



AUGUST 2026

Branches Newsletter



Join us for Worship Sundays at 9:30AM

Engage and **Inspire** all generations to **Connect**
with God through love and service.

Newsletter Highlights

All Church Read

Sunday Funday

Golf Outing

Outdoor Worship

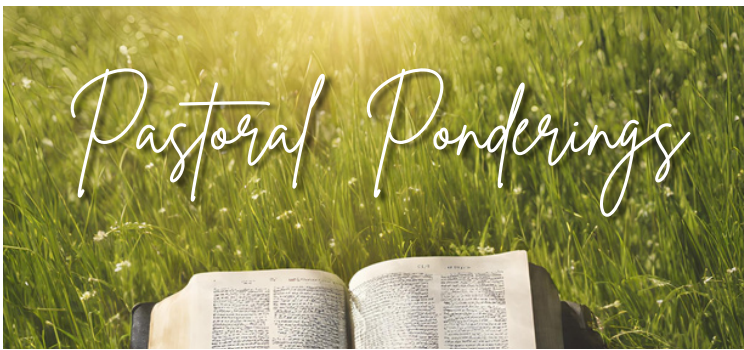
Festival of the Arts

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
OCONOMOWOC**

📍 815 S. Concord Road

📞 262-567-4461

✉ uccoffice@oconomowocucc.org



by Pastor Matt

Prophetic competition leads to bloodshed, and a terrified run across the desert. Elijah just out-prophesied the prophets of Baal, who were employed by king Ahab and queen Jezebel. We'll skip the juicy backstory here, but for a deeper dive read chapters 18 and 19 of 1 Kings.

Elijah was running from hired guns who would kill him on sight. He escapes to some desert mountains and finds a cave, where he can rest in relative safety, at least for a night or so. But God knew where he was, and interrupted his terror with a question: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He tells God the whole story, and it's not pretty. God tells him to stand up and look outside, because God's about to pass by. Elijah goes to the mouth of the cave. A violent, driving wind hits. But God was not in the wind. Then came an earthquake, but God was not in the earthquake. Then came a blistering fire, but God was not in the fire. Then after the fire came the sound of "sheer silence." Out of that silence came the voice again, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

The sound of sheer silence. What could that be? Our world assumes that God shows up in big things like straight-line winds, trembling earth, a twisting firestorm – that God can be found in more drama, more adrenalin, more money, more anything. But here, it's just the opposite. It is in the wonder of sheer silence that God comes near.

Let's pause here. Because there is so much noise. It's all around us. The mental noise of phones built to inhale our attention, for someone else's profit.

The personal noise of new medical conditions, or new glitches in relationships. The noise of food safety concerns, of neighbors being recast as enemies, of conspiracy theories and food prices and gas prices and... You feel all that?

The psalmist writes (62:1), "For God alone my soul in silence waits."

The prophet Habakkuk (2:20), "The Lord is in his holy Temple, let all the earth keep silence." Lamentations (3:26) – "It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

Many times across the gospels, Jesus goes off by himself in silence to be with God in prayer.

It's out there. Waiting. Like emerging after a dive into the lake, with just the sound of water running off your hair (I remember...), and maybe a loon calling. Or that early morning quiet with your coffee. Or a walk through the woods that's a chore to prepare for but is so worth it once you get going. Or that silent space in the argument with your friend or spouse, when you realize there is room to shift, and a new way forward can emerge.

But you don't have to wait for random moments to appear. You can plan silence. You can spark a revolution of peace in your heart by setting regular time for it. Maybe it can't happen every day. Start with a couple of times a week. Start easy, with five or ten minutes – then slowly build up. Cut yourself some slack, because it will be perfectly imperfect every time.

You are not manufacturing an experience. You are being present. Because the God who met Elijah in the sound of sheer silence still meets us in that open space. Make room for encounter, and you'll find that the deepest voice is the One that has been waiting for you all along.



