



Congregational *Connections*

Monthly E-Newsletter of First Congregational Church, UCC | Port Washington, Wisconsin | September 2023

SEPTEMBER START UP

“On your mark. Get set. Go!” A new program year is off and running! It’s exciting to start up the activities, events, and ministries of our church!

Look inside to see all the wonderful opportunities our church offers for spiritual and personal growth. We return to two worship services each Sunday morning beginning September 10 as we celebrate a “Season of Creation”. Church School also begins a new program year of classes for the children.

There is an article about our Confirmation program with an outline of the subjects and experiences. You can read more about the start of rehearsals for our Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir, and Children’s Choir. The Thrive Team has continued its work as part of the Marquette University Examen(ed) Church program and is beginning a new phase. See the note about our Wednesday Noon Study Group that begins on September 13.

There are so many meaningful ways to participate, and there is so much important work that needs to be done - but none of it happens without you! We can’t have a choir without people to sing or ring handbells! We can’t have a group Bible study if no one attends. We won’t be able to have Fellowship Hour if no one wants to help provide refreshments or stay after worship long enough to meet someone new. Jesus assured us that he would be present whenever two or three gathered in his name, but it’s a much more meaningful and uplifting experience when we have dozens to hundreds of participants worshipping together!

So, “On your mark. Get set. Go!” We have already started this exciting journey together!

See you soon!
Pastor Scott

START OF PROGRAM YEAR ON SEPTEMBER 10

On Sunday morning, September 10, we return to two services at 8:00 and 10:00 and kick off another program year in the life of our church! To help us celebrate, the Fellowship Team will be hosting Fellowship Hour following both services.

Church School will meet for the first time this program year and Nursery Care resumes, both at 10:00.

A table will be set up in Fellowship Hall showcasing our 125th Anniversary apparel ordering options, as well as information on our RaiseRight fundraising gift card program. In addition, our Medics in our Midst program will offer a third CPR and AED training for those registered after the 10:00 service.

We hope you can join us!



HONORING OUR 25+ YEAR CHURCH MEMBERS ON SEPTEMBER 17

On Sunday morning, September 17, the Congregational Care Team will honor members who have been with the church for 25+ years. We have nearly 70 members who have been with the congregation for at least a quarter-century! This is something to celebrate! These longtime members will receive a personal invitation to attend this special service. During the 10:00 service, we will recognize their years of faithful membership, followed by Fellowship Hour sponsored by the Congregational Care Team. In this 125th Anniversary Year, it will be wonderful to honor the members who have helped to make this congregation such a welcoming and warm faith community. Hope you can be a part of the celebration on September 17!



ORDER APPAREL THROUGH SEPTEMBER 24



Another round of apparel orders will be accepted through September 24. Check out the tote bag that has been added for \$20! **Click here** to ordering online, or **click here** for the paper order form. Thank you!

WORSHIP WITH US

Our last 9:00 summer Sunday service will be on September 3. After that, we celebrate two Sunday morning services at 8:00 and 10:00. Nursery care is available at the 10:00 service.

HOLY COMMUNION

The first Sunday morning of each month we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Communion is open to all who seek to follow in the way of Christ, both children and adults.

LINKED UP

If you are reading this newsletter online, be on the lookout for orange text - it's linked up to documents and web pages that you might find helpful or interesting.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER

If you have a celebration, prayer request, or other contribution for the newsletter, please email us 7-10 days before the first day of the month.

OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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!

Pages 3-7	Sunday/Church School Then & Now
Page 7	Church School News & Nursery Care Information
Page 8	Welcome Letter from Church School
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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.

