

First Congregational United Church of Christ

April 7, 2024



Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to *believe*.

~John 20:29

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 – <i>Childcare Room</i>
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday Worship – <i>Chapel, Sanctuary, Upper Lounge</i>
9:30-10:30AM	Children’s Ministry – <i>CYF Wing, Chapel</i>
10:30-11:00AM	Kwik Trip Fundraising – <i>Narthex</i>
10:45-11:45AM	Small Group for Parents – <i>HS Youth Room</i>
10:45AM-12:00PM	Adult Ed reserved for IPAC – <i>Upper Lounge</i>
4:15-5:15PM	LU Music Scholars’ Rehearsal – <i>Choir Room, Sanctuary</i>
6:00-8:00PM	First Things First AA Meeting – <i>Fellowship Hall, Common Grounds</i>
7:00-8:00PM	AL ANON – <i>Chapel / Alateen – Upper Lounge</i>

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.

The flowers are in celebration of Cheryl & Ron Reissmann’s 55th Wedding Anniversary.

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

April 7, 2024 9:30AM
Second Sunday of Easter ~ Communion Sunday

PRELUDE

Variations on *O filii et filiae*

15 c. French Melody
Setting by Wilbur Held

Dr. Nathan Birkholz, *organ*

WELCOME

**Please Rise in Body or Spirit*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey

One: The risen Christ lives among us, calling us to be a blessing,

All: Calling us to heal and transform the brokenness of our world.

One: The risen Christ lives among us, calling us to be a blessing,

All: Calling us to seek out the lonely and the lost and those who need to experience God's love.

One: The risen Christ lives among us, calling us to be a blessing,

All: Calling us to be disciples to the world: blessed, healed, and filled with joyous good news!

*OPENING HYMN (see bulletin page 8)

O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing

O FILII ET FILIAE

1-3: All 5: Choir

4: Cantor 6: All

Sam Dill, *recorder* John Aaholm, *percussion*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Pastor Mary Jo Laabs

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

SCRIPTURE READING John 20:19-31

Susan McFadden

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

SERMON *"No Doubt"*

Pastor Mary Jo Laabs

*HYMN #424

We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight

DUNLAP'S CREEK

MOMENT FOR MISSION: IPAC: *"We Are Still Here"* Series

Jerry Dees

OFFERING

Pastor Dianne Droster

CALL TO THE OFFERING

(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

I Know That My Redeemer Lives

SHOUT ON
19th century American folk hymn
arr. Neil Harmon

Sanctuary Choir

*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.**

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*You are invited to eat the bread when you receive your communion elements.
Please wait to drink the cup until instructed. Communion is gluten free.*

INVITATION

Pastor Mary Jo: In the United Church of Christ, we practice “open” Communion. All are welcome to participate in this sacrament.

Pastor Dianne: Jesus has invited not just some of us, but all to share in the feast of God’s presence, as the Spirit of God moves in and through all time, in every age, in every corner of the earth, calling people to renew their hope and joy.

Pastor Katherine: We begin in the name of our One God, the holy one who created us, the Christ who calls us to follow him and the Spirit who makes all things new.

Pastor Nick: Jesus was always the guest. In the homes of Peter and Jairus, Martha and Mary, Joanna and Susanna, He was always the guest.

All: At the meal tables of the wealthy where He pled the case of the poor, He was always the guest.

Pastor Mary Jo: Upsetting polite company, befriending isolated people, welcoming the stranger, He was always the guest.

All: But here, at this table, He is the host.

Pastor Dianne: Those who wish to serve Him, must first be served by Him. Those who want to follow Him, must first be fed by Him.

All: This is the table where God intends us to be nourished; this is the time when Christ makes us new.

Pastor Katherine: So, come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, or a better life, for a fairer world. Jesus Christ, who has sat at our tables, now invites us to be guests at His.

COMMUNION PRAYER

Pastor Nick Hatch

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.

WORDS OF REMEMBERING

Pastor Mary Jo: On the night on which He was betrayed, and as they were sitting at meal, Jesus took a piece of bread and broke it. He gave it to His disciples saying: "This is my body. It is given for you. Do this to remember me."

Pastor Dianne: Later, after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and said: "This cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you to remember me."

All: So now, we do as Jesus did. We take this bread and juice, the produce of the earth and fruit of human labor. In these, Jesus has promised to be present.