All are invited to have lunch and socialize at
Rockwell's Restaurant (Shorehaven north Campus)
The 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each Month
Menu Options are \$15 each

Tuesday, August 11

(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday, 8/3)

Superfood Salad, with red quinoa, edamame beans, rice, avocado, carrots, bell peppers, grilled chicken and a side of sesame lime dressing, served with an Andes candies brownie.

Grilled Italian sausage on a bun, with Marinara, Mozzarella, fries and an Andes candies brownie.

Tuesday, August 25

(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday, 8/17)

Salmon Caesar salad, with chopped Romaine, grape tomatoes, Parmesan cheese, home made croutons and Caesar dressing, with a Macadamia nut cookie.

Chicken Club sandwich on toasted wheat with bacon, lettuce, tomato, Cheddar cheese, mayo, chips and a Macadamia nut cookie.

Reserve your spot for a good time!

See Sue Zajac during Fellowship or call/text her at 414-698-3575. At each meal your cash will be collected by Sue Zajac (or designee) in order to make one payment for the group. Sorry no checks or credit cards—CASH ONLY.

Caring Connection

Caring Connection is a network of volunteers from our congregation who send cards, help out at funerals and give meals to those in need. We also participate in a confidential prayer chain, drive members to church, visit those at home or in a retirement community and take cards and plants at Christmas time to members who are home bound or in a retirement community.

This month we are highlighting our Visits/Call/Card Group



This group will provide support, assistance and friendship to those members in need. Depending on the circumstance, it can be a personal visit, just a friendly call or a thinking of you card on a regular basis. The volunteers have indicated on their Time & Talent Sheet that they would like to be involved in this mission. The 'pairing' of a church member and the church volunteer should be considered thoughtfully. We will review the list of church members receiving our help every 6 months or when needed.

Kim Caudill and Barb Moeller are co-ordinating this group.

Mission and Outreach



Singing Collection

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

August Singing Collection

August’s Singing Collection supports **Haus Of Peace**, located in Watertown, WI. Founded in 2016, Haus of Peace believes that everyone deserves the right to a safe and secure home. Their mission is to provide safe transitional housing and necessary resources to women and children who have experienced homelessness or abuse. Although located in Watertown, Haus of Peace helps all women and children in the surrounding areas.



Many of their volunteers and supporters come from all over the area too. Haus of Peace is committed to offering more than just shelter — they offer a journey back to self-sufficiency and confidence. They help rebuild and reshape people’s lives through a combination of physical, mental, spiritual, financial, and emotional support.

The Haus of Peace philosophy is rooted in the development of well-rounded, self-supporting individuals and the opportunity to understand what God has in store for those who embody integrity and accountability. Please give generously during August!

<https://www.hausofpeacewi.org>.



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

The first Sunday of every month, you are invited to bring items for the Food Pantry and put them in the baskets at the entrance to the sanctuary. These donations are delivered to the Oconomowoc Food Pantry during the week. Items that the Food Pantry accepts are:

Non-perishables: food items, Baby items - diapers, wipes, baby food, formula;
Personal hygiene items: soap, shampoo, tampons, sanitary pads, deodorant, toothpaste, laundry detergent, toilet paper.



August 2 & September 6

Please be sure before you donate that all perishable items are within their use dates and have not expired.

Capital Needs Campaign Update

The Capital Needs Campaign promotion is over, money has been received, and monies have been spent on the repair of the church and the surrounding grounds. A quick recap of the numbers will show:

Received: Total pledged over next 3-years = \$589,000
Total monies received so far = \$413,000 (70% of total)
Disbursed: Repaving parking lots and building maintenance = \$ 400,000

The next big project will be the technologic upgrades to the church sanctuary. This is going to be a complex endeavor because of multiple, interlocking parts.

Bids are being solicited and discussed within the Administrative Ministry. Work on the church sanctuary will need to be done during “slow” times so possibly next spring or summer. More to follow as decisions are made.

Again, thanks to all who have or are giving to the well-being of our church. The TLC that we are demonstrating will last for many years to come.