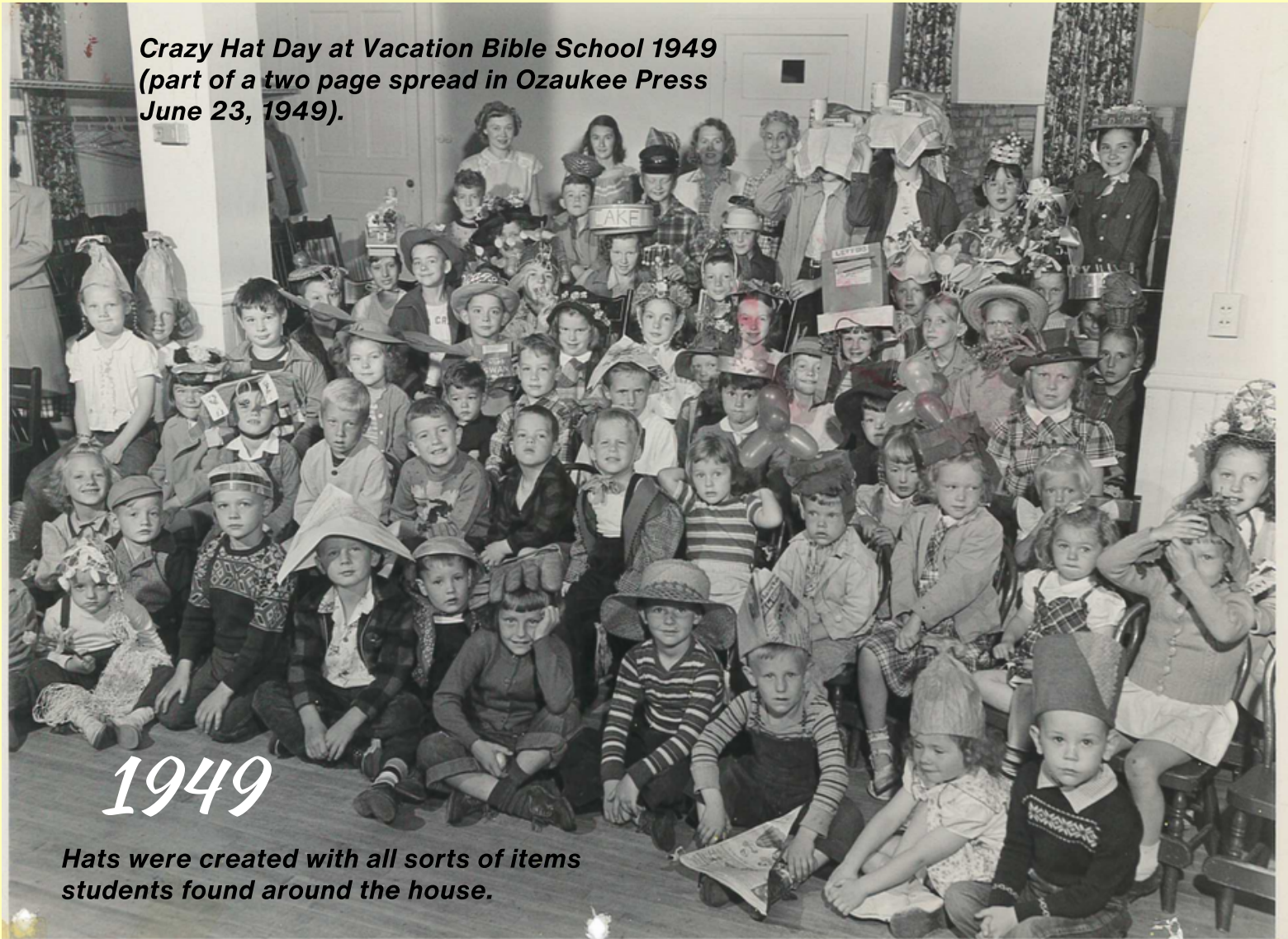
1898

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SUNDAY/CHURCH SCHOOL...THEN & NOW

***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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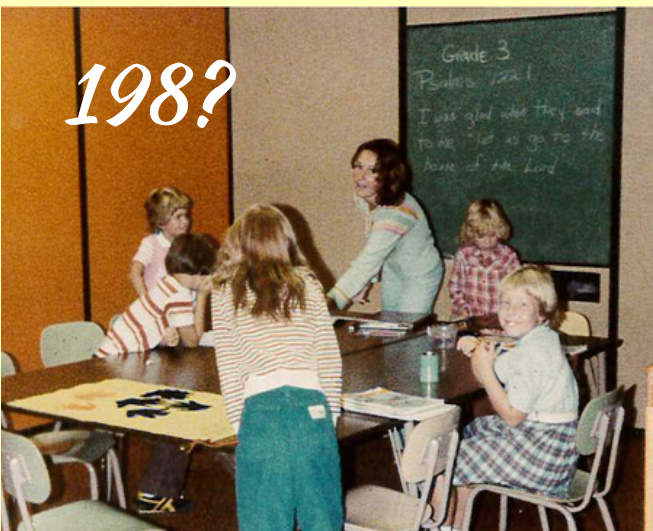
SUNDAY/CHURCH SCHOOL...THEN & NOW



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?

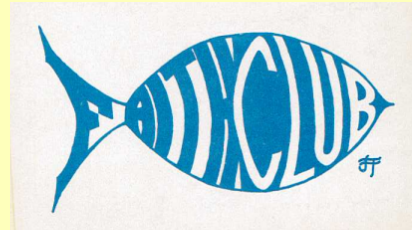
The lower level of the church was divided with foldable orange and tan walls that were pushed/pulled in place to create classrooms. Church School classes often got the cue to end class by hearing the closing hymn being sung overhead: it was to move walls and create the full space for fellowship time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



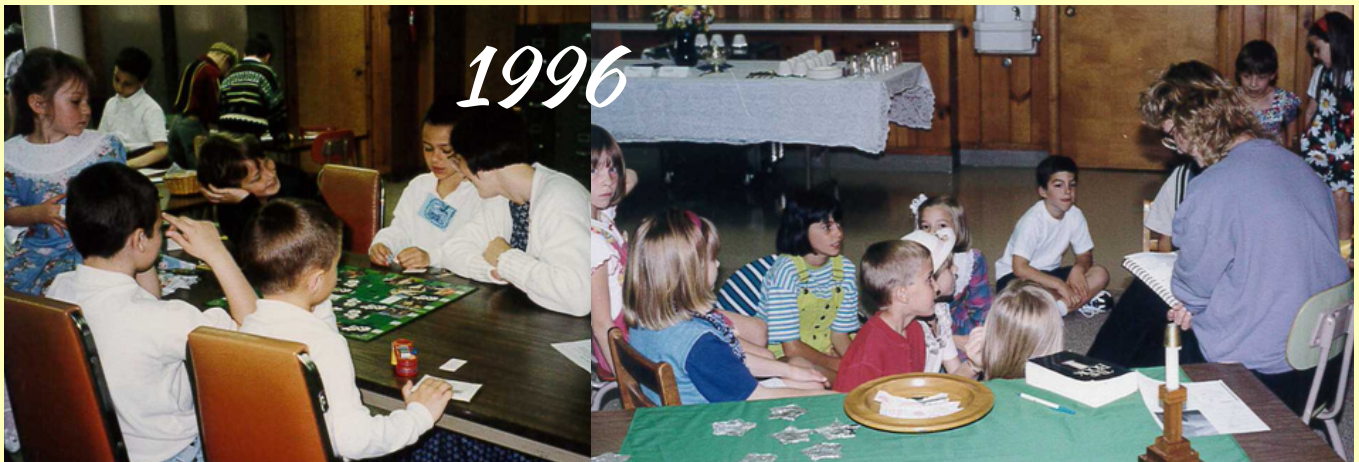
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SUNDAY/CHURCH SCHOOL...THEN & NOW