Pastor Katherine: Let us pray: Loving God, bless this bread, and bless this fruit of the vine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking at this table that our eyes may be opened, and we may recognize the risen Christ in our midst, in each other, and in all for whom Christ died. Amen.

Pastor Nick: He whom the universe could not contain, meets us now in this bread and in this cup. All things are now ready.

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

Larghetto from Sonata in C Major, Op. 1 No. 7

George Frideric Handel

Sam Dill, *recorder*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey

All: In gratitude for this moment, we give ourselves to you. Take us out to live as changed people because we have shared the Living Bread and the Cup of Blessing and cannot remain the same. Ask much of us, enable much by us, encourage many through us. So, may we live to your glory, on this earth and in heaven. Amen.

LITURGY OF FAREWELL FOR PASTOR MARY JO LAABS

Ending An Authorized Ministry

GREETING

Rev. Jane Anderson

Our church family is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share the time of farewell with our pastor who is leaving.

On October 15, 2022, this local church called Mary Jo Laabs to serve as Interim Pastor for Congregational Life and Outreach Ministries.

Pastor Mary Jo Laabs: I thank First Congregational UCC, Appleton, its members, and friends, for the love, kindness, and support shown me over the time I've been with you. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

All: We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

Pastor Mary Jo Laabs: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

VOWS OF RELEASE

Rev. Jane Anderson: Do you, the members and friends of First Congregational UCC, Appleton release Pastor Mary Jo Laabs from the duties of Interim Pastor for Congregational Life and Outreach Ministries?

All: We do, with the help of God.

Rev. Jane Anderson: Do you offer your encouragement for her ministry soon to begin as Interim Pastor at St. Paul's UCC, Wausau?

All: We do, with the help of God.

Rev. Jane Anderson: Do you, Mary Jo, release this local church from turning to you and depending on you?

Pastor Mary Jo Laabs: I do, with the help of God.

Rev. Jane Anderson: Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here, and on the relationship with another who has come to serve?

Pastor Mary Jo Laabs: I do, with the help of God.

WITNESS OF THE NE ASSOCIATION AND WI CONFERENCE

Rev. Jane Anderson: On behalf of the Northeast Association of the Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. The member churches of our Association and Conference hold each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service.

All: Thanks be to God.

Rev. Jane Anderson: Let us pray.

All: God, whose everlasting love for all is trustworthy, help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. The time we were together in your name saw our laughter and tears, our hopes, and disappointments. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories but move in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other, in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN (see bulletin pages 9 & 10)

Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore

PESCADOR DE HOMBRES

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Pescador de hombres (You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore)

Tune by Cesáreo Gabaráin

Setting by Al Roberts

Dr. Nathan Birkholz, *piano*

THANK YOU TO TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Pastor Nicholas J. Hatch

Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey

Pastor Mary Jo Laabs

Pastor Dianne Droster

Rev. Jane Anderson

Dr. Nathan Birkholz, *organ*

Sanctuary Choir

Daniel Boyd, *cantor*

Sam Dill, *recorder*

John Aaholm, *percussion*

John M. Albrecht, *Director for Music Ministries*

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Thank You Pastor Mary Jo ~ We are Grateful!

Join us today after worship for a Coffee Hour and Cake Reception for Pastor Mary Jo!

Send her off with all our blessings and the gratitude of the Holy Spirit!

Drop off your cards for Mary Jo in the box in the narthex.

O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al -

le - lu - ia!

1 O sons and daugh - ters, let us sing with
 2 That night the a - pos - tles met in fear; a -
 3 When Thom - as first the ti - dings heard, how
 4 "My pierc - ed side, O Thom - as, see; and

heaven - ly hosts to Christ our King; to - day the grave has
 mong them came their Lord most dear, and said, "My peace be
 they had seen the ris - en Lord, he doubt - ed the dis -
 look up - on my hands, my feet; not faith - less, but be -

lost its sting!
 with you here."
 ci - ples' word. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 liev - ing be."

Fine

- 5 No longer Thomas then denied;
 he saw the feet, the hands, the side;
 "You are my Lord and God!" he cried.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
- 6 How blest are they who have not seen,
 and yet whose faith has constant been,
 for they eternal life shall win.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!

These stanzas from a 19th-century translation of a longer 15th-century Latin text are the continuation of hymn no. 235 and are based on the traditional gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Easter. They are sung to a 15th-century French tune adapted for church use.

Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore

Tú has venido a la orilla



1 Lord, you have come to the lake - shore look - ing
 2 You know so well my pos - ses - sions; my boat
 3 You need my hands, full of car - ing, through my
 4 You, who have fished oth - er o - ceans, ev - er



nei - ther for wealth - y nor wise ones; you on - ly
 car - ries no gold and no weap - ons; you will
 la - bor to give oth - ers rest and con - stant
 longed for by souls who are wait - ing, my lov - ing



asked me to fol - low hum - bly.
 find there my nets and la - bor.
 love that keeps on lov - ing.
 friend, as thus you call me:

Refrain / Estribillo



O Lord, with your eyes you have searched me, and while
Se - ñor, me has mi - ra - do a los o - jos, son - ri -



smil - ing have spo - ken my name; now my
en - do has di - cho mi nom - bre, en la a -

Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore continued on page 10...

This is one of the most popular songs to emerge from the 1970s revival of religious song in Spain. It asks singers to become like the fishermen who left boats and nets to follow Jesus, first as disciples learning his way of love, then as apostles carrying that love to others.

TEXT: Cesáreo Gabaráin, 1979; English trans. Gertrude Suppe, George Lockwood, and Raquel Gutierrez-Achón, 1988, alt.

MUSIC: Cesáreo Gabaráin, 1979; harm. Skinner Chávez-Melo, 1987

Text, English Trans., and Music © 1979, 1987, 1989 Cesáreo Gabaráin (Published by OCP) Music Harm. © 1987 OCP

PESCADOR DE HOMBRES
 8.10.10 with refrain

G F#m B7
 boat's left on the shore-line be - hind me. By your
 re - na he de - ja - do mi bar - ca, jun - to a
 Em A7 D
 side I will seek oth - er seas.
 ti bus - ca - ré o - tro mar.

Joys and Concerns of Our Faith Community

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

Please call the church office if you have a prayer request: 920-733-7393

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

Sue Ahrens	Jean Jepson
David Andrus & Family	Kathy Lannoye
Jill Anthony, her sister & her nephew	Nancy Kandler
Katie Behl and her sister, Barbara	Helen McKean's daughter, Larri Jacquart
Don Brittnacher	Our friends in Kerio Valley, Kenya
Chris Brittnacher's brother, Steve Reinkober	Gretchen Revie
Karen Crawford's niece, Lori	Larry Schiedermayer
Rev. Ralph Di Biasio-Snyder	Frank and Pat Severin
Erstad's family friend, Silas, and his family	Mike Seymour's mom, Debbie
David Galow	Kinsley Tarr
Ken Geiger	Gloria Tate
Margaret Hankwitz	Jack Thiel
Judy Hanson	Peter Thiel
JoAnn Helms	James Totzke
Shirley Hoft	Those living with mental unwellness.
Joan Jensen's son, John	Wilma Wydeven

Please call or email the church office if someone's name should be removed from the list.

Thank you!



Pastor's Pen

Dear siblings in Christ,

In his book, "Markings," Dag Hammarskjöld wrote,
"For what has been, thanks. For what will be, yes."

I believe that these are some of the best words that we all can say as we come together on this Second Sunday of Easter, on what is the last day of our time together here at First Congregational United Church of Christ. I am truly grateful that our life's journeys have crossed during these 18 months of transition and am grateful to have served here as a member and Interim Pastor of this family of faith. We have come together as strangers and will part ways as colleagues and friends, having shared the costs and joys of discipleship. Thanks.

The title, "Interim Minister for Congregational Life and Outreach Ministries," will not be passed on to another minister at First Congregational United Church of Christ. For me and for each member and friend of this congregation, this "title" has historically been passed between those who have initiated, coordinated, and have been the "overseers" of mission and outreach into the community and the world; and of adult education and spiritual formation. The title has been a symbol of the "heartbeat" of this congregation as its "yoke" and has been shouldered up by Rev. Jane Anderson, Rev. Deb Burich, Rev. Katherine Kuhn, Rev. Laurie Lyter-Bright and me. Gratefully and by God's grace, after today, this *blessed position* that I have been privileged to hold, will lovingly be molded into the mutual ministry that Pastor Nick and Pastor Katherine are beginning to shape with all of you. The discipleship will not change for all who continue ministering under the "umbrella" of Outreach Ministries (formerly known as Mission and Service) and Congregational Life. This is, my friends, is what God is up to in our midst! Say, "Yes!"