Yours in Christ,
Chris Mol
Chair, Capital Needs Campaign

Meeting with Conference Regional Team

We will meet with Rev Bob Gross and Kelly Volk on **Tuesday September 15 at 6:30 pm** in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to join us!

The Wisconsin Conference UCC has introduced a new Southern Region Support Team to partner with the 74 congregations and clergy throughout the region. Their role is to support churches through times of transition, assist with pastoral installations and farewells, conduct exit interviews, maintain the regional pulpit supply list, and encourage new and emerging ministries. Working alongside Associate Conference Minister Rev. Rachel Bauman, the team's mission is to strengthen the vitality and sustainability of local congregations.

Over the next 18 months, representatives from the Regional Support Team and the Wisconsin Conference Board of Directors will visit every Southern Region congregation. These 60–75 minute conversations are intended to listen, learn, and better understand each church's unique strengths, challenges, mission, and hopes for the future. Following each visit, congregations will receive a brief written summary with recommendations for both the church and the Conference to help guide future planning, leadership development, and sustainable ministry. Churches are encouraged to review the discussion questions in advance to help prepare for these conversations



There truly aren't enough words to express the gratitude I have for this church and for every single one of you. My heart is full, and if I'm being honest...please don't let me leave!

When I started about 3 years ago I had no idea how much this place would change my life. Looking back now, I know without a doubt that God brought me here for a reason. He knew exactly where I needed to be, and he placed me among people who would love me, encourage me, challenge me, and remind me of His presence in ways I'll never forget.

Leaving is one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. This isn't just a church to me, it means so much more than that. While I'm excited for what God has planned next, a part of my heart will always remain here. This isn't goodbye, though. You can't get rid of me that easily! I'll be back to visit and worship.

Pastor Matt and Amy have been such an incredible blessing in my life. Pastor Matt, your words have changed me. So many times I've sat reading your sermons or listening to your messages with tears in my eyes because they spoke directly to my heart. You taught me things about God's love, grace, and acceptance that I wish I had known when I was younger. I often find myself wondering how different my life might have been if I had grown up hearing those messages. Thank you for helping me know God in a deeper, more beautiful way.

Amy, thank you for being so much more than a coworker. You've been a friend, a mentor, and someone I could always lean on. Being a working mom (with too many jobs) isn't easy, and there were days when I needed someone who simply understood. You did. Thank you for listening, encouraging me, praying with me, laughing with me, and reminding me that I wasn't carrying everything alone. Your friendship has been one of God's greatest gifts to me.

And to everyone else...I wish I could tell each one of you individually what you've meant to me. This church is unlike any place I've ever known or even thought a church could be. It is a place where people genuinely love one another. Where people show up for each other in times of joy and in times of heartbreak. Where strangers become family. I have been so incredibly blessed to be part of that.

Thank you for believing in me. Thank you for trusting me. As I leave, I don't take just memories with me, I take pieces of each of you. I leave with a stronger faith and deep friendships. I'll still be cheering you on, praying for you, and visiting whenever I can.

Thank you. ❤️
-Natalie

Dearest Staff and Members,

Words cannot express my gratitude for the most amazing send off I could have asked for at the service on May 31st. Please know these past 25 plus years will be cherished for a lifetime.

Thank you! You are the best! As I settle into my new normal, I hope to keep up some of the many friendships that have grown over the years. Wishing you all the best always.

Love,
Sue Weber



New Member informational meetings for prospective members and others interested in learning more about our church will take place on **Sunday, August 2nd & 9th at 11AM** in the church office conference room with the Membership Committee. Please let Pastor Matt know that you will be attending.

