



First Congregational United Church of Christ

November 2023 Newsletter

Dear friends,

Twenty-five women, members and friends of First Congregational United Church of Christ, gathered at Daycholah Center on Green Lake, last weekend for our Fall Women's Retreat. We were immersed in Daycholah Center's Mission Statement for two days and two nights!

We will love God, all others, and the earth by providing sanctuary, practicing hospitality, and performing ministry.



Under the leadership of my friend, Tamara Dassow-Cox, we were lifted in prayer and meditation, practiced mindfulness and tuned in...to the *right here and the right now*. We learned a "plastic-bag technique" of basket-making and tried our hand at journaling with collected pieces of leaves, feathers, pictures, our own art and word-memories of the retreat. We spent free-time walking, reading, puzzling and getting to know each other, as we breathed in the crisp air and the smell of the fireplace smoke; all the while, enjoying the colors of fall at the lakeshore. "Jesus, you have come to the lakeshore," and you have met us there!

We followed tour-guides around the sanctuary of the Daycholah Center campus, through the offices of the WI Conference UCC and in the glimpses of the outdoor labyrinth and sacred Effigy Mounds on site. An extravagant welcome was extended to us in the smiling and helpful staff and by means of hearty breakfasts; chicken and cheesecake; salmon, salad, and lava cake!

A breath-taking sight welcomed us into the Ley Chapel on Sunday morning. The Communion table's backdrop is windows overlooking the lake! We sat around the edge of the indoor labyrinth and Communion elements were served at its center.

This is us on Sunday morning as the retreat was coming to an end: refreshed, revived, and more equipped to be "mindful" than when we arrived on Friday evening. You might hear us quoting these words of Mary W: "Notice what you notice."

You also might notice that we are trying a little harder to get back into the NOW that we left behind for a few days.

Take a deep breath. Count to 5. Let it out.

Pastor Mary Jo



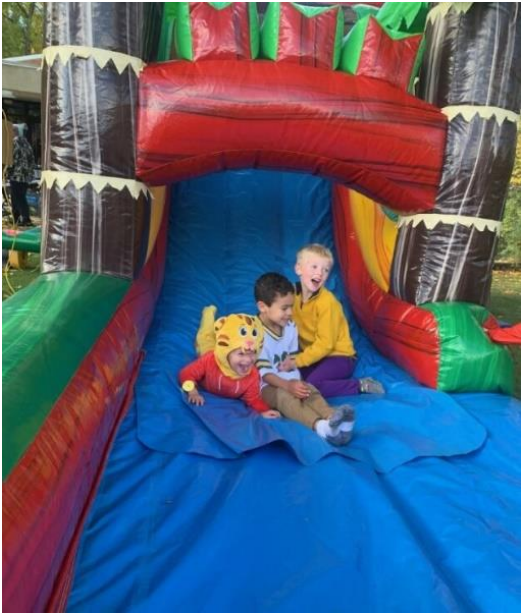
Pictures from our **Trunk or Treat** on October 22!



TRUNK OR TREAT



More Trunk or Treat fun!





Reminder: Daylight Saving Time ends this Sunday, November 5.

Don't forget to set your clocks **BACK** 1 hour!

Submitting items to the Weekly Church Emails /Social Media Announcements and the Sunday Bulletin's The Open Door Announcements

Submit your article to be included in the **Weekly Church Emails /Social Media Announcements**. These articles can also include pictures and clipart and links for people to "learn more." Answer all the following questions that apply in 150 words or less:



-*Who?* What church group or committee is doing this

-*What?* The event title or name

-*When?* Date and time of event, include the deadline to sign up as well

-*Where?* Which room in the church you'll use, the off-site address or the virtual link

-*Why?* Any event information and details

-*How?* Contact person's name/email/phone number

-*Cost?* What is the cost/how to pay

Articles submitted for the **Sunday Bulletin's The Open Door Announcements** are limited to 2 Sundays per month and are subject to editing for clarity and/or space available.

Deadline for submitting articles for any announcement is 4:00PM on Tuesday.

Submit articles, questions, or ideas to opendoor@firstcongoappleton.org.

Announcements in Worship Policy

- Requests for announcements must come to both pastors a week in advance (not the week or day of the service). These must be submitted in writing and 150 words or less.
- We have a maximum of three announcements a week; first come first serve at the discretion of the pastors.
- The pastor leading the worship service that week may make the announcement themselves, but congregational voices are welcomed.
- If the pastor cannot fit this request into worship, it will go into the bulletin, and the one making the request notified as time allows.
- Mission Moments are also available on a limited basis. These are longer and highlight critical needs or commitments for our faith community.

