

Let the little children
come to me
and do not hinder them,

One of the consistent ministries of the church has been a focus on children and youth. With the beginning of another school year and the start of our own program year, it is natural to reflect on how we have served families with children in the past, as well as look at the ways we are reaching out to children and youth today. Whether it was classes on Sunday morning or youth group during the week, our congregation has always known how important it is to teach the “old, old story of Jesus and his love”.

It was 2,000 years ago that Jesus declared, “Let the children come to me and do not hinder them”. We have worked to follow Jesus’ call for many years. In the pages that follow, see examples of involvement of children since 1898 and learn the ways we continue to minister to children, youth, and their families today!

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THIS MONTH'S WINDOW INTO OUR PAST - SUNDAY SCHOOL IN 1898 + PHOTOS THEN & NOW

Our September installment honoring our 125th anniversary highlights children in our church. The information was gleaned from our church historical collection.

Our first Sunday School classes (and worship services) were held at the Ozaukee County Court House April through December of 1898. The following is an excerpt from “**Early Days of the Congregational Sunday School**” article by Lenore Harms in the 1938 40th Anniversary church booklet:

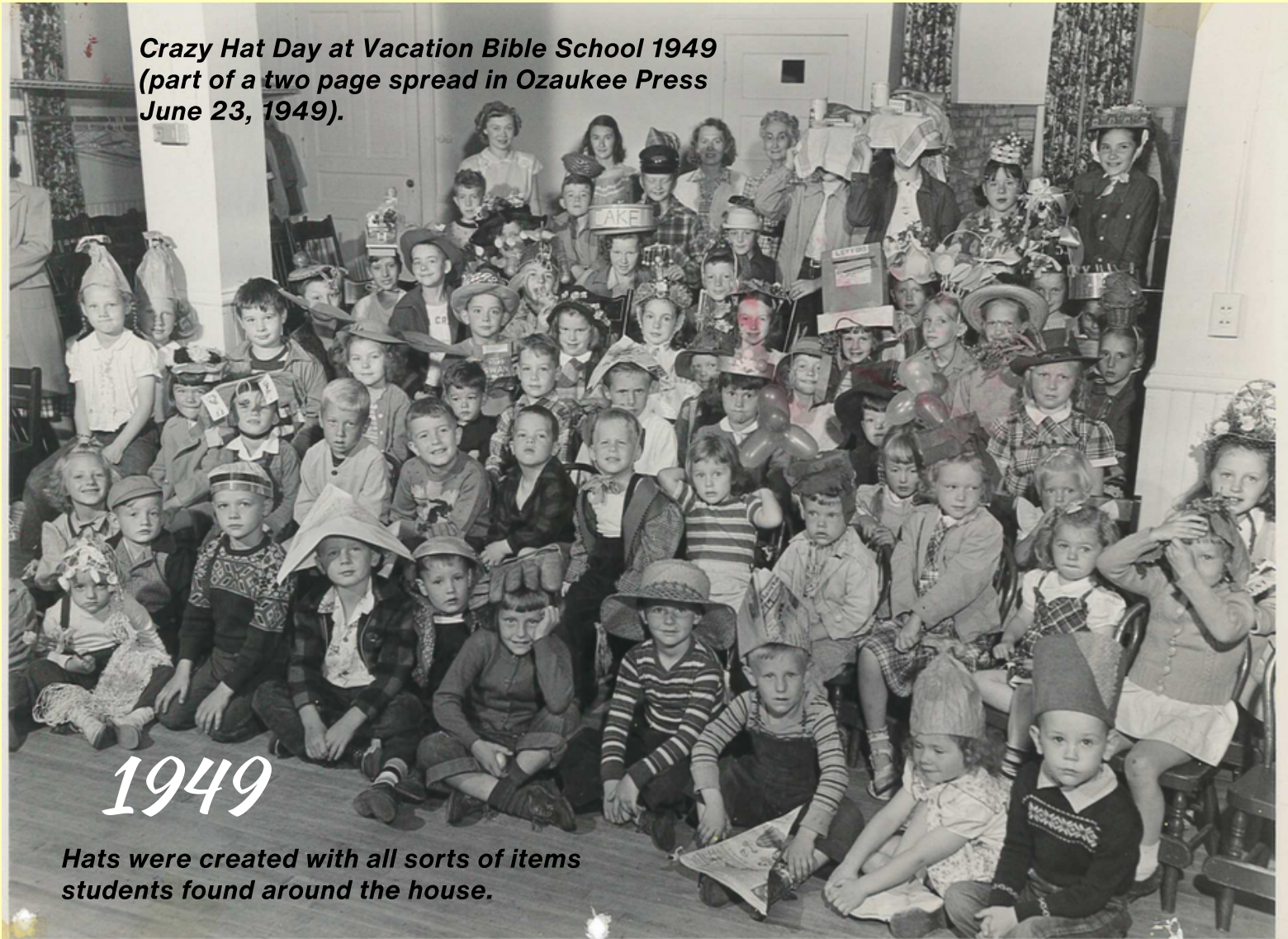
Irene Scott, a pupil in the 1898 primer class reports that she found the judiciary benches much too hard and too high in contrast to the little red kindergarten chairs that were used in the basement of the Methodist Church. She feared the mice that also insisted on attending Sunday School in the old Court House. However, these inconveniences were not of long duration, for on Christmas Day, 1898, the lower story of the Congregational Church was ready for occupancy.

