

The Church Mouse – April 2022
First Congregational United Church of Christ
eagleriverucc.org

Pastor's Report

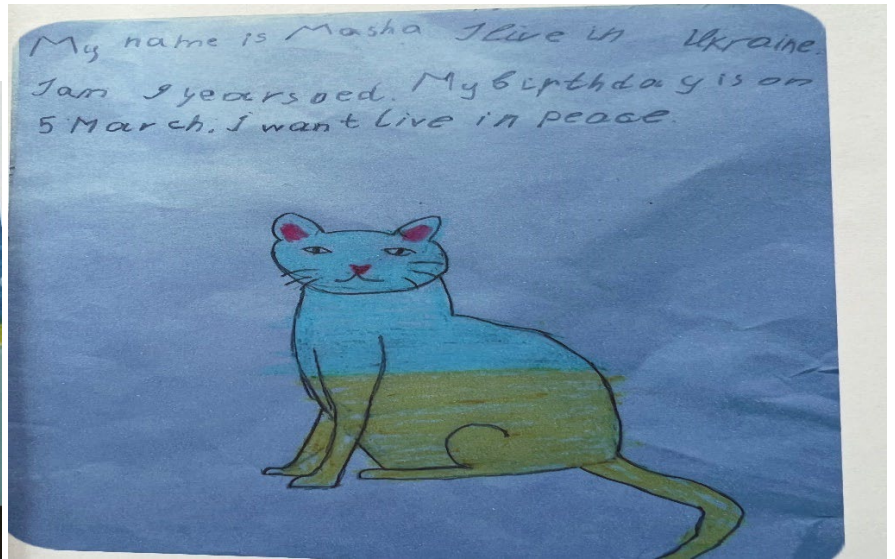
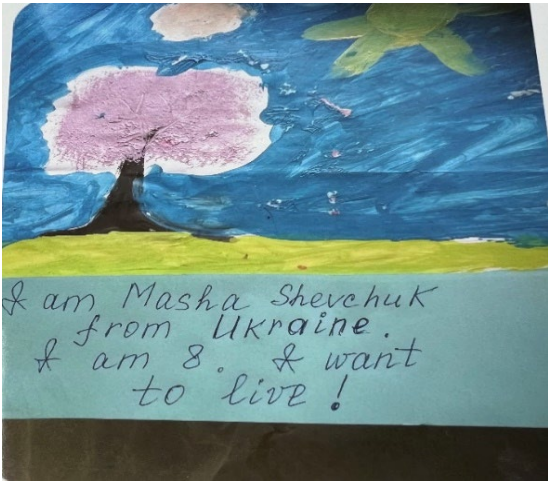
What a glorious Sunday Easter Day was! It really was the icing on the cake after our long days of Lent climaxed by Holy Week. I would like to say a word of thanks for all the hard work that went into making all these services a success. Yes indeed, it truly takes a village! I especially want to say thanks to all those who prepared and served dinner at our "Soup and Service" gatherings on Wednesday evening. In addition, I would also like to personally thank our church staff who worked diligently alongside me to ensure that all these services came off without a hitch. They handled so many of the intricate organizational details which allowed me to focus on the liturgy and my preaching. Truly a gift! And by the way, all the feedback was very much appreciated. I want to assure you that I take to heart and mind both the positive and the negative in the hopes of making things better, always my goal. It is always my objective to strive for perfection while settling for excellence. We may not meet the mark, but I pray we get an "A" for effort!!!

As we move into spring and then summer, I am certainly curious about what the routines will look like here at First Congregational United Church of Christ. I look forward to spring and summer in the Northwoods! After a long winter I will be going on my spring retreat beginning the end of the month over the Memorial Day weekend. I have been meeting with this group of clergy and academics for about fifteen years now. It is a very real part of my emotional and mental health, my very sanity! We participate in activities, including my favorite—fishing (I am not a golfer)—and share our issues along with some biblical and theological reflections. I will also be piggybacking a week's vacation on the backend of the retreat, so I will be gone about two weeks. It is a good time! I also attend a fall retreat called the Dead Preacher's Society, named after the movie of similar verbiage. In that gathering we do much the same work and I have been a part of this group since 1995! Where have the years gone? Rare is the time I choose to go to conferences, having found them to not be the most helpful to me at this stage of my career and not a good stewardship of that part of my benefits package. That general comment does not include denominational gatherings, however. I still enjoy those when I attend.