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.

JOIN OUR CHURCH MUSIC PROGRAM



We offer three dynamic choirs – Handbell, Chancel, and Children's Choir. You are invited to join at any time!



HANDBELL CHOIR - Open to all high school students and older. You do not need to be a member of our church to participate. Feel free to invite your friends and neighbors to join. The Handbells rehearse every Wednesday evening from 7:00 - 8:00 in the music room. They generally perform on the third Sunday of each month during the 10:00 service. No experience is necessary. If you can count to ten, you can learn how to play! Join at any time. The first rehearsal is September 6.

Director Lydia Linendoll began leading our Handbells two years ago. Lydia is also a member of the Milwaukee Handbell Ensemble.

CHANCEL CHOIR - Open to all high school students and older. You do not need to be a member of our church to participate. Therefore, if you have a friend or neighbor who enjoys singing, feel free to invite them. The choir rehearses every Monday evening from 6:30 - 7:30 in the sanctuary. They generally perform on the second and fifth Sundays of each month during the 10:00 service. No experience is necessary, and you don't need to know how to read music. Join at any time! The first rehearsal is September 11.

Director Brett Dimmer has led the Chancel Choir for 10 years. Brett begins his 25th year teaching instrumental music in the Grafton school district and just finished his inaugural year as the Director of the Port Washington City Band.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR - Our Children's Choir, led by Sherri Melichar, is open to all children 4K through middle school. Please see page 7 for more information! Director Sherri Melichar has been our church Pianist and Organist since 1995 and has led our Children's Choir for over 15 years. Sherri teaches music at Lumen Christi School in Mequon.



"MEDICS IN OUR MIDST" TRAINING SESSION ON SEPTEMBER 10



Phil Stepanksi, Pastor Scott, Instructor Paul Taleck, Tom & Shandy Roehrig, and David Franks at a training session in June.

Registration Still Open!



Thank you to all those who have already received training on CPR and the use of our church AED device! Bill Bond, our Medics in our Midst program facilitator, is planning an additional session on Sunday, September 10, following the 10:00 worship service. If you are interested, contact the Church Office. We hope that with all the individuals learning and training to assist, should a medical need arise at church, we will be prepared.



Consider making one of the following ongoing church offerings part of your weekly schedule this fall!

WEDNESDAY LUNCH GROUP

The Wednesday Lunch Group is back in action this month after a summer hiatus. We will resume our weekly meetings starting at **12:00 noon on Wednesday, September 13**. You are invited to join this friendly group in the Dennett Room for lunch, study, and conversation. Bring your own lunch and a beverage, and we will read and discuss the Bible passages that will be used in worship on the coming Sunday morning. Please know that you don't need to be a Bible expert to participate! Pastor Scott will provide some background information about the Bible passages and an assortment of thought-provoking questions. The conversation naturally moves on from there and the discussion is always interesting. There is usually lots of laughter and the sharing of individual opinions and perspectives.

YOGA OFFERED ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

Everyone is welcome to participate in a yoga class each **Wednesday evening at 6:00** at church, led by Dawn Stacey, a licensed yoga instructor and PTA. The group meets in the open classroom space across from the Music Room. Each class costs \$12, payable to Dawn via check, cash, or Venmo.

THURSDAY MORNING MEN'S BREAKFAST AT 8:00

Every Thursday morning at 8:00 a group of members and friends of the church get together for coffee, breakfast, and conversation. This delightful group of men meet at The Beacon restaurant, located downtown on the first floor of the Harborview hotel, and converse. The FCC Men's Breakfast Group is open to all the men of the church. Everyone places their own order and pays their own bill. It is a great way to spend the morning and jumpstart your day!

FIELD TRIP TO MENOMINEE CULTURAL MUSEUM ON SEPTEMBER 28

Please join the Friends for Justice Team as they travel to The Menominee Indian Tribe's Cultural Museum and Logging Museum in Keshena, Wisconsin on Thursday, September 28. We will be departing from the church parking lot at 8:30 a.m. and returning to Port Washington no later than 5:00 p.m. The cost of the self-guided tour for the museums is \$15 and we will go to lunch at a restaurant nearby. We plan to carpool, so no need to worry about driving the two hours to Keshena if you don't want to. The day may include conversation with a Tribal representative about the Back Forty Mine project. This is a proposed open pit metallic sulfide mine located on the banks of the Menominee River in Lake Township, Michigan on land considered sacred to the Menominee people. We hope to learn more about the Menominee people, and make a connection with the Tribe who previously inhabited this part of Wisconsin. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Scott or Louise Mollinger.



