, learning about the first disciples and how they responded to Jesus' call. These stories remind us that each of us is invited to follow Jesus and be His disciple in our daily lives.

Together, we will experience these stories through fun and interactive games and activities that help us understand what it means to follow Jesus and support one another, just as the disciples did. Our hope is that each child will experience the joy of being part of Jesus' mission both in story and in action.

Our middle and high school youth will focus on the powerful truth that through Jesus' death and resurrection, all things can be made new. Through engaging discussions and interactive activities, they will explore how God never loses hope and continues to bring new life to the world and to each of us.

We look forward to a month filled with faith, fun, and discovery as our children and youth continue to grow as disciples of Christ!



Youth Group

Wow...we have some talented bowlers in our youth group! Last month, our youth from 3rd through 12th grade came together for an afternoon of bowling and fellowship. There was plenty of fun, friendly competition, and laughter, and it was wonderful to see our youth supporting one another, no matter their age.

As we swing into spring, it's time to spring into youth group! Join us for a day of service and community at our Church-Wide Rummage Sale Set Up on Sunday, April 19, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. We'll help sort and set up rummage sale items which is a favorite event for our youth, not just for the treasures they might find, but for the chance to come together with their church family and friends to support our church.

Participants are welcome to bring friends and family! To ensure we have enough lunch for everyone, please RSVP to Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org by April 15. We can't wait to see you there and spring into action together!



Youth News

Church Camp

It's hard to believe how quickly summer is approaching! Have you made plans for or with your kids or even grandkids yet? If you're still exploring options, or looking to add something meaningful and fun, consider Church Camp!

The UCC offers two incredible camp experiences right here in Wisconsin: [Moon Beach](#) in St. Germain and [Daycholah](#) Center in Green Lake. Registration is now open, and camps tend to fill up quickly, so be sure to secure your spot soon!

Between both locations, there are programs for all ages and interests, including youth camps, family camps, and parent or grandparent-and-child experiences. It's a wonderful opportunity for kids to grow in faith, build friendships, and enjoy the outdoors. Be sure to check out the camp websites and register early!

We're also grateful that our church offers scholarships for youth campers who complete a service log. [Click here](#) to access the log and learn more about how to apply.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org.

We hope your family can take part in this meaningful and memorable summer experience!



Confirmation

Last month, our confirmands explored the roots of our church, First Congregational UCC of Oconomowoc, and its journey into the United Church of Christ denomination. We were especially blessed to welcome guest speaker Lois Jackson, who shared meaningful personal stories from her many years as a member of our congregation. It was a wonderful opportunity for our confirmands to hear firsthand how deeply our church's history is woven into the life of our community.

This month, our confirmands will travel to Cedar Valley in West Bend, where they will take an important step in their faith journey by writing and professing their individual faith statements. They have worked incredibly hard to reach this milestone, and I am so proud of each of them. Over this past year, they have grown closer as a group, and their faith has deepened in beautiful ways. Please keep them in your prayers as they enter this next chapter of their journey.

Be sure to mark your calendars for May 17, when we will celebrate these confirmands during worship. They will share their joint faith statement and participate in the Rite of Confirmation, including the laying on of hands. It will be a meaningful and joy-filled day for our entire church family!

International Mission Trip Fundraisers



Mission Trip Fundraisers

Our Youth Mission Team is excitedly continuing their fundraising efforts for the 2026 International Mission Trip! A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has already supported this year's group. This year, 18 participants will be traveling to Costa Rica to serve alongside local pastors and youth, sharing God's love and supporting communities in meaningful, hands-on ways. From light construction work to building relationships, our team is eager to serve wherever God and the community call us.

We are committed to making these mission trips accessible for all participants. With the support of our fundraising efforts and the generosity of our church family, we can do this together! Our mission team relies entirely on fundraisers to help offset expenses, so we invite you to support us in one or more of the following ways:

Plant Sale

With warmer weather approaching, it's time to start planning your flower beds and pots for the summer! Our Youth Mission Team is offering a variety of flats, 4½-inch annual pots, planted porch pots, hanging baskets, and more, all sourced from Shady Lane Nursery. You can also purchase a gift certificate to pick out your own flowers at the nursery. Stop by the Mission Table in Fellowship Hall after church now through April 19 to place your order. Orders will be available for pickup on May 8 or after worship on May 10. You can also order online [here](#).



