

## May 2022 Branches Newsletter



### First Congregational United Church of Christ

*To engage and Inspire All Generations to Connect with God through Love and Service*

815 S. Concord Rd.  
Oconomowoc, WI 53066  
[www.oconomowocucc.org](http://www.oconomowocucc.org)

Phone: 262.567.4461  
Fax: 262.567.5533  
Email: [uccoffice@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:uccoffice@oconomowocucc.org)

**Pastoral Ponderings . . .****A frequent topic in all churches ...**

*I am active in my ministerial association and the most frequent topic at our meetings and at lunch, and at regional convocations and national conferences is how to keep the church growing from within. This means keeping our current members while at the same time growing. Too often individuals and families join but then either leave, or rarely attend, because the church does not meet their needs. And the consensus on why seems to be that a church does not keep up culturally. In the WCA association there is only one church out of approximately twenty-five that is planning a new building. In the last 10 years four churches have sold their buildings. Two are in the process of closing. One is searching for a new minister and has received no applications! The rest are ok to good. How, if at all, does this information apply to this church, First Congregational Church UCC?*

*First, look to new church starts in this community in the last few years. Are they thriving? Are they large? Are they culturally relevant? Are they museums? Are they keeping alive traditions that died decades ago?*

*How you personally respond to these questions determine the future of this church.*

*Second, as soon as summer arrives, and it is coming fast, we will take little time to think about church. So perhaps in the next ten days you may wish to spend some time thinking about the following questions, and then discuss them with fellow members:*

*During this pastoral transition what is most important to you?*

*How is First Church adapting for the future needs of you and your household? And for other members? And for all ages from the very young, through teen years, to young singles, to young married with children, to the older?*

*What can First Church do to adapt for your future needs? And for other members? And for all ages from the very young, through teen years, to young singles, to young married with children, to the older?*

*How is First Church adapting for your spiritual vitality?*

*What can First Congregational Church do to adapt for your spiritual vitality?*

*What broader community cues are we sensing that will help our congregation adapt to the current needs of our community and to our congregation?*

*If we are not where you feel we should be, then what is holding us back?*

*When a candidate for the Settled Pastorship looks at the videos for each service at First Church what two or three key 'values' does the candidate see just by watching the services?*

*Both Lay Leadership and I are interested in your responses. Each member of this church must continually invite God into our Church so it becomes His Church. Otherwise, we will become petrified. Petrified branches. Petrified of any change and growth. Remember Jesus' analogy to the vine and the branches? A vine is living, growing, vibrant, constant seed producing, and bird inviting. In the WCA what happened to the churches that closed and are in the process of considering closing? No longer alive, dead or decreasing, listless, drying up, and unappealing.*

*We will celebrate Jesus' Ascension on May 22 and the Holy Spirit at Pentecost on June 5, 2022. This is what Luke wrote in the Book of Acts. "In the first book, Theophilus, [which is Luke's Gospel] I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'" Acts 1:1-5.*

*My prayer is that the Holy Spirit always be with this church. But we have to work for it!*

*-- a Reflection by Pastor Barry*

*My email is [barrywszymanski@sbglobal.net](mailto:barrywszymanski@sbglobal.net)*

## Congratulations to Pastor Amy Drewa!



Amy completed a four-year UCC sponsored course entitled the Lay Academy in order to assist this church's then ordained minister.

The needs of a 400 person church are great. Amy had been granted Licensure by the UCC for this church in 2017, but through clerical miscalculation of dates it was not renewed in 2021. Because I am part-time and live some distance away I requested that Amy reapplied for licensure. Lay Leadership, through our Moderator and I, endorsed Amy's reapplication. She submitted additional essays about her spiritual life, talents, and current work as additions to what she had previously submitted to the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, Southwest Association and Southeast Association (Waukesha & Burlington Districts) and to the SEA Church & Ministry Team.

It was great when we heard that Rev. Ruth Costello, Co-Chair of UCC SEA Church & Ministry Team announced on April 9:

*"Amy, We have reviewed your request for licensure; after reviewing your supporting materials, the Church & Ministry Team voted to approve your request. As is typical of licensures, we will review this request one year from now to see if the needs of the church still require such a licensure. We are grateful for your ministry! Grace and peace be with you."*

Then on April 21 Rev. Ted Drewsen the UCC Bridge Associate Conference Minister wrote to me that UCC licensed pastors use the title "Pastor"; "If she were to use her title to sign a letter, it would Pastor Amy D."