*Save
the
Date!*



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE EVENT TO MARK OUR 125TH ANNIVERSARY ON OCTOBER 22

The 125th Anniversary Team is excited to be planning a Community Open House on Sunday, October 22, immediately following our 10:00 worship service, 11:30 to 2:30. The event will be publicized and open to the community, and to our church members and friends. There will be tours of the building and Creekside Commons, information about our church history, current outreach, and much more! Start looking for memorable photos and stories to submit to the Memory Wall. The Team is looking for volunteers to help plan and to assist at the event. If you are interested, please contact the Church Office.

UPDATE FROM OUR PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS TEAM

Hello Congregation,

We would like to update the congregation with our current progress as a PPR (Pastor Parish Relations) Team. We have been working diligently to develop an evaluation tool for our pastor to help us identify strengths, weaknesses, and to develop an action plan of growth. As always, the intent of an evaluation is to identify areas that are working well and areas that could use improvements. We are asking members of our congregation to **fill out a survey that will be coming out on October 1** in the next newsletter. Please be sure to look for the link. A paper copy with mail-in options will be available to those who prefer them. The survey will provide feedback on our current pastor, congregational teams, and processes. Pastor Scott will be filling out a self-evaluation that was also created by the PPR team. The goal will be to have the surveys reviewed and ready for presentation at the congregational meeting at the end of January. Thank you in advance for taking the time to fill out this survey. We are grateful and appreciative of your time and thoughts!

Submitted by Sarah Riemer, PPR Team member



A NOTE OF RESIGNATION FROM OUR FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR

Church Friends,

I am saddened but also excited to announce that I have changed jobs from Novatech to a different company in the same field. The now familiar Novatech van parked at church is replaced by Rhyme, as I started the new job on August 14. This is a great opportunity for me, however, because of the nature of the new job, I will not have time to continue as Financial Administrator.

I will continue doing the job of Financial Administrator as best as I can until a replacement can be found. My resignation will be finalized after I can be confident in a replacement. I expect to still be involved on a volunteer basis moving forward.

If you know of someone who is interested and able to fill the position, please let us know so we can reach out to them.

This has been a great experience for me and I am happy to have served in this way.

Sincerely,
Phil Stepanski

2023-2024 MINISTRY OPTIONS SURVEY

Please fill out a new Ministry Options survey for 2023-2024. It is a great way to get involved in our church's activities and events. We did this in the spring of 2022, and the response was quite good, but we know things change and new opportunities arise. By filling out a Ministry Options Survey we have a better idea of how you would like to use your time and talents, and can connect you to the specific ministries in which you are interested. From hosting Fellowship Hour, to being an usher, from counting the offering to serving on one of our current teams, from helping with a fundraiser to getting involved in one of community service groups - there are many ways to help. Last year the surveys helped us find members who were interested in maintaining Creekside Commons, it helped us create a Pastor Parish Relations Team, it helped to reestablish a Congregational Care Team, and more.

Many of the ministry options have stayed the same, but there are new opportunities, too. Even if you filled out the survey last year, please fill it out again this year - there may be some things you would be willing to try now, that you weren't sure about last year. Maybe there is a new ministry for you to try or add your own idea! Please [click here](#) to fill out the survey or you may complete a paper copy at church. Thank you for helping with the ongoing work of our church!

[CLICK HERE](#)



FELLOWSHIP HOURS AND TEAM PLANS

We host a Fellowship Hour following our 8:00 service on the first Sunday of each month, and following our 10:00 services on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit with other families and friends in the church. Please make an effort to introduce yourself to people you haven't met. We will have a few additional Fellowship Hours in September, please take note:

Sunday, **September 10** - Fellowship Team hosting after both services

Sunday, **September 17** - Congregational Care Team hosting after the 10:00 service in celebration of our 25 year plus members

Sunday, **September 24** - Executive Team hosting after the 10:00 Family Service

Next month, the Fellowship Team will be hosting lunch and helping with an event:

Sunday, **October 15** - Hosting a BBQ Lunch after the 10:00 service, featuring pulled pork and more!

Sunday, **October 22** - Baking and serving desserts at the 125th Anniversary Community Open House

If you have any questions, or would like to be a part of the Fellowship Team, please contact Jennifer Dimmer, our Fellowship Team Representative on Church Council.

THEMES FOR WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER

This month we move away from the long season of Pentecost to lifting themes of Creation Care. It has been a difficult summer of environmental chaos. Heatwaves, wildfires, air quality alerts, warming ocean temperatures, flooding and mudslides have all been in the news. As Christians we have an important part to play in caring for God's creation. We know the world around us is deeply impacted by our actions. When we pay attention to the natural world around us, our sense of mystery and awe are deepened. By bringing these sensibilities into worship, we hope to grow our "capacity for beauty" and our sense of creation stewardship. Wendy Farley, in her book *Beguiled by Beauty*, observed that "our capacity for beauty is born when we begin to grasp that other things – people, animals, ecosystems, works of art – have a reality that has nothing to do with us... The capacity for beauty requires that we admire the mystery of others and recognize it as sacred and deserving of protection." Join us in worship this month and reflect upon the gift of God's Creation!

