

September Branches Newsletter



2020 MISSION TRIP— ZACHARIAH'S ACRES

July 26-30, 29 youth and chaperones embarked on a journey here in our hometown of Oconomowoc.

Please join us Sunday, September 23 for **Mission Sunday**
where you will hear stories from the participants about their trip!

WORSHIP SERVICE

9:00 A.M.

Currently One Service due to COVID-19



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 –0273

Phone: 262.567.4461

Email: Jennifer@oconomowocucc.org

www.oconomowocucc.org

Pastoral Ponderings

Dear Friends of First Congregational;

Presently, we live in a chaotic time of change and uncertainty. This virus has rapidly caused so much change. We hear on the news about the number of new cases each day. Events that we enjoy have changed or been cancelled all together. Even though we find ourselves in a pandemic, we are also in an election year and so much of what we do or say is seen as being political.

Last Monday evening, when I was getting my hair cut, I was talking to Kaitlynn. Kaitlynn, my barber, is a young mother. She stays at home during the day while her husband works and then cuts and styles hair in the evening. She has three children, ages five, seven and nine. I asked her how she felt about sending her children off to school in a few days? Kaitlynn shared with me that her children were going to attend school virtually. As she shared her reasons why, I felt a sense of fear in her voice. She was wanting to protect her young children. We talked about other young parents and the concerns of providing childcare. Also, we talked about summer-time activities for children and families that have been changed or cancelled.

At church we are facing many of the same issues as young families and being forced to make difficult decisions. On August 4, I asked the members of our leadership team and the chairs of our ministry teams to sit down together with me in hopes of discerning our direction and schedule for this fall. The next week the members of our Leadership team reflected upon our conversation; they came to the following recommendations.

Starting Sunday, September 13, we will begin our fall season with only one service of worship at 9:00 a.m. There will be no coffee hour. This decision is based upon our present attendance numbers. Many of our friends and members have not returned to worship simply due to the fear of catching the virus. In addition, the CDC and the Wisconsin Council of Churches recommend a sanitizing of the sanctuary between services. And there is not sufficient time between our services to sanitize the pews and the entire area. Leadership recommended to the staff that we see this time as an opportunity to be creative. Our service of worship will not be completely contemporary or completely traditional. We realize that many of you prefer one style of service over the other. But hopefully everyone can find it in their hearts to compromise and feel inspired as well as having their spiritual needs meet. In hopes of listening to the needs of the congregation, we recently sent out a brief survey. We thank everyone of you who filled it out. We have listened to your feedback.

In order to worship in person, we will have to continue the changes we previously made to our worship service, for example to wear masks, to practice social distancing, and to use hand sanitizer. We realize that many of our friends and members may want to wait to return to worship. Therefore, our services will be broadcast live and will be recorded so that you may watch them and participate at a later point in time. The recorded services take time to be prepared and posted, so please be patient. You will not find the recorded service posted immediately after the service.

Friends, this is a time for our congregation to pull together. To realize that due to the pandemic things will have to be different only until the time comes that we can return to a sense of normalcy. Our worship service may or may not have everything that you want; however, we ask that you support the congregation and the staff. All of us look forward to the day when this horrible pandemic is over, and we can go back to two full services and not have to wear any masks and greet each other in Christian love.

May the peace of Christ be with all of you,

Pastor Dave



What Is Ministry?

EVER WONDER WHAT OUR MINISTRIES, COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS GROUPS DO?

Each month we will highlight two (2) groups.

The Pastoral Relations and Staff Support Committee *consists of 4 active members of the congregation.*

The members may serve 2 consecutive 3 year terms. The goals and protocols of this group are to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between and among the Pastor, other church staff and members of the congregation.

They are to encourage constructive and caring communication in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust between the Pastor, church staff and congregation. If a conflict or concern arises between the Pastor's ministry and that of the congregation or church staff, the committee will assist in problem-solving, seeking solutions and possibilities to avoid destructive conflict. This committee is the first step for any conflicts or concerns that arise in the church in order to avoid "parking lot chatter" that doesn't promote positive problem-solving. While this committee will be one of confidentiality, we will expect those who bring concerns to eventually communicate those concerns directly and honestly to the necessary parties. This could be via a signed letter or email, phone call, meeting Pastoral Relations members or meeting with only concerned parties. The members of this committee are Don McCollum, Amy Middleton, Barb Moeller and Julie Palm.