What can Pastor Amy now do in her new responsibilities? She can now officiate as a minister at Baptisms and at Holy Communion. I have asked her to employ her minister's duties at weddings and funerals if I am not available. I have also asked her to visit the sick when I am not able to. I hope everyone in this church appreciates and applauds Pastor Amy's past dedication and now new responsibilities to fulfill the ministerial needs of this church! -- *Pastor Barry*

## Mission Ministry—Spring Project: Soles for Jesus

It's May! Time for our amazing Mission outreach opportunity, SOLES FOR JESUS!! SFJ collects new and gently used shoes (all sizes) for the people of Africa who desperately need them.

We have already been collecting shoes (bins are located in Fellowship Hall and near the Office). Thank you to those who have donated.

Those who receive shoes also hear the message of Jesus and are given personal copies of the Gospel message written in their own language.

Along with collecting shoes, we would like to raise \$1.00 for every pair of shoes (it costs \$2 to ship each pair). There will be a table in Fellowship Hall between the worship services during the month of May.

There will be informational videos playing before worship on the small TV in fellowship hall, and after worship on the big screen in Fellowship Hall.

Our Sunday School classes will be focusing on this Mission during the month of May. SFJ believes that sharing shoes along with the message of Jesus has the power to change a life. For more information go to [www.solesforjesus.org](http://www.solesforjesus.org) As with all of our Mission work, Let's be difference makers!



## Youth News

### Join us for Vacation Bible School on Adventure Island!

At Adventure Island VBS, children and youth 3 years old-4<sup>th</sup> grade will enjoy an interactive, energizing, Bible based good time on their quest for God's great light. They will become Explorers and discover how God's light shines on us and how we can reflect that light as we live each day. After a high-energy Opening Assembly time, the Explorers make their way to the Bible Story Station. Interactive Bible lessons reveal Pathfinders to equip your Explorers for an active life with God. The students will expand on what they've discovered by making their own art projects at the Craft Station, singing new songs at the Music Station, exploring the wonders of God's creation at the Science Station, playing games at the Recreation Station, and enjoying tasty treats at the Snack Station. Join us as we discover God's great light at Adventure Island where there is NO cost for all participants! Come for one, two or all sessions on June 12, July 10 and/or August 14 from 9 – 11 a.m. Spread the word and invite your friends and family. If you're interested, please [click here](#) to register today!



Adventure Island isn't just for 4<sup>th</sup> graders and younger! Volunteers are also needed and will see how God's light shines on all of us. Youth 5<sup>th</sup> grade and older are more than welcome to join and help on Adventure Island. Of course, we will also need plenty of adults. Sometimes looking through the lens of a child/youth will open our eyes to see the light God instilled in ourselves. If you or your youth is interested in volunteering for any of the sessions, please contact Amy Drewa at [amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org).

### Confirmation



Our 2022 Confirmands have taken the next step in their faith journey. They were able to put into words their thoughts and beliefs of their faith right now. Each of them worked very hard and are very excited to share their individual faith statements with their families on June 4 and a combined faith statement with all of you on June 5.

Mark your calendars to join us on June 5 at 9 a.m. for this special service and to witness these wonderful young adults reaffirm their baptismal vows through the Rite of Confirmation. We hope you will be able to join us to show your Christian love and support.



### College and High School Graduates

In honor of all our graduates, college and high school we want to recognize you on your accomplishment! Join us on June 12 during the 9 a.m. service as we recognize you. Please let the office know your or your young adult's name, where you/they are graduating from, your/their future plans and if you will be attending the service on June 12. *Congratulations, we can't wait to recognize you!!!*





## Youth Group Activity

Our youth came together in April to help with our Annual Rummage Sale.

They had fun sorting items and engaging in a scavenger hunt.

Join us May 22 as we come together to BOWL OUT HUNGER. All youth 3<sup>rd</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to join us to celebrate the last day of Sunday School for the 21/22 school year and to support the Oconomowoc Food Pantry.

Watch your emails for more information.



## Sunday School News!

It's hard to believe that we are entering our final month of the 21/22 Sunday School year. It has been nice to have our classrooms filled with laughter and fun while the children and youth learn and engage in biblical stories while they strengthen their friendships with their Christian family.

