

The Church Mouse - May 2021

First Congregational United Church of Christ 715-479-8501

Interim Pastor: Rev. Gail Irwin pastorgail@eagleriverucc.org
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Pastor's Letter

This month we will be returning to in-person worship. This involves lots of logistical details, like enlisting ushers and training camcorder operators. But beyond that, this is a moment when, as Nathan Kilpatrick of Duke University wrote recently, *"we will all be newcomers."* He goes on,

"Even with a widespread yearning for a return to normalcy, we may find that our familiar places now feel somewhat foreign. Ongoing and necessary health and safety precautions will change the ways we interact in these spaces. On Sunday mornings, social distancing may mean that our usual pew can no longer be 'our pew' because it's now reserved to be the buffered distance between us." We will still be without coffee hour, choir and the circle of people holding hands during the closing song.

Kirkpatrick also point out that, in the year we've been apart, we've all had life experiences that are hard to articulate. We are not the same people we were before the pandemic. We will all be newcomers again, and will need to get gently re-acquainted with each other.

As your interim pastor, I am a newcomer, too. I don't know what in-person worship felt like here before the pandemic, but I know there is no way to re-create it anyway. Instead, we have the opportunity to keep creating new ways of being together.

The good news is that your church has skills for welcoming the newcomer. We know how to actively listen to another's story, how to accommodate differences between people's needs and feelings, how to discern someone's spiritual gifts, and how to focus on the common good of all. This will be a time to activate all those skills.

I believe our worship gatherings will be

- 1) **Safe for all:** I expect that we will all conduct ourselves so that even those who have not yet been vaccinated will be safe to attend (and as more get vaccinated, it will keep getting safer).
- 2) **Different:** please come with an open heart and mind. Treat in-person worship as a new experience, and find what you love in it, instead of focusing on what you miss.
- 3) **Diverse:** some will continue to worship remotely. Find ways to welcome even those who are not in the room with you.
- 4) **Holy:** remember that worship is not designed to entertain you, but a time to celebrate everything God has done for us, and open yourself to deeper discipleship.

I look forward to seeing some of you in worship, and continuing to minister you, whether remotely, or in person. As always, the Holy Spirit is what binds us together.

Peace be with you!

Pastor Gail

Memorial Sunday, May 30th

As a special day of remembrance, this year we will use Memorial Sunday to honor the lives of church members who died during quarantine. The families of these members were unable to host memorial services at the time and will do so as circumstances allow them to. But our church will honor their memories when we gather on Sunday, May 30th.

Both services that day will be identical. However, the 9:30 service will be held outdoors, weather permitting, so that we can accommodate a larger crowd. We wish to welcome family members and friends of the deceased on that day. Members remembered will be:

Dorothy Lorch (Oct. 6, 2020)

Robert Cole (Jan. 4, 2021)

Chris Thomson (Jan. 8, 2021)

Dennis Burgy (Jan. 22, 2021)

Malcolm Fell (Jan. 24, 2021)

Bette Vande Hey (Jan. 26, 2021)

If you are a member of one of these families and wish to attend either service, please let us know ASAP so we can accommodate you that day.

**“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)

President's Message

FINALLY!

In-Person Services will be held on May 9, 16, 23 and 30: 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

**I'm echoing the sigh of relief I hear throughout the congregation:
finally COVID infection numbers are leveling off; finally vaccinations are giving us a greater security as we
venture into normal masked living;
finally we are able to get back to worship, although limited, in our sanctuary;
finally we can even look forward to outside worship with larger attendance;
and finally we can get on with being the CHURCH
as a loving, giving, partnering, reaching people
ready to offer help beyond the restraints placed on us by the past year's events.**

Practicing as Christians together, we will temporarily be restricted to not singing or responding aloud as a group in worship. But we'll also soon have the chance to see each other again. Some of us will have the opportunity to meet Pastor Gail for the first time in person. And in May we'll also have the chance to hear a re-born tone chime choir under the direction of our new friend Susan Krivichi, who has put a Chime Choir together for music that fits COVID protocol.

As Luke Aschbrenner learned while attending the Northwest Association UCC annual conference, we are not alone. Churches are struggling to find safe methods of re-opening and of connecting with their members in helpful ways. During the past year First Congregational UCC members and friends have worked together through calling trees, food help for NATH, nominating missions, weekly music and meditation, and constant contact through internet and mail. Much of this activity will continue, and we'd like to urge you to suggest other ways in which we can help members, or charitable drives in the city which reflect the ideas of our mission and vision.

