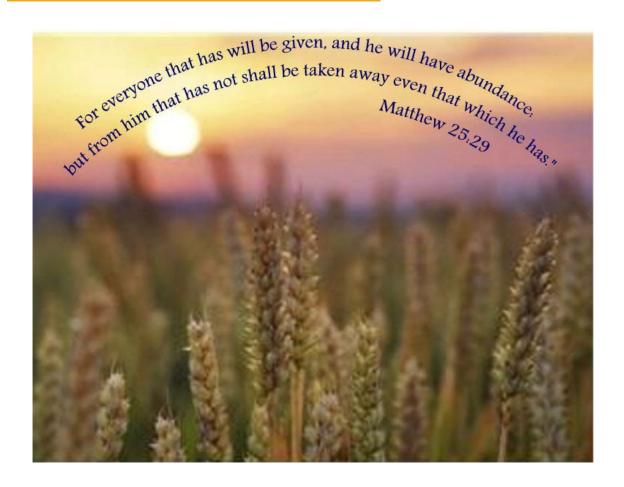
First Congregational United Church of Christ

November 19, 2023





Welcome to The Church of the Open Door.

Our door is open to you at whatever point you are in your journey of faith.

TODAY AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC, APPLETON

9:25AM - 12:00PM	Childcare - Childcare Room	
9:30 - 10:30AM	Children's Ministry (Fall Crafts on the Bridge) - CYF Wing, Bridg	
9:30 - 10:30AM	Sunday Worship & Family Handbells Sunday - Sanctuary	
10:30 - 11:30AM	3rd Sunday Family Day: Chat After Church - Nursery, Art Kitchen	
10:30 - 11:30AM	Children's Choir - Choir Room	
10:30AM - 12:00PM	Council Stewardship Coffee Hour - Narthex	
10:45 - 11:45AM	Parents' Book Discussion - HS Room	
7:00 - 8:00PM	First Things First AA Meeting - Fellowship Hall, Commons Grounds	
7:00 - 8:00PM	Al-Anon - Chapel / Alateen - Upper Lounge	

We are glad you are here today! You are welcome to worship in person with us in the Sanctuary or watch it livestreamed in the Chapel, Upper Lounge, or Narthex. The Nursery also has livestreaming, on the other end of the building.

Baptisms are held on the third Sunday of each month. To schedule a baptism, contact the church office six weeks before your desired baptism date.

Childcare is available for ALL infants and toddlers. Please see an usher for directions to the Childcare Room.

Communion: The sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. Communion elements are gluten free. All are welcome to join us!

Donating to First Congregational UCC, Appleton: We have many convenient ways to donate. Giving envelopes are in the pews and may be put in the offering plates, checks can be mailed to the church, you can visit our webpage and click "Give," or you can text FCUCC GIVE to 73256. *Messages and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel.

Flowers: Today's flowers were arranged by Cindi Ritcey Fox.

Hearing Loop: Need help hearing our service? Ask an usher. They can help get you in the loop!

Online Streaming and Podcasting are available on Facebook: FCUCCAppleton or Youtube: First Congregational UCC Appleton.

Open Door Announcements can be shared by emailing opendoor@firstcongoappleton.org or calling the office.

References to God in our worship may at times be gender specific. You are invited to substitute terms that reflect your understanding of the inclusiveness of God.

Sunday School: Our PreK - 5th graders begin in worship. After the children's message, they walk together to the CYF wing for our Children's Ministry Program. Youth gather on Wednesday evenings.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

November 19, 2023 9:30 AM Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDE

Ar hyd y nos (For the Fruit of All Creation)

Welsh traditional tune Setting by David P. Dahl

Dr. Nathan Birkholz, organ

WELCOME Pastor Nick Hatch

INTROIT

Jubilate, Amen!

arr. R. Shaw Hollis

Church Family Handbells, Beth Vercouteren, director

*Please Rise in Body or Spirit

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor Mary Jo Laabs

One: All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above, so we give thanks:

