



JUNE/JULY 2024

# 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

Summer Outdoor  
Worship Services

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Camp Firelight

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Habitat for Humanity,  
Helping Hands Fund

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7th Annual Bald Eagle  
Car Show

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Golf Outing

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
OCONOMOWOC**

📍 815 S. Concord Road

📞 262-567-4461

✉ [uccoffice@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:uccoffice@oconomowocucc.org)



by Pastor Matt

In a deceptively simple scene, Jesus is working through a crowd, and an expert in the Jewish law brings a straightforward question: “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Ripping a page from Socrates, Jesus says: “You know the law. What does it say there?” Seeing the respect Jesus shows for his learning, the young man directly answers: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus said, “That’s right. Do this and you will live.”

“Butbutbut...” says the law expert, “who exactly is my neighbor?” With that, Jesus paints the miniature verbal masterpiece we now know as the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Yet, the question remains: who IS my neighbor? Across the gospels, Jesus is clear that the neighbor is not just the person living adjacent to you, but is, in fact, anyone before you, anyone around you, anyone facing trouble, anyone whose need at the moment is greater than your own. This is deep spiritual truth.

AND. And... in first century Israel/Palestine, daily life was drenched in direct contact with your geographical neighbors. You worked together, got water from the town well together, did laundry on the same day to save labor. You likely would bake on the same day, hear each other’s arguments, know when their roof developed a leak, watch each other’s livestock. So, you were already in real relationship with your geographic neighbors.

In 21st century North America, things are different. We are comfortable with abstract neighbors “out there somewhere” – safely distant, unmet, theoretical. Harder for us, are neighbors who actually live across the street or next door. And here’s the question: how can we actually “love our neighbor as we love ourselves,” if we do not even know who they are?

Here is a challenge for the summer months: taking seriously Jesus’ simple command to “love our neighbor as we love ourselves,” **please try to meet, and learn the names of, your neighbors whose places touch the place where you live.** Take advantage of “yard-work season” to talk across the fence or the trash bins, or to venture across the street. Invite someone over for a “cold one,” or for brats. If you’re adventurous, quietly help with a project.

It may seem like a small thing, but much good will come from this. Not only will we actively sabotage the toxic separation of our time. We’ll also begin to see our neighbor as more than the sum-total of their annoying habits or political signs. By simply meeting them and learning their names, the largest single barrier will already be broken down, and we will be more able to pray for them, to serve them, more able to be the living mortar that helps build true community in a divisive, self-involved, venal time. We’ll be more able to enact the command of Jesus to love them, to love God - and thereby, to authentically be the church. I look forward to hearing about your experiences in all this as we periodically check-in during worship over the coming months.

With longer days, and green, and vacations, summer brings new ways to connect with the people around us. Right around us. Let’s do this. For the love of God. And of our neighbor.



## Moderator Musings



During my Moderator Report at the Spring Congregational Meeting I mentioned a phrase my sainted mother would say when my brothers and I would be “volun-told to do something for our old church in Elkhorn WI. She would state, “This will earn you another jewel for your crown in heaven”. As a teenager that phrase didn’t mean much to me but as I have gotten older and certainly as I have served as your Moderator I have become acutely aware of the need for great numbers of willing volunteers to accomplish our church mission.

The numbers of our members who willing give their time is truly inspiring. Be it helping at the rummage sale, being part of the Blue Apron Brigade who served lunch at our recently hosted Southeast/Southwest Association meeting, or serving Fellowship Hour each Sunday, all these actions demonstrate an individual’s commitment to Christian service. In Confirmation class we ask the young adults to describe the roles that Jesus played and invariably one student will say “Servant”. Being a servant or volunteer to others is in line with Jesus’s commandments and answers the Bible’s call, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.” 1 Peter 4:10.

Stewardship Ministry has been discussing how to both acknowledge those church members who volunteer but also how to encourage others to find their spiritual gifts and to offer them God. More to come in the next few months. In the meantime, keep collecting those jewels for your crown.

Yours in Christ,



Chris Mol, Moderator, First Congregational UCC of Oconomowoc

# Summer Outdoor Worship Services

**Join us for our Outdoor Summer Worships**

June 16 at 9:30AM (*Father’s Day*)

July 14 at 5:30PM

and August 11 at 5:30PM with Potluck



**August** articles are due no later than **Monday, JULY15** to Natalie Gruentzel - [natalie@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:natalie@oconomowocucc.org)



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, June 11

*(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday 6/3)*

## Tuesday, June 25

*(RSVP to Sue Zajac by Monday 6/17)*

*Please look for the next menu options on the Narthex table.  
They will be printed as soon as they are received.*

## Reserve your spot for a good time!

During Fellowship or call/text Sue Zajac 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.