During the month of May our children and youth, 3-year old through 12<sup>th</sup> grade will engage in the story of Jesus washing his disciples feet and Mary washing Jesus' feet. While we explore these stories we will also learn about Soul's for Jesus, an outreach opportunity the entire church will have an opportunity to participate in. Each week they will all come together to hear the biblical story, the meaning and importance of washing of the feet and they will learn about Souls for Jesus. They will engage in a different activity each week to help drive the story, meaning and outreach opportunity home. We are excited for all ages to come together this final month to learn and grow together in their faith and helping those in need.

### **Important Dates:**

May 1: Washing of Feet

May 8: Our feet are a gift

May 15: Shoe-ful of Fun!

May 22: Soul's for Jesus Event/Last Day of Sunday School



### **Thank you, teachers!**

Last month some of our members helped continue to water the seeds of faith in our children and youth and we can truly see them starting to blossom. We are truly blessed for all those who bring their time, gifts and talents to our children and youth by teaching in some capacity! Thank you, Rochelle Behling, Deb Bursinger, Melissa and Jason Rheineck, and Jenny Wallace.

Please join us during the 9 a.m. service on May 22 as we recognize all our amazing Sunday School Teachers!

You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

*Deuteronomy 11:19*

## Mission & Outreach

### Singing Collection

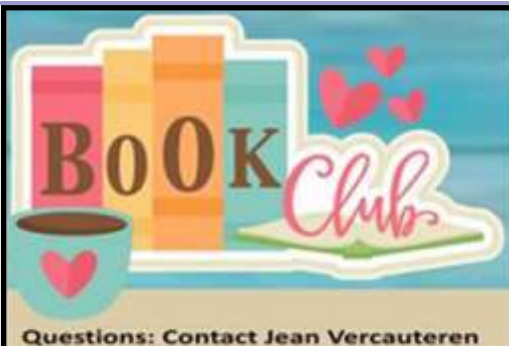


Every time we worship, loose coins in the offering are donated to a Mission Partner. The coins in the metal plates make a "joyful noise," so we call this our Singing Collection.

### May's Singing Collection is for Church World Services.

Church World Service (CWS) has one goal: to build a world where there is enough for all. After seven decades moving towards this goal, CWS has the faith and experience to know it is possible. Working around the world, they have seen gardens flourish in barren land. Migrants and refugees finding homes even after every door has been closed. Houses standing strong against nature's worst disasters. That's the power of their compassion at work when it links to human resilience.

Let's take action and join CWS in making a better world.



**1 pm only**  
**In Person OR Zoom**

Meeting ID: 894 1263 9679  
Passcode: 382924

If you prefer to call: 1 312 626 6799

When prompted enter:

Meeting ID: 894 1263 9679#  
Passcode: 382924#

Book club continues with 1 pm  
in-person or zoom meeting.  
NO evening sessions.

ALL are welcome to join any  
of the discussions on the third  
Thursday of the Month.

### Upcoming Selections:

May 19:  
*Call Your Daughter Home.*  
Author: Deb Spera

June 16:  
*Four Winds*  
Author: Kristen Hannah

July Book Club Movie Outing !  
*Stay tuned for further details.*

August 18:  
*The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek*  
Author: Kim Michele Richardson

September 15:  
*The Only Plane in the Sky*  
Author: Garrett M. Graff



### Volunteers Needed

**Mission Ministry is looking for volunteers**

**Contact: Pam Van Every**

**Dates: May 14, June 25**

CREATING  
A NEW  
GROUP

### Creative Thinking Book Club @ 6:30pm

*Ever wonder if Heaven is Real ?*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Book: "Heaven Is For Real"
- Books available for purchase in Fellowship Hall  
(starting May 1 after the worship services)
- Contact: Don McCollum or Valerie Jane Williams



- Meeting 1x per month Day TBD by attending members
- Men encouraged to join

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

On 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-perishable 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 all perishable donations are within use dates and have not expired.**

May	1	September	4
June	5	October	2
July	3	November	6
August	7	December	4



### Oconomowoc Food Pantry: Did you know

- Is a non-profit organization,
- Is run by volunteers with no paid staff,
- Receives no government subsidies,
- 100% of your donations go to servicing those in need.

## Pull Tabs

*Please continue to save your pull-tabs !*

A big THANK YOU to everyone who has contributed pull tabs. Please continue to bring your pull tabs from beverage cans, soup cans, pet food cans etc.

FYI it takes approximately 1,128 tabs to make 1 pound and each pound generates about fifty cents (0.50) from the aluminum recycler. Each year the RMH earns an average of \$6,000 from pull tabs which all goes to providing services for the guests at the Ronald McDonald House.



