

The Church Mouse - July 2020

First Congregational United Church of Christ 715-479-8501

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July 

'Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come!' (Song of Solomon 2:12)



Dear Church Family and Friends,
2020

June 24,

You may remember that on March 21, I included the indoor Geranium picture on the left in a pastoral letter. The same picture, now outdoors, is on the right! The season is progressing and blooming. Especially during this Pandemic, our summer and the beauty of its growth are such a gift to us!

As we travel through this challenging Coronavirus season, flowers remind us of the continual turning of seasons, and of God's care for us:

²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.

(Matthew 6:28-29)

The challenges and decisions which our church faces are not unique. This is a hard time for churches and pastors. As in our personal relationships, it is a time for patience, kindness and nurture. '...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ...' (Galatians 5:22-23)

Our church now has a group of people who are looking seriously at eventually worshipping in our sanctuary. Much preparation and details must be attended to before we can gather in person. Virus counts must decline. We take seriously the health and comfort of our members. Even when we do return to worship inside, things will not be the same. There will be sanitizing issues, face masks, no singing, physical spacing, no hugging or handshaking for a while. But we will see and hear one another! I am so grateful for all of the work and input of church leaders, members and staff.

I thank God for your patience, courage, work and support of many kinds!

As a favorite hymn says, "God Be With You Till we meet again,!"

Yours in our Christ, *Pastor Jane*

pastorjane@eagleriverucc.org

Greetings, Members and Friends of First Congregational UCC, Eagle River

As I write this, the sun is shining, a soft breeze is blowing, and nature continues to provide an abundance of tranquil beauty. It's been a spring/summer where I've appreciated more than ever a walk down a tree-lined road with Tom, the dogs, the vast array of wildflowers that keep popping up, and all the signs of new life: the speckled fawns on wobbly legs, the fox with its kits, the wild turkey with its babies, and so much more.

Every day there are new reminders of the real beauty in this world. These things give me a sense of peace — not just for their distraction from all the chaos in our country and in the world right now — but because they are an ever-present reminder of God's presence in our lives and of God's love for us and for all creation.

I hope that you, too, are finding moments of peace and joy this summer, feeling God's presence in your life, and finding strength and comfort in God's love. Now, on to a few church-related matters ...

Music Director - Lori Hunter is resigning as Music Director of the church, effective June 30. Music Director is one of three roles that she has been serving at First Congregational UCC. Lori will continue to serve as choir director and pianist/organist.

Church reopening - We have a small ad hoc committee (Pastor Jane, Mark Johannsen, Bernie Hupperts and me) looking at preparations that need to be made before we can reopen the church and begin having services again. Among other things, we've taken steps to purchase large quantities of hand sanitizer and face masks; removed the Bibles, hymnals, prayer cards and pencils from the pews; and considered how to block off every other row of pews/seats to provide physical distance between those in attendance. Other things discussed include having only one service on Sundays during the pandemic (**not** a permanent change), restricting the number of people who can attend at one time, and requiring people to sign up ahead of time.

All of this is a work in progress. We have been monitoring CDC reports, reports from leading epidemiologists, and local, state, and national Covid-19 reports. We are also researching and monitoring other churches — locally and elsewhere — to learn what they are doing or not doing. We are also cognizant of the demographics of our congregation and the fact that many — if not most — of our members are among the most vulnerable when it comes to exposure to Covid-19.

While Vilas County seems to be holding steady and continues to have few reported cases of Covid-19, we are hitting the height of the summer tourist season. Many people have been and will continue to come here from elsewhere in Wisconsin and other states, and while we welcome the economic boost, more people in the area also increases the potential for exposure to Covid-19.

There are no easy answers, but we will continue to move forward in our discussions regarding reopening for Sunday services. In the meantime, please look elsewhere in this edition of the Mouse for news about a special Wednesday "music and meditation" time to be held at church. I am excited about this new offering and give special thanks to Mickey Jensen and members of the Sanctuary Arts Group for the idea and for making it happen.

