

SABBATICAL UPDATE

Every 5th year our church grants a 3 month sabbatical leave to the Senior Pastor. This summer Pastor Chris will be taking his sabbatical with 4 goals in mind. They are:

Read—There is little time to read during the program year. I have a stack of books to read including books by Adam Hamilton, Frederick Buechner, as well as an in depth look at the Apostle Paul and his writings in the New Testament.

Renew—The confirmation curriculum has not been seriously changed since I started. I hope to develop a new syllabus for our 3 year confirmation program.

Refresh—I am hoping to spend some time with family. I have trips planned with my mom, dad, sister and family, plus time at the cabin.

Relax—For me an important gift of the sabbatical is having some time off with no meetings and weekly commitments so I can just rest.

Pastor Chris will be back for VBS (July 29-August 1). Pastor Dave Ostendorf will be leading worship and coordinating pastoral care during the sabbatical. Pastor Chris will be providing updates on his sabbatical on the church facebook page if you wish to follow them.

CHURCH SOFTBALL

Let the softball season begin. Our family league softball team is a great opportunity for parents to share time together playing on the same team as the kids. Our first month's games are:

June 10 6:30 pm at Hoffman Park
June 17 7:45 pm at Hoffman Park
June 24 6:30 pm at Hoffman Park

Come join in the fun and laughs. If you have any questions please contact Matthew Thurston at (715)781-3626 or Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945.

FINANCIAL

Treasurer's Report

	Week of June 2, 2019	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,357	\$ 222,827
General Fund		
Operational Needs	\$ 9,284	\$ 204,248

A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office.

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

E-Giving—It is quick, easy & safe. It is designed to help both you with your home budgeting & financing of church ministries which continue even when you are away. Contact Missy (missy@firstchurchrf.org) with questions. If you give electronically, please use the e-giving bookmark in the pew as the offering plate goes by.

Asylum Family Update—As of January 4, 2019, Heidy and the children became permanent residents of the United States. It took one month less of three years to acquire this status. After four years, they can become citizens if they so choose. Actually, they could have remained in the United States because they were given asylum, but the Ecumenical Asylum Committee decided to help them go the whole way even though it proved to be a very expensive process.

Meanwhile, the family's life is changing dramatically. Heidy now has two nieces in the US. Maria Antonia is her oldest brother's first child, born when Heidy was seven. Maria is the mother to two little boys. She plans to move to Wisconsin to live with Heidy. Heidy's other niece is little Jemina, one year old, who is the daughter of Heidy's recently deceased brother. She is living with a cousin in San Francisco, and Heidy is planning to adopt her.

Summer is upon us & the kids are ready for YMCA Camp, swimming lessons, and Vacation Bible school. Next year they will be in kindergarten, third, fifth, and seventh grades. Time flies.

JUNE 9, 2019

No matter who you are. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here!

As Jesus' courageous disciples, living God's grace, we strive to...

WORSHIP FAITHFULLY

Sunday Volunteers Needed

Nursery for: June 16, 23, 30;
July 7, 14, 21, 28

Liturgists for: Aug 4, 11, 18

Welcomers for: June 30; July 7, 14, 21, 28

Coffee Fellowship for: July 7, 14, 21, 28

The sign-up sheets are on the back table. Thank you!

SIGN UP

Church Office Hours—The church office hours between Memorial Day and Labor Day are: Mon-Thurs: 8:30 am-4:00 pm; Friday: Closed

Summer Hours—The summer worship schedule with **one worship service at 9:30 am** has begun. Pastor Dave will be in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the summer. We encourage you to call the office (715-425-2052) to let staff know of family pastoral needs.

WELCOME OPENLY

Nursery Help Needed—We will need volunteers to fill in for the summer. If you are a regular user of the nursery, please consider being a nursery volunteer. A sign-up sheet is on the table.

SIGN UP

Church Pew Clean Up—We are looking for a small team to help straighten up the church pews each week. Please sign up if you are interested.