During this time of get-togethers and such, I look forward to continuing to get to know each one of you as we continue to build our pastor and people relationship. It has been quite a joy to be in your fellowship as you have been everything the search committee promised me you would be. We have much work to do together as we seek to better build beloved faith community as a local missional church in Eagle River, Wisconsin. We have a unique message as a progressive voice of Christianity and we must learn the best ways to advertise who we are, to preach what we practice while practicing what we preach. There are people in this area who are looking for a church home, a faith community, just like this one. I know this to be true because I have met some of them in my random trips about town. People do see our banner and it is their hope that we live up to what is implied in that spectrum of colors. May we be the welcoming and inclusive church that we claim to be. May this be our humble prayer.

I look to see you on Sundays!

President's Comments



A friend sent us the two cards above. They are from the same child, Masha Shevchuk, a Ukrainian girl who was eight when the war began and is nine now. "I want to live," she says into the chaos around her. "I want to live in peace." she writes on the second card. As you can tell, both cards are made with Ukrainian colors.

I look at these cards and think of Masha daily. I am so relieved that First Congregational United Church of Christ here in Eagle River sent \$2500 to Ukrainian relief through our UCC Relief Agency, doing its part to help children like Masha and others caught in a Russian-made war against Ukraine, a war that seems to be repeating what Hitler did to Poland or Czechoslovakia.

It's Easter weekend as I write this, still icy winter here in the North. Still the hope that comes with Easter faith, can be spread one-by-one through Easter and Spring prayers. I pray that our Spring-hope will reach across the world and bring Easter peace to the war-torn world where Masha lives.

Bernie Hupperts

Council Report

The Council caught Spring fever and decided upon one community worship service each month on the last Sunday of the month, an outdoor 9:00 a.m. gathering. It is the hope of the Council that First Church members as well as others in the community will attend. These last Sunday of the month services will be held June through September, weather depending.

The commUNITY worship services were part of a larger discussion regarding the development of how to grow church attendance and membership. The Council also noted that an ongoing concern is a reduction in pledged income and even non-pledged income.

A committee comprised of Trisha Moore, Shirley Thompson, Steve Burrill, Bernie Hupperts and Pastor Tim will bring suggestions to the Council regarding growth in all areas of the church. Following this discussion, the Council will consider how its growth is fitting with the Constitution's definition of governance.

Council will meet next on May 9, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

In accordance with CDC guidelines, wearing of masks is now optional. We will continue to sign in for worship. If we have cases of COVID within our congregation brought to our attention, we will notify everyone as soon as possible.

Online Giving is now available on the church website. With online giving, you can set up recurring or one-time gifts to be made automatically from your checking account or by debit or credit card. Online giving allows you to make gifts more conveniently and easier, especially when not physically attending worship.

Designated offering envelopes are not necessary to make a gift and to receive a yearly contribution statement. With our new accounting software, we will be recording contributions based on name and not by envelope number. Any cash offering that is placed in any envelope with a name on it, or a personal check will be recorded. If you would like to donate to a specific ministry, please indicate on the envelope or on the check memo line.

Just a reminder that we continue to receive and accept pledges throughout the year.

As a church family, we are ready, willing, and able to share with you in your prayers of sadness and celebration. Please feel free to share your prayer with us on the church website, under the Ministries heading, or by calling the church office at 715-802-8501. To protect the privacy of all individuals please only share prayers for those, you have received direct permission to share on their behalf. We ask that any prayer requests mentioned from the pulpit have the permission of the one desiring prayer. Thank you for your understanding. Prayer Concerns: As we worship today our thoughts are with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters.

Scripture readers, ushers, and camcorder operators are always needed as well as readers for the Concerns of the Church. You may sign up by visiting our website; or you may also contact Joy Turpin at: joyfaithchapinturpin@gmail.com or the Church office.

Beginning Sunday, May 8th, we will resume Coffee Hour in the parlor following each Sunday service. Coffee and tea will be provided. We are looking for people to provide goodies to share along with the beverages. These can be homemade or purchased. You can contribute cookies, muffins, or other baked goods. If you would be willing to volunteer, please put your name on the sign-up sheet or email or call Debbie Brown in the Church Office. An email will be sent at the beginning of the month to those who are providing snacks for that month.

