

The Church Mouse - November 2020

First Congregational United Church of Christ 715-479-8501

Interim Pastor: Rev. Gail Irwin pastorgail@eagleriverucc.org
Email for Nan (Office Manager) & the Church Office: office@eagleriverucc.org
Email for Amy Mehlhoff (Info Tech) amy@eagleriverucc.org
Email for Sharon Breit: youthministry@eagleriverucc.org
Home Page: www.eagleriverucc.org



A Message from Pastor Gale

So many things that clergy used to encourage their congregations to do have been flipped recently! As your new interim, I would normally be encouraging you to come to worship in person, sing in the choir, gather for faith formation, visit the homebound and share food. I would be encouraging you to “get busy” with accomplishing whatever interim tasks we had determined to do in our time together.

But these are not ordinary times. This week, our Conference Minister Rev. Franz Rigert, in accordance with the Wisconsin Council of Churches, asked our churches to *resist in-person gatherings*, and recommended *remote worship for the duration of the fall season*. The covenant I made with your Council is to engage in ministry subject to the WCC recommendations as much as possible. In a time of extraordinary spike in infection, I am learning with you how to abide by these unnatural restrictions on our contact.

So, as much as I would love to gather with you in worship and small groups, I am instead asking you to ***Take personal and ethical responsibility for physical distancing from those outside of your own household, especially the vulnerable.*** Limit your trips out, and ***always wear a mask when you go out.*** Do not plan events that are held in person in the church building or elsewhere and avoid coming inside the church unless absolutely necessary. If you have already made plans to gather, adjust your plans. Some of your beloved church family are now sick with the virus. One member has died. COVID 19 is no longer a remote issue; it’s here.

But that does not mean our ministry together can’t continue. I propose that we start slower. Instead of meeting with groups, I will be calling people, Zooming, or meeting in driveways as weather permits, one household at a time. *This will take time.* You can help by calling each other for better communication, teaching a friend about computer communication, writing letters or offering someone lonely a 6 ft. distance walk outdoors. Be alert to needs in the community, and find ways to help. Find a discipline of weekly on-line worship and daily prayer.

Be creative about the ways we engage in ministry. You already get this: your musicians are sending music offerings weekly by email. Spiritual leaders are providing prayers and Facebook posts for reflection, and an on-line prayer group is being formed. I am posting worship and hosting occasional Zoom gatherings where we can meet by phone or computer.

We are all disheartened about what we cannot do because of the pandemic. But many of you call your church “family”, and this is a unique time to strengthen that bond in creative ways. I truly believe God is opening new ways to do new things. Take time to listen and discern the possibilities. And as you listen to God, let me know what you are hearing!

Pastor Gail

“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)

Council and President's Report

Greetings to you all. Don't we feel more like a church again since Pastor Gail has begun regular on-line service. The advantage is that you can click into it at any time that fits your schedule. Let me tell you how I find her on-line service. This may help some of you who have some of the same difficulties as I.

Marlyn and I use gmail, and for some reason church information, when sent by email, goes into my Promotions or Updates boxes rather than into my **In Box**. I have gone to the SEARCH MAIL at the top of a gmail inbox page and typed in amy@eagleriverucc.org When I click on that email address, I see listed everything Amy Melhoff, our tech specialist, has sent. I skim down until I find an email from First Congregational with the title: Sunday Service email. That's it. All you need to do is click on it and follow Pastor Gail.

If others have to access the service in a different manner, please let us all know. Computer software seems to send us information in many ways. Good hunting, as Pastor Gail offers us a fine service.

COUNCIL NEWS

In October we hired Pastor Gail as our Intentional Interim. This means she will not be eligible for consideration by the Search Committee as it begins to look for our settled pastor. However, Pastor Gail will help us prepare for a new pastor. She will also provide leadership as Head of Staff, as an ex-officio member of Council, and provide pastoral care. Before the real winter hits, she hopes to meet members maintaining social distance for a few minutes in their driveways.

The Council is always considering options for opening church while staying within the Wisconsin Council of Churches guideline. At the November Council meeting, Pastor Gail will present some ways in which we can observe Advent and Christmas safely.

Other staff members continue to offer inspirational experiences. You have encountered Lori Hunter's regular weekly on-line column Moments for Music. Sharon Breit, with her assistants Louse Krus and Amy Florence, is greeting our children on Faith Formation Wednesday afternoons. Outside the staff, Patti Roberts continues to bring us spiritual and hopeful passages through Sheltered Thoughts online.

We have carefully reopened Fellowship Hall for AA, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, and FLOCK. As Council member Trisha Moore noted, we have considered the balance between wanting to return to the building against the increasing risk posed by COVID. Numbers, time and space are paramount in planning. Everyone is aware that monitoring is important as is a quick move to closure if necessary.

