

September 2022 Branches Newsletter



Starting Sept 11 (Rally Day)

Worship Service & Sunday School
9:30am

Fellowship Afterward

*I was glad when they said
unto me,
Let us go into the house of the
Lord*

Worship Service: 10 A.M.

Starting September 11th
9:30 A.M.



First Congregational United Church of Christ

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

815 S. Concord Rd.
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Pastoral Ponderings . . . God's Holy Spirit

- Offered for your reflection by Pastor Barry

Humanity's ideas of God and how the Trinity works among us are formed as history unfolds. The ancients, coming out of the stone age into the Bronze and Iron Ages, wondered and, with God's Holy Spirit, Genesis and The Torah was formulated. Then the Prophets wrote in times of turbulence. Jesus, who fulfilled the Law and taught us more, and then was resurrected, lived in the unrest of Israel under Roman oppression. The Middle Ages were times of religious unrest and the resulting political upheavals in Europe.

During the time of the Reformation Philip Melanchton was a colleague of Martin Luther. Melanchton was the first systematic theologian of the Protestant Reformation, and author of the 'Augsburg Confession'. He found solace in the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit. He wrote "We never sense the benefits of God unless our heart has already been purified through the Holy Spirit and God's kindness has been imprinted on a pure and pious heart." I pressed to find further background. After Melanchton studied the Book of Genesis he focused on how the 'Spirit of God' was moving over the waters. He wondered, "How does the Spirit of God move above the waters?" He found his answer, not in Europe's theologians, but in the words of a Syrian. The Syrian said that 'God moving above the waters' has the same meaning as 'keeping something warm with one's body heat, as a sitting hen warms her eggs.' Through the Syrian theologian Melanchton had a personal experience of God's Spirit who "warms, nourishes, teaches" us. With his understanding of God's Holy Spirit, he wrote a prayer addressed directly to the Holy Spirit. [I set it out below].

What of us? We are wondering what Age we are leaving and what New Age is coming. We live in a time of turbulence and unrest world-wide. Peoples of many nations live under oppression. For many individuals these are times of religious strife. In our uncertainty we question why so many are insecure and anxious. Why does a lack of confidence in our institutions, both political and religious, flourish in a seemingly modern age. However, when we ask these questions, we are also questioning God. So, what did Philip Melanchton, living during the unrest and confusion of the Reformation, find in God's Spirit? Philip called the Holy Spirit 'The Comforter'. Why? Because he discovered, all during the turmoil of the Reformation, that the Holy Spirit gave him solace, gave light to his soul, ruled him with consolation, made him holier, and bolstered his faith in God. When he wrote his prayer he echoed Psalm 23:6: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long."

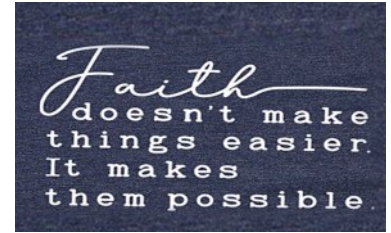
This is Philip Melanchton's prayer. During these times may we find it helpful for our prayers:

*"Almighty and Holy Spirit,
The Comforter,
pure, living true
– illumine, govern, sanctify me,
and confirm my heart and mind in the faith,
and in all genuine consolation;
preserve and rule over me
so that dwelling in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
I may behold the Lord
and praise him with a joyful spirit,
and in union with all the heavenly church. Amen."*

Rally SUNDAY!