New to Church?—Are you a first time visitor? Please stop at the welcome table in the gathering area to receive a special welcome gift from us!

WELCOME OPENLY

Strengthen the Church Offering—The Strengthen the Church Offering of the United Church of Christ supports the expansion of ministry and growth of local UCC congregations across the nation. Last year a dozen grants totaling \$350,000 were shared through the New and Renewing Spiritual Communities program supported by the offering, which also backed important Youth and Adult Leadership development. Half of the funds we give stay in the Wisconsin Conference for its leadership development work that benefits all our UCC churches as we seek to move into a shared future in the state. We invite you to share with the church in this offering!

Vacation Bible School—The 2019 VBS theme is "God's Creation!" Participants will use the tools of scientific inquiry to explore the wonder and interconnectedness of God's marvelous creation. We need many kids and volunteers. Please volunteer to help. Please also register your children and spread invitations to other children. All are welcome! The dates are **Monday through Thursday, July 29–August 1, from 9:00–11:30 am**. Registration forms are available on the sign up table and on the website.

Please Save For VBS—Please save license plates and denim jeans (holes are fine). We plan to turn these old things into new creations.

Hymn Sing—Wed, June 12, 6:30 pm at United

Methodist Church—Hosted by Barb Wall—Do you enjoy singing or listening to hymns? If you do, then this is the evening for you. You choose the hymns you would like to sing. It can be a childhood favorite or a new hymn.



Piano Fund Update!—Last Sunday our membership added an additional \$3,130.00 to our Piano Fund Drive, bringing our total to \$7,502.50! Thank you to all who have donated. It should be noted that \$1,015.00

of that amount was given in honor of Nora Roen by her family. We will be continuing with our drive through the end of June.

WELCOME OPENLY

Texas Couples Trail Dancing—Classes Wednesday night at 7:00 pm on June 12, 19 & 26, in the youth room. Great comradery, fun & exercise. You don't need cowboy boots or know how to dance, just be able to count to four. Tim Hoopman 715-425-2796

Yoga—The Yoga group meets **Tuesday & Thursday from 9:00-10:00 am** in the Fellowship Hall. We now have space for new members—men & women welcome! This is a warm & caring group. Bring your yoga mat and a smile. Jan Hansen is the Certified Instructor.

Men's Group—Meets every other Tuesday for coffee, treats, conversation and fellowship. Our next gatherings are **Tues, June 11 & 25 at 8:00 am**. Join us!

Garden Helpers Needed—We are in need of helpers on our garden crew. You do not have to be an expert gardener to be part of this group. Please use the sign-up sheet if you are interested & see Lu Lueck with questions.

GROW SPIRITUALLY

UCC Synod is coming to Milwaukee June 21-25!

Surely, you want to be a part of this biennial gathering, since it's practically in our neighborhood, & our Conference is hosting. You can go for a day, or two, or the whole shebang. Plus, if you volunteer for just 6 hours (or more!), you get a great discount on the registration fees. Talk to Bob or Rebecca Ferguson, or check out the Wisconsin Conference UCC website at <http://www.wcucc.org/about-wcucc/the-general-synod/synod-volunteering/>.

LIVE SUSTAINABLY

Sustainable Living: Tip of the Month—Sunscreen is often used for our outdoor summer activities and fun. But some sunscreen products contain chemical additives that can be harmful not only for you, but also our environment. When sunscreen washes off in our lakes & rivers, it can be harmful to marine life & especially to coral reefs in our oceans. It is estimated that up to 14,000 tons of sunscreen is deposited in the world's oceans each year. When wondering what sunscreen is safest to use, it would be wise to consult your physician or local pharmacist. You can also search for helpful information online. Even with sunscreen, studies have shown that skin damage or the risk for skin cancer can still occur. Therefore stay in the shade as much as possible, wear a cap or wide-brimmed hat, cover your skin with light clothing, make use of patio & beach umbrellas, & take advantage of our wonderful shade trees. ~Brought to you by the Mission Committee

Hope for Creation—River Falls Churches Partnering for a Sustainable Future. Our congregation has formally joined other River Falls churches in the **Hope for Creation** commitment that they have been nurturing in recent years. Church Council unanimously supports the Commitment to Creation pledge to work together for a more sustainable future. In the weeks & months ahead we'll be hearing more about the upcoming *Year of Living Creationally* that Hope for Creation churches will participate in. We celebrate this important step forward with the larger Christian community of River Falls & look forward to the continuing development of our practices of sustainable living.