On **September 13th** New Member Sunday will be held during which time those interested in becoming members of our church family will be warmly welcomed into our membership. *Please contact the Church Office if you are interested in attending the September 13th meeting and/or in becoming a member.*



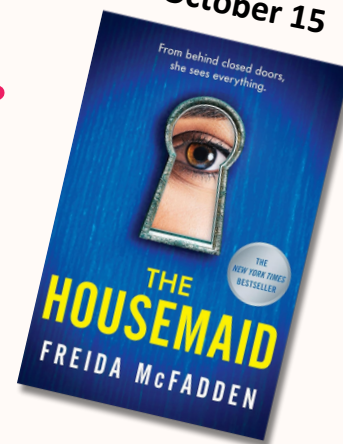
September 17



COME AND JOIN US AT OUR

BOOK CLUB

October 15



Socialize and form friendships by joining us for an immersive experience at Book Club. Book Club gives you a chance to get to know people you may never have had contact with otherwise! We enjoy reading and respectfully discussing a broad range of viewpoints as we seek to grow in our understanding of our Lord and one another. Join us to gain knowledge, creativity and community. Everyone in the Book Club gets a chance to pick a future book of the month. Come help us discover something new!

Join us at 1:00PM in person or Zoom next month. If you prefer Zoom please contact Jean Vercauteren for details.

All are welcome to join for any book and discussion.



First Congregational UCC of Oconomowoc

invites you to join us at the

2026 Annual Golf Outing

to benefit the ministry and mission of First Congregational UCC

Monday, August 10, 2026

Where:

Oconomowoc Golf Club
5621 Brown Street
Oconomowoc, WI 53066

Check-In, Warm-Up, Box Lunch:

10:00-11:00 am

Shotgun Start:

11:00 am

Dinner:

6:00 pm

Check-In for Dinner Only as early as 3:30 pm.

Please join us for Contests and Fun!!

Entry Includes:

18 holes of golf on a private Donald Ross course

Practice range and green available before your round

Box Lunch

Golf Contests

Dinner

Silent Auction; Raffles Prizes and Live Auction

FELLOWSHIP

\$25,000
Hole in One Contest
with purchase of premium package

All are Welcome to join in the fun!

Invite family, friends, neighbors and coworkers to play.

No matter your group size or skill, we will match you up.



To register: visit us at
oconomowocucc.org or
Scan Here to Register





Sunday FUN DAY

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UCC OCONOMOWOC

Together, we'll
explore just how
amazing and
surprising God's
grace truly is.