Congregational Life

Embracing God, welcoming others, knowing ourselves

Parking Lot Update

One third of our parking lot is currently under construction. Until further notice, please DO NOT walk through the construction area. If you choose to park in the main parking lot, please park as far back as possible from the construction and use the South River Street sidewalk to access the front door. Parking is also available in the CYF parking lot.

Why not "First Congo" anymore?

At the Church Council meeting last week, the Council unanimously voted to change our domain name and website address and no longer refer to ourselves as "First Congo." There is good reason for this decision given our current awareness of, and interest in, promoting racial equity. Appropriation is a term defined as the action of taking something for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission. We are proportionately a white church and using the name "Congo" implies otherwise. In conversation with a person of color, who happens to be a UCC Pastor, she stated, "I would never step foot in a white church by that name." In addition, we now have and will continue to have families from the Republic of the Congo in the Fox Cities. What would it be like for one of them to come to our church based on that name? We need to be sensitive to unintentionally causing harm to persons from the Congo and other persons of color.

This won't happen overnight as we have long established habits and we may need to kindly remind each other. It will take some time to get the domain changes in place and you will be kept updated as we proceed.

With gratitude, The Racial Equity Group

JOIN US! 1st Wednesday Night Dinner

Wednesday, **November 1**, 6:00-6:30 PM. Dinner is held on the first Wednesday of the month in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome, you do not need to be involved in other Wednesday evening activities, you do not need to sign up in advance, and there is no cost (although a freewill offering will be taken.) The main dish this week will be Sloppy Joes with gluten free and regular buns.

Membership Exploration Gathering

Are you new to First Congregational and want to learn more about our faith community? Would you like to find a place to ask your questions of faith and call your faith home? Then join Pastors Mary Jo and Nick after worship Sunday, **December 3, 2023** (10:45AM - until approximately noon) in the Upper Lounge.

We'll be talking about our journeys of faith. We will share about this church, our theology, and get to know one another. We hope to listen to your spiritual journey and the questions that have guided you to seek new answers.

Please RSVP for the new Membership Exploration Gathering by signing up on the sheet in the narthex or by contacting the front office at info@firstcongoappleton.org.

If you have completed one of the former classes and are ready to join the church, we will be introducing all our new members to the congregation during worship on Sunday, **December 17**.

Rally Sunday Thank You

A belated but very sincere thank you to everyone who helped and participated in our Rally Sunday festivities! The Mission and Outreach team knocked it out of the park with the informative display of activities that we offer here. Those that helped plan, prepare, serve and clean up after the event -- you rock! Karma's Mailbox once again provided that great musical backdrop -- we really appreciate your talents! We thank the nearly 175 people that came down and enjoyed the morning -- it was great to hear our halls 'buzzing' with enthusiasm! 'Cheers' to a new church year! -- The Congregational Life Team

Congratulations!



Congratulations to Tom Ott, custodial assistant, on his 1ST Place winning medal for softball!

Happy Birthday Esther!

Esther Gehrt will celebrate her 103rd birthday on November 4! She is the oldest member of First Congregational UCC, and she watches every service on her tablet. She follows news of the church closely and happily stays in touch with several of our members who visit or call often. She would love to receive birthday cards from children and adults in our congregation. Send your cards to the church office, 724 E. South River Street, Appleton, WI 54915, and we will get them to Esther for her birthday!



The NAMI Walk Thank You



The Mental Health Task Force thanks the members of the Faith, Hope and Love team and those who donated in support of the NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness) Fox Valley walk. Our team was in the top ten fundraisers at over \$1600. What a great first year!

FCUCC Library November Books of the Month

We Are Still Here!: Native American Truths Everyone Should Know by [Traci Sorell](#) (Author), [Frane Lessac](#) (Illustrator)

This is a children's book, but most adults will learn things they didn't know about Native American history.

From Amazon - Twelve Native American kids present historical and contemporary laws, policies, struggles, and victories in Native life, each with a powerful refrain: We are still here!

Too often, Native American history is treated as a finished chapter instead of relevant and ongoing. This companion book to the award-winning *We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga* offers readers everything they never learned in school about Native American people's past, present, and future. Precise, lyrical writing presents topics including: forced assimilation (such as boarding schools), land allotment and Native tribal reorganization, termination (the US government not recognizing tribes as nations), Native urban relocation (from reservations), self-determination (tribal self-empowerment), Native civil rights, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), religious freedom, economic development (including casino development), Native language revival efforts, cultural persistence, and nationhood.

Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message by [Chief Jake Swamp](#) (Author), [Jr. Erwin Printup](#) (Illustrator)

Great book for helping children think about gratitude.

From Amazon - A traditional Iroquois celebration of the beauty and spirit of Mother Earth, as told by a contemporary Mohawk chief.

For as long as anyone can remember, Mohawk parents have taught their children to start each day by giving thanks to Mother Earth. Also known as the Thanksgiving Address, this good morning message is based on the belief that the natural world is a precious and rare gift. The whole universe - from the highest stars to the tiniest blade of grass - is addressed as one great family.

Now readers of all ages can share in this tribute to the environment, adapted especially for children by Chief Jake Swamp, whose efforts to share this vision of thanksgiving take him all over the world. Chief Swamp's inspirational message, along with Erwin Printup, Jr.'s unforgettable landscapes, make *Giving Thanks* a timeless celebration of the spirit of nature.

Helper(s) Wanted

We are looking for a helper(s) for the Christmas Eve services, this person would be paid to be on hand to do snow removal, help pastors with set-ups, and minor custodial clean up. They can contact Bart at bforseth@firstcongoappleton.org or 920-851-9907 for more information.

Adult Education Offering

What: Advent Book Study

Book: *Prepare the Way for the Lord, and the Message of John the Baptist*, Author: Adam Hamilton (Copies will be available in the Church office for \$8.)

When: Sundays: **November 26 to December 17**

Time: 10:45AM-12:00PM

Where: Upper Lounge/Zoom

Led by Pastor Mary Jo and Mary Dees

About the book: Prepare to receive Christ this Advent with the message of John the Baptist and best-selling author and pastor Adam Hamilton in *Prepare the Way for the Lord*. For centuries, Christians have turned to the story and message of John the Baptist in the weeks leading up to Christmas. In *Prepare the Way for the Lord: Advent and the Message of John the Baptist*, best-selling author and pastor Adam Hamilton explores the Advent themes of John's life and ministry, and how John calls all followers of Jesus to prepare our hearts for his coming. In each of the Gospels, the story of Jesus is intertwined with that of his cousin John, the one whom the prophets foretold would come to "prepare the way of the Lord." When we hear the message of John the Baptist, it makes us and our world ready to receive Christ. Chapter topics include: 1. A People Prepared for the Lord 2. God Is Gracious 3. The Fruit of Repentance 4. Witnesses Testifying to the Light

Outreach Ministry

Building relationships, serving others, pursuing justice

Pillars Meal Sign-up

Time to Create a Nourishing Meal for Pillars Thursday, **November 2**, 2023. Check out the link to sign up! [Pillars sign up](#) We will be making soup and grilled cheese sandwiches. It's a great way to meet new people and enjoy fellowship. For questions contact Shelley Nulton, snulton@att.net or 920-202-4419.



Shoe Drive

Check your/your kids' closets! Seeking gently used boys' and girls' athletic shoes for youth of all ages. Menominee Tribal Youth Services helps K-12 youth pursue their passion for sports. Sports include football, cross-country, volleyball, basketball, and wrestling. Please put your best foot forward by dropping off shoes in good condition in the box in the narthex by Sunday, **November 5**.



November Economic Justice Work Group Meeting

Monday, November 6, 2023

7:00-8:00PM Zoom only via link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82544862424?pwd=cWtYRlgyOEp3ekhFMHZmdi9U5EE2dz09>

If you are interested in learning about pursuing genuine, intentional economic justice in our Fox Cities communities, please join us to learn about new plans for worker-cooperative business development. Ted Toussaint, our guest speaker and co-founder of the Generative Local Community Institute, will discuss ways to address financial insecurity, food insecurity, and health in Appleton. Ted grew up in Appleton and was part of the FC UCC family. He has spent his career working in health delivery systems to develop and scale new care models for equitable primary care and population health. He is now working to get upstream on the social determinants of health through local economic and food system development. All are welcome to learn about these practical, humanitarian solutions.

PS: Save **December 4, 7:00-8:00PM** for EJWG's next speaker, Vaya Jones, Appleton alderperson (District 10) and specialist in Social Determinants Health. Hybrid In-Person & Zoom meeting.

HoHoHo Let's GoGoGo to the Annual Alternative Christmas Market!

Stroll on into the Fellowship Hall after worship on Sunday, **November 12** from 10:30AM-12:00PM to support our mission partners and our bakery sale. There will be live music, coffee, and a breakfast snack during our joyful gathering. **We are in need of donations for the bakery sale**, which can be delivered Saturday morning or Sunday before worship and the market.