1898

(continued...)



***Crazy Hat Day at Vacation Bible School 1949
(part of a two page spread in Ozaukee Press
June 23, 1949).***



1949

***Hats were created with all sorts of items
students found around the house.***

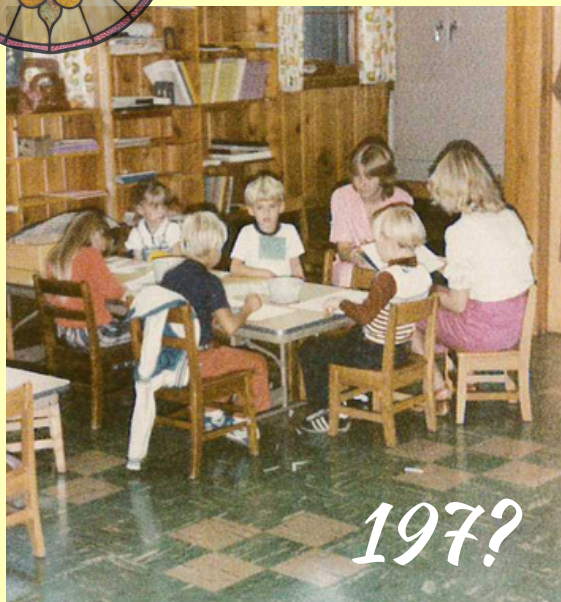
The late 1950s and the 1960s were booming times for Sunday School: most years enrollment was more than 100 students, preschool through high school. In 1963, for example, there were 149 children enrolled in 11 classes and 20 adults were involved as teachers, coordinators, and treasurer.

Until the late 1960s, Sunday School expenses were not part of the church budget but were self-funded via children's offering and financial gifts from members. The attendance numbers are even more staggering considering the space used was just the basement of the original church building! How did they all fit?

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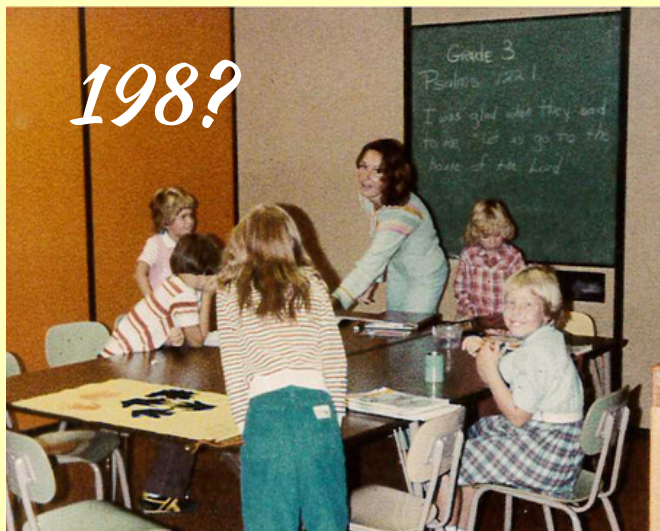
SUNDAY/CHURCH SCHOOL...THEN & NOW



197?