Women's Fellowship Spring Luncheon,

Tuesday, May 10th, 11:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. As First Congregational United Church of Christ gradually comes back to life, the Women's Fellowship is pleased to once again be hosting the Spring Luncheon. All First Congregational women are invited to join us for fine food and friendship in Fellowship Hall. Prior to our lunch together the Northland Pines top forensics and music students will be presenting short performances in the sanctuary. Norma Yaeger will accompany the musicians. You will be able to visit with the students during lunch. The luncheon originated as a way to thank all the First Congregational women who have assisted the church in some way over the past year. Even if you have not been able to be active until now, please come and feel free to extend this invitation to 1 or 2 guests. RSVPs are required! Please call Sharon Breit, 715-477-2163 or Linda Sanborn, 715-891-5655, (like right now!). A sign-up sheet is available in the sanctuary. Also, please let us know the names of your guests. We look forward to an uplifting mini-concert and the opportunity to enjoy lunch together. See you then!

The Women's Fellowship

GAME NIGHT COMING SOON

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, May 18th at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall! Come one, come all! Young (kids welcome) or old, brainchild or dunce...if you like to play games and have fun, this night is for you. The games will have you laughing your socks off (sorry, Tim...laughing your shoes off????) with absolutely NO pressure to win (although for you competitive types, there will be a grand champion prize.) No board games, no intricate rules to learn, just lots of silliness, camaraderie, and jollies. And no entry fee! Bring your family, bring your friends (non-First Congregational players welcome) and come and enjoy. Coffee, water, and soda will be provided. If you would like to bring a finger food snack to share, that would be a welcome addition but is not required. We anticipate that the evening will last for 2-3 hours depending on the number of participants. You do not need to pre-register, although it would be helpful in planning if we had an idea of the expected head count. Please contact Barb Helmick or Nancy Diepenbrock if you plan to attend. Or you may put your name(s) on the sign-up sheet at the back of the church. If by chance you do not pre-register, you are welcome to come anyway! There will be room for everyone, and we will make it work! The past two COVID years have been tough on us all. It has been far too long since we spent an evening together in fellowship! Please come and join us and help us get back to some form of normalcy and be ready to have some FUN! Barb Helmick, helmickjanesh@ymail.com; 920-412-4782 or Nancy Diepenbrock, petsX5@gmail.com; 715-479-2498.

Cooking Classes

Wednesday, May 18; COOKING WITH LEMONS 1pm to 3:30 pm

Lemons are indispensable to everyday cooking. As content keeping company with savory dishes as they are sharing the sweet life with desserts. Join us as we prepare Savory Lemon Chicken; classic Hummus with Lemon Rosemary Crackers; and Lemon Meringue Pie.

Wednesday, May 25; Greek Cuisine 1 pm to 1:30 pm

Enjoy an afternoon in Greece, as we explore the delicious cuisine from that part of the world. We'll prepare and taste traditional spanakopita, Greek potatoes, chicken lemon soup, and a fun take on baklava.

Wednesday, June 15; Summer Soups and Flatbreads 1pm to 3:30pm

Whip up some summer soups with us, full of nutritional ingredients and seasonal flavors. Then add a delicious flatbread as we prepare a number of soups and breads, perfect for a filling lunch or light supper.

Wednesday, June 22; 1pm to 3:30 pm

Regional Desserts you'll be surprised with these wonderful regional desserts which are sure to satisfy your sweet tooth. Black and white cookies, classic key lime pie, bumpy cake, gooey butter cake and jammers
Stay tuned for details!

To register for classes email sweetbluberi@gmail.com or call Dottie Reeder at 715-891-7920. Classes are \$35.00 per person and include lots of fun as well as complete recipe copies, instruction, preparation and tasting of the foods prepared. Wear comfortable clothes. No open toe shoes. Aprons are provided. All classes are interactive.

PHONE DONATIONS

With the limited access to our church parlor during the Covid pandemic, our used phone initiative has suffered but it's back!!!! A brand spanking' new collection box is positioned in the entry foyer and is waiting for your old phone (and hearing aid see below). Every year, millions of phones are thrown away crowding landfills, creating hazardous waste and hurting our environment. Give your old phones a new sustainable life by dropping them here! The used phones (any age, working or not) will be sent to Medic Mobile and through their recycling

partner, The Wireless Alliance, they will be safely recycled to fund open-source software and support health care workers across Asia and Africa. A reminder: Medic Mobile takes data security and privacy seriously. Your phone will be erased of all data through a secure process that has a bunch of numbers and letters (which are too complicated for ME to explain) but the bottom line is that your phone donation is safe. We started this program in 2013 and to date, we have contributed 276 phones. It's time to get going again! If Medic Mobile can recycle just 1 % of disposed phones each year, they can outfit 1 million health care workers and improve the lives of 50 million people! Don't let your old phone go to the trash. It can have another life somewhere, and help someone in need! And let's not forget HEARING AID DONATIONS We started this program in 2017, collecting used hearing aids and donating them to organizations who refurbish them free of charge. The gift of hearing is then distributed to needy people in over 100 countries all over the world. Any make or model of used hearing aid, working or not working, is accepted. To date, we have sent 13 hearing aids on to a new life. Please drop your used hearing aids into the same box as the phones and empower a needy person to build a better life. Questions? Ask me! Nancy Diepenbrock: petsX5@gmail.com.

