

## November 2022 Branches Newsletter



"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good;  
His love is eternal!"  
Psalm 107:1

### Worship Service & Sunday School 9:30 AM

#### Fellowship Afterward

"Our worship seeks to **ENGAGE**, **INSPIRE**, and **CONNECT** in a modern service that is rooted in our church's history. It reflects the deep richness of God's grace and good news, and always points us to service in the world and life in God's creation."



## First Congregational United Church of Christ

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

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Oconomowoc, WI 53066  
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## Pastoral Search Committee



The committee continues to meet with candidates regarding their interest in possibly becoming our Pastor. After reviewing their profile and on-line sermons if they are available, we start with a Meet and Greet via Zoom which is very casual and allows us to get a feel for their personality. After that we move to an interview if our committee and the candidate are interested in pursuing getting to know each other with more depth.

After receiving a relatively small number of profiles over the summer, we began to receive more of them in early September and were able to have several Meet and Greets at the end of September. We are pursuing interviews as follow ups as appropriate.

We continue to evaluate these candidates based on answers from you, our fellow congregants, from the congregational survey completed last summer. It's been a year since our profile was originally published, so we took advantage of the slower number of candidates who were available this summer and did a thorough review of our profile, editing and updating it. It has recently been republished.

We appreciate you keeping our committee in your prayers and pray that we are blessed with a strong candidate who sees us as the congregation of their choice in the near future.

All our best: Deb Bursinger (co-chair), Jack Buss, Kit Dailey, Stephanie Hogan, Andy Meckl, Jason Rheineck, Jill Riemann (co-chair), Tim Schuyler and Fred Steinke

## Stewardship Sunday

**November 13th**

*Collecting Time & Talent forms  
and Pledge Cards*

*Honor the Lord with your wealth  
and with the best part of everything you produce.  
Then he will fill your barns with grain,  
and your vats will overflow with good wine.*

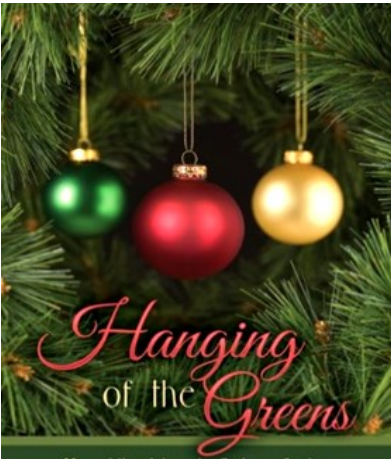
Proverbs 3:9-10 (NLT)



**GIVE. RECEIVE. REPEAT.**



The weather is getting cooler, leaves on the trees have started to change color and the Stewardship campaign is in full swing. Please plan on either attending church on November 13 or send in your Time/Talent sheet and Pledge. Thank you for joining in our cycle of joy



## Hanging of the Greens

Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas and preparing ourselves for a new year living in the presence of God through our relationship with Christ.

So, join us the first Sunday of Advent, November 27 for a special service of the Hanging of the Greens during the 9:30 a.m. worship service. We will come together as we prepare ourselves for the beginning of the Advent Season. During the service we gather and place the decorations, which will tell the story of Christ's birth in their unique way. We will hear the timeless traditions behind these decorations and sing the beloved, favorite carols and listen anew to the stories of Christ's birth as recorded in the gospels.

## Advent 2022 - Calling all Decorators (*and those willing to climb a ladder*)

Advent is swiftly approaching and although Fall is still in the air, it is time to begin preparing for the Christmas Season. Please save the dates to assist with the chores of decorating the church in November and removing the decorations on New Year's Day.

November 14 –19 Welcoming Ministry and members will locate, repair, and stage decorations.

November 20 – Help decorate the Church after our worship service. No packer game that day. Children/youth are invited to assist with decorating. Children activities will be offered. Lunch will be served at 11:30am for those staying after the worship service to help.

January 1 – New Year's Day - Worship service/brunch in Fellowship Hall. No on-line service will be available.

