

AUGUST 2022

Volume 37 - Issue 8

# The Congregational COLUMNS

## The 2022 Project – ‘THE ELEVATOR’ (as of July 19 in Week 19)

As last reported, we are replacing the old elevator. This is Week 19 of the project. Over the past 10 weeks since the last report, there has been a 45-foot-tall hollow “Jenga” tower constructed of 8” cement blocks and concrete from the inside out and topped off on the third floor. The carpentry work started for construction of the finished walls on all floors on the backside (north) of the tower. Here is a summary of what has been accomplished since May 12:

*Week 10-16:* Tower construction completed with all floors finally supported by the tower.

*Week 17:* Wall framing and drywall begins to be installed. Oh, and the elevator was delivered.

*Week 18:* During the past weeks, the electrical work has been intermixed with other activities.

*Week 19:* Elevator installation has begun its five-week scheduled construction activity.

The project was ahead of schedule at the time of our last report. Despite a little slip, we are still two weeks ahead of plan. All is going well. Here is a set of pictures taken in July 2022:

*View from inside the 2nd floor parlor looking north-east. At the top are the supports for the third floor that were supported by a large I-beam and are now embedded in the tower South wall. To the left are the new electrical conduits to feed the elevator mechanism in the shaft.*



*View looking south-east in the closet on the 3rd floor. This is the top cap of the elevator shaft before the drywall is installed. The cap is taller and larger than the previous one. The door to the roof has been shortened to compensate for the increased cap height. The cap extends into the PF game room toward the back. A new games cabinet will be installed in that room.*



*View from the 1st floor Atrium area looking west from outside the church Office. Yes, that is the elevator still in its wrappings. More parts are out back. Week 19 started the unwrapping and installation.*



THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
IN WAUWATOSA

# Worship & Discovery

## Women's Ministry

*Tuesdays, August 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30  
at 7:30<sup>am</sup>*

Women's Ministry is starting a new book, "Twelve Extraordinary Women," by John MacArthur. Feel free to join this group and read about 12 God-shaped women of the Bible. During the summer months, the group gathers outside by the Parking Lot door, so bring a lawn chair. If you are interested in joining us or reading the book, contact Patty Reddy or just show up.

## Adult Learning Hour

Adult Learning is on summer hiatus. The group will start up again in September. Check September Columns for the fall start date and study topic.

## Men's Ministry

*Second and Fourth Wednesdays,  
August 10 & 24 at 7:00<sup>am</sup>*

Meet in Library for the DVD Series, "The History of Christianity: From the Disciples to the Dawn of the Reformation."

## Men's Bible Study

*First & Third Wednesdays,  
August 3 & 17 at 7:00<sup>am</sup>*

Men's Bible Study meets at 7<sup>am</sup> on Wednesday mornings. Join us in Room 107 for interesting studies and good conversation.

## CONGREGATIONAL COLUMNS

A monthly newsletter produced by the First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa to keep members and the community up to date on activities at the church.

[www.FirstChurchTosa.org](http://www.FirstChurchTosa.org)

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Like us on Facebook!

### Operating Statement Summary

Year to Date as of June 2022

	Current Year	Prior Year
Pledge Base Received	47.0%	47.0%
Pledge Income	\$222,416	\$234,628
Total Income	\$343,447	\$325,621
Total Expenses	\$232,667	\$254,293
Net Income	\$110,780	\$71,328

Detailed financials  
available in the office.

*Join Us September 11, 2022  
for our annual fall kick-off*

# Rally Sunday

# PIG ROAST

2022

on Ridge Court

*Enjoy Food, Fun/Games & Fellowship*

**Adults \$10 • Children \$5 • Family \$25**

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# Rhonda Kwiecien to Serve as Music Director

It is with regret that we say goodbye to Katelyn Peterson, our Music Director, as she moves to Iowa City for a Teaching Assistantship at the University of Iowa. When Patrick Dill left us and before Katelyn came on board, Rhonda Kwiecien took over the responsibilities of the Music Director to keep the music program operating. Now that we are, again, facing a period without a Music Director, it seems appropriate to recognize Rhonda's actual role and add Music Director to her title of Keyboard Musician.

Currently, Rhonda is responsible for all activities associated with the organ and pianos – from choosing and playing music for a variety of services, to playing keyboards for choir and solo rehearsals, overseeing maintenance of the church's keyboard instruments, and so much more. Beginning in August, she also became

responsible for planning and implementing all music components of the worship service, including music selection in collaboration with the minister and the choral director, once that position is filled. Rhonda will also supervise all professional music staff.