All: For joy in living

One: And patience in trouble; All: For rainbows after clouds

One: And moonlight on the darkest night; All: For wisdom to walk the right path
One: And peace to calm anxious worry;
All: For all things bright and beautiful

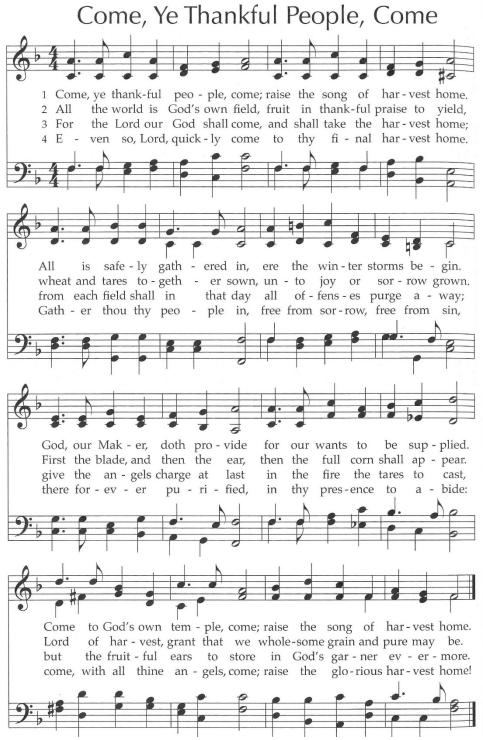
One: No matter the shape or the size... we give thanks! All: All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above,

One: So let our song arise as we give thanks to God for all God's love.

*OPENING HYMN (see bulletin page 3)

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR



CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Rev. Franz Rigert

(During the sermon, the prayer request cards will be collected. After the Children's Sermon, the children will follow their teachers to Church School.)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 65: 9-13 H. Hopson

The **Refrain** below will be introduced by the Sanctuary Choir, and then repeated by **ALL**. Psalm verses will be sung by cantors and choir, followed by repetitions of the refrain sung by **ALL**.



Copyright 1988 by Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL $\,$ 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Cantor and Choir: *Lord, you care for the earth; you bless it beyond all measure.* Your river is full, rich grain is in the fields; the land is in your care. **Refrain (All)**

Cantor and Choir: You sent fresh rain to prepare the barren field; you crown the year with goodness; your paths with blessings overflow. **Refrain (All)**

Cantor and Choir: May the fields spring forth with gladness; may the hills sing out with joy. May the meadows be clothed with flocks; may the valleys be decked with grain; all earth sings for joy. **Refrain (All)**

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 25:14-30 NRSV

Sue Detienne

The Parable of the Talents

"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good

and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'

But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return, I would have received what was my own with interest. So, take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents.

For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

SERMON "Spiritual Investors"

Rev. Franz Rigert

*HYMN #27

Now Thank We All Our God

NUN DANKET

MOMENT FOR STEWARDSHIP

Kristin Alfheim

OFFERING

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Pastor Nick Hatch

(During this time, you are invited to a virtual offering. Please visit our webpage and click "Give" to make your weekly offering, or text FCUCC GIVE to 73256).

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Jubilee!

Arnold B. Sherman

Church Family Handbells

*DOXOLOGY

ALL: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, ye heavenly host: Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

Pastor Mary Jo Laabs

(You are welcome to submit your prayer requests throughout the week to the church office, or email to a pastor for confidentiality.)

One: The Lord be with you. All: And also with you.

One: Let us pray.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN #527

For the Fruit of All Creation

AR HYD Y NOS

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Nick Hatch

POSTLUDE

Now Thank We All Our God

Tune by Johann Crüger Chorale from Cantata BWV 79 by J.S. Bach Transcribed for organ by Michael Burkhardt

THANK YOU TO TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. Franz Rigert, WI Conference UCC, Minister Pastor Nicholas J. Hatch Pastor Mary Jo Laabs

Dr. Nathan Birkholz, organ

Church Family Handbells, Beth Vercouteren, *director*: John Albrecht, Marlessa Benson, LouAnn Graf, Ben Hallett, Heather Hallett, Mark Hallett, Ruth Hallett, Pat Hirby, Casey Joan Kollman, Logan LaViolette, Luke LaViolette, Elizabeth Melchert, Shelley Nulton, Preston Parker

Sanctuary Choir

Heather Hallett, Casey Kollman, Curtis Anderson, cantors John M. Albrecht, Director for Music Ministries

Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE, # A-714899. All rights reserved.