January 8—Holy Communion for Epiphany

We will need help to remove and store the holiday decorations following the worship service and assist with final storage and cleanup of the decorations the week following.

For questions or concerns, please contact the Holiday Decorating Coordinators Pat Evans, Mickey Kellner and Valerie Jane Williams. Many hands will make these events a happy and rewarding experience. Volunteers' time and participation are appreciated.



## Chrismons

Chrismons, long time Christian symbols, have been made by our Church members over the years.

They are part of our Church's heritage. These delicate, ivory items embellished with gold and pearls will be displayed during Advent. Please take a moment to enjoy them and read what they signify.

*"Chrismon" is a combination of the words "Christ" and "monogram," and means "symbols of Christ." Chrismons are gold and white, representing majesty and purity. Ideas for fashioning them are developed from early Christian symbols, the Bible and church histories.*

## Youth News

### Youth Group News!

We are excited for some fun and to prepare not only ourselves but our Sunday School Hall and Church for the Advent season! Our youth in 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to join us to help decorate the church, engage in some activities, and of course enjoy some food!!! Mark your calendars to join us on November 23 from 10:30-12:30. Watch your emails as more information will become available. Please [click here](#) to register today.

### Sunday School News!

Last month our children and youth enjoyed exploring how Jesus Calmed the Storm for his disciples and found ways how Jesus can calm storms in our lives. While in the classroom or exploring our church property the children and youth had fun and engaged in the lesson each week.

As we enter a time of thankfulness, we often find ourselves sharing things we are thankful for. Many times, it's for our families, homes, food and water. Have you ever thought to be thankful for the living water that God provides? This month we will be exploring the living water God provides for all through the story of the Woman at the Well. Through this story we will engage in activities, games, and projects to learn more about this story and what it means to us today.

As for our Middle and High School classes they will be exploring the topic of "Humility," where they will learn that humility grows gratitude. They will be looking at how different characters in the Bible demonstrated humility. As they look at the Old and New Testaments, they will see that humility is not a new idea, but it is something God has been developing in His people since creation.

On behalf of our amazing teachers and Education Ministry each of us are thankful for the opportunity to share in the Christian education of each child and youth. May God fill you with many blessing during this time of thanksgiving! -Amy Drewa

### Confirmation



Our 2023 confirmands are off to an amazing start! Our first session in October was a blast! The youth had fun bond and forming relationships while asking and answering some tough questions. We are truly excited to see where this year goes! We will be gathering again for a retreat in November to Daychola where we will explore our Faith Journey! Please continue to keep this group in your prayers as they discover their faith a little more.

### Mission Trip

If you have not heard our 2023 Youth Mission Trip will be heading to Fort Myers, Florida, June 18-24! The work will include essential home repairs, roofing and building relationships with one another as well as the community members. Most importantly we will be bringing hope to this community what has gone through so much. This is open to all youth going into 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2023 through those who completed 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Contact Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org with any questions.

[More Information](#)

[Register Online](#)



## Annual Christmas Pageant

Our Annual Christmas Pageant will be held in person on **Sunday, December 18** during the 9:30 a.m. worship.

Rehearsals will take place **Sunday, December 11 from 10:00-1:30pm** (with lunch provided) for all lead/speaking roles, and on **Saturday, December 17 from 12:30-3pm** for everyone.

We are very excited to come together again in person to offer another wonderful pageant! This year we are looking for several children and youth who are interested in a variety of roles. There are both speaking and non-speaking roles. We are also looking for volunteers to set up lunch/snack, costumes and supervise children the day of the pageant. Sign up today by [clicking here](#).

We look forward to all the help and support on the production of another wonderful Christmas Pageant! If you have any questions, please contact Amy Drewa at [amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org).



## Holiday Giving Tree Share in the spirit of the holidays by helping those in need!



Our congregation will be supporting some families this Christmas through the Waukesha County Christmas Clearing Council, the Women's Center, students from the Head Start program, and seniors through Eras Senior Network.