For ages 3
years old to
8th grade

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

1PM – 5PM

Dinner following at 5PM

Event Highlights

**EXCITING GAMES & ACTIVITIES
CREATIVE CRAFTS
TASTY TREATS**



Register

FOR MORE INFORMATION: AMYDREWA@OCONOMOWOCUCC.ORG

**SUNDAY FUNDAY IS MORE THAN AN EVENT, IT'S AN EXPERIENCE
YOUR KIDS WON'T WANT TO MISS!**

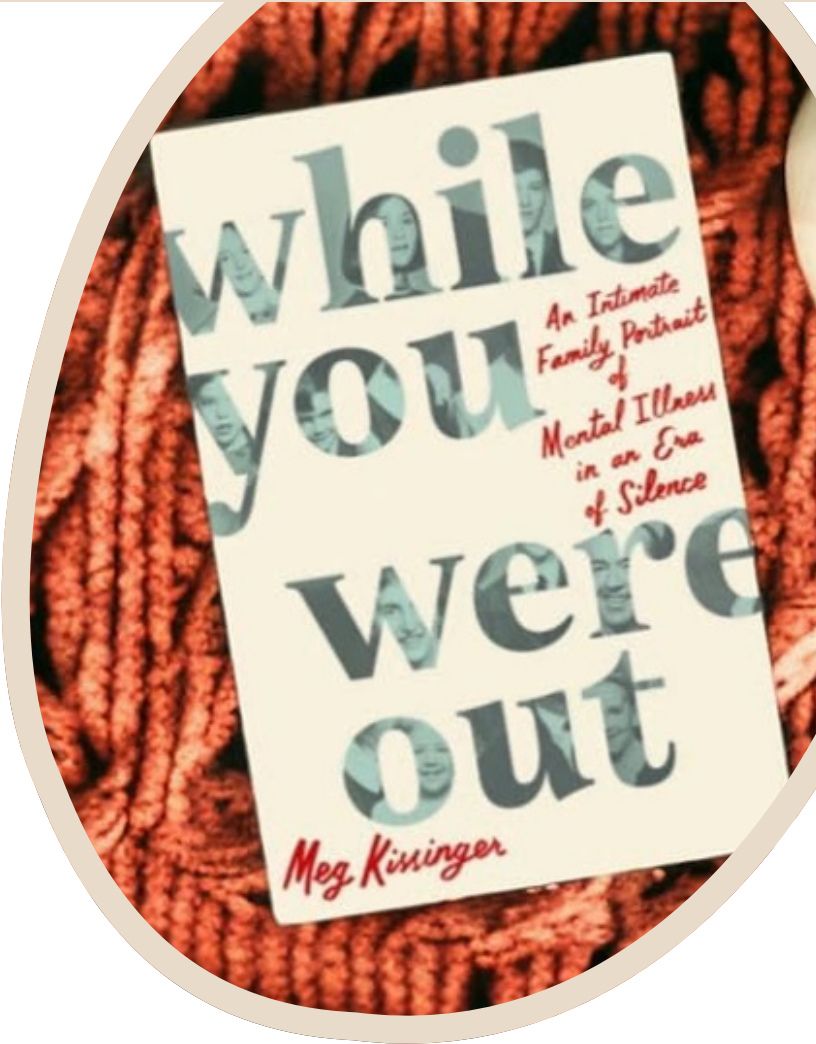


THE WISE COMMITTEE PRESENTS AN
ALL CHURCH READ

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

by Meg Kissinger

This will be a learning
opportunity about mental
health in an era of silence
and the effects it has.



**Books available in
the office to "check
out" or you can
purchase the book
on your own.**



FREE on Kindle
Unlimited if you
have it!

JOIN US FOR A DISCUSSION IN SEPTEMBER



Youth News

VBS

We are getting ready to CELEBRATE and we can't wait for you to join us!!!! Join us for a one day Sunday Funday Surprise Party Vacation Bible School, Sunday, August 16 from 1-5PM! Join us for an unforgettable afternoon of laughter, joy, and a few delightful surprises because when Jesus is involved, the unexpected is always part of the celebration! Together we will explore stories of how Jesus shows up at parties, sharing meals, and turning expectations upside down. His guest list isn't what people expect....it's waaaay better. Everyone is welcome, especially those who feel left out, overlooked, or unsure if they belong. And that's the good news we'll celebrate together: God's grace is for everyone. This party is for all children and youth 3 years old through 8th grade! Don't forget to register today and bring your friends!!!

[Click here](#) to register today and invite your friends!!!

Confirmation

A new Confirmation journey is about to begin, and we couldn't be more excited! This fall, we'll be welcoming a new class of students entering 9th grade who are ready to explore their faith, ask meaningful questions, and grow in their relationship with God.

Over the coming weeks, information about the Confirmation program will be sent to our rising 9th-grade students. We look forward to walking alongside these youth as they discover what it means to live out their faith and become active members of the church community.

If you have a student entering 9th grade, or an older student who is interested in participating, and you have not heard from us by mid-August, please contact Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org. We'd love to welcome them on this exciting faith journey!

WANTED.....Vacation Bible School Volunteers

HEY ADULTS AND YOUTH..... this Sunday Funday Surprise Party isn't just for kids it's for kids of all ages!! Come join this unforgettable Sunday Funday filled with joy, laughter, surprises, and God's amazing grace! We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help make this special day a success through games, crafts, snacks, Bible activities, decorating, set-up, clean-up, and more. Whether you love working behind the scenes or leading the fun, there's a place for everyone to serve! Come be part of sharing God's love, welcoming every child, and helping create a celebration they'll never forget.. [Click here](#) to sign up or contact Amy Drewa at amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org.