September 3: Genesis 2:4b–22 Acts 17:22–28

Communion Sunday, Season of Creation 1: Forest Sunday

We celebrate the sacrament of Communion this morning in our final 9:00 a.m. summer service. The scripture texts bring us into this year's Season of Creation through our personified, companion - the Forest, who calls us into greater awareness of the interconnection of all that God has created.

September 10: Genesis 3:14–19; 4:8–16 Psalm 139:7–12

Church School, Season of Creation 2: Land Sunday

The program year begins this morning as we resume two Sunday morning services at 8:00 and 10:00. Church School will be meeting downstairs. As we consider the Land, we can't help but share an experience of awe, wonder and even struggle. Together we marvel that God is everywhere. There will be Fellowship Hour after each service.

September 17: Joel 1:8–10, 17–20 Romans 8:18–27

Chancel Choir, Season of Creation 3: Wilderness Sunday

We welcome back the Chancel Choir this morning. We also honor members who have been a part of our church family for 25 or more years! Our scripture texts invite us to push past the emptiness of the wilderness, for we can find hope and renewal even in unfamiliar landscapes.

September 24: Genesis 8:20–22; 9:12–17 Revelation 22:1–5

Family Sunday, Handbell Choir, Season of Creation 4: River Sunday

It will be wonderful to hear from our Handbell Choir this morning! We encourage families with children to worship with us on this Fourth Sunday of the month, there will be a special Children's Message just for them! The themes for worship use the image of a river flowing with the fullness of life, to encourage all of us to find joy in God's love and healing.

OUR CHURCH DESIGNATIONS

As we move into a new program year, we wanted to refresh you on some of our church designations:

Safe Sanctuary

We are doing our very best to ensure that all people, most especially children, are always safe at church or when participating in church activities and programs.

Accessible to All (A2A)

We are doing our very best to make our church fully accessible to persons with physical disabilities.

Open and Affirming (ONA)

We are doing our very best to welcome all people into full participation in the life of our church regardless of their sexual orientation.



LOOP HEARING ASSISTANCE

Our sanctuary offers Loop Hearing Assistance. If you wear a hearing aid, you can switch it to “T-coil” mode and have a direct line to the sound system used during services. If you do not use a hearing aid, but are having difficulty hearing the service, there is a headset available, just ask one of the ushers.



AED DEFIBRILLATOR

The Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for use in case of cardiac arrest is located on the wall at the north end of the long hallway downstairs across from the classrooms, near the Music Room. There is a small team with training on the use of the AED, if you would like to be included in the next training session, September 10, please see page 12 or speak to Bill Bond.



RECORDINGS OF WORSHIP SERVICES

We continue to record our Sunday worship services each week for those who are unable to attend. Be sure to subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) ("First Congregational Church of Port Washington"). This allows you to receive immediate notification when a service is uploaded.



EXAMEN(ED) CHURCH THRIVE TEAM MOVING INTO A NEW PHASE

Our church's Thrive Team made up of Scott Symes, Louise Mollinger, Meg Tackes, Gary Tackes, Terry McManus, and Scott McLeod will be moving into a new phase of their discernment work with the help of Marquette University's Examen(ed) Church program. They have been learning practices of personal reflection and developing the team's ability to engage in group reflection together. The next phase is about reflecting on our church's mission and values (who we are, what we believe, what we are trying to do), as well as upon the specific context (place, time, economic factors, etc.) in which we are working to be the church.

In the introduction to the July meeting of the Thrive Team, the Marquette folks wrote the following as they were trying to help the group begin thinking in new ways,

William James, American Philosopher and "Father of American Psychology", said, "My experience is what I agree to. Only those items which I notice shape my mind." Who we are is largely a matter of what we attend to and have attended to over time. If this is true, then we should take very seriously what we are paying attention to. This is true for churches, as much as for individuals. What we pay attention to as a church over time is what we become. What are we paying attention to as a church? What tools or processes do we use to pay attention? Sadly, many churches (and the people in them) do not have reliable tools or practices for reflecting on what they are doing. Their assessment of their church and its ministries is controlled by that which most easily attracts their attention: numbers - "So many (or few) turned out for youth group!", or strong feelings - "That service really stirred my soul!". These assessments can be of limited value in informing the church in how well it is fulfilling its mission and identity.

At our July meeting, the focus turned to several ministries of our congregation, and instead of thinking about the numbers of participants or how it made people feel, the questions to be asked were around "what was the goal or purpose of the ministry?" and "what tools, resources, or materials were necessary for the ministry?" The group also reflected on "what people were involved in running the ministry and who were the people that were served by the ministry?" and finally, "what did the ministry do? What were the activities or practices that made up the ministry?" By paying attention to the answers to these questions the group gained a new perspective. They hope to bring many of these insights to the whole congregation soon. The group travels to Marquette University on Saturday morning, September 23.

TEASEL REMOVAL 2023

Jim Holmes, Susan Niederfrank, Adele Richert, and Pastor Scott removed teasel on Saturday morning, August 5. Because of the hard work in previous years, it only took the four of them about 30 minutes to clear it all up (plus some other vines and invasive stuff)! Thanks Jim, Susan, Adele, and Scott!