Beginning November 13, a Sign-Up Genius will be emailed out and available before and after each worship. Click on it to see how you can make a child/youths Christmas a little brighter. There will be gifts ranging from \$5-50. So, pick an item or two and bring it to church any time before Sunday December 4. If you prefer, you can also have your item shipped to the church and we will wrap it on your behalf.

In addition to purchasing gifts, we are also looking for a few people to help deliver the gifts to the families.

If you would be interest in doing this or have any questions please contact Rania Dempsey ([rania@wi.rr.com](mailto:rania@wi.rr.com)) or Amy Drewa [amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org).

## Food Pantry Collections

**Dates: 11/6, 12/4**


Please remember your food donations. They can be placed in the basket at the entrance to the sanctuary or dropped off at the Church office. Donations are delivered to the Oconomowoc Food Pantry.



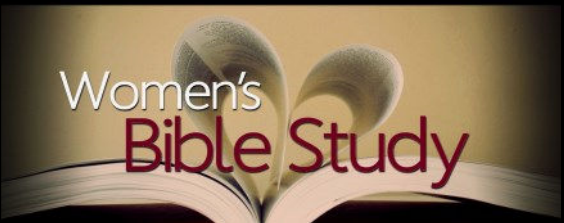
## Piggly Wiggly Receipts



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



**Wednesdays**  
**1:15pm -2:30pm**  
*in the Music Room*



Women's  
Bible Study

Contact Cindy Meckl for more details :  
([themeckls@gmail.com](mailto:themeckls@gmail.com) or 262-567-2558

## 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.

### ***In November, our singing collection supports ... Family Promise***

Family Promise Week was celebrated October 17-23, 2022. Since 1988, more than one million children and parents have turned to Family Promise for assistance with homelessness prevention, shelter and housing, and other supports, and the need for services continues to grow. Family Promise of Waukesha County hosted a Dialogue of Hope on October 18, 2022 with former guests and Family Promise staff.

Our congregation has been involved with Family Promise of Waukesha County since its inception in 2012. Our continued support is much appreciated by the families that have been helped and by the staff and volunteer coordinators. To learn more please go to the website at <https://www.familypromisewaukeshawi.org> or contact volunteer coordinators, Cindy Meckl and Deb Bursinger.

### ***Funeral Servers and Bakers Needed***

A group of volunteers that serve and bake for funerals that take place at our church are looking for members willing to become part of our team. It is a great way to support families that are going through a difficult time in losing a loved one. We seek people willing to set up for funerals by getting tables ready for whatever food is planned to be served by the grieving family for those who join in the repast. This usually takes 3 to 4 hours as we ready the area in Fellowship Hall, serve the food and clean up after. Any amount of time you could spend is appreciated. Bakers who volunteer make 3 dozen bars or cookies which can be dropped off at church before the funeral takes place. This group is an important one to show our care for member families so we need more people to join and keep us strong!

### ***Women's Gathering—Christmas Party***

Come join us for Our Christmas party on Wednesday, Dec. 7, at 5:00 at Shorehaven Pub. The meal choices are Chicken Dijon & Dill Salmon (with all the sides). The cost is \$17.00, tax & tip included. The bar is separate.

Carolyn Crom will be the collecting the money this year, as they can no longer do separate transactions. Please submit either cash or a check (made out to Carolyn Crom) by November 23rd, along with your food choice. This year instead of a gift exchange, it was decided to give a cash donation to either Food Pantry, Family Promise, or even socks.

You can either put your donation in an envelope with your choice written on the envelope, or we can have a free will offering taken at dinner. We hope to have a great turnout. Its always been a fun night & the food is excellent. Please rsvp to Carolyn at [ckcrom@yahoo.com](mailto:ckcrom@yahoo.com), or 262-567-9093. Thank you to you all. Hugs Carolyn Crom.



## **RAISE RIGHT (aka SCRIP)**

Fall has arrived and that means that the “Holidays” cannot be far behind. Extra shopping, not only for Christmas but also Thanksgiving looms on the horizon for many of us. Food for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s special meals. Gifts for family and friends. We have gift cards to help with all of that. Groceries from Metro Market, Piggly Wiggly and Sendik’s can be purchased with the cards we have in stock. Wine and spirits from Total Wine and gifts from Books & Co., Target, Walmart Cabelas, Kohl’s to name a few. A gift card can be used as the gift also.