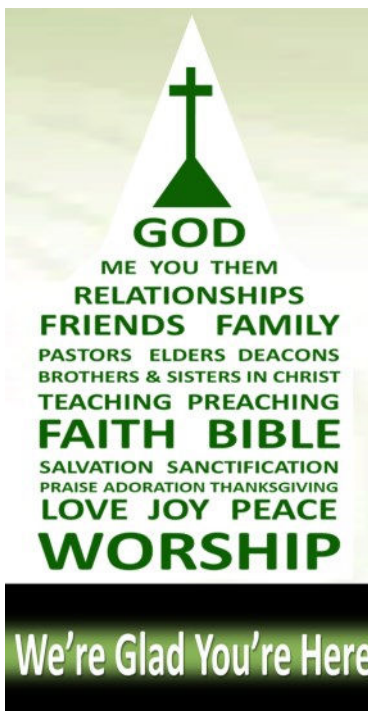
Sunday, September 11

Join us as we kick off the start of another great Sunday School Year on Sunday, September 11 during the 9:30 a.m. service! We have an exciting worship planned for and will be handing out bibles to our 3rd graders. There will be an Open House after the service where you will be able to enjoy some fellowship time, see our classrooms and meet all our amazing volunteers who make these programs possible. We look forward to seeing everyone!



Spirituality Ministry

NEW TIME 9:30am



Starting with Rally Sunday, September 11, we will be going back to one worship service. We are looking forward to services that include everyone who wants to participate. All of our talented musicians and speakers will be invited to share their gifts so that our services reflect our congregation as a community.

We at First Congregational UCC are a unique group; our very own unusual liturgical family. Spirituality Ministry's goal for our worship services is to look and sound like who we are and represent what is important to all of us.

The following is the description of our worship that will be on the website:

"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."

Grief Workshop Part II September 20, 2022

Because of the summer plans of so many who attended the first part of the Grief Workshop, please 'Save the Date' for Part Two to September 20, 2022. I know this is many weeks away, but scheduling during the summer is difficult, and I want to make sure as many who wanted to attend the second part will be able to do so. If that day will work [97% it will], then Session One will be at 2:15pm to 3:45pm. Session Two [the same presentation] will be from 5:15pm to 6:16pm. I thank all those who attended the workshop for the sharing to make the sessions most meaningful to all.

Youth News

Youth Group News!

We are very excited to continue to offer Youth Group gatherings this fall! Again, this year there will be two groups, a Junior Youth Group (3rd-8th Grade) and High School Youth Group (9th-12th Grade). Each group will be meeting separately once a month beginning in October. September 18 from 10:30-12:30 all groups will come together to "Launch their Faith"! Join us as we explore how the Holy Spirit powers our faith and how our church is your launchpad. We will have a fun lesson while making and launching model rockets. We will also enjoy some pizza and fellowship! So mark your calendars to join us!

Youth are always allowed to invite friends to join in on any of these events. These are great opportunities for our youth to build lasting, meaningful relationships with their friends from church. All youth attending any youth group gathering need to have a registration form filled out. Please [click here](#) to register today.

Sunday School News!

We are very excited to get this new school year started and can't wait for our halls to be filled with laughter, engagement, and fun from God's greatest gifts! None of this would be possible without the selfless willingness of dozens of people that have said "Yes!" and stepped forward to teach Sunday School! We are so blessed and thankful!

This year our teachers will continue to implement the Rotation model for children 3 years old through 4th grade! Each month we will focus on a specific Bible story while the children actively engage in an activity. Our 3-4 year olds will stay in the preschool room while our 1st-4th graders will rotate weekly between the Art, Games, STEM, and Story room.

As most students are back in school, they are paying attention to their new teachers hopefully like Jesus' followers did when he talked about the Beatitudes. In September we will begin with exploring the Beatitudes through fun and engaging games and activities to help the children learn more about the Beatitudes. Our Middle and High School Youth will also be discussing the Beatitudes through a 4-week study. They will find ways to invite God to adjust their attitude as they ease towards the new school year.

We are truly excited to be implementing these curriculums for our children and youth and can't wait to see how they will grow in their faith!

Save the following dates:

September 9 - Rally Day/Open House

October 2- World Communion Sunday and Family Worship (No Sunday School)

As always, if you have any questions, please email amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org.

Confirmation

We are very excited to kick off this faith journey with a new group of youth interested in reaffirming their baptismal vows. Our first session will take place on September 24 where we will begin with a parent meeting and work on teambuilding. We look forward to a faith filled journey with these individuals and can't wait to get started! If you have a youth 9th grade or older who is interested in participating and haven't received information in the mail, please contact Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org.