Sunday, November 26, 2023 Worship Service

"All God's People Gathered Together"

Pastor Nick Hatch

Matthew 25:31-46

Musicians: Dr. Nathan Birkholz, organ; Sanctuary Choir

Children's Ministry Locations for Today			
Upstairs, to the Left	Upstairs, to the Right	Downstairs	
Childcare Room	Nursery	Little Angel's Room	
Infants and Toddlers		Preschoolers	
Bridge & Theater	Art Kitchen	Science Room	
K-5 th Grade			
Scripture Tent		Middle School Room	
-			

Guidelines for Worship Service Announcements

- ➤ 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 less than 100 words; these are brief announcements!
- ➤ We have a maximum of three announcements per week, first-come, first-served at the discretion of the pastors. Multi week announcements are discouraged.
- ➤ Generally, the pastor leading the worship service that week makes the announcement themselves. Exceptions are made.
- ➤ 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.

Worship Notes

Joys and Concerns of Our Faith Community

Members of our church family benefit from our prayers, support, and words of encouragement as they celebrate special times or struggle with difficulties in their lives.

Please keep these people in your prayers and greet them with a loving word when you see them.

Please call Pastor Mary Jo at 715-351-0450 or <u>email her</u> if you have a new joy or concern you would like us to pray for, as well as any questions and other assistance needed.

In cases of a pastoral emergency, please call 920-810-2600.

Jill Anthony, her sister & her nephew Nancy Kandler Katie Behl and her sister, Barbara Kandy Kueler

Don Brittnacher
Helen McKean's daughter, Larri Jacquart
Chris Brittnacher's brother, Steve Reinkober Richard Miller's son-in law, Rick Kramer

Karen Crawford's niece, Lori

Beth Detienne's mother

Our friends in Kerio Valley, Kenya
Stephen Otto's brother, Gerald

Jim Edwards Gretchen Revie Heidi Mendonca Erstad Larry Schiedermayer

Erstad's family friend, Silas, and his family Judy Schneider

Phil Gabrielson Frank and Pat Severin

David Galow Mike Seymour's mom, Debbie
Art Gandler Paul Siket

Esther Gehrt's sons, Steve and Ken

Ken Geiger

Mark Spindler

Kinsley Tarr

Margaret Hankwitz

Judy Hanson

Jack Thiel

JoAnn Helms Peter Thiel
Shirley Hoft James Totzke
Misty Hofman Jean Van Wagenin

Phil & Mary Hornseth's nephew, Brian and Lecia Wardle's daughter, Mya

Eric Montross Joe Wells

Joan Jenson's son, John Jake Whisler and his family

Jean Jepson Diane White

Kathy Lannove

8

The Open Door Announcements

For more information on these announcements and other events, please visit our website, weekly e-newsletters, and social media.

What! No Newsletter?! What's Happening Now...

After a lengthy period of change, the FCUCC Staff, under the guidance of the Church Council and with pastoral input, has collaborated to re-assemble and implement communication procedures for First Congregational UCC. This is the evolving plan:

- 1. The hub of communication will be our website.
- 2. Weekly E-Newsletters will be sent out Mid-Week and on Fridays.
 - a. The Mid-Week E-news will be sent out late in the day on Tuesdays to provide updates about Wednesday evening activities.
 - b. The Friday E-news will provide the virtual version of the coming Sunday's "Open Door," which includes the **weekly bulletin** along with its attached announcements.
- 3. Look for us on **social media**.

Submit your articles/items to be included in the **Weekly Church E-Newsletters/Social Media/Website Announcements**. These articles, 150 words or less, can also include pictures and clipart and links for people to "learn more."