Outdoor small groups - Three people volunteered to lead small groups outdoors where members of our congregation can come together safely (10 or fewer people), reconnect, share, and build their faith, all while remaining socially distant. Hopefully you will be hearing from them soon (possibly elsewhere in this newsletter or via email) with their ideas and information about meeting times and dates.

Annual meeting - We plan to hold the church's annual meeting in September as our Constitution requires. It will most likely take place on the last Sunday of the month — Sept. 27th. At this time, I am not sure whether we will be able to hold the meeting inside the building, or whether it might be more appropriate to gather outside on lawn/folding chairs (pray for no rain), or whether we will need to attempt some sort of virtual meeting. Personally, I like either of the first two options much better than the last one. But we will need to see what the safest option is as we get closer to that date.

Blessings and hugs to all of you!

Barbara Helmick, Church Council President

“Empowered by the Holy Spirit and with the help of God, we open our doors and hearts to all in service and love, as modeled by Jesus Christ.”

(Mission Statement of First Congregational United Church of Christ, Eagle River, WI)

Coming soon...

Meditation & Music

Do you miss church? Do you miss the spiritual uplifting that comes from being present in God’s House? Do you miss the warmth of smiles from friends not seen for so long? Yes? Well, so do we!

We do not know when First Congregational UCC will reopen for worship as we remember it. That will be determined by the Council as time and circumstance permit. In the meantime SAG, the Sanctuary Arts Group, has an idea to help bridge the divide.

Beginning Wednesday, July 8th, 2020, 1st UCC will open its sanctuary doors at 12:00 noon until 1:00 for quiet meditation and prayer, accompanied by sacred music provided by our talented church organists and pianists. This opportunity will happen every Wednesday thereafter for six weeks.

You will find the sanctuary welcoming you as it would on any Sunday morning in the summer: lights on, candles lit, and fresh flowers on the altar. However, you will also find needed changes that are a sign of the times.

Masks will be required and must be worn. Masks will be available for those in need of one. Seating will be limited and available in every third pew so as to maintain social distancing. Sanitizers will be available. Entry and exit will be directed and escorted.

This will not be a time for socializing in the back of the sanctuary; please save that for the outdoors. This will be a time for quiet meditation as we reconnect spiritually with God in His House. While the service will last an hour, it may have a come and go atmosphere, accommodating others as space becomes available.

We hope you will join us as we gradually bring our church home back to life. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mickey Jensen at 715-479-7504, or via email at flipdaflyr@msn.com

Sanctuary Arts Group:

**Mickey Jensen, Patti Roberts, Molly Jaeger
Donna De Pape, Ken Lynch**

Church Musicians

**Lori Hunter, Linda Brainard
Norma Yaeger**

CHOIR

Those who wish to sing, always find a song.

Swedish Proverb



BOOK LOVERS CORNER

In May I wrote asking what others were reading because I was having trouble getting into a book. It may have been partly due to the pandemic. It seems the emotional ups and downs of dealing with the pandemic and the isolation as well as more recently the demonstrations for Black Lives Matter can have an impact on many aspects of our wellbeing. Increased stress may affect our ability to concentrate. Puzzles and solitaire are for me the strategies that work for taking a break. I did discover a couple of books that succeeded in grabbing my attention and two other members of the book group offered suggestions as well.

Norma Yaeger's suggestions: one of the book group's selections was "**Leadership: In Turbulent Times**" by Doris Kearns Goodwin. It was excellent for its organization, insightful content and writing style. Definitely a thumbs up! I also finished "**The Mourners' Bench**" by Susan Dodd, in fact reading it twice because the second time around I recognized more of the metaphors and underlying allegory. I had also checked out Amy Tan's "**The Hundred Secret Senses**" but having trouble getting into it. (Has anyone else read it and would recommend it (or not)? I started "**Benjamin Franklin**" by Walter Isaacson, but it's like reading about Superman — you almost can't believe how industrious, inventive and clever he was.

Mary Lou Congdon wrote: "**The Giver of Stars**" by Jojo Moyes takes place during the Depression telling the story of a group of women that start a traveling library on horseback. I couldn't put it down. "**The Other Alcott**" by Elise Hooper tells the story of Louisa's younger sister May. Loved it!