I will always give thanks that together, we have, with steady determination, re-invigorated almost all of the ministries that have been put "on hold" because of the Pandemic of 2020. We, the staff, members, and friends of First Congregational United Church of Christ, will find our places in the next history book of the church during the years 2022-2024+... as the ones who have said, "Yes," to *unmasking* ourselves and to embracing all that we, as a congregation, had left behind. With courage and faithfulness, we have said, "Yes!" to God's nudging to embrace "new things," and at times, thankfully, we have courageously admitted, "No, not this; not now."

As Pastor Nick, Pastor Katherine and I have been collaborating this week, and thinking on these things...it warms my heart with gratefulness that they, as co-pastors, are ready,

willing and “oh-so-able” to “Go without knowing,” however *God will lead* this church into the future.

*May all I say and all I think
Be in harmony with thee,
God within in me,
God beyond me,
maker of the trees.*

-Chinook prayer

You will all be in my thoughts and prayers, First Congregational United Church of Christ. “Yes!” I will always remember the “Church of the Open Door.” Open it wider, my friends.

There are many blessings ahead!

Take a deep breath. Let it out!

“Thanks” for our mutual ministry!

Mary Jo Laabs, April 7, 2024



Easter Bulletin Cover from
The First Congregational Church
April 10, 1898

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY LOCATIONS FOR TODAY

Upstairs, to the left	Upstairs, to the right	Downstairs
Childcare Room Infants & Toddlers	Nursery	Little Angel's Room Preschoolers
K-5th Graders - Chapel (returning for communion)		

USHER TEAMS & AUDIO & VIDEO

APRIL USHERS: **TEAM 4:** Rick Detienne, Sue Detienne, Tim DeHart, Sheryl DeHart, Mary Gay Hornseth, Phil Hornseth, Sandra Hurm, Ron Hurm, Bill Ritcey, Gene Spindler, Cheryl Spindler
 MAY USHERS: **TEAM 3 & 6**
 AUDIO & VIDEO: JD Jicha, Rod Reynolds, Matt Feuerhelm

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR NEXT SUNDAY

"Disbelieving Joy" Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey
 Luke 24:36b-48 Joyful Noise Offering - Bring your coins!
 Musicians: Dr. Nathan Birkholz, *organ*; Sanctuary Choir

ON THE CALENDAR

Sunday, April 7	10:30AM	Mary Jo's Farewell Coffee Hour & Cake Reception
Sunday, May 5	11:00AM	New Member Exploration
Monday, July 8 -Friday, July 12	9:00-11:00AM	Vacation Bible School
Tuesday, July 16 -Saturday, July 20		Youth Trip to Great Lakes Regional Youth Event, Rock Island, IL

WORSHIP NOTES (space for your personal notes/thoughts)



Fundraising CARD PROGRAM

Youth will be selling
Kwik Trip cards
Every 1st Sunday of each month
(Communion Sunday)

TO ORDER YOUR CARDS:
EMAIL Sheila - svanrooy@uccappleton.org
or Sarah Wilterdink - swilterdink@uccappleton.org
or
PICK UP at church office during business hours

Orders received by Wednesday will be available for pick up the following Sunday.

*Thank you for supporting
our youth trip!*



WISCONSIN CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

You are cordially invited to attend the
62nd Annual Meeting of the
Northeast Association of the Wisconsin
Conference of the United Church of Christ

Saturday, April 20, 2024
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Daycholah Center, UCCI
W1010 Spring Grove Rd, Ripon, WI 54971

Registration deadline is April 4

Registered individuals will receive a copy of the annual meeting book by email prior to the meeting. This will include materials which will be voted on at the business meeting. It will also include a map to Daycholah. Carpooling is encouraged. One printed copy of the book will be mailed to each church in the association.

NORTHEAST ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING



SATURDAY APRIL 20TH
AT THE DAYCHOLAH CENTER
(9am-2pm)

DAY CAMP FOR THE YOUTH

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Rev. Breanna Illéné

Director of Ecumenical Innovation and Justice Initiatives at
the Wisconsin Council of Churches

HOW TO DO CHURCH IN THE AGE OF ONLINE EVERYTHING?