## Piggly Wiggly Receipts

Please remember your Piggly Wiggly receipts. In order for us to receive monies, we need to collect and turn in January's receipts by March. There is a collection area in Fellowship Hall or drop them off with Jennifer in the Church office.

## Easter

Pastor Barry was a good sport to have an egg cracked on his head. The egg was empty like Jesus' tomb on Easter morning.



Photo courtesy of Linda Davis.

### Donate Blood In Memory of Mike Hogan

In October 2007, Mike Hogan passed away from injuries sustained in a car accident. Mike was a regular blood donor with the Red Cross, donating every 8 weeks.

Please come and donate blood in honor of Mike, to show your support and help those in need.



### 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Blood Drive

Saturday, May 7, 2022  
7:30 AM to 11:30 AM



American Red Cross

redcrossblood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767



## What is Homebrewed Faith? *All are welcome, any or no beliefs.*

For some of us, we grew up in the church and were given our faith by our parents and teachers—we were told what to believe. Some of that faith was beneficial and sometimes it wasn't. Sometimes it was shallow and there may or may not have been room for questions.

Homebrewing, whether it be beer or kombucha or tea, became a thing in people's home, taking the raw traditional ingredients and mixing them with modern or local ingredients to create something new. Homebrewed Faith is a chance to do that: taking seriously the history and traditions of Christianity and reflecting on them for our modern world, creating and choosing a faith of our own.

This is an opportunity for open conversations, opinions, and growth.

This is a partnership with Emmanuel UCC the last Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.

Splash Martini Bar, 134 N Main St, Oconomowoc. *May 25 Topic: What the Hell? No really, what is hell?*

Home Brewed is a chance to grow, create, develop a faith of your own and that faith responds to the world. What are the feminine images of God and does it matter? How do we read the Bible well? What does it mean to welcome all people? Let's brew together!

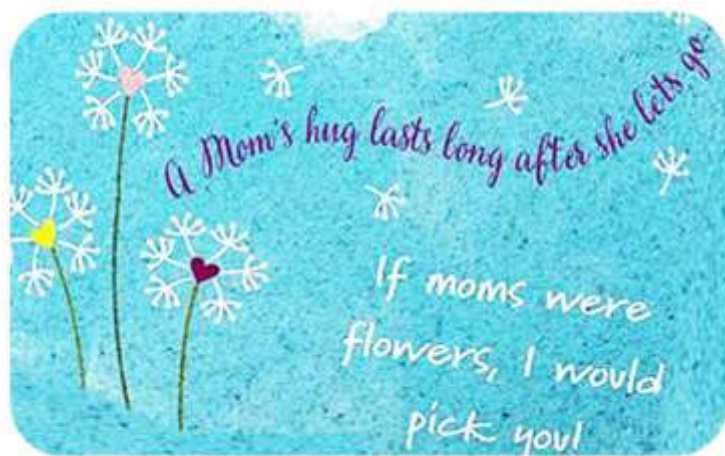
## SCRIP

Spring is here, Many of us will be updating our wardrobes with new spring and summer items . How about using Scrip gift cards for as many of those items as possible? Cards are available for retailers selling clothing, groceries, toys, home, and garden items. There are even cards to use to purchase the gas you may need to travel. Want a card we don't routinely stock? If it is available through the Scrip program it can be Special Ordered. Contact: Cheryl Hoff [clhoff4721@gmail.com](mailto:clhoff4721@gmail.com).

The mission trip participants are travelling to Puerto Rico this summer so their expenses may be greater than some other years. How about helping to defray those costs by purchasing Scrip? ALL profit from the sales of these gift cards goes to the youth program here at church including Mission Trips.

### Thanks to ALL Scrip Volunteers

A sincere and hearty **THANK YOU** to each and every one of our faithful volunteers who oversee selling scrip on Sunday mornings. The program would not work without them. Kudos to Pam Van Every, Connie Laufenberg, Susan Perschon, Jim Zajac, Lynn Van Dam, Pat Witkowski, and to Jennifer who manages Scrip sales during office hours.