Habitat Faith Build 2023

A sincere thank you to the volunteers who contributed to a successful workday at the Faith Build in Menasha on September 28. Our construction volunteers and Habitat senior crew installed drywall in the Lor family home. Other church volunteers offered food and beverage which provided nourishment. Construction work "thanks" goes to Penny Boehlen, Greg Brahe, Susan Forsythe, Doug Gilbert, Eileen and John Hoft-March, Mike Loomis, Chris Mayer, and Chad Shea. The work would not have been complete without a great meal thanks to Carolyn Ahrens, Barb Boren, Sheryl De Hart, Phil and Mary Gay Hornseth, Shelley Nulton, and Sandy Olander. We thank all of them for their representation, willingness and efforts in supporting Habitat and the 2023 Faith Build.



Fellowship - Online Auction - Raffle - Music - Awards - Celebration

ESTHER 19TH Annual Banquet

Sunday, November 12, 2023 5:00PM

Grand Meridian, 2621 N. Oneida St., Appleton

Reignite Your Fire for Justice!



Keynote Speaker:
Ana Garcia-Ashley

Ana Garcia-Ashley's family emigrated from the Dominican Republic during the 1960s to flee the chaos of Trujillo's dictatorship. Intensely interested in the intersection of politics and faith, Ana developed a foundation for organizing congregations. During her tenure as lead organizer, Milwaukee's MICAH won a \$5 million reinvestment commitment from the city's banks. Ana was a founding organizer for WISDOM and became Executive Director of The Gamaliel National Network in 2012. Ana's deep sense of organizing as a ministry, her interest in social justice and her experience as a naturalized immigrant dovetail perfectly with the goals of ESTHER and WISDOM. We are "a community of people living out our faith and values to collectively transform our communities and bring about justice locally, nationally and globally."

Early-Bird Special through November 1: \$65 per ticket - Starting November 2, \$70 per ticket

Order online: esther-foxvalley.org/banquet - call 920-843-8083

Mail checks payable to ESTHER: PO Box 784, Neenah, WI 54957



Sponsored by:



Attorney George Curtis
Apex Accident Attorneys, LLC
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WE'RE STILL HERE! A DAY TO CELEBRATE INDIGENOUS CULTURE

Saturday, Nov. 4, 10am to 3pm

- 10:00am Welcome, Browse Native Artisan Tables
- 10:15 - Noon Indian Story Stick Craft Project*
(for children & youth, age 5-10 must be accompanied by adult)
- Noon - until gone Lunch of Traditional Food + Frybread Tacos
- 1:00 - 1:45pm Oneida Youth Smoke Dancers
- 2:00 Cultural Education Display Area open
- 2:15 - 2:45 Native American Storytelling
- 2:45 - 3:00pm Continue to enjoy Cultural Education and Native Artisan Vendor Displays

Activities and lunch are free!
*Please register for Story Stick Project
in advance by calling 920 733-7393.
Space is limited

Location/Host:
First Congregational UCC
724 E. South River St.
Appleton, WI 920 733-7393

Check This Out

Please consider this wonderful PBS-TV offering about Electa Quinney, a Stockbridge Mohican teacher and mentor. She was the first public school teacher in Wisconsin. There is an elementary school in Kaukauna named after her! We have a biography about Electa Quinney in our church library. Airdate: Tuesday, November 7 @ 7:55PM.




Native American Heritage Month
Featuring Oneida Storyteller

Debra Morningstar

Thursday, November 16
Neenah Public Library

7pm

Sponsored by: 

First Congregational United Church of Christ
724 E. South River Street
Appleton, WI 54915

firstcongoappleton.org

920.733.7393

Office hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00AM-3:00PM

Land Covenant

The land now occupied by Appleton, Wisconsin and surrounding areas - including the current site of First Congregational UCC - was the home, hunting, gathering, and farming land of the First Peoples of this territory: the Ho Chunk Nation and the Menominee Nation. Other tribes were forcibly re-located to this region by the actions of colonialism. Despite centuries of reprehensible treatment, the peoples of these sovereign nations are robust and enduring among us.

We are truly saddened by the genocide of their ancestors, the seizure of their lands, and the repression of their cultures and languages. We acknowledge that we benefit from the economic and social legacy left by settler colonialism.

We are grateful that many members of these original Nations have honorably served and defended the United States. We strive to honor their cultures and their insightful stewardship of this land and all creatures on it, recognizing our common interest in protecting its air, water, soils, and web of life for all future generations.

We commit ourselves through study and immersion experiences to learn the history and cultures of these peoples and their traditional knowledge.



— The Church of the Open Door —

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