BBQ BIBLE STUDY - SUMMER 2023 RECAP

While last summer's BBQ Bible Study was a more traditional "Bible Study", focusing on the Gospel of Luke, this year's study was part "Bible Study" and part "Film Critique"! The group watched the first season of Angel Studios' "The Chosen" which can be seen on a number of streaming services (Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, at least). There were eight episodes viewed over Wednesday evenings in June, July, and August. Once again, Pastor Scott cooked an assortment of burgers, brats, dogs, and sausages, and a group of 8 to 12 folks gathered and shared salads and desserts for a hearty dinner. Afterward, the group made sure everyone was up to date on the plot, and then watch the evening's episode.

This first season of "The Chosen" introduced many well-known New Testament people. From Jesus (of course) to Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus the Pharisee, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, Mary, James and John, and Matthew. We saw the beginning of Jesus' ministry along the Sea of Galilee and his calling of the first disciples. Much of the plot was, of course, straight from the Gospels, but there was quite a bit of background information and plot points that were creatively introduced to show dynamics of 1st Century life and give motivation for some of the characters that were not from the Bible. The food was delicious, and the conversation about what we watched was spiritually nutritious! The group hopes to have an opportunity to start watching Season Two of "The Chosen" sometime soon!



RAISERIGHT GIFT CARD FUNDRAISING PROGRAM FOR CHURCH


**NEXT FCC ORDER
DUE SEPTEMBER 17**

Through our gift card fundraising program called RaiseRight, the church can raise money when members and friends use retail gift cards to pay for everyday purchases (like gas and groceries), instead of paying by credit card, cash, or check. There are a ton of options and hundreds of gift cards you can purchase from retail stores, online merchants, restaurants, gas stations, entertainment, even flights and travel purchases; and each can be turned into a small percentage of money that will go directly to our church. You have options to buy eGift cards (available immediately), physical gift cards, and reloadable gift cards. For every gift card purchased, earnings are up to 20%, with an average earning of 6% that goes to the church. The earnings come from the gift card brand you are purchasing - their way of supporting organizations and communities like ours. You do not pay anything extra, for example, if you buy a \$50 gift card, you pay \$50. Please note - *Kwik Trip is running a promotion of 9% back!*

Jennifer Dimmer and Rhonda Thompson, our church RaiseRight Coordinators, will be placing an order on Sunday, **September 17**. The gift cards will be available at the church for pick up starting on Sunday, September 24. You can enroll and place an order on the company website, RaiseRight.com/enroll. Our church enrollment code is **P8I47VHNX56H**. Or, you can complete the **paper form** and write out a check to the church. Thank you!

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CHURCH SPACE AVAILABLE FOR RENT



The space previously used by Port Pre-School is available for rent. Please share **the flyer** to help generate interest! Contact the Church Office if you have any questions.

OUR CHURCH COUNCIL

Executive Team

Moderator: Jason Jacque (2024)
Associate Moderator: Jodi Cowen (2024)
Clerk: Rhonda Thompson (2025)
Treasurer: *currently vacant* (2025)

Team Representatives

Christian Education: Shandy Roehrig (2024)
Fellowship: Jennifer Dimmer (2025)
Staff Support and Review: Ken Matthews (2024)
Property: Bill Bond (2025)
Community Outreach: Eric Olson (2024)
Liturgy: Tracy Greymont (2025)
Stewardship: *currently vacant* (2025)

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

The June minutes were approved at the August 17, 2023 Church Council meeting.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH Church Council Minutes June 13, 2023

Call to Order by Jason Jacque, Moderator, @ 6:32 pm

Attendees- Pastor Scott, Jason Jacque, Tracy Greymont, Phil Stepanski, Ken Matthews, Mike Spalding, Jodi Cowen, Jennifer Dimmer, Shandy Roehrig, Kathy Bretl, Bill Bond, and Rhonda Thompson.

Opening Meditation – (Bill B)- How Important is Kindness in God's Eyes

Approval of the Minutes / Review of Spring Congregational Minutes – May 2023-Ken Matthews motions to approve the May minutes and Jennifer Dimmer seconds the motion. Minutes are approved. The Spring Congregational Minutes are for review and will be voted on by the congregation at the fall meeting in November.

Monthly Budget Review / Church Management Software Update (Phil)-Looking at the Budget vs Actual Report through May of 2023, there are no surprises. Gross Profit totals \$86,560 (2023 Budget is \$202,186), Total Expenditures come to \$91,868 (2023 Budget is \$255,926) for a \$5308 deficit (2023 Budget is estimated to end with \$53,740 deficit). For Phil the greatest issue is the cash flow and making payroll at the end of the month. As of May 31, 2023 the Main Checking Account balance totals \$4,855.14; Scrip Checking has a balance of \$1,383.89; Mission Account has a balance of \$1635 (not shown in Quickbooks) with -\$1435 Mission Commitment. The Memorial Savings Account has a balance of \$24029.32. The Cornerstone Fund has a balance of \$25,539.99 for total money available \$31,979.02 The Window Loan balance total is \$5402.78. The Home Depot Raise Right gift card balance is at \$39.56.

The latest AT&T bill is finally in line with services for a monthly bill of \$128.39, including \$42 for internet and \$89.59 for two phone lines. The Fellowship Team received a \$100 check that has been deposited, but is not in this Budget vs Actual. The Brat Fry brought in \$426.

(continued on the next page)

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES continued...