[Details & Registration](#)

The Open Door Announcements

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

National Health Care Decisions Day: Imagine you are in an accident or develop a serious illness and you can't make health care decisions for yourself. Who would make those decisions for you? Would they really know what you want? Advance Care Planning is making sure the people who matter know what matters most to you so they can follow your wishes. It is also important to know that Wisconsin is not a "next of kin" state meaning that spouses or parents of adult children are not automatically able to make health care decisions for their loved ones. That is why making these plans and completing the legal forms for Wisconsin is so important. On Sunday, **April 14**, join Ben Adams, retired elder law attorney, and Sue O'Neill, RN in the Chapel any time after church to have your questions answered and get the paperwork needed to help complete this process. If you are unable to attend, you can contact Fox Valley Advance Care Planning Partnership at fvacpp@gmail.com or visit their website at <http://www.FVACPP.org> They can also be reached at 920-997-8412. All their services are free.

The Indigenous People's Allies Committee (IPAC) is very pleased to announce the continuation of our educational programming, "We Are Still Here," with an April speaker series. The first presentation will feature Debra Morningstar, professional storyteller, fiber artist, and Oneida Tribal Citizen. Her topic: "Dismantling Dangerous Indian Stereotypes: The Hollywood Indian." All are welcome to attend on Sunday, **April 14**, 10:45AM-12:00PM in our Fellowship Hall.

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 Katherine and Pastor Nick after worship Sunday, **May 5**, 11:00AM-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@uccapleton.org.

New members will be introduced in worship on Sunday, May 19.

Church Library: Each month in 2024 the library will focus on a theme and display books related to the theme. In April our theme will be Mental Health Awareness Month. Please check the display – you may find something worth reading.

Reminder: The Mental Health Task Force meets on Monday, **April 8**, 6:00–7:30PM, in the Upper Lounge. Contact Mary Sullivan msullivan623@yahoo.com or 920-740-9452 for more information.

Praise & Clays! Come join Pastor Nick and other members of the church for a fun afternoon of sporting clays at Woodfire Lodge in Brillion on Sunday, **April 21** at 2:30PM. We will meet for a round of sporting clays then five stand shooting. After we will have dinner and a short devotional in the lodge together. Need a ride? New to the sport? Don't know anyone going? No problem! All ages are welcome. Clays cost \$36 per person plus your cost for dinner. Please let us know you will be there! Reach out to Mark Dougherty at Doughertymark59@gmail.com with any questions or to RSVP.

Appleton Health Wellness Survey: City leaders in Appleton are seeking community input to improve health and wellness throughout the city and are conducting a citywide [Community Concerns survey](#) to address various areas such as access to housing, affordable and nutritious foods, transportation, and education. The initiative aims to gather diverse voices from all parts of the city to create a comprehensive understanding of community needs. The survey closes on **April 30** and is accessible online or in-person at city hall and the public library.



Take the survey here!

World Relief Updates: Diaper and Bedding Drive for World Relief April 14, 21 & 28. Accepting any size disposable diapers, new sheet sets (full or twin), new or gently used comforters (full or twin). Donations will be collected in the narthex in the “Pack and Play.” Volunteers of all types are needed at World Relief. Move-in Team and Transport Assistant are especially needed. If you are interested in helping, please contact the World Relief Volunteer coordinator, Trinity Vang, 920-714-3550, tvang@wr.org

CMN Scholarship Fund Request for Donations: Donations to our church’s College of Menominee Nation Scholarship Fund encourage and support students of all ages, of all nations...Indian and non-native, who are seeking to improve their life with solid educational foundations.

EJWG & ESTHER Save the Date!! On Tuesday, **May 7**, our church will host a film showing, co-sponsored by the Economic Justice Work Group and ESTHER, of “The Invisible Class.” This documentary examines the systemic causes that have created homelessness. Doors open at 5:30PM, and the film showing is in the sanctuary at 6:00PM followed by a panel of speakers. This film contains some strong language; not recommended for young viewers.

The Forgiveness Project: Come view this international exhibit which features 18 personal stories of challenges in forgiveness. At the heart of **The Forgiveness Project** is an understanding that restorative narratives have the power to transform lives; not only supporting people to deal with issues in their own lives, but also building a climate of resilience, hope and empathy. Exhibit at 2600 Philip Lane, Appleton on **April 7**, 12:30-4:30PM and **April 8**, 10:00AM-3:30PM. Free admission.