If the card(s) you want are not in our inventory but are available from Raise Right I am glad to place an order for you. All you need to do is complete a “Special Order Form,” preferably pay for your order and you will have your cards shortly.

### **Special Orders for Christmas should be placed by December 11.**

Here is an update on the profit earned for the youth programs for the past couple of years:

2020	Thru Oct. 24: \$1,396.04	Full year: \$1,864.95
2021*	Thru Oct. 24: \$1,536.76	Full year: \$1,985.87
2022	Thru Oct. 24: \$2,265.94	

*\*The account was reconciled with the bank and a “surplus” amount of \$336.75 was found and added to the youth account making the total for 2021 \$2,322.62!!*



# OCON

## Luv2Give

**Open Thursdays**  
**9:45-10:45 a.m. &**  
**12:00-2:00 p.m.**

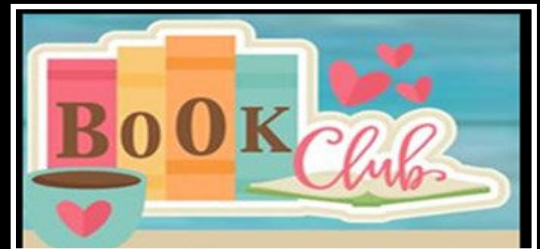
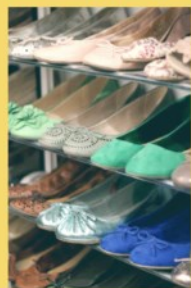
**NEW LOCATION!**

**First Congregational UCC**  
**815 S. Concord Road, Oconomowoc**



**OCONOMOWOC**  
 HIGH SCHOOL

*Stocked with FREE donated items & operated by the  
 Oconomowoc High School 18-21 Transition Program*



**(in-person & Zoom, if needed)**

**Nov. 17**  
**West with Giraffes by Rutledge, Lynda**

**Dec. 15**  
**The Personal Librarian by Benedict Marie**

**January 19, 2023**  
**It Ends with Us by Colleen Hoover**

**February 16, 2023**  
**The Book Woman's Daughter  
 by Kim Michele Richardson**



## **New Member Brunch—Oct 2, 2022**



Barb Ehrgott re-joined our church family after living in Florida for 20 years. Her summers will be spent here near her 2 grown children and 3 grandchildren. She was in sales before retiring and now loves sports, crafts and social activities. Bonnie Laugerman is her sister!

Barb was reinstated into the church family on Sunday, October 2nd. We warmly welcomed her back into our congregation along with celebrated the new members who joined us since 2020 at a New Members Brunch. With so many wonderful dishes, we may have to ask for the recipes —if the individuals are willing to share !



## **Family Promise (FP)**

Thanks for all that continue to support Family Promise by making food for meals! These meals are very much appreciated by the families! We will keep you posted when our next host week for meals is scheduled.

Family Promise Week was celebrated October 17-23, 2022. Since 1988, more than one million children and parents have turned to Family Promise for assistance with homelessness prevention, shelter and housing, and other supports, and the need for services continues to grow. Family Promise of Waukesha County hosted a Dialogue of Hope on October 18, 2022 with former guests and Family Promise staff.

Our congregation has been involved with Family Promise of Waukesha County since its inception in 2012. Our continued support is much appreciated by the families that have been helped and by the staff and volunteer coordinators. To learn more please go to the website at <https://www.familypromisewaukeshawi.org> or contact volunteer coordinators, Cindy Meckl and Deb Bursinger.

**Help FP shelter families have a joy and cheer-filled holiday season by donating holiday decorations.**

With their [expanding shelter program](#), Family Promise is looking for help to procure some holiday decorations to be used in the apartment shelters -- and a couple of items for the Day Center! The goal: All 5 families have the ability to decorate their apartment & create a festive atmosphere.