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.

Because of the information distribution process above, the monthly *physical* newsletter has been discontinued as of December 2023.

<u>Helper(s) Wanted</u>: 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 <u>bforseth@firstcongoappleton.org</u> or 920-851-9907 for more information.

<u>NOAAH Requests</u>: Needs: winter jacket size 5XL which may need to be ordered online; Mother needs: a bed for a 2-year-old who has been sleeping on the couch, she also needs silverware, cups, bowls, plates, and kitchen chairs. Please call Barb Mincheff at 920-832-5515 to arrange for pickup. Thank you, Sue Ahrens

<u>World Relief is collecting winter coats, hats, and gloves</u> of all sizes for new refugees who are arriving without warm outerwear. If you can help, please bring new or cleanused items to the narthex through **November 26**.

<u>An Advent Book Study</u> led by Pastor Mary Jo and Mary Dees will be held on Sundays from **November 26 through December 17** from 10:45AM-12:00PM in the Upper Lounge and on Zoom. The book, *Prepare the Way for the Lord, and the Message of John the Baptist*, (author Adam Hamilton) is available in the church office for \$8.

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 Pastor Mary Jo and Pastor Nick after worship Sunday, December 3, 2023 (10:45AM-12:00PM) 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 the story of 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 in the membership of First Congregational UCC, we will be introducing all our new members to the congregation during worship on Sunday, **December 17**.

Looking for Wednesday Servers: Our "First Wednesday" dinners are off to a great start, but we could use a few extra hands in the kitchen! Time commitment is from about 4:30-6:45PM. Are you willing and able to help do a little prep work and serve? We'd love to have you! Two upcoming events to round out 2023 are:

Wednesday, **November 29** - Hanging of the Greens (pizza dinner) Wednesday, **December 6** - Soup and Sandwiches

Please contact the church office if you're interested.

Looking for a Coffee Hour Coordinator: Everybody's lovin' coffee hour following service. We'd love to have someone to coordinate and 'recruit' for the rest of the church year. Is it YOU? Contact the church office if it IS you!!! (Also, there's a signup sheet in the narthex for you to sign yourself or your group up for any given Sunday!)

Last Chance to Support the Turtle Trekkers! Twenty-three people from FCUCC Appleton collectively walked at least 2,300 miles (100 miles per person) this fall to raise funds for our mission partner, Re-Member. Donations to the Turtle Trek will support the purchase of winter fuel for the Oglala Lakota people on Pine Ridge reservation. If you wish to sponsor our trekkers and give to this fund-raiser, please make your checks out to "FCUCC Appleton" with a note in the memo line indicating "Turtle Trek Challenge." Please contribute before **November 30**.

Economic Justice Work Group Hybrid Presentation: Two speakers, Vaya Lauren Jones and Denise Fenton, will talk to us on Monday, December 4 from 7:00-8:00PM in the Upper Lounge and by Zoom. Jones is the Social Determinants of Health Team Lead at ThedaCare and Appleton Alderperson District 10. Fenton is Appleton Alderperson District 6 and worked in information technology for close to forty years.

Of top concern for Jones is the availability of affordable housing in Northeast Wisconsin, as well as a comprehensive approach to health care that recognizes issues such as income, transportation, housing, and food insecurity that play roles in health care access.

Fenton also sees affordable housing as affecting the whole economy: businesses need workers with housing near their jobs. Fenton supports changes to city zoning ordinances and other regulations that make it easier to provide housing.

Join with this Zoom link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84775663873?pwd=WklKWnc2cC9QQmc0d0l3aDJ5RE5SZz09

Mark Your Calendars for These Upcoming Worship Services

Wednesday, November 29

Hanging of the Greens, 6:00PM Dinner (pizza and salad) & ornament making followed by 7:00PM Worship

Sunday, December 3

First Sunday of Advent, 9:30AM Worship & Communion

Sunday, December 10

Second Sunday of Advent, 9:30AM Worship, Major Choral Work with strings

Wednesday, December 13

Taizé Service of Healing & Hope, 6:30-7:00PM

Sunday, December 17

Third Sunday of Advent, 9:30AM Worship

Sunday, December 24 ~ Christmas Eve

Fourth Sunday of Advent & Christmas Eve, 9:30AM Worship;

Childcare provided as well as a whole-group activity for children PreK - 8th grade.