Here are quotes from three of the stories:

- "In that instant, I realized how much negative energy it takes to hold hate inside." Zak Ebrahim
- "I'm beginning to realize that no matter which side of the conflict you're on, had we all lived each other's lives, we could all have done what the other did." Pat Magee, daughter of a bombing victim
- "Through forgiveness, I've learned that love doesn't die." Kia Scherr

This exhibit is sponsored by: The Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, ESTHER, and Charter for Compassion. See more description, photos, and a donation option to Forgiveness Project at www.theforgivenessproject.com

NOAHH Requests: A woman who has completed in-patient treatment and is getting an apartment needs: a twin bed and mattress, shower curtain, cleaning supplies, dishes, and silverware. Also, a father reunified with his 12-year-old daughter needs a bunkbed for her and her half-sister, TV stand, bookshelf, small dressers, and a couch. Please call Barb Mincheff 920-832-5515 or Sue Ahrens 561-531-3211.

This Week's Schedule

Monday, April 8

1:00-2:30PM	Prayer Shawl – <i>Common Grounds</i>
6:00-7:30PM	Mental Health Task Force – <i>Upper Lounge</i>
6:30-8:30PM	Prayer Shawl – <i>Common Grounds</i>
6:30-8:30PM	Fox Valley Flute Choir – <i>Sanctuary</i>

Tuesday, April 9

1:00-2:30PM	HR Committee Meeting – <i>Upper Lounge</i>
1:30-3:00PM	Racial Equity – <i>Zoom only</i>
1:30-2:30PM	Isaiah Project Meeting – <i>Isaiah Room</i>
2:00-4:00PM	Library Committee Meeting – <i>Library</i>
6:00-8:00PM	AAUW Event w/Speaker – <i>Fellowship Hall</i>
6:00-8:00PM	Wild Women of First Congregational – <i>Stone Arch Brewpub</i>
6:30-7:30PM	Living Sober AA – <i>Common Grounds</i>
7:00-8:00PM	Technology Committee – <i>Zoom only</i>
7:45-8:45PM	Fireside AA – <i>Common Grounds</i>

This Week's Schedule continued on page 18...

Wednesday, April 10

10:00-11:45AM Isaiah Project Meeting – *Isaiah Room*
12:15-1:00PM Loving Acceptance Meditation Group – *Upper Lounge*
1:00-2:30PM The Invisible Class - *Theater*
5:30-8:30PM Childcare – *Childcare Room*
5:45-6:25PM Youth Handbells – *Amistad Room*
6:00-7:30PM MS Youth Group – *MS Youth Room*
6:00-7:30PM HS Youth Group – *HS Youth Room*
7:00-8:30PM Sanctuary Choir – *Sanctuary, Choir Room*

Thursday, April 11

9:00AM-5:00PM King's Daughters Rummage Sale Setup – *Fellowship Hall*
12:00-1:00PM AA – Search for Serenity Group – *Common Grounds*
4:30-6:00PM ESTHER – *River Room*
7:00-8:00PM Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Friday, April 12

9:00AM-5:30PM King's Daughters Rummage Sale – *Fellowship Hall*
7:00-8:00PM Al-Anon – *Upper Lounge*
7:00-8:30PM N.A – *Common Grounds*

Saturday, April 13

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

Sunday, April 14

9:25AM-12:00PM Childcare – *Childcare Room*
9:30-10:30AM Sunday Worship w/Joyful Noise Collection – *Chapel, Sanctuary, Upper Lounge*
9:30-10:30AM Children's Ministry – *CYF Wing, Chapel*
10:30-11:30AM Advance Healthcare Planning with Ben Adams – *Chapel*
10:30-11:00AM Children's Choir Party – *Choir Room*
10:45-11:45AM Small Group for Parents – *HS Youth Room*
10:45AM-12:00PM IPAC "We Are Still Here" Speaker Series – *Fellowship Hall*
4:15-5:15PM LU Music Scholars' Rehearsal – *Choir Room, Sanctuary*
6:00-8:00PM First Things First AA Meeting – *Fellowship Hall, Common Grounds*
7:00-8:00PM AL ANON – *Chapel / Alateen – Upper Lounge*

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, soil, 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.



We are "The Church of the Open Door," a welcoming and inclusive Christian community.
No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.



—The Church of the Open Door—

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

724 E. South River Street | Appleton, WI 54915

920.733.7393 | uccappleton.org

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