Council also discussed the stewardship challenge set by our 2021 budget. We are a church and want to keep functioning for the spiritual well-being of our members. So I would urge you to fill out your pledge card with love and a promise. Then return it in the stamped, addressed envelope. Approved by us at the Annual Meeting is the goal of \$150,000. Please consider your contribution to this goal carefully. We need funds to keep alive our mission for you, for the community and for the larger community. Thanks. Blessings, safety and health be yours.

Bernie Hupperts, Council President

Pastor search committee update

The search once again begins. We have officially started our search for a new pastor. We met with Rob MacDougall (UCC Conference Minister) via Zoom Oct. 6th who will guide us throughout the process. We discussed how best to begin as well as a review of the process. We then followed up with our first committee meeting Oct. 7th and will begin by revisiting the church profile to see if there needs to be any necessary changes. We discussed that since a survey was done not too long ago, we will not be putting out another at this time and will revisit responses to that as we proceed. As you are aware this will be a lengthy process as we will want to take our time to thoroughly proceed so we can get candidates that fit the vision, mission and needs of our church family. We will be putting updates in the Mouse to keep you informed as to our progress. We ask that you be patient and understanding as we do take this job very seriously and want to do the best for you, our church family. A list of committee members and their contact information is listed below. You are welcome to email any one of us with questions or suggestions you may have throughout this process.

Trista Langley-Tyler (committee chair) jewelry@metalurges-upnorth.com 715-617-1162
Kelli Burrill: kelli.burrill@gmail.com Nancy Diepenbrock: petsx5@gmail.com
Pat Fox: wpine2fox@yahoo.com Sandy Kaitchuck: skait85@gmail.com
Kamie Kolb: kamiekolb1@gmail.com Doug Malinsky: doug.malinsky@gmail.com
Patti Roberts: robertsupnorth@hotmail.com Krista Wittkopf: copper4811@gmail.com

NOVEMBER SCRIPTURE READINGS

Nov. 1	All Saints Day	Rev 7:9-17 and Ps 34:1-10, 22	1 Jn 3:1-3	Matt 5:1-12
Nov. 8		Josh 24:1-3a 14-25 and Ps 78:1-7	Wisd of Sol 6:12-16	
		1 Thess 4:13-18	Matt 25:1-13	Tending God's Light
Nov. 15		Judg 4:1-7 and Ps 123	Zeph 1:7, 12-18 and Ps 90:1-8 (9-11) 12	
		1 Thess 5:1-11	Matt 25:14-30	Extravagant Opportunity
Nov. 22		Ezek 34:11-16, 20-24 and Ps 100 (Ps 95:1-7a)		
		Eph 1:15-23	Matt 25:31-46	Reigning Compassion
Nov. 29	First Sunday of Advent			
		Isa 64:1-9 Ps 80:1-7, 17-19		
		1 Cor 1:3-9	Mk 13:24-37	Where Are You, God?



It is time again, time to help our community by filling **Thanksgiving Dinner** bags, our 16th year. The tradition continues as we help the Vilas Food Pantry provide the fixings for a tasty Thanksgiving dinner for the families that come to the pantry. Due to the pandemic, the pantry has had to make some changes when giving out food. This year we are asking for **monetary donations** instead of having others fill the bags. The pantry will then purchase all the food to fill the bags so less hands are handling the food items. The total items for each bag costs about \$20, give or take whether items are on sale or where you shop. Please consider helping us out so we can provide for the growing number of families and individuals we are serving through the Vilas Food Pantry.



Checks can be made out to the **Vilas Food Pantry** and mailed to: **Vilas Food Pantry, PO Box 761, Eagle River, WI 54521.**

We will be collecting monetary donations until November 15, 2020.

Thank you in advance for helping to make this project a success. Thanks for caring.

Happy November! This month we celebrate thankfulness. November is a time to count our many blessings – name them one by one.

FULL OF TALENT



This story is from **Matthew 25:14-30**

It starts out with a man going on a trip. This man called his servants together and gave them his money to care for while he was away. The first servant received five bags of silver. In the original story, it says the master trusted this servant with five talents. A talent was a measurement of money. The second servant received two bags and the last servant received one bag.

Matthew 25:15 says: “to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability.”

Two of the servants traded the silver they received and made more silver. But the one who received one bag, dug a hole and hid his money. When the man came back from his trip, he praised the two servants who increased their silver. However he was angry with the servant who had buried the silver because he was lazy and buried it and made excuses for not doing better. **SO, WHAT DOES THIS STORY HAVE TO DO WITH YOU?**

God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. What happens when we use our talents well? We get better and better at them. When we love God, we will use the abilities he has given us. Everyone is good at something, and in the parable of the talents, we learn that we are supposed to use our talents to glorify God. His son Jesus taught us to help others and love others. Just because you are young, doesn't mean you don't have talents to share with others. Be a servant to God in the way you live.