School Year Blessing

August has arrived, which means a new school year is just around the corner! As families begin shopping for school supplies, picking out new clothes, and preparing for fresh starts, we invite you to begin this season by placing the year ahead in God's hands.

Join us for Rally Sunday Worship on Sunday, September 13, as we celebrate and bless the start of another school year. Students of all ages, from preschool through adulthood, are invited to bring something they use for learning each day, whether it's a backpack, lunch box, water bottle, computer bag, or briefcase. During worship, we'll offer a special blessing and prayer for everyone as they begin a new year of learning, growing, and discovering.

As a new school year begins, let's come together as a church family to ask God's guidance, protection, wisdom, and peace for everyone embarking on this new adventure.

Youth News

Sunday School News!

Can you believe it's already that time of year again? Where did summer go?!

As you're registering your children for school, don't forget to register them for Sunday School, too! We are so excited to welcome everyone back for another year of growing in faith, building friendships, and continuing our Adventure with God.

Back-to-school season is filled with fresh starts finding the perfect backpack (or digging last year's out from under the bed!), gathering school supplies, and settling into new routines. It's also the perfect time to jump into a brand-new Sunday School year!

This August, our teachers and volunteers will be busy preparing classrooms, planning exciting lessons, and getting everything ready for another incredible year. Throughout the year, we'll journey through amazing Bible stories, discover how God's love is at work in our lives, and celebrate our faith together in fun, meaningful, and hands-on ways.

Sunday School is open to all children and youth ages 2 years through 12th grade, and friends are always welcome!

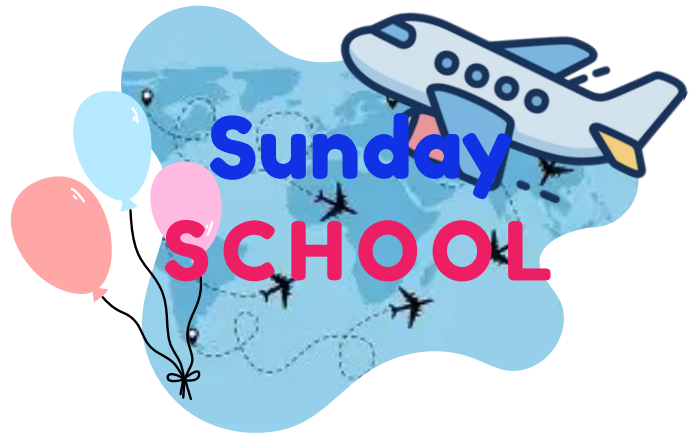
What to Expect This Year

- Ages 2 through 4th Grade: Children will rotate each week through our Art, Science, Games, and Story rooms, where they'll experience Bible stories through creative, interactive activities.
- Grades 5 through 12: Older students will explore how Scripture connects to everyday life through engaging discussions, activities, and opportunities to grow deeper in their faith.

Whether your child is joining us for the very first time or returning for another year, we can't wait to share this journey together. It's going to be a year filled with discovery, laughter, friendship, and countless opportunities to experience God's love.

[Click here](#) to register for Sunday School!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. We can't wait to begin this year's Adventure with God with you!



Rally Day! Sunday, September 13

Mark your calendars and get ready to kick off an exciting new Sunday School year as we continue our Adventure with God!

Join us for a special worship service as we celebrate the start of a brand-new year filled with faith, friendship, fun, unforgettable adventures and maybe even a few surprises. During the service, we'll continue one of our favorite traditions by presenting Bibles to all of our 3rd graders. This is a meaningful milestone as they continue to grow in God's Word.

After worship, the celebration continues! Everyone is invited to enjoy a special time of fellowship, meet our amazing Sunday School teachers, explore our classrooms during an Open House, and see all the exciting things we have planned for the year ahead.

Whether you're returning or joining us for the first time, we can't wait to welcome you as we continue this Adventure with God together. It's the perfect way to start an incredible year of learning, growing, and celebrating God's love!