Before turning to a summary of the April Council meeting, I also want to offer enormous thanks to our Search Committee. On the next page you will find the Committee's report that the Profile upon which so much depends as we now begin to look for a settled pastor is submitted to our Association Conference Minister Rob MacDougall. The nine Council-appointed members to the Search Committee have worked faithfully to capture a picture of who we are and what defines the leader we seek as we move forward on our Christian journey. This seems, to me, to be a time when God called the right people together so that in due course this congregation will have a chance to vote on a settled pastor who meets our growing spiritual needs.

Council Report

In April we approved the first steps of Protocol for the In-Person Worship and prepared for a May opening. The Council also noted that, should infection spikes occur, we may need to retreat to meeting solely on-line and that regular communication with the congregation will be necessary. However, masks and distance wherever members meet to participate in a service will still be required. Ushers will help in cleaning between services.

The Vine Family Fund plans continue. A small group of Council met with School Administrators Scott Foster (NPSD) and Delnice Hill (Phelps SD). If approved at our Annual Meeting, we will use 4.5% annually from the Fund for providing teacher grants and a suitable book for all 4th grade students. Two committees of school people and members of our congregation will be formed to help meet these mission dates.

You may have noticed a help wanted ad in the News Review which refers to a technology staff person. Amy Mehlhoff has resigned our IETD part time position. Kathy Holperin is providing what counsel and help she can at this point, although she is currently a Moon Beach full-time employee. A Personnel Committee is seeking to fill the position. If you know someone who might be suitable, contact Paula Hendrickson or Pastor Gail.

The congregation deserves recognition for keeping us financially viable throughout this past year of the pandemic. We are indeed fortunate that budget needs continue to be met. In addition, Council did approve making an application for a second PPP loan from the federal government. That application was approved and PPP funds will help off-set some of the staff need involved with the new IETD (Information and Electronic Technology Director).

(Council continued)

Rising vaccination rates and lower infection rates in Vilas County have led the Council to begin Phase One of our process toward opening worship services and the church building.

In-Person Services will be held in the sanctuary during May at 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. with limited seating of 24% capacity (up to 38 people per service). **Those who wish to attend may call or email the church office by 3 p.m. on Thursday to let Nan know you plan on attending (715) 479-8501.** Masks will be required and ushers will assist with the distanced seating. Communion will be served using single serving packages. Services will run 30-40 minutes.

Upstairs restrooms will be available but other areas of the building will be restricted.

For those who wish to continue worshipping remotely, the service will be recorded live and posted to YouTube by Sunday afternoon. In addition, we will continue sending paper copies of the service to those who have been receiving them.

On May 30th, the 9:30 a.m. service will be held outdoors, weather permitting. Please read the letter sent to you from Council in late April for more details.

Our next meeting will be in person at 6:30 on Monday, May 3rd. We will be meeting in the sanctuary as Monday evenings are already taken in Fellowship Hall. What better place to meet, right?

Stay healthy this month,
Bernie Hupperts

Pastor Search Committee Update - May

Greetings, Church Family,

We have wonderful news to share. We have completed the profile editing step of our pastor search process. The profile has been sent to Rob MacDougall (UCC Conference Minister) who has approved and published it on the national site for potential candidates to see. Now that it is published, we invite you to view it. You have two ways of doing so: 1) going to the church website and clicking on the link provided 2) calling the church to set up a time to come in and view the hard copy that is available on site.

We are very pleased with our work on the profile and very excited to be moving to the next step of pastoral candidate applicants seeking a church family to lead and be a servant to. We thank you again for your patience and understanding as this was the most time-consuming part of the process. We feel by taking this slow and thoroughly looking over the profile we have faithfully represented our church family, what our church means to us and what we are seeking in our next pastor. There may be a lull in updates as we now have to wait for interested candidates to submit their applications. We will continue to inform you when this happens and as the interview process begins. God has been with us guiding and giving us strength through this first step and will continue to be by our side as we move into the next step. Please do not hesitate to contact any committee member with questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

The Pastor Search Committee

Trista Langley Tyler (Committee Chair) jewelry@metalurges-upnorth.com 715-617-1162

Kelli Burrill - kelli.burrill@gmail.com

Kamie Kolb - kamiekolb1@gmail.com

Nancy Diepenbrock - petsx5@gmail.com

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Pat Fox - wpine2fox@yahoo.com

Patti Roberts - robertsupnorth@hotmail.com

Sandy Kaitchuck - skait85@gmail.com

Krista Wittkopf - copper4811@gmail.com

Scholarship Sunday is May 16th! This is a day you can make a special gift to the church's Scholarship Fund. Join us to celebrate and support our students and the scholarship ministry! Gifts can be made to the church with a check earmarked "Scholarship Fund" or by using the special offering envelope in your box.