The Personnel Committee *consists of 4 active members of the congregation.* The members may serve 2 consecutive 3 year terms. This committee is similar in that they also work closely with the Pastor and church staff but it is in more of a Human Resource capacity.

They will maintain current descriptions for the Pastor and all other staff positions as a basis for hiring and evaluations and maintain the employee handbook which defines the relationship of the congregation with church staff. The committee will be responsible for an annual evaluation and review of the performance of the Pastor. The Pastor will provide the Committee with an annual evaluation report of all other Staff. The Personnel Committee will then make salary recommendations to the Budget Committee as a result of these reviews. The members of this committee are Stephen Carlson, Pat Evans, Amy Hayes and Lois Jackson.



Stewardship Ministry Update

"Engage, Inspire, Connect" is the new church mission statement and the 2020 fall Stewardship theme. The committee agreed it represented the unique qualities of our church and our time and talents.

As we move through this fall Stewardship campaign, we will reflect on how each of us are:

- **Engaged** by Jesus to live God's word
- **Inspired** by the Holy Spirit to joyfully unite to love, honor and worship
- **Connected** in song, with friends, family, generations, the community and God

We look forward to sharing this stewardship journey as we get closer to Stewardship Sunday, November 8th.

Youth News

Sunday School News



Our Sunday School year will be unlike any other year we've ever had!!!

We are very excited and dedicated to make this a safe, fun and engaging Christian education. For the safety of our children/youth as well as volunteers we will be slowly coming back to in-person Sunday School with virtual options available. The layout below will be for September and October and will be revisited in October for November and December. We will also be following the Oconomowoc Area School District. If the schools switch to virtual learning due to the increased cases of Coronavirus, our in-person sessions will switch to virtual as well.

We will continue to offer the Rotation style of Sunday School for 3 year olds through 5th graders. Each month there will be a different biblical story with a different weekly activity. The first Sunday a virtual story time will be emailed out with an activity. The second Sunday there will be an in-person option in the pavilion during the 9 a.m. service for up to twelve (12) registered children as well as a zoom option at the same time. The zoom will be recorded and sent out for those who were unable to attend. For the remaining weeks a virtual lesson will be emailed.

Our youth in 6th-12th grade will have an opportunity to participate in a virtual zoom lessons the first, second and fourth Sunday from 10:45-11:30 for 6th-8th grade and 11:30-12:15 for 9th-12th grade. There will be an in-person session the third Sunday during the 9 a.m. worship in the pavilion with twelve (12) registered youth for grades 6- 12th. Everyone will come together for scripture reading and activity. They will then break out to their groups (6th-8th and 9th-12th) for discussions.

We are here to spiritually support all our families, youth and children during this time of uncertainty. We ask for your patience, grace and understanding as we try to find ways to provide Christian education for everyone no matter their comfort level yet remain safe. Please watch your emails for up to date information. As always please feel free to reach out to Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org. We can't wait to see everyone either in-person or virtually really soon!!!

RALLY DAY - Like No Other ! Sunday, September 13

Join us in-person or virtually on September 13 during the 9 a.m. worship as we kick off the start of another great Sunday School Year! There will be a special presentation of bibles to our 3rd Graders, children's message, music and message. We hope you will be able to join us or tune in!

Sunday School Registration and Sign Up

It's that time of year again to register your child/youth for Sunday School! All children and youth participating either in-person or virtually need to register their child/youth. Please [click here](#) to do so. If you are experiencing issues or need assistance please contact Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org. In September and October we are asking families to sign their children/youth up for the in-person sessions. This will help us accurately plan our sessions and adhere to the 50% capacity. We are only allowing the first twelve 12 children/youth per session with a waitlist. If you are on the waitlist you will be called as soon as possible if a spot opens.

[Click here](#) to sign your 3 year old-5th grader up for the September 13 session.

[Click here](#) to sign your 6th-12th graders up for the September 20 session.

Youth Group News !

We are very excited to continue to offer Youth Group gatherings this fall!

Junior Youth (3-4 grades)
Middle School Youth (5-8 grades)
High School Youth (9-12 grades)

Again, this year there will be two groups:

- Junior Youth Group (3rd -8th Grade)
- Youth Group (9th—12th Grade)

Our Junior Youth will be meeting once a month beginning September 13 from 10:15-11:15.

The High School group will come together once a month as well beginning September 20 from 10:15-11:15.

Please 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.

Confirmation

As a new school year begins, we are also starting a new Confirmation class! This year we have a group of 5 youth who will be participating. Obviously, our sessions may look a little different than years past but we are dedicated to making this a fun, engaging and learning experience. We look forward to a faith filled journey with these individuals and can't wait to get started in October!