Stock Shares

Consider becoming an investor in our 2026 International Summer Youth Mission Trip by purchasing a share of stock. Shares can be purchased for any amount (\$5, \$20, \$50, or more) at the Mission Table after worship. Your investment helps a participant serve in a way that could be life-changing. Stockholders will also receive an invitation to the Stock Shareholders Breakfast in the summer. Please prayerfully consider supporting our Youth Mission Team today!



Annual Rummage Sale Food Booth

During our Church-Wide Rummage Sale on April 25, the Youth Mission Team will be offering a food booth featuring BBQ, hot dogs, chips, and drinks. Stop by to enjoy a meal and support our mission team!

Thank you for helping our youth serve, grow, and make a difference in the world!

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>

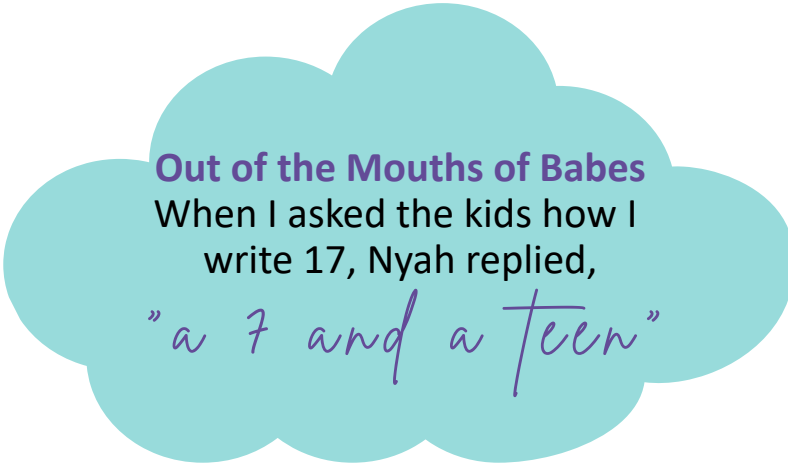
FYI: To register for any of our classes, you will need to download and sign up for our classroom app, Brightwheel.

Learn more here



THANK YOU!

Thank you to all of you who joined us for Preschool Sunday!



Out of the Mouths of Babes

When I asked the kids how I write 17, Nyah replied,

"a 7 and a teen"

AUGUST FRIDAY FUN 2026

WHAT IS IN MY GARDEN??

Enjoy 3 Fridays full of garden fun!!



August 7, 14 & 21

9-11 AM

Cost: \$90

OPEN TO ALL CHILDREN AGES 25 MONTHS - 4 YEARS OLD

REGISTER HERE: [HTTPS://SCHOOLS.MYBRIGHTWHEEL.COM/SIGN-IN?](https://schools.mybrightwheel.com/sign-in?)

[REDIRECT_PATH=FORMS/6CBE4352-A11D-440F-87F8-9747458272D7/SELF-SERVICE](https://schools.mybrightwheel.com/sign-in?REDIRECT_PATH=FORMS/6CBE4352-A11D-440F-87F8-9747458272D7/SELF-SERVICE)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Maundy Thursday at Good Shepherd: April 2 (7PM)

Easter Sunday: April 5 (9:30AM)

Coffee with the Pastor: April 7 (1PM - 3PM)

RISE and Cook: April 10 (5PM)

Ladies Luncheon: April 14 (11:15AM)

Coffee with the Pastor: April 14 (1PM - 3PM)

Book Club: April 16 (1PM)

RISE at Whelans: April 18 (12PM)

Confirmation Class: April 18-19

Youth Group: April 19

Coffee with the Pastor: April 21 (1PM - 3PM)

Rummage Sale: April 25 (8AM-2PM)

Mental Health Sunday: April 26 (9:30AM)

RISE Art Class: April 27 (4PM)

Ladies Luncheon: April 28 (11:15AM)

Coffee with the Pastor: April 28 (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