These small wooden chairs were no doubt built by the Wisconsin Chair Factory right here in Port Washington. This room (located where our church office rooms are now) was used by our youngest Church School class and by Port Pre-School until the remodel and addition was built in 1998-1999. Who remembers when there was a fenced playground just south of the church building?



198?

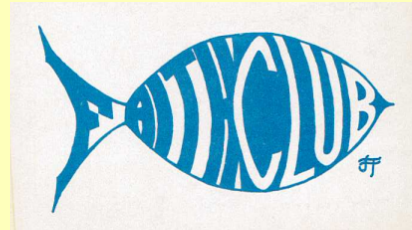
The lower level of the church was divided with foldable orange and tan walls that were pushed/pulled in place to create classrooms. Church School classes often got the cue to end class by hearing the closing hymn being sung overhead: it was to move walls and create the full space for fellowship time after worship.



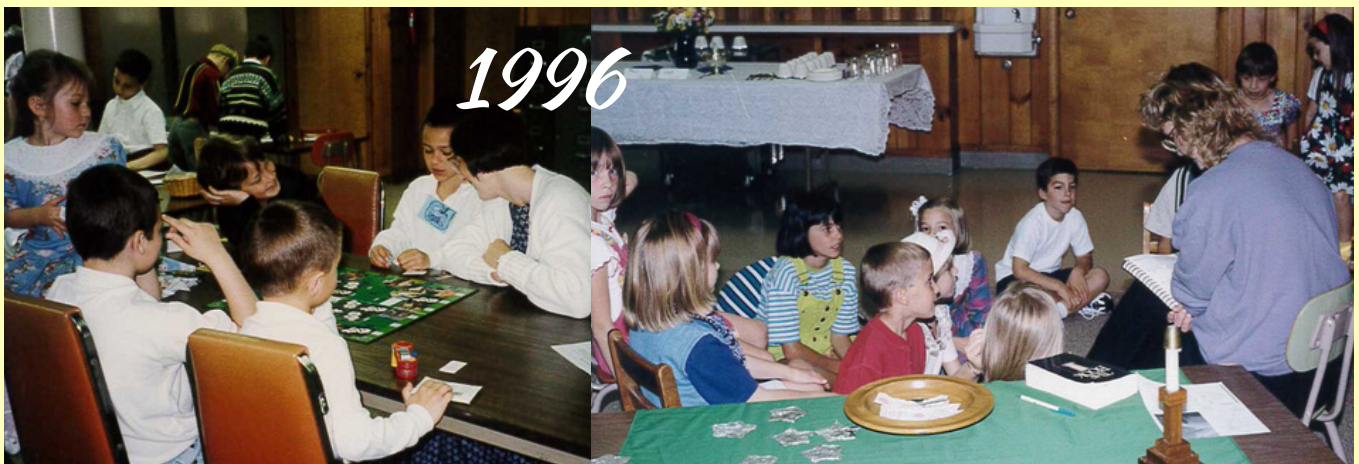
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SUNDAY/CHURCH SCHOOL...THEN & NOW



Bruce Laabs, Sr. was instrumental (pun intended) in founding and leading Faith Club, a youth group for middle schoolers that was active in the late 1970s. Photo to left and below shows Bruce playing guitar to younger children on a Sunday morning.



Church School has used published curricula, teacher-made materials, and mixes of both. Times of meetings have changed. Classes have varied in size and age range. Most importantly, many congregation members, both parents and non-parents, have worked to create fun and meaningful Church School times for the children of our congregation.

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SUNDAY/CHURCH SCHOOL...NOW!



Our Church School youth showing off their wishing well craft this past spring.

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

We are excited to start another fun program year of Church School! Church School, open to all 4K through 7th graders, meets on the second Sunday of each month at 10:00. To learn more, please see the invitation from Shandy Roehrig, our Christian Education Team Representative, on the next page. We invite you to join us on the following dates this fall:

September 10, October 8, November 12, December 10

Church School parents are asked to complete a registration form each program year. You may [click here](#) to print it out, or complete when you are at church.