Solar City—We celebrate with our friends and neighbors at St. Bridget Catholic Community their decision to "go solar." Before long, installation of 148 solar panels will begin, providing about 40% of the church's electrical needs. Like First Congregational, St. B received important support in this solar commitment from WPPI Energy, the regional power company serving 51 locally owned, not-for-profit electric utilities, including River Falls. Our two faith communities have partnered for five years, exploring and acting on a range of matters related to faithful, sustainable living—a partnership that has grown to six River Falls churches working together through Hope for Creation.

SERVE GENEROUSLY

Invitation for Disaster Relief Gift for the Midwest and in Mozambique—This spring has brought seemingly endless rains, tornadoes & other disasters to the Midwest & cyclones to eastern Africa. Floods in Iowa & Nebraska have been widespread & devastating. In Mozambique & east Africa thousands have died in one of the worst weather disasters to hit the continent in decades. We wonder what we might do to help out.

Our United Church of Christ (UCC) Disaster Ministries is on the ground in these & many other places with a deep commitment to long-term recovery. State-level UCC Disaster Coordinators assure that local communities' needs are met as cleanup & rebuilding get underway. The pastors & leaders of 56 congregations comprising the United Church of Christ in Mozambique assure that emergency funds get "on the ground" to help their communities rebuild.

All of us are invited to support this vital disaster relief work here in the Midwest & in Africa. If you would like to gift this critical work, checks can be made to First Congregational Church with a notation for either "Midwest Flood Recovery" or to "Mozambique." Our gifts will be forwarded to UCC Disaster Ministries, to be designated and shared directly with those so severely impacted... and on whose behalf we would convey deep thanks and blessings.

Save Your Family Fresh Receipts!-ARC gets \$1,000 for every \$150,000 in receipts, so every dollar counts. ARC is the agency funded by local churches to help address the immediate needs of people in our community (rent, utility, gas, repair help). A box for receipts is on the back table.

Simpson Shelter Needs: Travel size soap, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, & lotion; Disposable shaving razors & shaving cream; Deodorant; Bath towels—gently used or new; New thermals for men & women—all sizes; New heavy duty hats & gloves for men & women; New bras—all sizes; New women's underwear—sizes 5 & 6; New boxer shorts—all sizes; New white t-shirts—all sizes; New white socks for men & women; Coffee (ground preferred), hot cocoa. There is a box in the gathering area.

CARE PASSIONATELY

Prayer List—If you have people you wish to add to the church prayer list, please use the blue "I Wish" pew cards & put in the church office or the offering plate. If you wish to receive the weekly prayer list via email, contact the office.

Care Givers Program—An opportunity to serve members through an outreach program that pairs members providing visitors to those unable to be with us regularly in worship or activities. If you are interested in volunteering, have questions or are aware of anyone that would benefit from this, contact Jan Hansen at 715-821-4008.

Meal Ministry—Ever had a death in the family? How about something joyous & life changing like the birth of a baby? As a congregation we are called to 'care passionately' for one another & one of the ways we would like to do that is through a "Meal Ministry." A small stipend to help pay for food may be available. If you are interested, please contact the church office.

Thinking of You Cards—Please use them to send a note to someone who is ill, grieving or you just haven't seen in a while. Place them in the offering plate & we will deliver them. This is one of the ways we care for one another.

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Among Friends, located here at church, provides a social respite for individuals with dementia & their caregivers. We are open 9 am-3 pm every Tuesday. Please contact Norma Revels 715-293-2561 or Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn 715-307-1182 if you are interested in knowing more.