*Thanks to all of your hard work and dedication,  
we received this letter with a donation:*

Dear Church in Oconomowoc,

Thank you for so graciously hosting an Outstanding annual meeting of worship, fellowship and workshops. Thank you for being true friends to your visitors, with kindness and warm welcomes.

Your meeting house is beautiful! and lovely maintained. It is clear a lot of good work goes on under its roof.

In addition to all the organization, planning, and dedication of your members and organizers, the out-of-pocket costs must have been very large. I hope the enclosed might help with them.

Thank you for the generous welcome, and for your fine example of what church should be.

Gratefully,  
Donald Taft



## 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.



### June's Singing Collection

Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit housing organization working in local communities across all 50 states and in more than 70 countries around the world. Habitat's vision is of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Habitat works toward this vision by building and improving homes in partnership with individuals and families in need of a decent and affordable place to live. Families have a rigorous application to complete and they are expected to put in sweat equity hours. Their mortgage is determined by what they can afford for a monthly payment. They only pay for materials that Habitat has to supply. Many materials and appliances are donated and labor is through volunteer hours.

We have been partnering with the Habitat for Humanity of Washington and Dodge Counties as a way to keep Rich Behling's legacy alive. We try to schedule the third Saturday of the month during the winter/spring/fall months. We take the summers off due to busy schedules. The houses that we have worked on have been in West Bend. No skill or experience is needed when volunteering with Habitat. They provide all the knowledge, training, equipment and supplies. All you need is a positive attitude, commitment, and dedication to work on any of the tasks they offer based on skill, interest and willingness to learn. Come join us this fall on the third Saturday of September, October, and November. Additionally, you can support their vision financially during our June singing collection.

Interested in learning more? Rochelle Behling will be happy to connect with you!



### July's Singing Collection

Our July singing collection will benefit The Helping Hands Fund. It is a local, internal fund that offers financial assistance to individuals who come to the church seeking help. As Amy Drewa explained, "with the generosity of our congregation, we are able to provide rental assistance, utility assistance and in some cases an evening of rest in a hotel for those who are homeless."



## 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.

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



### Joyce Stearns

While living in MN she was a Medical Technologist but since then has moved to Wisconsin to be closer to her family. She loves being outdoors so has been exploring our Oconomowoc area.



### Gene and Sandy Davenport

After living in Marinette, WI for 44 years they decided to move closer to family in 2022. Gene was a General Manager for a furniture company and Sandy a stay-at-home mom to their 2 daughters. They both loved traveling and Sandy likes to go to concerts, movies and loves to play Bridge. Gene likes volunteer work and to help out at church.

# Caring Connection



Connecting volunteers  
to church members in need.  
Joining us together in love.

Caring Connection is a network of volunteers from our congregation who direct God's healing message to Church Family members in need. Everyone is invited to participate in this meaningful mission, living out your faith through a variety of caring opportunities.

## Caring Connection provides the following\*:

- Transportation to church services/events
- Meals to families or individuals in need
- Assistance with church funeral luncheons
- Participation in a confidential prayer chain
- Long-term or short-term visitation
- Sending cards of sympathy and celebration
- Delivering Christmas poinsettias to members who are homebound or bereaved
- Knitting and delivering prayer shawls
- Caring help as needed, in response to special joys and concerns



These caring opportunities are flexible with volunteer's schedules, and participants are called on as needs arise. **\*To help this ministry, simply check one or several of the above services on your Time and Talent sheet.**

**If you or someone you know could use a little help from Caring Connection, contact the pastor at the church office: 262-567-4461 or [uccoffice@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:uccoffice@oconomowocucc.org) or the Coordinator of CC.**





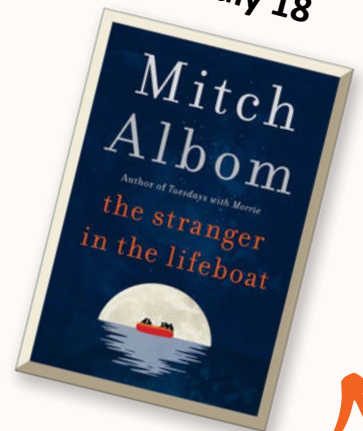
June 20



COME AND JOIN US AT OUR

# BOOK CLUB

July 18



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.**





# MISSION STOCK SHARES

Invest in our 2024 Summer Mission Trip by purchasing a share of stock. Shares are sold in any amount. By purchasing a share, you are helping a participant serve in a way God has called them. They are stepping out of their comfort to serve communities and to bring a helping hand and hope.