Rain  
or Shine

# 5th Annual Bald Eagle Car Show

**Saturday, June 18, 2022**

**10 am - 2 pm**

**First Congregational UCC Grounds**  
815 S. Concord Rd, Oconomowoc

**9 am cars & bikes arrive**

**Food • Beer • Music • Raffles**



**Bikers  
Welcome**



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

**PREREGISTER BY June 11, 2022 TO GUARANTEE A DASH PLAQUE**

Registration: <https://forms.gle/z2yVtNChEmcNeXRt7>

**CONTACT:** Andy Meckl 262-720-1876

**EMAIL TO:** TheMeckls@gmail.com

## Event Sponsors



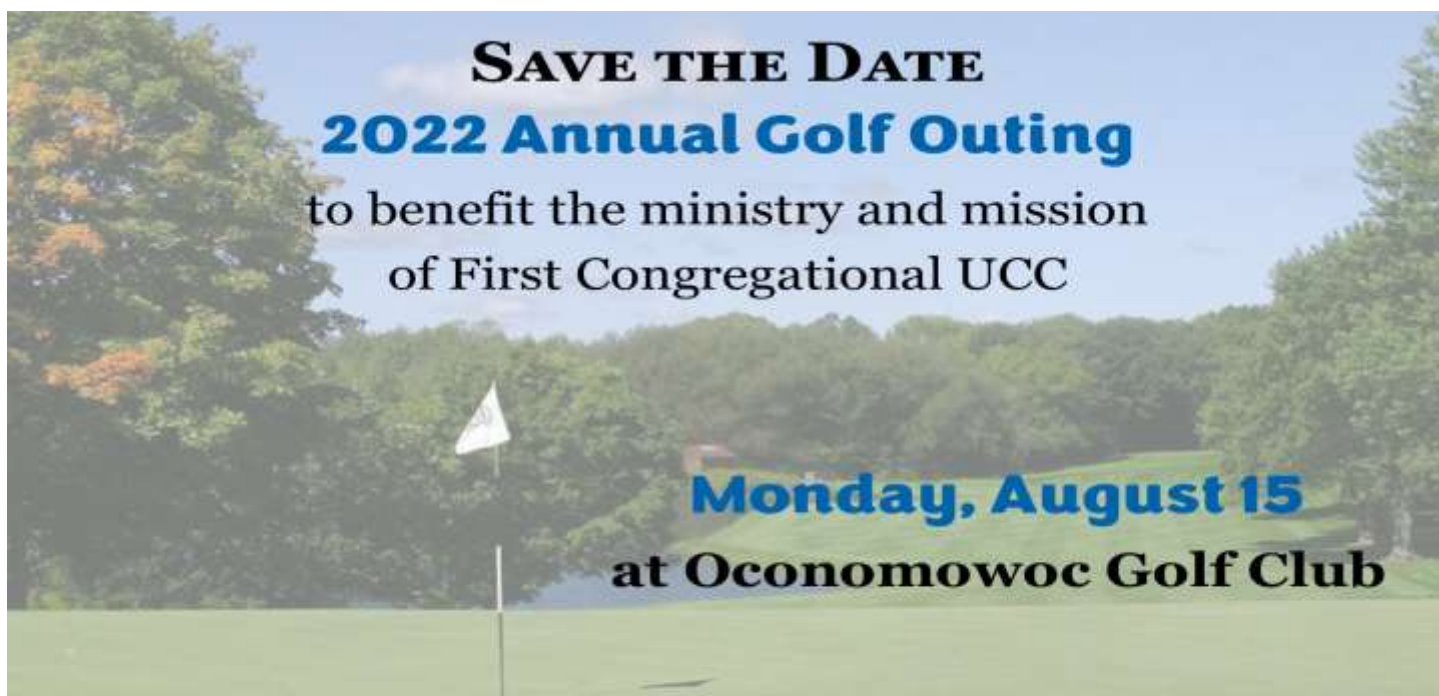
**OCONOMOWOC**  
REALTY LLC



**Sobelman's**  
PUB  
& GRILL



**HOLZMOTORS**  
Wisconsin's Largest Selection of New Chevrolets



### The Garden is Open and Welcomes New Gardeners!

There are a few garden plot vacancies  
 For new gardeners, its on a first come, first serve basis.

***Ten-foot square plots are available for \$25.00 each.***

Water, access to a Garden Shed, Basic Tools, Marsh Hay, and Optional Roto-Tilling are included in the price. Gardeners are asked to practice organic methods without use of insecticides, herbicides or pesticides. In addition to growing fresh vegetables, Community Gardening offers opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and fellowship with each other while social distancing!!

To find out more, contact Tom or Shirley Depies at 262-567-7254 or email [tvdepies@charter.net](mailto:tvdepies@charter.net).





## Hearts & Hands Preschool

For more information: e-mail: [preschool@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:preschool@oconomowocucc.org)

To schedule a private tour, contact Cindy Meckl 262-567-2558  
or [themeckls@gmail.com](mailto:themeckls@gmail.com).