Having Rhonda fulfill the roles of Keyboard Musician and Music Director will ensure a smoother transition when the new Choir Director comes on board and will provide greater continuity during periods of disruption, such as the recent pandemic.

*Congratulations, Rhonda!*



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...And the Greatest of These is Love

## NACCC Annual Meeting & Conference is All About Love



1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

The first in-person NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference in two years was reimagined by Rev. Dr. Don Olsen and the Host Committee in Wichita. Their theme was "...the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13), and love abounded as NACCC members reconnected with old friends and made new ones. A lot of credit is due Drury Plaza Hotel on the historic Chisholm Trail, which kept everyone happy with delicious meals, comfortable rooms, beautiful surroundings, and excellent service. The group in Wichita numbered 153. Another 70-plus registered to attend virtually.

Instead of a single Bible Lecturer, Saturday's program presented three women, Diana Butler Bass, Valerie Kaur, and Mihee Kim-Kort, who spoke on different forms of love: love of God, love of the other, and love of self.

Bass is an award-winning author, sought-after speaker and preacher. She earned a PhD in religious studies from Duke University in 1991 with an emphasis on American ecclesiastical history. Her commentary on contemporary religion and spirituality has appeared in the New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN.com, Atlantic.com, USA Today, HuffPost, The Christian Century and Sojourners. Her AMC talk reflected her latest book, *Freeing Jesus*. Bass assures us that, even though we humans continue to evolve with our world, the teachings and words of Jesus have evolved with us. By reading and studying the Gospel, we find that Jesus is relevant to our current lives.

Valerie Kaur is a civil rights leader, lawyer, best-selling author, and award-winning filmmaker. Believing in love as a force for justice she has been called "a moral compass" for our time. The daughter of Sikh farmers, Kaur earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies and International Relations from Stanford University, a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School, and a Juris Doctor from Yale Law School. She is a member of the California Bar. Kaur challenged the audience to love the other, to "see no stranger." She encouraged her audience to get to know the stranger" as the best way to build community and move beyond fear and prejudice. "Deep listening is an act of surrender," she added. "We risk being changed by what we hear."

Mihee Kim-Kort, ThM, M.Div. and Princeton Theological Seminary alum, took on the topic of love of self. Mihee is a Presbyterian minister, self-described agitator, speaker, writer and "slinger of hopeful stories about faith and church." Her writing and commentary can be found in the New York Times, TIME, BBC World Service, USA Today, Huffington Post, Christian Century, On Being, Sojourners, Faith and Leadership. Kim-Kort says that "God's love for us breaks every boundary; therefore, so should our love for ourselves and each other." Her own faith journey changed when she accepted that she is gay was both a challenge to her sense of who she was and an opportunity to fully love herself as she is. The experience of learning to love herself convinced her

*continued on page 4*

*Ann and Jim Harris leave  
the AMC's Sunday Worship  
Service at Plymouth  
Congregational Church*



that self-care and mindfulness make space for attending to God's love for us, opening us up to a more expansive relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Other presenters furthered the discussion on love. The Reverend Dr. Jim Olson, President of the Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation, and Anna Jeide-Detweiler, U.S. Ministry Director and granddaughter of Molly and Arthur Rouner, held workshops on the topic of reconciliations and finding common ground. Like Valerie Kaur, Olson and Jeide-Detweiler believe that getting to know and understand one's "opponent" is necessary to achieving reconciliation. "Join the circle," said Olson. "Don't put yourself in the center." Congregational minister and author, the Reverend Dr. Arthur Rouner and his wife, Molly, founded the Center to help bring about reconciliation in Rwanda and Burundi following the civil war. Today the Center operates in both the U.S. and Africa.

Rev. Ian MacDonald (California) and Rev. Dawn Carlson (Indiana) facilitated a workshop that focused on the Post-Pandemic Church. MacDonald and Carlson, who are pioneers in online church, advised their audience that this is the perfect time to reimagine and reinvent your church, discarding those things that are no longer effective and building on the aspects of your church that bring you joy.

The workshop about minister sabbaticals was also particularly relevant post-COVID. The Alban Institute recommends that churches offer their clergy a three-month sabbatical every four to seven years to prevent fatigue and "compassion burnout." Workshop participants discussed the benefits derived from taking time away from the church. They also discussed ways churches can prepare for sabbaticals, including financing.

Video of the AMC is available on [nacc.org](http://nacc.org).

During the Business Meeting, six churches joined the NACCC. Rev. Ed Gabrielson, pastor of First Congregational Church of Searsport, Maine, graduated from the CFTS program. Revs. Tom and Wendy Van Tassel, who recently retired as co-pastors at First Congregational Church of Spencer, Iowa, were honored with the Harry R. Butman Award. A Special Citation was given to Jeff Dillon, who is retiring as the NACCC Treasurer after 12 years of service.