Gaining New Relationships and Skills



Life Altering Experience



**SOME GIVE BY GOING;  
OTHERS GO BY GIVING!**



Purchase your stocks today  
in the Church Office or after  
worship in Fellowship Hall.



Rain  
or Shine

# 7th Annual Bald Eagle Car Show

**Saturday, June 15, 2024**  
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Due to  
Road  
Const.

This year at **Okauchee Lions Park**  
**N49W34400 E. Wisconsin Ave, Okauchee**

9 a.m. cars & bikes arrive

**Food • Beer • Music • Raffles**

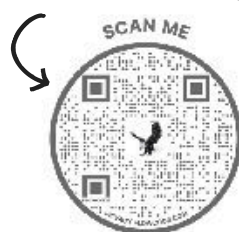
Bikers Welcome



First Congregational UCC of Oconomowoc  
[www.oconomowocucc.org](http://www.oconomowocucc.org) • 262-567-4461

**Contact:** Andy Meckl at 262-720-1876  
or [TheMeckls@gmail.com](mailto:TheMeckls@gmail.com)

Facebook Page



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

## Platinum Sponsors



## Gold Sponsors

Groskopf Construction  
Oconomowoc Realty

Volunteers  
Sign up





**First Congregational UCC of Oconomowoc**

**invites you to join us at the**

# **2024 Annual Golf Outing**

**to benefit the ministry and mission of First Congregational UCC**

## **Monday, August 12, 2024**

### **Where:**

Oconomowoc Golf Club  
5621 Brown Street  
Oconomowoc, WI 53066

### **Check-In, Warm-Up, Box Lunch:**

10:00-11:30 am

### **Shotgun Start:**

11:30 am

### **Dinner:**

6:00 pm

### **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



### **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](http://oconomowocucc.org), click here, or  
complete the form on the next page**

# Golf and Dinner Registration

**Dinner Choices: Ditka Pork Chop, Dill Sauce Salmon, Baseball Sirloin Steak**

## GOLF AND DINNER REGISTRATION

(Premium package includes 3 mulligans, 10 raffle tickets, entrance into the Ewald Win a Car Hole in One Contest, and a chance to win a golf shop gift certificate.)

Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Entrée Choice: _____	Premium Package _____
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Entrée Choice: _____	Premium Package _____
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Entrée Choice: _____	Premium Package _____
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Entrée Choice: _____	Premium Package _____

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Golf/Dinner Registrations @ \$190 + \_\_\_\_\_ # of Premium Packages @ \$20 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## NON-GOLFER DINNER ONLY REGISTRATION

Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Entrée Choice: _____
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Entrée Choice: _____
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Entrée Choice: _____
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Entrée Choice: _____

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Dinner Registrations @ \$50 = Dinner Only Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Special Recognition will be made for all Sponsors

Deadline for sponsorship sign-ups and payment is August 1, 2024

Hole Sponsor	\$125 _____	Par Sponsor	\$250 _____
Birdie Sponsor	\$500 _____	Eagle Sponsor	\$1,000 _____
Ace Sponsor \$2,200 _____ (includes foursome, please add names above)			

Sponsor Name: _____	Contact Person: _____
Address: _____	Phone #: _____

Final deadline for all registrations and checks are due by August 1, 2024. Please make checks payable to: First Congregational UCC with "Golf Outing" in the memo and mail to 815 S. Concord Road, Oconomowoc, WI 53066. Or simply pay online at [oconomowocucc.org](http://oconomowocucc.org) and click on the "Give" button. There is a 3.5% convenience fee if using a credit card.





*at First Congregational UCC*

*June 25-27 from 1-4 pm*

*for children 3 years old - 5th grade*

**Come and learn to face your fears while trusting in God.**

Through music, drama and storytelling, games, arts and crafts, science, and even snacks, children will learn ways to connect with and trust God.

So come and join us at Camp Firelight! Spread the word and invite your friends and family.

*The cost for each participant is \$15.*

Click [here](#) to sign up  
or use the QR code.