Children In Church

Here at First Congregational UCC children are always welcomed in church. Currently our family room is unavailable to be used at this time. The limited amount of in-person Sunday School during worship can pose as a problem for families with children. We hear you and understand. We know it can be hard for children to sit through a service and as parents we want them to be quiet and not be an interruption. Please know that children are never an interruption in church, they are a gift from God and we love to hear them!!

Due to the circumstances this year there will be plastic containers filled with activities children can do while they sit in church during a service. When you come to church grab a bin and let them have fun. After service please place the bin in the designated used area. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org

2020 Church Directory



The next Church directory has been scheduled for distribution on October 4th.

Please send updated addresses, emails and phone numbers to Jennifer@oconomowocucc.org

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. The **September Singing Collection** is for our **Christmas Clearing House**. Yes, you read it right, Christmas. The Christmas Clearing Council of Waukesha County (CCC) promotes and coordinates giving to families in need during the Christmas season. You can make the Christmas season brighter for children who might not otherwise experience the joy of the holidays.



Hearts & Hands Preschool



Oh what fun we had this summer !

We are having so much fun with our "Down on the Farm" August Friday Fun class!
The kids had fun learning all about farm animals!



On September 9th, our 2020-2021 school year will begin! We have implemented new policies and procedures to help keep all happy and healthy this school year. Check out our new COVID-19 FAQ page on our website: heartsandhandspreschool.org

We are opening the school year at 50% licensed capacity, we had Microbe Free WI come disinfect, sanitize and protest our preschool areas, and we are also spending a lot of our class time outside! We are so blessed to have 22 acres to explore, a wonderful pavilion, a beautiful outdoor worship area, and a super fun playground!

Here's an easy way to help the preschool: like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram.

Then, comment and share our posts! **For more information:** e-mail: preschool@economowocucc.org



Group of church members lending their skills to replace exterior casing trim on our Church



Hearts & Hands Preschool



Did You Know ...

Information provided by Cindy Meckl



On Friday, August 7th, Microbe Free Wisconsin was at church to sanitize and protect the preschool (preschool rooms, hallway, bathroom, and playground)! As a gift to the church from preschool, the church office, downstairs bathrooms, upstairs bathrooms, Fellowship Hall, the sanctuary and the pavilion were also sprayed:) This now means that the majority of the church building surfaces are now protected from microbes (bacteria and viruses - including COVID) for at least the next year!

We are so excited to add this additional level of protection to our preschoolers and staff plus church members and church staff as well!

There is a two step process: sanitizing and protective. The first spray kills current surface microbes while the second spray forms a long lasting polymer that is firmly bonded to the microscopic pores of any hard or soft surface to form a clear protective shield. The disinfecting and shielding surfaces system is effective against a broad spectrum of germs & microbes including MRSA, Ebola, Coronavirus, Norovirus, EColi, Influenza, Salmonella, and more. This will help fight the EPA's definition of "sick building syndrome" by improving indoor air quality in treated environments as well.



To see how this system works, see this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxVQXukrCBI&feature=youtu.be>

WELCOME Our New Members

Kevin and Toni Guyton

Kevin and Toni moved from South Carolina to Oconomowoc in September 2019. Previously, they have lived in North Carolina and North Dakota. Kevin loves road bike cycling, gardening and leading Bible Studies. He works at Husco Int'l in Waukesha and is in charge of Global Supplier Quality. Since the pandemic he has been working from home. Toni loves to go to flea markets and rummage sales to find treasures and keep in contact with their 5 grown children that still live in the Carolina's. Three of them are nurses who also treat COVID patients. Oh, and she loves to sing! Maybe she will lend her voice in church soon. Welcome!



Gary Phillips

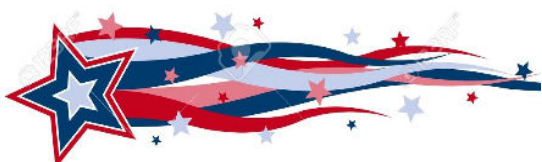
Gary lives in Pewaukee and has retired from the construction business. However, he continues to find jobs to do outside which keep him very busy. He has 6 grown children and when they were at home, wrestling was their passion. He joined us for our annual golf outing this year and his daughter, Hanna, even sang a solo at our outdoor service in June. Welcome to our church family! Look for Hannah's introduction and photo next month!