Mission Trip

This summer, our Youth Mission Team traveled to Parrita, Costa Rica, where they experienced an incredible week of serving, growing, and witnessing God's love in action. From the moment they arrived, they were welcomed with open arms by the congregation of Yahweh Yireh and quickly became more than guests, they became family.

Throughout the week, our youth and dedicated chaperones faithfully shared their time, talents, and hearts. Together they poured concrete for construction projects, brought joy and laughter to residents at a local nursing home, taught English to school-aged children, shared God's Word, and delivered bags of groceries to families in need while spending time praying and building meaningful relationships with them.

While the projects they completed were important, it was the relationships they formed that made the greatest impact. Through worship, service, laughter, and prayer, God worked in powerful ways strengthening faith, building new friendships, and reminding everyone involved that Christ's love knows no borders.

We are incredibly proud of this remarkable group of youth and chaperones for the compassion, dedication, and servant hearts they demonstrated throughout the week. They represented our church family with grace, humility, and love.

On July 19, the team led worship and shared stories, reflections, and lessons from their mission experience. If you were unable to join us, we encourage you to watch the worship service and view the mission trip slideshow to experience some of the incredible moments from the week.

We are deeply grateful for the partnership we've begun with the congregation of Yahweh Yireh and look forward to the opportunity to serve alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ again in the future. God truly blessed this mission team!!

Youth News



HEARTS & HANDS

Celebrating ALL of God's Children

Fall 2026

We have openings for our fall classes for ages 2.5–4K

To sign up for any of our classes, see our website:

<https://www.heartsandhandspreschool.org/programs>

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

Kid's Fest

Join us at Kid's Fest on **Tuesday, August 4th** from **9:00 AM to 1:00 PM** at **Fowler Park**.

This is a fun and FREE family event! Sign up for a class during Kid's Fest and receive FREE registration (a \$70 value)! Spread the word!



TIME TO
Celebrate



- **Giving Back:** The preschool has officially given over \$100,000 back to the church (\$100,527.34 to be exact)!

- **Congratulations, Nyla!** Nyla passed her Introduction to Childcare class. She has been a wonderful addition to our team, and we are so proud of her accomplishment!

- **Another Milestone:** Our 22nd year of preschool begins on September 9th!

AUGUST FRIDAY FUN 2026

WHAT IS IN MY GARDEN??

Enjoy 3 Fridays full of garden fun!!

August 7, 14 & 21

9-11 am

Cost: \$90



REGISTER

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

New Member Info Meeting: August 2 (11AM)

RISE Cooking Class: August 3 (5 PM)

Prayer and Bible Study: August 6 (6PM)

Work Saturday: August 8

New Member Info Meeting: August 9 (11AM)

Annual Golf Outing: August 10

Ladies Luncheon: August 11

RISE at Whelan's: August 15 (noon)

Festival of the Arts: August 15 - 16

Hymn Sing: August 16 (9:30AM)

Outdoor Worship: August 16 (6PM)

Book Club: August 20 (1PM)

Rise: August 20 (6PM)

Ladies Luncheon: August 25

Hearts & Hands Open House: September 2

Labor Day: September 7 (Office Closed)

Ladies Luncheon: September 8

Hearts & Hands First Day: September 9

RISE and Dine Cooking Class: September 10 (4:30PM)

Work Saturday: September 12

Rally Sunday, New Member Sunday, Member Appreciation: September 13

Book Club: September 17 (1PM)

RISE at Whelan's: September 19 (noon)

RISE Makers & Munchies: September 28 (5PM)

Hearts & Hands Mom Meet and Greet: September 30 - October 1

FOR MORE INFO VISIT US AT

WWW.OCONOMOWOCUCC.ORG

STAY CONNECTED AND FALL INTO CHURCH WITH US

Rev. Matt Schneider-Adams, Senior Pastor pastor@oconomowocucc.org

Amy Drewa, Minister of Faith Formation and Community Engagement amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org

Karl Kay, Music Director karlkay@execpc.com

Cindy Meckl, Hearts & Hands Preschool themeckls@gmail.com