FAMILY SUNDAYS

On the fourth Sunday of every month at 10:00, the church hosts a Family Service which includes the participation of our youth, specifically the 8th grade Confirmation Class and our Children's Choir. Here are the fall Family Service dates:

September 24, October 22, November 26, December 24

NURSERY CARE RESUMES ON SEPTEMBER 10

Every Sunday morning during the 10:00 service we provide Nursery Care for children newborn through elementary. Care is mostly provided by our 8th grade Confirmation students and their families. Our Nursery is located in the Gilomen Room, across from the restrooms.

Nursery parents are required to register their children, [click here](#) for the form or complete at church. We also ask parents to sign their children in and out of the nursery. We want to do our very best to make the nursery safe and secure.

A WELCOME LETTER FROM OUR CHURCH SCHOOL LEADER

As the school bell rings across our communities, our Church School bell rings too. We are excited for another great year in Church School, with our first class on Sunday September 10. Children 4K through 7th grade are welcome to join us during the 10:00 worship service on the second Sunday of each month for learning and fun!

We begin each Church School morning with the children finding their name tags and adding a color ribbon. We then settle in for a mini-Church Service led by our oldest students, followed by a bible lesson and discussion tied to the season or curriculum aligning to the program year. We then move into Fellowship Hall where we use our creativity and imagination to bring our lessons and stories to life. Several times throughout the year we will complete a service project, which allows us to share our faith in serving our community.

At our first class we will be discussing the Land in which we live, following a passage from Psalm 139:7-12. You may [click here](#) to view the curriculum. We will be announcing our first service project for the year (a donation drive for the The Food Pantry here in Port Washington), create our name tags for the year ahead, and get to know each other.

We encourage families who are curious about our program to join us on September 10, or any Church School Sunday which may fit within their schedule. We understand families have busy schedules and welcome the children any time they are able to join us (even if it is not every month). Parents are also welcome to stay and join us for our lessons, as we understand some children may be unsure if its their first time joining us. Please take a moment to complete the following registration form and bring it along on Sunday. We will have paper copies available as well.

Students entering 8th grade through high school are encouraged to sign up to help in our Nursery (with a parent) and are also welcome to assist in Church School as well. Many hands always makes light work!

I wish everyone a wonderful school year and look forward to another fun year of learning and faith at First Congregational.

Blessings,
Shandy Roehrig



Church School kids posing with a wagon full of food for those in need last fall.



JOIN CHILDREN'S CHOIR!

Open to all children 4K through middle school. You do not need to be a member of our church to participate. Therefore, if your child has a friend or neighbor who enjoys singing, feel free to bring them along, too! No experience required.

The choir rehearses:

Second Sunday: 11:00 in the sanctuary

Fourth Sunday: 9:00 in the sanctuary

The choir performs during the 10:00 service either monthly, or seasonally, depending on participation. The first rehearsal is Sunday, **September 10**.



8TH GRADE CONFIRMATION PROGRAM BEGINS ON SEPTEMBER 11

A Note from Pastor Scott

I am excited to get started with this year's 8th grade Confirmation program!

We have four components to our Confirmation program.

- The first component is the monthly **Class** (generally on the 3rd Monday of each month). Confirmands are introduced to the Bible, the Trinity (God the Creator, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit), church history, the life of prayer, our calling to discipleship, among other subjects.
- The second component is monthly **Mission Experience** that will help develop the habit of "putting faith into action" and encourage a spiritual life. We will be helping at The Port Food Pantry, Daycholah Center on Green Lake, Family Promise, walking the Stations of the Cross at Holy Hill, serving a meal at St. Ben's in Milwaukee, touring America's Black Holocaust Museum, and visiting a synagogue.
- The third component is **Worship Experiences**, like leading the Christmas Pageant, assisting Family Sunday worship and attending other special services during the year.
- The fourth Component is **Serving their church** by providing Nursery Care, selling Christmas trees, and helping with fundraisers.