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.

September - Youth Mission Trip

September's Singing Collection will be given to supplement the Youth Mission Group's next trip.

October - Christmas Clearing House

October Singing Collection will be given to the Christmas Clearing Council of Waukesha County. 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 2021, they coordinated giving to more than 2,100 families and 4,800 children.

For more information visit www.christmasclearingcouncil.org

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!



Food Pantry Collections

Dates: 9/4, 10/2, 11/6, 12/4

Please remember your food donations for the Food Pantry. 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 by the **end of July**. There is a collection area in Fellowship Hall or drop them off with Jennifer in the Church office.



Sept. 8

The Only Plane in the Sky by Graff, Garrett
Lunch @11:30am Lucky Chucky's Bar & Grill.

Oct. 20

The Guest List by Foley, Lucy

Nov. 17

West with Giraffes by Rutledge, Lynda

Dec. 15

The Personal Librarian by Benedict Marie

Rain did not put a damper on the last of our three outdoor services (August 28). Thank you to all for making it a memorable evening of community and worship.



Get Ready for Back to School



Use SCRIP Cards

Shop your
favorite stores
(same prices, same service)









Give to the Church Youth Mission Fund at the same time



2022 Golf Event Results

Well, WE DID IT!!!!!!

Some additional monies are still coming in,
but including those, we netted a total of
\$20,924.00



WHAT A GREAT JOB DONE BY ALL. It truly was a great golf outing.



NEW MEMBER Sunday—This Fall a Celebration !

A New Member Sunday and a New Member Brunch to celebrate those who have joined the church in 2020-2022 are being planned for October 2. There have been 31 new members since August 2020. This number includes those who joined as Profession of Faith, Transferees from other churches and those who have been confirmed since October 2020.

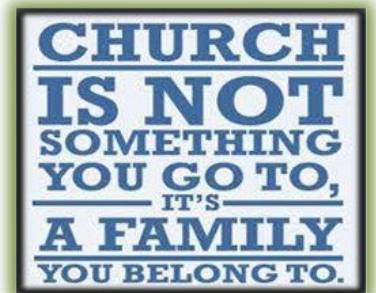
Following the October 2 worship service, our newest members and all who have recently joined our church since March 2020 are invited to attend a New Member Brunch during which time we will celebrate you being a part of our church family. Invitations will be sent closer to the brunch date.

If you are interested in becoming a part of our church family, would like to transfer their membership to First Congregational or become reinstated, please contact Linda Davis at pldavis.pd@gmail.com or 207-985-9186 to have your questions answered or to indicate your interest in joining our church. We look forward to hearing from you.