Pastor Gail's hours are changing! With in-person worship starting, Pastor Gail will be in Eagle River on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays. Home visits and in person meetings will need to be scheduled during those days. However, she will still be available by phone, Zoom and email Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. She will take Fridays off. During the transition in early May, her hours will be variable. If you have a pastoral need, don't hesitate to call or email!

First Congregational UCC is seeking a Social Media Administrator for a part time paid position on our staff. This person will handle congregational emails, website management, and other communications. If you know of someone who is qualified for this position (not a member of our church), please have them contact Paula Hendrickson at paula@thecarshopeagleriver.com for more information.

Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting delegates wanted!

This year's annual Meeting will be held virtually from May 11-16, 2021. The theme is "Powered by Generosity". Though we are unable to see each other in person, the Conference has put together a great virtual event with exciting content, engaging speakers and plenty of time for personal interaction. Events are held online on week day evenings, followed by the business meeting Saturday, May 15th, and virtual worship May 16th. Pastor Gail will be going and your church needs two delegates. **Deadline is May 6th.** Go to wcucc.org to learn more or contact Pastor Gail.

What's next for Adult Study?

If you are interested in continuing some of the great Adult Study we enjoyed by Zoom this winter, please **join Pastor Gail by Zoom on Thursday night, May 4th at 6:30 p.m.** to talk about future adult study topics, times and formats for the coming summer. What would you like to study? Here's the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87664424376?pwd=Tk9wdWZmSDYydi80dnh5MTJyVDh6UT09>

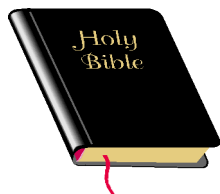
Meeting ID: 876 6442 4376 Passcode: IDEAS

YAY! We need ushers again! Are you willing to be an usher for in-prson worship at 7:30 or 9:30 a.m.? The duties are a little different with Covid protocols in place, but friendly, masked faces are needed! **Please contact the church office to sign up for a date and time in May and plan to arrive 30 minutes before the worship start time for a little extra training preparation.** Thank you for helping!

Camcorder operators are needed to film our 7:30 a.m. service! If you attend the early service and are willing to be trained, this mission will help those who are homebound to experience worship with us remotely and can be done while you're at church for worship. The more volunteers we train, the better! Please see Kathy Holperin or Pastor Gail for information.

A Note from Pastor Gail about Pastoral Visitation:

I will be fully vaccinated as of May 4th. If you would like a visit in person or remotely for any reason, **I need to hear from you directly.** Please call me at 920-883-7887 or email me at pastorgail@eagleriverucc.org to schedule a visit and/or communion. It's important to me to visit as many of you as I can, but I will need your patience as my days in Eagle River are limited. I hope to see you soon!



MAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

May 2 Fifth Sunday of Easter 1 Jn 4:7-21	Acts 8:26-40 Jn 15:1-8	Ps 22:25-31 <i>Abiding in Love</i>
May 9 MOTHER'S DAY 1 Jn 5:1-6	Acts 10:44-48 Jn 15:9-17	Ps 98 <i>Friends Together</i>
May 16 Seventh Sunday of Easter 1 Jn 5:9-13	Acts 1:15-17, 21-26 Jn 17:6-19	Ps 1 <i>Guided in Prayer</i>
May 23 Pentecost Sunday Rom 8:22-27	Acts 2:1-21 Jn 15:26-27, 16:4b-15	Ps 104:24-34, 35b <i>Spirit for All</i>
May 30 Trinity Sunday Rom 8:12-17	Isa 6:1-8 and Jn 3:1-17	Ps 29 <i>Mysterious Encounter</i>

A Message
from Miss Sharon
Christian Education Director



Hello Faith Formation Students. We will be meeting from 3:34 to 5:00 p.m. every Wednesday in May: the 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th. This is a lesson plan that I would like you to complete and bring with you when we meet on May 5th.

Please answer the questions below on separate pieces of paper.

EARTH DAY is celebrated on April 22 and has become a world-wide day to demonstrate support for environmental protection. Jesus used the world around Him when He taught.