### Registration is now open for our summer classes!

**June Summer Fun** runs from 9-11:30am on Tuesdays & Thursdays in June.  
This class will take place outside and is open to all children ages 3&4.

**August Friday Fun** runs from 9-11am on Fridays in August.

This class is open to all children ages 2.5-4 years old  
Toilet Training is NOT REQUIRED for any of our classes  
Church members receive 20% off of their tuition!

[Click here to register:](#)

More information  
plus registration forms  
can be found on our website  
[www.heartsandhandspreschool.org](http://www.heartsandhandspreschool.org)

### May Contests - Help us spread the word! 25% off Registration for the month of May!

- Help spread the word and if someone hears about it through you, you will get a \$5 gift card:)
- All people who do a review (written or video) and post it on our Facebook, Google, Yelp, or our website will get put into a drawing to win a gift card for flowers!!

### Thank-you Thank-you Thank-you

- Bob Frick for replacing our sink faucet!!
- Sue Zajac for bringing Bear to class!

It's always the BEST DAY EVER  
when he joins us in class



Bear

- Molly (Paige's mom) for bringing Daphne to class!



Daphne

### Class Offerings 2022-2023

#### 4 Year-old Class (3 days/week)

- M/W/F AM 9:00—11:30 am
- At least 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2022
  - Maximum 11 children per class
  - \$225/month



#### 3 Year-old Class (2 OR 3 days/week)

- M/W AM 9:00—11:30 am OR T/Th AM 9:00—11:30 am OR  
M/W/F AM 9:00—11:30 am OR T/Th/F AM 9:00—11:30 am
- At least 3 years old by Sept. 1, 2022
  - Maximum 11 children per class
  - \$170/month (2 days/week)
  - \$225/month (3 days/week)

#### 2 1/2 Year-old Class (1 OR 2 days/week)

- T OR Th 9—11 am OR T AND Th 9—11 am
- At least 2 1/2 years old to start class
  - Maximum 6 children per class
  - \$95/month (1 day/week)
  - \$160/month (2 days/week)



Toilet Training not required to attend any of our programs

### EASTER 2022

We colored eggs in class and then did an egg hunt.  
(Photo Near left)

The kids got an empty egg so they could tell others all  
about the GOOD NEWS that "Jesus is ALIVE" (photo far left)






## Volunteer Assignments

*If you are unable to fulfill your assignment, please swap with someone and let the office know the change. THANK YOU .*

	9 a.m.			10:30 a.m.	
Date	Welcome Ctr	Greeters	Fellowship #1	Greeter #1	Fellowship #1
1-May	Barb Rux & Fred Steinke	Barb Bjur	Jean Vercauteren & Lois Jackson	Deb Schuyler	
8-May	Carolyn & Lloyd Crom	Caryl Mulder	Connie Laufenberg & Valerie Jane Williams	Don & Peg McCollum	
15-May	Dan & Sara Moldenhauer	Jim Zajac	Don & Peg McCollum	Randy Bourdo	
22-May	Barb Bjur	Dan Wiley	Sue Dumford-Zajac & Barb Blecker	Dave Schmucker	
29-May	Jeff & Kit Dailey	Jean Vercauteren	Dan & Kim Caudill		



**COFFEE** Join us for Fellowship  
Christ Offers Forgiveness  
For Everyone Everywhere

## New Member Sunday—May 15th



Anyone who is interested in becoming a member of our church family on that day please contact Linda Davis at [pldavis.pd@gmail.com](mailto:pldavis.pd@gmail.com) or 207-985-9186 as soon as possible.

We are looking for sponsors to help our new members feel welcome after New Member Sundays by accompanying them to Fellowship hours, church activities, and any answering questions they might have. Please contact Linda Davis if you wish to be a sponsor for a 6 month period of time.

New Member: We welcome Harry Evans to our church.

Please look for new members' pictures and biographies on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall.



Rev. Barry and Pastor Amy visit our newest Church member, Harry Evans.

## Staying Connected ...



Rev. Dr. Barry W. Szymanski, Interim Pastor [bws1mp@gmail.com](mailto:bws1mp@gmail.com)  
 Amy Drewa, Pastor, Dir. of Ed. & Youth [amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org)  
 Jennifer Arnold, Office Admin. [jennifer@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:jennifer@oconomowocucc.org)  
 Cindy Meckl, Hearts & Hands Preschool [themeckls@gmail.com](mailto:themeckls@gmail.com)