Family Do-It-Yourself Nativity, 4:00PM Worship

A Service of Lessons and Carols, Candlelight & Communion, 8:00PM Worship; Childcare is not provided for this service.



Worship & Music:

The Children's Choir singing in worship on Sunday, November 12!





<u>Gratitude from Esther Gehrt</u> ~ Esther feels deeply blessed by all the beautiful birthday greetings she received from members of First Congregational UCC and their children. She loved the way the kids seemed so impressed by her celebration of being 103 years old. Thank you to all who sent cards (see photo) and who continue to hold her in prayer. She's staying comfortable thanks to the care of hospice nurses and volunteers, as well as staff at Country Villa in Freedom.

Why not "First Congo" anymore? The Church 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

Christmas Gift Bay Giveaway and Donations for Pillars Children

Our Church Youth have decorated Christmas gift bags to use for your holiday presents! They will be giving them away on Sunday, **November 26** and Sunday, **December 3** after the worship service. The bags are free, one per household! Please note we will be accepting donations to help us buy craft projects for the children living at Pillars Emergency Shelter. The High School Youth meet with the children every third Wednesday night for crafts and games.





This Week's Schedule

Monday, November 20

3:00 – 5:00PM Outreach Ministry – *Upper Lounge and Zoom*

6:30 – 8:30PM Fox Valley Flute Choir – Sanctuary

Tuesday, November 21

9:00 – 10:00AM Strong Bodies – S. Fellowship 11:00AM – 12:00PM Staff Meeting – Upper Lounge 1:00 – 2:30PM Chrysalis – Upper Lounge

6:30 – 7:30PM Living Sober AA Group – Common Grounds 6:30 – 8:00PM Safety Committee Meeting – Upper Lounge 7:45 – 8:45PM Fireside AA Group – Common Grounds

Wednesday, November 22

12:15 – 1:00PM Loving Acceptance Meditation – *Upper Lounge*

7:00 – 8:30PM Sanctuary Choir – Sanctuary

<u>Thursday</u>, November 23 - *Church office closed* ~ *Happy Thanksgiving Day*

12:00 – 1:00PM AA – Search for Serenity Group – Common Grounds

7:00 – 8:00PM Fox Valley 94 AA – Common Grounds

Friday, November 24 - Church office closed

7:00 – 8:00PM Al–Anon – *Upper Lounge* 7:00 – 8:30PM N.A – *Common Grounds*

Saturday, November 25

11:00AM – 12:00PM Debtors Anon – *Common Grounds* 7:00 – 8:00PM Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Sunday, November 26

9:25AM – 12:00PM Childcare – Childcare Room

9:30 – 10:30AM Sunday Worship – Chapel, Sanctuary, Upper Lounge

9:30 – 10:30AM Children's Ministry – *CYF Wing* 10:30 – 11:30AM Children's Choir – *Choir Room* 10:45AM – 12:00PM Advent Book Study – *Upper Lounge* 10:45 – 11:45AM Parents' Book Discussion – *HS Room*

5:00 – 6:00PM LU Music Scholars' Rehearsal – Choir Room, Sanctuary

6:00 – 8:30PM AL ANON – Chapel / Alateen – Upper Lounge 7:00 – 8:00PM First Things First AA Meeting – Commons Grounds

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.

Welcome to our Home of Homes.

We are "The Church of the Open Door," a welcoming and inclusive Christian community.

We're committed to tolerance, justice, and exploration – not dogma and rules.

So, no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.



724 E. South River Street | Appleton, WI 54915 920.733.7393 | firstcongoappleton.org Office hours: Monday – Friday, 9:00AM – 3:00PM