**To Order thru Amazon [\(Click Here\)](#)**







## 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).



### 2022-2023 School year is off to a great start!

It is so fun to have 34 children back in class:)

More information  
plus registration forms  
can be found on our website

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

### Friday Fun Class starts November 23rd!

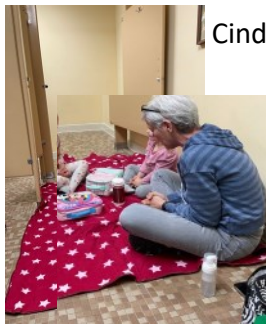
The next Friday Fun class, "Thankfulness" starts November 4th and runs through November 17th from 9-11 am.

This class is open to ALL children ages 25 months - 4 years old. Cost is \$75.

See our website for details: [www.heartsandhandspreschool.org](http://www.heartsandhandspreschool.org)



We made delicious muffins that were free of dairy, eggs, and peanuts 😊 and invited our moms to come join us. The kids loved making them, serving them to mom, and then playing on our new playground with her. A great time was had by all 🎧 🍌 We all love this annual event ✓ See our website for the recipe along with tips to make them 📖



Cindy and kids in shelter during the tornado warning mid-October

Thanks Amy Drewa for meeting with our preschoolers 2 times per month.

The kids love their  
"Ms. Amy" time <3

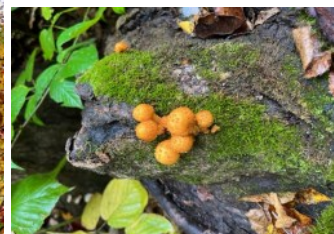


## Thank-you      Thank-you      Thank-you

Thanks HSED students for watering, weeding, and mulching church planting beds.

Thanks Sandy Meyer for volunteering in our preschool classroom every Wednesday!

Thanks Pat Witkowski for organizing a wonderful hike on the Ice Age Trail. We can't wait for the next one.



## ..GIVING THANKS TO THE FATHER

who has **qualified** us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light  
He has **delivered** us from the power of darkness  
and **conveyed** us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,  
in whom we have redemption  
through His blood,  
the forgiveness of sins.

The Church Office will be CLOSED  
November 24 - 25 in observation of Thanksgiving

## Staying Connected ...

**Rev. Dr. Barry W. Szymanski, Bridge Pastor** bws1mp@gmail.com  
**Amy Drewa, Pastor, Dir. of Ed. & Youth** amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org  
**Jennifer Arnold, Office Admin.** jennifer@oconomowocucc.org  
**Cindy Meckl, Hearts & Hands Preschool** themeckls@gmail.com

### Upcoming

Sunday, November 6  
Sunday, November 13  
Thursday, November 17  
November 18-19  
November 20

Sunday, November 27  
Sunday, December 4

Sunday, December 11  
Thursday, December 15  
Thursday, December 15  
Sunday, December 18  
Saturday, December 24  
Saturday, December 24  
Sunday, December 25

Sunday, January 1  
Sunday, January 8

### Events

**Holy Communion**, Food Pantry Sunday, Daylight Saving Time ends

**Stewardship Sunday** (Time and Talent sheets collected)

**Book Club** 1pm in-person or Zoom **West with Giraffes by Lynda Rutledge**

Stage and Prepare Decorations for Advent

*Calling All decorators for Advent and people willing to climb the ladders*

Help decorate the Church following Worship service

Children activities will be offered

Lunch will be served at 11:30am

Hanging of the Greens Worship Service *1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

**Oconomowoc Community Choir Concert 3pm**

*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

**Book Club** 1pm in-person or Zoom **The Personal Librarian by Marie Benedict**

**Blue Christmas (in conjunction with UCC Dousman Church)**

**Christmas Pageant** *4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent*

**Christmas Eve (4pm)**

**Christmas Eve (11pm)**

**Christmas Day**

**Worship Service / Brunch Not avail on Zoom Held in Fellowship Hall**

*Holy Communion for Epiphany  
(Decorations taken down following Worship service)*