Donna suggests "**The Art of Hearing Heartbeats**" by Jan-Philipp Sendker, translated by Kevin Wiliarty. It is a poignant and inspirational love story set in Burma, style somewhat like a fable or fairy tale at times. The story itself is very compelling and I really liked the contrast in attitude to life and one's relationship to family within the society in Burma and the family in New York. A really beautiful story.

Please let me know of any other book recommendations for next month's Mouse. There have been some suggestions for how we might continue our book group in the fall. I will share more details in the next Mouse.

Til next month, Donna De Pape

JULY SCRIPTURE READINGS

July 5 - 5th Sunday after Pentecost

Gen 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 & Ps 45:10-17 *or Song of Sol 2:8-13*
Zech 9:9-12 & Ps 145:8-14, Rom 7:15-25a Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 12 - 6th Sunday after Pentecost

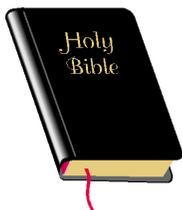
Gen 25:19-34 & Ps 119:105-112, Isa 55:10-13 & Ps 65:(1-8), 9-13
Rom 8:1-11 Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

July 19 - 7th Sunday after Pentecost

Gen 28:10-19a and Ps 139:1-12, 23-23 Wisd of Sol 12:13, *or Isa 44:6-8*
Rom 8:12-25, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 26 - 8th Sunday after Pentecost

Gen 29:15-28 and Ps 105:1-11 45b *or Ps 128* I Kings 3:5-12 & Ps 119:129-136
Rom 8:26-39 Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52



WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE? It is surprising what all has gone on since the beginning of this year. Many have been left feeling lost or misdirected. We need to move on, but how? My hope is for this group to discuss positive ways to deal with all of the changes, the feelings of loss and the ways to move forward. Our first gathering will be on **Tuesday, July 21st at 9:00 a.m.** We will meet in the empty lot across from our church. Please bring a lawn chair and water (at least something to drink in case it's hot). Since it needs to be limited to 9 participants plus myself, please call me, **Tobi Johansen (920-450-1402)** or email me at **tjharleygal56@gmail.com** if you are interesting in attending.

God Bless and have a fantastic day!

HELLO FAITH FORMATION KIDS!

We don't need to mask our feelings when we pray!



Are you tired of having to wear a mask? I am too, but I feel we may have to continue this for awhile. Some people wear a mask or paint their faces at Halloween or at a party. They are trying to hide their identity from other people.

Sometimes, we don't want others to know our true feelings. That is like wearing a mask. We might not tell people how we truly feel. We might keep a lot of our feelings inside us.

But, we should never wear a "mask" on our feelings when we talk to God in prayer, because God knows each of us very well. God wants to know when we are feeling sad, or angry, or happy.

You don't always have to pray aloud. You can pray silently so only God hears. You can pray sitting, or standing, or kneeling, or with your hands folded or unfolded.

God looks at our "heart condition," not our body position when we pray. You can pray at bedtime or mealtime, or in church or any time you need to talk to God. You can pray not only for yourself, but for other people, too. God listens and cares about everything you say in your prayers.

Hopefully, we will be able to worship together again, but we may need to wear a mask; don't "mask" your feelings when you are there.

PRAYER: Dear God, we thank you for being able to tell you everything in prayer. We know that you care about all of us. Amen.

Missing all of you!

Love and hugs, Sharon Breit, Christian Education Director

THE BUZZARD, THE BAT, AND THE BUMBLEBEE



If you put a **BUZZARD** in a pen that is 6' x 8' and is entirely open at the top, the bird, in spite of its ability to fly, will be an absolute prisoner. The reason is that a buzzard always begins a flight from the ground with a run of 10-12'. Without space to run, as is its habit, it will not even attempt to fly, but will remain a prisoner for life in a small jail with no top.



The ordinary **BAT** that flies around at night, a remarkably nimble creature in the air, cannot take off from a level place. If it is placed on the floor or flat ground, all it can do is shuffle about helplessly and painfully until it reaches some slight elevation from which it can throw itself into the air. Then at once, it takes off like a flash.