UCC Book Club, aka Knights of the Reading Round Table.

We had an enthusiastic discussion of "Our for the Blackbird, One for the Crow" at our April meeting. Everyone found it engaging, provocative and very well written. Our last regular book meeting for the season is May 19, Thursday at 6:30 p.m. We are discussing The Splendid and the Vile by W. Eric Larsen. Host: Carol Marshall. We plan to meet in person. Hope to see you there.

The May Flock meeting will be held at church on Thursday, May 17 at 6:00pm. If you like to stitch, this is the group for you! Our hostess for this month is Betty Rosenbaum. If you plan to attend please contact her at busybettyr@gmail.com so she can plan for refreshments. If you would like more information, call or text Linda Brainard at 715-891-3548.

We are still looking for somebody who has the skillset to do some small woodworking projects. Please call the church office if you can help.

After a year of employment at First Congregational United Church of Christ, Alex Fluegel, our Information and Electronic Technology Director is leaving. His last day of employment will be May 23rd, 2022.

There have been inquiries regarding the collection of greeting cards for recycling. Some card donating tips:

- All types of greeting cards, including Christmas are used.
- Only the card front can be used (please check to be sure the back side is clear of any writing, etc.)
- They cannot accept Hallmark, Disney or American Greeting cards.
- 5" x 7" size or smaller is preferred.
- St. Jude's Ranch for Children has a Recycled Card Program where the children take used cards and make new ones.
- The rewards are great. You get satisfaction in knowing the cards are used to help sick children, plus it helps keep your storage area uncluttered. The sick children get satisfaction in taking an old, used card and making it into a brand new one; plus, they receive money for their work and they are taught entrepreneurship skills.
- Women's Fellowship pays the postage for the cards sent from our church.
- At this time, they are in particular need of Birthday and Thank You cards.

Flower Calendar

Pick your Sunday and put your name on the Flower Calendar that is in the hall next to the elevator. If you want the office to order flowers, put "order" after your name and they will be ordered from Vintage Garden Studio with the cost of \$30. You are welcome to take them home after the service. Your name will be in the bulletin and the name of the person or event you are celebrating will be listed.

You may also bring flowers from another source and place them on the flower stand next to the piano, put your name on the calendar and let the office know if you want additional information in the bulletin. Weather permitting, you are also welcome to bring garden flowers, or even an arrangement of wild flowers. Again, put your name on the flower calendar and let the office know if there's a special person or event involved. What better way to honor anyone or anything than to share flowers with your church family on Sunday.

April sponsors:

Please note that in observation of the Season in Lent there were no flowers during worship in the Sanctuary.

First Congregational United Church of Christ

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CHURCH STAFF

Timothy W. Shirley, Pastor; pastortim@eagleriverucc.org

Debbie Brown, Church Administrator; office@eagleriverucc.org

Jonathan Alexander (Alex) Fluegel, Information & Electronic Technology Director; alex@eagleriverucc.org

Sharon Breit, Director of Christian Education; youthministry@eagleriverucc.org

Lori Lee Hunter, Director of Music; lori.lee.hunter@gmail.com

Linda Brainard, Pianist; lsbpiano@msn.com

Norma Yaeger, Pianist; norma888@frontier.com

Christine Clough, Cleaning Services

CHURCH COUNCIL

President: Bernie Hupperts

Vice President: Mark Johannsen

Trisha Moore

Cathy Palmer

Luke Aschbrenner

Deb Stolze

Steve Burrill

Clerk: Norma Yaeger

Pastor Parish Relations Committee - Tobi Johannsen

Women's Fellowship - Linda Sanborn

Sanctuary Arts Group (SAG) - Patti Roberts

Performing Arts Music - Bernie Hupperts

Music Director - Lori Hunter

Organists/pianists - Linda Brainard

Lori Hunter; Norma Yaeger