Prayer: Dear Father in heaven, show us the gifts and talents you have given us. Let us use them to your glory. | Peter 4:10



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Nov. 3	Linda Cole
	Mary Ann Hansen
Nov. 6	Marty Pietila
Nov. 8	Connie Eaton
Nov. 10	Sandra Slagle
Nov. 11	Dick Frisque
Nov. 12	Amy Deditz
Nov. 13	Mickey Jensen
Nov. 15	Tom Wittkopf
Nov. 16	Patsy Ward
Nov. 19	Donna Welhoefer
Nov. 20	Arvid Spier-Olsen
Nov. 21	Amanda Kent
	Deb Stolze
Nov. 22	John Schroeder
Nov. 23	Bryan Yakel
Nov. 24	Diane Lausar
Nov. 25	Margaret Surpluss
Nov. 26	Terry Posto
Nov. 28	Patti Roberts
Nov. 29	Donna Adams
Dec. 1	Louise Krus
Dec. 3	Lori Collins
	Barbara Helmick
Dec. 4	Stephanie Nesbitt
Dec. 7	Libby Collins
	Carol Trojanowski
Dec. 8	Pam Dunphy
	Molly Jaeger
Dec. 9	Grace Florence
Dec. 10	Carol Smart

Do you or someone in your family have a birthday in November/December 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!*



To my church family
"Thank you so much for all of the beautiful birthday cards, phone calls, and the special singing group under their umbrellas on the afternoon of my birthday. What a wonderful surprise for my 102nd!
Blessings to all"
Helena Roerdink



Sympathy to the family of **Dorothy Lorch**. Dorothy joined our church September 19, 1976, and was a devoted member of our church family. She died at home on October 7th at the age of 95. A private service was held on October 16th with only family present.



New address for

Phil and Mickey Jensen
2766 Alice Circle
Stoughton, WI 53589

To Our Church Family,

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others."



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

pastorgail@eagleriverucc.org
Cell phone: 920-883-7887



SUNDAY,
NOV. 1st

Turn your clocks BACK before you go to bed Saturday evening.

Thanksgiving

For all the good things I do have
and for all the good things I have had
and for all the good things I will have,
for what I am,
for what I have been,
for what I can be
for what I shall be,
thank you, God.

Thanksgiving was never meant to be shut up in a single day.

GET YOUR FLU SHOTS! Self-care for the flu

Flu symptoms generally begin about one or two days after your exposure to the virus and may seem to hit you suddenly. Among healthy people, flu symptoms vary in severity. Signs and symptoms range from a sore throat and runny nose to fever, chills and muscle aches. Flu symptoms can make you feel awful, but if you're otherwise healthy, you can generally take care of yourself at home. Try these remedies:

- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol, others) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) to reduce fever and muscle aches. Don't give products containing aspirin to children or teens recovering from chickenpox or flu-like symptoms, as these drugs have been linked to Reyes's syndrome, a rare but potentially life-threatening condition.
- Drink clear fluids, such as water, broth or sports drinks.
- Rest as needed or change some of your activities, depending on your symptoms.

Stay home from work, school and other public places for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone to avoid infecting other people. Most people feel better within a week of becoming infected with the flu virus, although coughing may last for another one or two weeks



Greetings everyone,

Make sure you are on our email list in order to receive the wonderful emails we are putting together for members and friends of the church. We have our Moments for Music, Scripture in Song, and Sheltering Thoughts! Also, it's where we provide the most up-to-date information in these strange times. If you are having trouble seeing the email make sure amy@eagleriverucc.org is added to your address book so it is not placed in spam or different folders for your email. We also have been working on a live streaming service, keeping our Facebook page up to date, and keeping the website current. We are doing our best to provide you lots of ways to stay connected to our church community while we can't be together in person. Thank you so much for all your patience as we continue to figure this out together.



First Congregational UCC Contact People - 2020 –2021

Pastor Gail Irwin Cell: 920-883-7887 Church: 715-479-8501

Email: pastorgail@eagleriverucc.org

Church emails: Nan - office@eagleriverucc.org 715-479-8501

HOME PAGE - www.eagleriverucc.org

Office Mgr. - Nan Pophal, 715-479-9882

Info Tech - Amy Mehlhoff, 801-425-5214

Clerk - Norma Yaeger, 715-477-1984

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

CHURCH COUNCIL

President: Bernie Hupperts 715-617-9468

Vice President: Mark Johannsen 920-475-7576

Molly Jaeger: 715-479-4505 Trisha Moore: 715-617-1102 Shirley Thompson: 715-479-8753

Cathy Palmer: 715-617-6373 Luke Aschbrenner: 715-358-6579

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, 715-617-9468

Music Director - Lori Hunter, 715-493-8078

Organists/pianists - Linda Brainard, 715-479-5043; Lori Hunter, 715-493-8078,

Norma Yaeger, 715-477-1984