I believe that this combination of practice, reflection, and learning will help each of our confirmands feel good about affirming their Baptismal vows and joining our congregation as adult members. The Confirmation journey begins on **Monday evening, September 11**, with an informational meeting for parents and 8th graders in the Dennett Room from 6:30-8:00. The first class is **Monday evening, September 18** from 6:30-8:00.

I can't wait!

Pastor Scott

MISSION TRIP PLANS FOR NEXT SUMMER

For the past two summers our church has partnered with Pilgrim UCC in Grafton on a high school mission trip. In 2022 the group travelled to Kentucky to work with the Appalachia Service Project, and in 2023 the group went to St. Louis and worked with the Urban Mission Experience. Next summer, the group plans to travel to rural Ohio to work on a farm serving children and youth on the Autism Spectrum. The trip will take place the second week of July 2024. These mission trips are fun and life-changing! Please let Pastor Scott know if you are interested in participating.



EARN PORT PRIDE HOURS WHILE SERVING THE CHURCH

A component of Port Washington High School's Port Pride Program is community service in which students pledge to complete 15 hours of community service each semester in exchange for one final exam exemption.

First Congregational Church is a partner of the program! High school students may earn hours by serving our church in a variety of ways: Nursery care, hosting Fellowship Hour, ushering, selling Christmas trees and more. See sign up below for three ways to serve, or reach out to the office to learn about the others!



SUNDAY SERVERS - ONLINE SIGN-UP



We will continue to utilize the online SignUpGenius tool to allow for easier scheduling of our Sunday morning servers. Simply click on the links and choose which Sundays you would like to serve. Sign up once, or as many times as you'd like! If you have any questions, please reach out to Beckie in the church office.

- USHERS** Greet congregants, hand out service bulletins, and collect the offering at the 8:00 or 10:00 Sunday morning worship service.
- WORSHIP LEADERS** Help Pastor Scott lead the congregation in responsive readings, unison prayers, and scriptures during the 8:00 or 10:00 worship service.
- NURSERY CAREGIVERS** Watch over children newborn through elementary in our nursery during the 10:00 service. The 8th grade Confirmation Class will be helping out, but we need some additional help. Please note, 8th graders and high schoolers must be accompanied by a parent.

NEW PROGRAM YEAR FOR LIGHTHOUSE

Our church continues to partner with four other churches: Grand Avenue United Methodist Church, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Living Hope Lutheran Church, and Parkside Community United Church of Christ, all located in Port Washington and Saukville, to support our joint ecumenical initiative, Lighthouse Youth Ministry. All middle school and high school youth are invited to participate this fall! Here are their plans for September:

Tuesday, September 5th - First Day of School Donuts

Lighthouse would love to help start the school year off with a smile! We'll be handing out donuts starting at 6:45 am until the first bell rings to any PWSSD students or staff who would like one. High schoolers will find us in the shared parking lot of the high school and First Congregational Church, and middle schoolers can walk down just past the school outside of Christ the King Lutheran Church. Tell your friends!



Sunday, September 10th from 7:00-8:00 pm – Game Night

Come join us for a night of fun and getting to know one another as we kick off a new program year with some large group games.



Sunday, September 24th from 7:00-8:00 pm – Paint Night

Unleash your creativity as we spend the evening creating works of art to help decorate our Lighthouse HQ building. All materials will be provided. Please RSVP to Christin by Sunday, September 17th so we make sure we have enough supplies.

Christin Flucke, Youth Director, will be joining us for our first Family Service at 10:00 on Sunday, September 24, to tell us all about Lighthouse! You may [click here](#) to view the events calendar through December. Please contact Christin at (262) 483-9582 or christin.flucke@lighthouseyouth.org if you have any questions. Stay up to date on any schedule changes as well as event reminders by joining the Lighthouse message group on the Remind app. Simply text "pwseym" to 81010 and follow the directions to join!

Check out [Lighthouse - Port Washington Saukville Ecumenical Youth Ministry](#) on Facebook or go to their website at lighthouseyouth.org.



Part of the Lighthouse group who recently participated in "Hunger Quest" mission experience August 18 - 20.