*sign up*





## Youth News



### Confirmation

Congratulations to our newest members and 2024 Confirmation class. On **May 19** these 5 young individuals led us in worship, shared their beliefs through their joint faith statement and reaffirmed their baptismal vows through the Rite of Confirmation. We are beyond proud of these young individuals and welcome them as members of the church.

### Fruits of our Labor Garden

Our youth garden is planted and growing strong! Come and join us as we work together, build community, learn how to garden and enjoy the possibilities God provides us. All children and youth are invited to join us **Sundays, June 9** during the 9:30 worship service, **July 14 and August 11** during the outdoor worship services. We look forward to growing with you this summer!

## College and High School Graduates



Join us on **June 9** during the 9:30 worship service as we celebrate and recognize our 2024 graduates! If you have or are graduating (high school or college) please send an email to Amy Drewa at [amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org) with the name of the graduate, where you/they are graduating from, your/their future plans, a picture that can be shared on the screens and if you/they will be attending the service on June 9. We are very excited and proud of you and can't wait to celebrate this milestone with you!

## WANTED.....Vacation Bible School Volunteers

HEY ADULTS.....do you remember going to camp as child? Come back to camp this summer as a volunteer at Camp Firelight our Vacation Bible School. We will be hosting it **June 25-27** and could really use your help! Youth fifth grade and older are invited to join us too! Please [click here](#) to see how you can help.

## Mission Trip

Please keep our 2024 Summer Youth Mission Team in your prayers as they travel to Biloxi, Mississippi **July 14-20**. During their time there they will be the hands and feet of Jesus doing small work projects, building relationships, and spreading Christian love to those they encounter. Mark your calendars for **August 28** for Mission Sunday to hear about their experiences. Thank you to everyone who has supported this group with prayers, monetary donations, and participation in our fundraisers. If it wasn't for all of you this trip wouldn't be possible!

# HEARTS & HANDS

Celebrating ALL of God's Children

## Friday Fun Class

August Friday Fun Registration "Into the Woods" has begun! This program will run on Friday, August 2, 9, 16 & 23 from 9-11 am. This class is open to ALL children ages 25 months - 4 years old. Cost is \$100 for the public and \$80 for church members! Click [here](#) to register.



The kids love their chapel time with Ms. Amy.

## End of the Year Stats



- We served 44 kids in 41 families
- We gave 1 child a full scholarship for the year
- So far this school year, we have given \$4,358.49 back to church in the form of a tithe



Layla's dad and Oaklyn's mom came to class to talk about being a police officer!

## Start of the School Year

The regular school year starts Wednesday, September 4th with our largest number of families EVER!!

## Substitute Teachers



We are looking for substitute teachers for next school year! No experience necessary - just a love for children:) Contact Cindy Meckl to find out more info!



Thatcher's mom, Meghan, volunteered to take school pictures for us!

[timmerlyphotography.com](http://timmerlyphotography.com)



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Music Sunday:** June 2

**Graduation Sunday:** June 9

**Ladies Luncheon:** June 11 (11:15AM)

**Car Show:** June 15 (10:00AM - 2:00PM)

**Work Saturday:** June 15 (10:00AM - 11:30AM)

**Outdoor Worship Service:** June 16 (9:30AM)

**Book Club:** June 20 (1:00PM)

**Ladies Luncheon:** June 25 (11:15AM)

**Camp Firelight VBS:** June 25 - 27 (1:00PM - 4:00PM)

**Independence Day** (Office Closed): July 4

**Ladies Luncheon:** July 9 (11:15AM)

**Outdoor Worship Service:** July 14 (5:30PM)

**Mission Trip:** July 14-20

**Book Club:** July 18 (11:15AM)

**Work Saturday:** July 20 (10:00AM - 11:30AM)

**Ladies Luncheon:** July 23 (11:15AM)

**Mission Sunday:** July 28

## **STAY CONNECTED AND FALL INTO CHURCH WITH US**

Rev. Matt Schneider-Adams, Senior Pastor [pastor@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:pastor@oconomowocucc.org)

Amy Drewa, Director of Children & Youth [amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org](mailto:amydrewa@oconomowocucc.org)

Karl Kay, Music Director [karl@execpc.com](mailto:karl@execpc.com)

Cindy Meckl, Hearts & Hands Preschool [themeckls@gmail.com](mailto:themeckls@gmail.com)

FOR MORE INFO VISIT US AT  
**[WWW.OCONOMOWOCUCC.ORG](http://WWW.OCONOMOWOCUCC.ORG)**