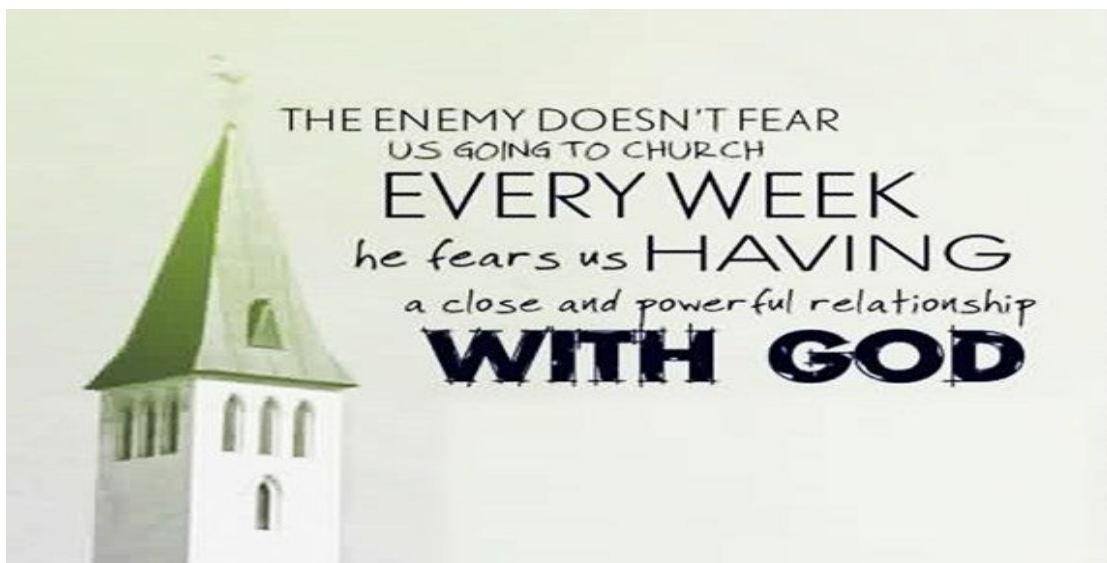
Become a Sponsor for New Members

The purpose of sponsors for new members of our church will be to ensure that they feel welcome.

Sponsors will join them as they become new members during a church service, and then take them to Fellowship and introduce them to other church members and accompany them during the fellowship hour. Sponsors will be available to answer questions they might have or direct them, if needed, to someone who can fully answer their questions or address any concerns. Sponsors will invite new members to attend church activities and events. The sponsors' role will be to serve as companions for the first six months following New Member Sunday to ensure that they feel welcome and that they are an important part of the congregation.



Please contact Linda Davis at pldavis.pd@gmail.com or 207-985-9186 to express interest in being a sponsor.





Hearts & Hands Preschool

For more information: e-mail: preschool@oconomowocucc.org

**To schedule a private tour , contact Cindy Meckl 262-567-2558
or themeckls@gmail.com.**



2022-2023 Classes start September 7th!

We cannot wait to start!

Toilet Training is NOT REQUIRED for any of our classes

Church members receive 20% off of their tuition!

**More information
plus registration forms
can be found on our website**

www.heartsandhandspreschool.org

Friday Fun Class starts September 23rd!

Celebrating God's Creation September 23rd - October 21st (5 weeks, \$125)

This 5-week session takes the children through the creation story and all that God created!

Class runs for 9-11am on Fridays and is open to ALL children ages 2.5-4 years old.

For more information and to register, click this link: [\(Click here\)](#)

Thank-you Thank-you Thank-you

A mystery gardener planted marigolds in the playground and they are huge and beautiful. Thanks so much for adding some beauty to our day!



Gary Phillips added boards to the back of the garden near the atrium. This will prevent the washout of the dirt and wood chips that has been happening every time we have a hard rain. Thanks Gary!

Head Start installed a new playground and it is beautiful! Check it out when you get a chance! We are so thankful that they willingly share this area with the preschool.

FREE



**We no longer need this for preschool.
Does anyone want this for their child?
Contact Cindy Meckl, themeckls@gmail.com
or call/text 262-567-2558**



The Church Office will be CLOSED
Monday September 5

in observation of Labor Day.

Have a great & safe day.

See you Tuesday, September 6th

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, September 4

Monday, September 5

Thursday, September 8

Sunday, September 11

Tuesday, September 27

Sunday, October 2

Sunday, October 16

Thursday, October 20

Sunday, November 6

Events

Worship with Holy Communion, Food Pantry Sunday

Observance of Labor Day, *office closed*

Book Club 1pm in-person or Zoom **DATE CHANGE**

Optional Lunch before. Lunch @11:30am Lucky Chucky's Bar & Grill.

Questions, please contact Jean Vercauteren

Rally Day

Fall Ministry Meeting @ 6:30pm I the Music Room

New Member Sunday

Worship with Holy Communion, World Communion Day, Neighbors In Need Offering, Food Pantry Sunday

Fall Congregational Meeting, immediately following Worship Service.

Book Club 1pm in-person or Zoom

Worship with Holy Communion, Food Pantry Sunday
Daylight Saving Time ends