1. Look at these words: Rock/Earth/Wind/Fire/Water. Which of these words best describes your relationship with God.
2. What does conservation mean? Write ten words that mean the same thing. A thesaurus or dictionary may help you.
3. If there are no dinosaurs around, can we assume extinction is part of God's plan? Should we give up acres of workable land to provide a habitat for endangered animals?
4. Read Matthew 5:13. The verse calls on us to be the salt of the earth. List five ways we can be a salt.
5. Read Psalms 19: David seems to indicate the earth itself has a voice. Write down five things the earth says that we don't need. How can we listen to the earth better?
6. Read Job 12:7-10 What do animals teach you? What lesson have you learned from your pets? What have you learned from zoos about animals? Design an animal conservation log that could go on a t-shirt.
7. What does it mean to go green? Is your school green? Your home? Do something around your home to make your home green and tell me about it.

"You cannot get through a single day without an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."

—Jane Goodall



Why God made mothers

A group of elementary school children were asked why God made mothers.

"To help us out of there when we were getting born," one child replied. "She's the only one who knows where the Scotch tape is," a second child answered.

Asked what ingredients mothers are made of, another child replied, "God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice in the world and one dab of mean."

The children were also asked, "Why did God give you your mother and not some other mom?" "God knew she likes me a lot more than other people's moms like me," replied a little boy. "Because we're related," a little girl said. They were asked, "What kind of little girl was your mom?" "They say she used to be nice," one child answered. Another child said, "I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be that she was pretty bossy."

Asked what the difference is between moms and dads, one child said, "Moms have magic. They make you feel better without medicine."

The children were asked, "If you could change one thing about your mom, what would it be?" "I would like for her to get rid of those invisible eyes in the back of her head," one child replied. Said another, "She has this weird thing about keeping my room clean. I'd get rid of that." Still another child replied, "I'd make my mom smarter. Then she would know my sister did it, not me."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

May 1	Allison Liddle
May 3	Pat Fox
	Sally Kemp
May 7	Barb Pevytoe
May 8	Dan Holperin
	Lori Hunter
May 10	Ayla Shepherdson
May 12	Larry Mattes
May 14	Bernice Gilbert
	Nikki Manta
May 16	Dillon Gagliano
	Barb Schroeder
May 18	Shirley Thompson
May 21	Barb Stadler
	Matthew Towne
May 24	Doug Breit
	Rod Pevytoe
May 25	Sandy Gillum
May 26	Mark Deditz
May 27	Sue Anderson
May 31	Nan Pophal
June 5	Pamme Williams
June 8	Emily Klopp
June 9	Nan Andrews

Do you or someone in your family have a birthday in May/early June 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!*



Linda Jorgensen
has a new address ...

Phelps Care Center
4288 S. Maple Road
Phelps, WI 54558

THANK YOU!

From 2021 Year of Giving recipients

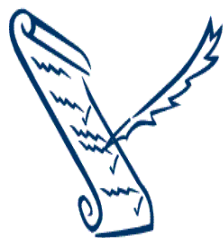
"Dear First Congregational Church, I want to personally welcome you to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM)! Your tax-deductible gift

of \$100 on March 10, 2021 added you to the ranks of the most compassionate and dedicated people I have ever met. Thank you for joining with us to change medicine and research, and save lives. You fill me with hope that we will achieve a world without cruelty! Sincerely, Neal D. Barnard, MD, President."

"Dear First Congregational United Church of Christ, Thank you for your donation to the Micah Project in March. Your partnership and support of our ministry with street-connected youth in Honduras means so much. We continue to be encouraged by how God uses the Micah family to bring hope and love to many who are desperate and hurting in Tegucigalpa. You are a significant part of that —thank you! Sincerely, John Bell, the Micah Project"



Want to do something really special this summer? How about volunteering at Camp AweSum? *Camp AweSum's mission is to transform lives by providing a respect-based culture that supports, loves, and values autism through education and acceptance.* Volunteers are needed at Moon Beach Camp for family camps of one week each in June and August. Training is required and a donation for your camp expenses is much appreciated. The experience will be life changing! To learn more, go to: <file:///C:/Users/lgail/Downloads/CA%20Volunteer%20information%202021.pdf>



Wishlist

NATH - Frederick Place - Most Needed Items

1. Tweezers
2. Men's boxers (all sizes)
3. Bathroom cleaner
4. Bras (all sizes)
5. Dry erase markers
6. Coffee
7. Coffee creamer
8. Olive Oil
9. Butter
10. Cooking spray

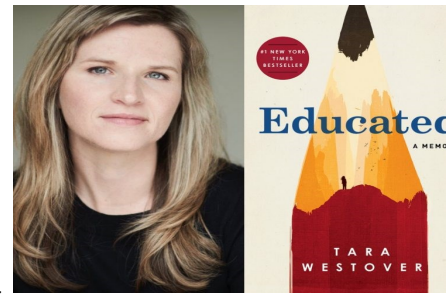
If you would like to donate items from the "Wishlist" bring them to the church, rap on the door and we'll take them from you. They can also be taken to Frederick Place in Rhinelander at 204 W. Frederick St.
Monetary donations are always welcomed!
nathnorthwoods@gmail.com



BOOK LOVERS READING GROUP

We will meet via Zoom on May 20th at 7 p.m.