Join us for Kayaking - ~~September 12th~~ 10 a.m. **RESCHEDULED TO SEPT 19**

We had so much fun kayaking on August 15th that we are doing it again on September 12th! We will meet at 10 am at the launch near the Kilde in Oconomowoc. No experience necessary and if you do not have a kayak, let us know and we'll find one for you. ALL are welcome and children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent.

For more information, contact Cindy Meckl 262-567-2558 or themeckls@gmail.com. Here's a link to photos taken on kayak trip <https://share.icloud.com/photos/0l1aP1UR-i64pSINz-R-9nx9g>



**The Church Office will be closed on Labor Day
September 7, 2020**

Food Pantry Sundays - First Sunday of Every Month



Pantry Hours:

Tues. & Thurs. 1:30-
2:30pm and
6:30-7:30 pm

Saturdays
9:30-10:30 a.m.

You are invited to bring items for the Food Pantry and place them in the baskets at sanctuary entrance. These donations are delivered to the Oconomowoc Food Pantry (*South end of St. Vincent De Paul thrift store*) 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.

Did you know that the Oconomowoc Food Pantry is a non-profit organization. It is run by volunteers with no paid staff and receives no government subsidies. 100% of your donations go to servicing those in need. ***Please mark your calendars to donate.***

Collection dates: September 6 October 4 November 1 December 6

Scrip Gift Cards - A Word (or 2 or more) about Scrip

Do you:

- **Put gas in your car** at Speedway, KwikTrip or BP?
 - **Eat at** Cornerstone, Rosati's, Olive Garden or Applebee's?
 - **Grocery shop for food** at Piggly Wiggly, Festival Foods, Meijer, Sendick's or Pick n Save?
 - **Visit local spots** like Cornerstone and Fiesta Cancun?
- Both have outdoor seating available.

We have Scrip for all that and more! Please consider using Scrip to support our youth program AND local businesses at the same time. Profits from the sale of these cards support our church youth programs.

Stop in, call the Church office 262-567-4461 or email Jen during the week to check out and purchase the vast variety of gift cards. Ask her to gather the cards you want so all you need to do then is to stop by with your payment to pick up your order.

Have you ever wondered why it sometimes takes a while to get a card you would like?

Currently cards are only shipped to us from Scrip on Mondays and Wednesdays. Orders must be placed, at the latest, by noon central time on Wednesday to be shipped that week. Fortunately, orders usually arrive within one day of being shipped. This schedule is why, when we have had to order a card you want it may not be available for a week. Another reason may be that if we do not have a large enough order to give us a profit after the cost including shipping, we may delay ordering until additional cards are needed. You are welcome to check the list of retailers offering Scrip if you wish to order a card that is not routinely ordered.

Below are some examples of cards we routinely have and their respective percentage of rebate we receive for the cards

RETAILER	REBATE %
Barnes & Noble	8
Bath & Body Works	12
Books & Co.	20
Cabela's	10
Chili's	11
Cornerstone	20
Cousins Subs	9
Marcus	15
Panera Bread	8
Papa Murphy's	8
Pizza Hut	8
Rosati's	10
Qdoba	7
Starbucks	7
Whelan's	10

Note that our local retailers give us a generous rebate!

Golfing for Family Promise

What do Blackjack, Hula Hoops, Margaritas, Snickers and German Beer all have in common?

Honestly, not much! But if you were at this year's Annual Golf Outing, you would have joined in on all these fun activities. Creativity was on hand this year when many of our previous year's plans were put on hold. Oh, and we had some great golf too!

We didn't let the coronavirus, a 90-degree day or rain, wind, lightning and thunder stop us. This year will go down as one for the record books. We called it our "Plan B" day, since we were making adjustments all day long. We were masked up, sanitized and mostly outside enjoying 120 acres of God's creation!

100 golfers were enjoying the day until Chuck Wood (golf-pro, weather guru) called all the volunteers and golfers back in to safety after 3 hours of play. And we were ready for them!

Raffle ticket sales were brisk, hor d'oerves were hot and the drinks were cold.

A beautiful partnership with Family Promise that day was highlighted when we "live auctioned" off the components of building a house – doors, windows, bricks and shingles! The crowd was very generous and we were so grateful to have raised \$11,000 in just 7 minutes! Joe Nettesheim, Executive Director of Family Promise, created the enthusiasm and shared just how the money would help the homeless families in Waukesha County.