We have received one pledge for Making All Things New at this time.

We received a thank you from United Church of Christ (UCC) for a \$315.86 check to be used for Turkey/Syria Earthquake Relief.

Phil went back to the company with the copier quote with a proposal for us to start a new contract with a new copier in 2024 with minor fixes to existing copier as needed in 2023, but hoping to get them to agree to sending the new copier if the existing one crashes before the end of the year.

Phil has a list of qualifying factors needed for the ERC, Employee Retention Credit (Cares Act) and doesn't think we qualify.

Realm, the new software program, is in the works, but Phil hopes July will be the month for data entry with volunteer help.

The insurance claim has a copy of a spreadsheet and supporting receipts/documents. Some of the vendors are getting anxious for payment, but we are waiting for the insurance company to review the claim and make the payout.

Phil and Amy have met to talk through electronic and technology services. Constant Contact the E-Blast or platform company is raising the monthly rate by 16%, but we pay annually. If that same 16% increase is applied annually that's about \$28. Phil thinks we should talk about the 2024 budget before the fall to start discussions on trimming cost and generating revenue to eliminate/reduce deficits as reserves are depleting.

Pastor's Moment (Pastor Scott)-Pastor Scott is taking a vacation July 8th through the 15th. Don Niederfrank will cover services on July 9, 16, and 23.

Old Business

Property Team. Building maintenance updates (Bill)-They met on May 26th. The Property Team meetings will be moving to the third Friday of the month.

The quote for the repair of the solar panel inverters is \$4,380, but repairs wouldn't be until the end of the year. They are looking at other sources for the repair. Not having the inverter does impact the bottom line with credits to the electric bill and the occasional check. Getting quotes on the solar panels has been difficult. It's been discovered that another panel has some storm damage.

The roof has been repaired.

Jon Crain will be billing us \$200 for the removal of the black walnut tree. There is still more trees to remove/work to be done.

Brett has completed the Property Team calendar. LED replacements are still being changed out as some bulbs have been difficult to locate.

AED and CPR Training (Bill)-The first class was a success. The next class will be Sunday July 9th. Bill hopes to have a class this fall. The class discussed that it would be good to add the location of the AED in the bulletin.

Church Google Drive (Jodi)- Tabled til next month.

Rental Space update – (Pastor Scott)-The team will meet tomorrow. Pastor Scott has asked an accountant what it would mean for the church taxes/financials if we have a for profit company rent our space.

(continued on the next page)

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES continued...

Council updates from Pastor Parish Relations (Shandy)-The group will meet Thursday to continue work on evaluation process. A latest intel is that it's a waste to have office hours; Pastors should be working out in public facilities. The idea was brought up is to have meetings out in the community to give some exposure and also to show more of what goes on behind the scenes.

St. Benedict's Coordinator for Ozaukee County (Pastor Scott)-The hope is have Joanne Pierringer back in the fall to lift the need for a replacement up again. Pastor Scott hopes to make a trip with her to St. Benedict's for his first ever visit to see how things operate and for reinstating it as Confirmation Class outing.

Interest Surveys (Pastor Scott)- Previously a Ministry Options Survey was conducted in Spring 2022. There was some talk of hope for the future activities, like the Liturgy Team to help plan worship services. Pastor Scott would like to get a new survey started again this fall. He would like all team leaders and teams to review their proposal and provide input on the proposal or to add team thoughts on how others can help.

Additional Team Updates (Shandy, Eric, Jennifer, Mike, Ken, Jodi)-Jennifer Dimmer says the end of the year picnic was a success.

Jennifer Dimmer, Jodi Cowen, and Tyfani Ulicki are meeting to discuss a possible church rummage sale as a fundraiser. Another fundraiser idea is Breakfast with Santa. Jodi has an update on Santa fees for Breakfast with Santa. She was given a quote of \$250 (discounted)

Capital Campaign Update-Thanks to the team for assembling the mailings and getting them out. Thanks to Amy Gilhooly for designing the brochure. There is a member that asked about gift donation challenge/match or a plaque for any members that donate a certain amount. Any mention in the newsletter will also go out in an email blast. A plaque should list all donors or nothing.

Any other new business to come before the Council?-Jason was approached about having one service. Some feel this would make the church feel fuller, but some like the difference the two services offer. Jason will add it to the August agenda for discussion. Another topic to be added to the agenda, to discuss Confirmation Sunday options.

Thank you to Mike Spalding and Kathy Bretl for all of their service to the church and for their time and effort in their roles.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment 8:06 pm. Submitted by, Rhonda Thompson -Clerk

PROPERTY TEAM MEETING MINUTES

Our Property Team is an active church team comprised of a handful of folks from our church. The team keeps a close eye on our church and works to maintain all aspects of our church building and grounds. The team would like to share their recent monthly meeting minutes:

August 2023 Property Team Minutes

CONGRATULATIONS

To Simon Gilhooly, Kylee Olson, and Chloe Rychtik for participating in the Lighthouse Youth Group service experience called “Hunger Quest” the weekend of August 18. They served at three different organizations in Milwaukee and Libertyville, IL that focused on helping the hungry and learned more about world hunger through discussions and a variety of fun activities.

To Courtney Cowen, who was named an All-American last month with her dance team from Alma College in Michigan, her team also earned the highest qualification scores for Nationals.