Our book for May is “Educated” by Tara Westover.



Memoir of a girl raised by survivalists in rural Idaho, set foot in a classroom for the first time at age 17. “Educated” is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty and of the grief that comes with severing the closest of ties. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one’s life through new eyes and the will to change it.”

After the May meeting, we figure it’s a good idea to take a break for the summer. We will plan to meet in August to select books for the coming September 2021 to May 2022. I will send out an email with more details toward the end of July. If we gather in August to select the next year’s books, we should have a complete list for the year.

Happy Reading.

Donna De Pape (Contact me with questions at spindle257@gmail.com)



Monday May 31st



Moon Beach Volunteers Needed for Spring Work Weekend

Moon Beach relies on volunteers throughout the year to keep our sanctuary functional and beautiful!

If you love this place, enjoy creating community around shared goals and have wanted to see what happens “behind the scenes” at Moon Beach, this camp is for you!

Everyone who is willing to pitch-in is welcome! We have both skilled and unskilled tasks to be completed, from cabin maintenance, painting, plumbing and carpentry to stacking firewood, basic trail clearing and raking! There is no shortage of tasks to be done. Youth who are ready to learn responsibility, work ethic and good stewardship are welcome to attend with their parents/guardians.

The Spring Work Camp includes Friday night lodging, Saturday’s breakfast/lunch/dinner and lodging, and ends after Sunday brunch. We invite you to arrive any time on Friday night to settle in and enjoy free time. After a day of exertion on Saturday, we’ll have some community time and free time on Saturday evening. We’ll send you home feeling accomplished and spiritually refreshed (even if your body’s a little sore) after worship and a delicious brunch on Sunday morning!

Our Spring Work Weekend is scheduled for Friday, May 21st thru Sunday, May 23rd.

PLEASE NOTE: If you do NOT plan to attend for the entire session, please let us know when to expect you, what meals you’ll be having with us and when you plan to leave.

Please visit our website at: ucci.org for more information or to register. If you’d like to come on a different day with a group from your church please contact me and we can plan something.

Lunch will be included!

If you have any questions, please contact Kathy at: Kathy@ucci.org or call (715) 479-8255.

*****Moon Beach seeking adult/skilled volunteers for
Extreme Makeover Work Week*****



What: This event is an event focused on specialized skills — carpenters, painters, landscapers, sewers, arborists, electricians, plumbers and more are welcome to participate in a week filled with hard work and camaraderie.

When: Monday, May 24th thru Friday, May 28th, Extreme Makeover includes lodging as well as breakfast, lunch and dinner Monday thru Thursday as well as Friday breakfast.

Where: Beautiful Moon Beach Camp in St. Germain, WI

How much: any donation is welcome but not required. Our typically suggested donation of \$50 per day covers our basic costs for your attendance.

Thanks for your willingness to make Moon Beach come alive for guests throughout the year!

PLEASE NOTE: If you do NOT plan to attend the entire session, please let us know when to expect you, what meals you'll be having with us and when you plan to leave.

Please contact Kathy at: Kathy@ucci.org or call me (715-479-8255) if you have questions.

IN-PERSON WORSHIP

MAY 9, 16, 23 and 30th: 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary.

May 30th the 9:30 service will be outdoors, weather permitting.

Call to reserve each week!

Wear your mask. Use the hand sanitizers. Ushers will space you.

We will clean between the two services.

First Congregational UCC Contact People - 2020 –2021

Pastor Gail Irwin Cell: 920-883-7887

Email: pastorgail@eagleriverucc.org

First Congregational UCC, PO Box 1385, Eagle River, WI 54521

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

HOME PAGE - www.eagleriverucc.org

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

Director of Christian Education: Sharon Breit, 715-477-2163 youthministry@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

Clerk - Norma Yaeger 715-477-1984

Pastor Parish Relations Committee - Tobi Johannsen 920-450-1402

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

Sanctuary Arts Group (SAG) - Patti Roberts, 715-479-6191

Performing Arts Music - Bernie Hupperts, 715-617-9468

Music Director - Lori Hunter, 715-493-8078

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

Norma Yaeger, 715-477-1984