A **BUMBLE BEE**, if dropped into an open tumbler, will be there until it dies, unless it is taken out. It never sees the means of escape at the top, but persists in trying to find some way out through the sides near the bottom. It will see a way where none exists, until it completely destroys itself.



PEOPLE in many ways, are like the buzzard, the bat and the bumble bee. We struggle about with all our problems and frustrations, never realizing that all we have to do is look UP. Remember, sorrow looks back, worry looks around, but faith looks up. Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly and trust in Jesus who loves us and Himself for us.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

July 1 Sandy Kaitchuck
July 2 Jamie Remme
July 5 Dale Bishop
Carlton Schroeder
July 6 Helena Radloff
July 7 Kate Remme
Georgianna Starz
July 8 Marlyn Hupperts
Tom Marion
July 10 Bob Trojanowski
Jan Yahr
July 12 Pat Tucker
July 13 Mark Shepherdson
July 16 Rose Tyler
July 18 William Starz
July 21 Lochlan Siegmeier
July 25 Brenda McNutt
Stacey Ray
July 30 Bruce Kaitchuck
August 1 Holly Farrell
August 3 Nancy Smart
August 4 Lily Tyler
August 5 Kathy Breitzman
Jill Brunstad
Debbie Preuhs
August 7 Linda Brainard
Sam Welhoefer
August 8 Mark Holperin

New Address!



**Arlene Turk, Apt. 219
820 Third Street
Woodruff, WI 54568**

**Phone number remains the same
715-617-6494**

To Our Church Family,

**The secret to joyful living is celebrating
SOMETHING every day, no matter how
insignificant it may be.**



If you know of someone who would benefit from a call or a card, please let the pastor know.



Do you or someone in your family have a birthday in July/early August that isn't listed? Call the church office and we'll add you to our list.

You don't have to reveal your birth year.

Thank you!

Enjoy the day with your loved ones and stay healthy so we can all meet again in the future with warm greetings and hugs.



SMALL GROUP GATHERING

From Kathy Holperin: I'll host coffee (no Mark) at my house on **Wednesday, July 15th at 10 a.m.** Folks should bring their own to-go beverage container and chairs for outdoor space for 9 people. We'll just catch up with one another and discuss our highs and lows during the coronavirus times. Please call or email me by July 10th if you're interested in joining me at my house: 1450 White Pine Drive.

kmholperin2@frontier.com 715-617-2424

Mark and I will also host a cook-out on **Wednesday, July 22nd at 6:00 p.m. for eight people.** Bring your own beverage and a dish to pass; we'll supply brats and burgers. This will be casual conversation, a time to catch up with one another. Bring your masks if it will make you feel more comfortable even though we'll be practicing social distancing outside. Please contact me by July 16th if you are interested in joining us for a cook-out at our house: 1450 White Pine Drive
Rain dates to be announced.





Outdoor Small Group Meditation

Psalm 104:34 "May my meditation be sweet to Him, I will be glad in the Lord." NKJV

I will be gathering a meditation group on **Tuesday, July 14 from 6:30—7:15 p.m.** that will include group discussion, guided breathing/imagery and quiet time to sit, be still and simply be. No prior meditation is required. :) This is an easy-going, explorative gathering to bring people together, to breathe deeply and to send loving-kindness, prayers and positive energy to ourselves, each other, and out to our church, our communities and world!

The session will be held in the First Congregational UCC's grass parking area to the west of the church (on the corner of 1st and Division Streets). Please wear a mask and bring your own chair. Wear comfortable clothing ... and bug protection (if needed).

Group size will be 10 or less and will include the first 10 people who express interest and then a waiting/second session waiting list if needed. **Please RSVP to Trisha Moore at trshmr@gmail.com or 715-891-2412.**

Rain date: Thursday, July 16, same time and place as above.

God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves.