To Cora Ann Manderscheid, daughter of Meghan and Wesley, and sister to Raymond, who was baptized into the Christian faith on Sunday morning, August 27. Faith Battaglia is Cora’s sponsor.



Baptism

SPECIAL THANKS

To our worship leaders in August: Jennifer Dimmer, Kathy Bretl, and Phil Stepanski.

To our August Offering Counters: Kathy Bretl, Ken Matthews, Joe and Bev Mueller, Phil Stepanski and Tracy Bretl, and Joe and Dawn Rychtik.

To Jeanne Mantsch for writing greeting cards for the month of August.

To Jim Holmes, Susan Niederfrank, Adele Richert, and Pastor Scott for removing teasel on August 5.

To those who donated school supplies for the community back-to-school drive.

To Meghan Manderscheid, our church Lighthouse Youth Ministry Representative, who prepared and served breakfast to the Lighthouse middle school youth who stayed overnight at our church on August 18. The group was very hungry having ended their 24-hour fast with the breakfast meal.

To Brett Dimmer for being the “sound engineer” for all of the pre-recorded accompaniment for the soloists at Lloyd Smith’s Celebration of Life on August 26.



LET US KNOW IF YOUR CONTACT INFO CHANGES

As always, please reach out if your contact information changes. You may email Beckie in the Church Office at office@portucc.org. Thank you!



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Cindy Lopez | 16- Zair Katzer |
| 3 - Jim Olson | 17 - Mark Yellen |
| 4- Penny Atkin | 18 - Skylar White |
| 5 - Kitchie Allen | Chad Mitchell |
| 7 - Cash Mantsch | 19 - Chris Drasch |
| 8 - Amanda Laabs | 20 - Melissa Bergin |
| Roman Cira | 21- Adele Richert |
| Jean Hoffmann | 22 - Louise Reed |
| Sam Pasten | 23 - Emily Schowalter |
| 10 - Annette Stimac | Porter Katzer |
| 11 - Mike Nowicki | 24 - Madison Yellen |
| Diane Fowler | 27 - Makenna Eslinger |
| 14 - Rick Hoffmann | Bill Greymont |
| Justin Franke | 29 - Tracy Greymont |
| 15 - Marti DeMario | |



SEPTEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES



- 3 - Angelo and Cindy Lopez
- 4 - Jim and Barb Olson
- 21 - Bruce and Amy Laabs
- 23 - Craig and Sandy Modahl
- 24 - Mike and Jane Spalding
- 26 - David Martin and Margaret Niederfrank
- 27 - Jim and Brook Holmes
- 28 - Neil and Jonda Johnson
- 30 - Troy and Bridget Bretl

*Please contact Beckie Perez,
at office@portucc.org,
if you would like to add a
Birthday or Anniversary.*



SEPTEMBER 2023 CALENDAR



Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
					1	2
3 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9 am Worship Service	4 Labor Day	5 7am Lighthouse handing out donuts for First Day of School 9:30 am Staff Meeting	6 10 am Friends for Justice Team 6 pm Yoga 6:30 pm Executive Team 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal Begins	7 8 am Men's Breakfast-The Beacon	8	9
10 New Program Year! 8 am Worship Service 9 am Fellowship Hour 10 am Worship Service Church School Begins Nursery Care Begins Franke Baptism 11 am Fellowship Hour Medics AED Training	11 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal Begins 6:30 pm Confirmation Class Parent Meeting	12	13 12 pm Lunch Group Begins 6 pm Yoga 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	14 8 am Men's Breakfast-The Beacon 6 pm Knellsville 4-H Club 6:30 pm Church Council	15 11 am Property Team	16
17 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost 8 am Worship Service 9 am Fellowship Hour 10 am Worship Service Honor 25+ yr Members Chancel Choir Nursery Care 11 am Fellowship Hour	18 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6:30 pm Confirmation Class	19 9:30 am Staff Meeting	20 12 pm Lunch Group 6 pm Yoga 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	21 8 am Men's Breakfast-The Beacon	22	23 8:30 am Thrive Team to Marquette University
24 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost 8 am Worship Service 10 am Family Service Handbell Choir Nursery Care 11 am Fellowship Hour	25 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	26 9:30 am Staff Meeting	27 12 pm Lunch Group 6 pm Yoga 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	28 8 am Men's Breakfast-The Beacon 8:30 am Friends for Justice Team Field Trip to Keshena	29	30 (Fellowship Hall Reserved)

CHURCH INFORMATION

First Congregational Church - *United Church of Christ*
131 North Webster Street
Port Washington, WI 53074
(262) 284-2022
website - portucc.org, email - office@portucc.org

Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday mornings from 8:30 - Noon

Pastor Scott's Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays, and by appointment

Office Staff

Rev. Dr. Scott McLeod, Pastor - pastorscott@portucc.org
cell phone - (262) 903-0449, home phone - (262) 723-1100
Amy Gilhooly, Communications Director - amyg@portucc.org
Beckie Perez, Office Manager - office@portucc.org
Phil Stepanski, Financial Administrator - phil@portucc.org



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Check out the church website - portucc.org

ONLINE GIVING WITH PAYPAL

PayPal is an easy way to give to the church to pay your pledge and/or make an extra financial gift. You can find the **PayPal** button on the home page of the church website (portucc.org) or use this QR code. Thank you!