So many thanks go to all of our generous sponsors, registered golfers, tireless volunteers and those working behind the scenes to make this event happen. The First Congregational UCC Golf Outing to benefit Family Promise was a huge success due to each and every one of you.

Proceeds of the day totaled **\$ 25,110.49 !!!**

Imagine the many ways this day will continue to serve the needs of those served by Family Promise.

Enjoy a few pictures that were taken that day and remember to **SAVE THE DATE** for next year's outing.

Monday, August 9th, 2021!



To view the gallery of photos ([click here](#)). Enter your email address and the password (case sensitive): FPOCC2020 Enjoy!

God Wins – Revelations Series

On September 13 we will begin a new sermon series on the book of Revelation.

God Wins: Revelation Series is an 8-week sermon series that goes verse by verse through the first 7 chapters of the book of Revelation.



While throughout the Book of Revelation we encounter epic events and mysterious players in the ultimate end-time drama, all of the great prophecies found in this series are given in relationship to who Jesus is. Indeed, this is the “testimony [or witness] of Jesus Christ.” Everything here speaks of His presence and power. His great love and sacrifice, even of His enemies and His complete and final victory over everything dark in this world. The God Wins: Revelation Series will leave you challenged and hungry for more of Jesus, the Savior of all humankind.

To help you prepare for the message before you come to Church, here are the selected scripture passages in advance.

Date	Title	Scripture
9/13	Week 1: Revelation Sent from the Throne of God	Revelation 1:1-8
9/20	Week 2: John’s Vision of the Voice	Revelation 1:9-20
9/27	Week 3: Words From the One Who Knows Us Best-Part 1	Revelation 2
10/4	Week 4: Words From the One Who Knows Us Best Part 2	Revelation 3
10/11	Week 5: The Sights and Sounds of Heaven	Revelation 4
10/18	Week 6: The Lamb and The Scroll of Redemption	Revelation 5
10/25	Week 7: The Opening of the Six of Seven Seals	Revelation 6
11/1	Week 8: The Two Great Multitudes	Revelation 7

Bible Study

In connection with our new Sermon series on Revelation we will be starting a new virtual Bible Study on Zoom.

Our studies will be held on Thursday nights beginning September 13 at 7pm lasting through November 5th. Our lesson each week will center on the scripture passage from the preceding Sunday.

Family Promise Thank You and Update

As our church's volunteer coordinators for Family Promise, we want to express our gratitude to the congregation for supporting Family Promise through our annual golf outing. It was a wonderful event and this congregation exceeded expectations in every way - the funds that were raised, the participation and the fun! A special thank you to Fred Steinke and Patti Ewald for their hard work to make this happen. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

- Family Promise is supporting several local families experiencing difficulty. Donations of the following are appreciated: diapers (newborn and size 1), baby clothes, and art supplies for a 6 and 8 year old boy and girl. Donations can be dropped off at the church office or in the FP bin outside the church office door.
- Family Promise of Waukesha County continues to operate during the pandemic by focusing on its homelessness prevention initiative. This is especially important as many families are experiencing hardship during this time and the organization is helping alumni and other families in our community remain in their homes.
- Family Promise of Waukesha County has purchased a Day and Family Resource Center in Waukesha and the move from Wales to Waukesha will happen this month.



First Congregational UCC of Oconomowoc
815 S. Concord Rd.
Oconomowoc, WI 53066 -0273

Phone: 262.567.4461

Email: Jennifer@oconomowocucc.org
uccoffice@oconomowocucc.org

www.oconomowocucc.org

Branches Deadlines - 2020

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Articles Due</u>	<u>Released</u>
Oct	Sept 16	Sept 25
Nov	Oct 21	Oct 30
Dec/Jan	Nov 11	Nov 20

Please send events/announcements to:
Jennifer at Jennifer@oconomowocucc.org

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Staying Connected ...

Pastor Dave Schnepf pastordaveschnepf@gmail.com
Amy Drewa, Dir. of Ed. & Youth amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org
Jennifer Arnold, Admin. Assistant jennifer@oconomowocucc.org
Cindy Meckl, Hearts & Hands Preschool themeckls@gmail.com

Branches

September 2020

Currently One Service
at 9 a.m.
due to COVID-19

Upcoming Events:

September 6	Pantry Sunday
September 7	Office Closed, Labor Day
September 13	Rally Sunday
September 16	Branches Articles Due
September 17	Bible Study begins
September 27	9am Outdoor Worship
October 4	World Communion Sunday
October 18	Fall Congregational Meeting
November 8	Stewardship Sunday