"Thank you so much for awarding me with the Jane Zipperer Scholarship! I am more than appreciative and I really do wish that there were better words than thank you. That being said, thank you for believing in me and for helping me continue my education!" Amy Deditz

"Thank you for once again providing me with financial support with the Zipperer Scholarship, as I continue with my higher education. I am especially grateful for it as it is one less thing to worry about during these trying times. I'm hoping that with the degree I'm working towards, I'll be able to help make the world a better place. I hope you are all doing well. Hang in there and stay safe!" Tess Holperin

"Dear First Congregational UCC, Thank you very much for selecting me to receive the First Congregational UCC Kranz Scholarship (\$3,000). This very generous scholarship will be extremely helpful for me in covering my college expenses. I am very excited and eager in my anticipation for college life. I believe that I will be assigned a mentor to help me navigate through these next four years! I am positively certain that I will be preparing myself for a very successful career in some form of business. Financial times can be especially difficult in the midst of this pandemic and I cannot emphasize how thankful I truly am! The future is exciting!" Liam Oas



"Dear First Congregational Members, Thank you VERY MUCH for your generous contribution of \$1,000 to the food pantry. The pantry is blessed to have solid community support — especially now. Our food donations are down but our cash donations are helping offset that. Thanks to people like you the Pantry remains open. As you know, we are a small pantry working with an all-volunteer staff. Without our volunteers, and generous supporters like you, we could not accomplish our mission. We humbly accept your donation — rest assured that it will be spent wisely helping others in our community." Elizabeth A Spencer, Board Member - Treasurer

"Dear Local Mission Fund UCC, Feed Our Rural Kids (FORK), a registered 501©(3) non-profit organization has gratefully received the donation in the amount of \$1,000 from your organization in support of our work. On behalf of all of us at FORK and more importantly those children living in the Northland Pines School District with food insecurity on a daily basis, a huge and heartfelt THANK YOU for your incredible support. It truly does provide a lasting impact and helps make a positive and profound difference to the 22% of Vilas County children currently living in poverty." Daniel B. Beihoff, Treasurer FORK

"Dear First Congregational UCC, Thank you for the generous \$500 gift. I realize this gift was not made lightly. We will spend it wisely on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. We have made staffing changes and plan on being here next year and welcoming our volunteers once again. Thank you. Without you, there is no Re-Member. Although the future is uncertain, our resolve has never been stronger. Thank you for reaffirming Re-Member's work and our commitment to the Oglala Lakota people with your generosity." Jennifer J. Sklener, Director of Finance and Grants, Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota

To be fully alive

O God, awaken the life within us and around us, and help us live life to its fullest.

Life is you and me and everyone else.
Life is always growing, always reaching.
Life is to be who we are meant to be.
Life is time to do and to become.
Life is pulse and rhythm.
Life is loving and being loved.
Life is knowing and being known.
Life is being heard and hearing others.
Life is healing.
Life is enough food to eat.
Life is work you're proud to do.
Life is making mistakes.
Life is the unknown.
Life is wisdom.
Life is crying.
Life is laughing.
Life is hope.
Life is anger and aggressiveness.
Life is restraint and control.
Life comes in all colors — all unique.
Life is no two alike.
Life is a feeling that there is something bigger than life.



O God, help us to know the fullness of life for ourselves and for others. Amen.

— Source Unknown —

Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything that is beautiful;
For beauty is God's handwriting — a wayside sacrament.
Welcome it in every fair face, in every fair sky, in every fair flower,
and thank God for it as a cup of blessing.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



First Congregational UCC Contact People - 2020

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Director of Christian Education: Sharon Breit, 715-477-2163 youth ministry@eagleriverucc.org

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Vice President: Mark Johannsen 920-475-7576

Carlton Schroeder: 715-272-1837 Molly Jaeger: 715-479-4505 Bernie Hupperts: 715-479-9468

Trisha Moore: 715-617-1102 Shirley Thompson: 715-479-8753

Pastor Parish Relations Committee - Donna DePape, 715-617-1710

Women's Fellowship - Linda Sanborn, 715-479-8091

Sanctuary Arts Group (SAG) - Mickey Jensen, 715-479-7504

Performing Arts Music - Bernie Hupperts, 715-479-9468

Organists/pianists - Linda Brainard, 715-479-5043; Lori Hunter, 715-493-8078,
Norma Yaeger, 715-477-1984