This year's AMC was a hybrid. Over 150 individuals attended in person, while another 70 participated online.



*Doug and Elizabeth Wermuth, members of the 2023  
Annual Meeting and Conference Host Committee, offered  
Norm Erlendson a bag of cheese curds to promote next year's  
event in Milwaukee.*

Next year's AMC will be in Milwaukee, hosted by the Wisconsin Congregational Association. At least 50 volunteers from the Wichita host churches were required to help the 2022 AMC run smoothly. Consider lending a hand next June, when Congregationalists from all over the U.S. and beyond our borders descend on Milwaukee.

- **Dick Berger**, NACCC Year Round Delegate for First Church

## Ashley is Listening!

There are 312 churches in the National Association for Congregational Christian Churches and over 28,000 people in their combined congregations. The NACCC Executive Director, Ashley Cleere, would like to know how the NACCC can support its churches and to hear what congregations are concerned about these days. In July, Ashley kicked off a listening tour with the goal of visiting every NACCC church in three years. Ashley will be at First Congregational on Sunday, August 14<sup>th</sup>. Watch for specifics about her visit in the Green Sheet and online.





## Summer Sunday School

For ages 3

– entering 6th grade

Children who have completed grades 6 and up are encouraged to remain in church with their families.

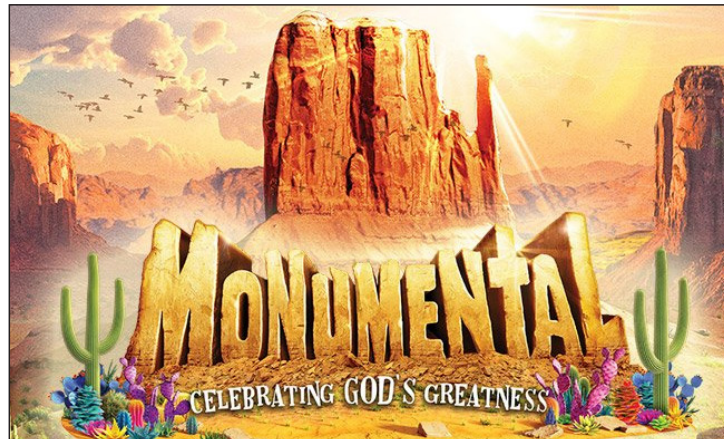


## Pilgrim Fellowship

It has been a successful year of food, fellowship, and fun for our middle and high school teens. We will try to meet once a month this summer so that we can stay connected, and we will hold our meetings out on Ridge Court. Look for e-mails from Tonia to find dates that will work for our busy youth.

# Vacation Bible School 2022

August 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> • 9-noon



*I hope that all of our FCC youth will join us for this summer's Vacation Bible School....*

**MONUMENTAL** is our theme, and the children will  
**CELEBRATE GOD'S GREATNESS.**

"Go off-road for a Monumental adventure through the colorful canyons and sunbaked trails of the southwest. By exploring God's awesomeness, kids form a rock-solid faith for the road ahead."



Miley



Jet



Harley

Registration form included.  
Additional copies can be found  
in the church Atrium.



Rollo



Quincy

Howell

# WCA Camp 2022 – The Best Week of the Year!

We had another incredible year at WCA Summer Camp! It was an amazing experience for the 43 youth and 20 staff in attendance. We had a strong Wauwatosa presence, sending ten youth and three adults as representatives from First Church. I was honored to be Camp Administrator, Luke Huitink was a counselor with the Junior High group, and Sandy Huitink served as Camp Nurse. The GODAPALOOZA theme was evident throughout the week and in all of the camp activities, which were held at Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center in Wautoma from July 10th – 16th. The weather was cooler than past years, and we dealt with rain on multiple days... and yet, we were all flexible and adaptable to make the most of the situation. That being said, it was still a beautiful week to be at camp!

FCC high school teens Miles Coppage, Katie Huitink, Addison Mc-Voy-Holtz, Maura McVoy-Holtz, Aubrey Moore, Bella Sanders, Gunner Sgarlata, and Riley Stern enjoyed a week of programing with directors Shannon



Brophy and Tom Penno. The “Headliners of the Bible” program focused on Jesus and his disciples teaching us life’s lessons! They explored the Last Supper from Jesus’ perspective, discussed taking a “leap of faith” and

trying new things from the book of John, and reflected on learning from mistakes. The high schoolers also covered Judas and betrayal, Peter and growing faith, and how we can be a catalyst for change. All of the topics were presented in large group, deeply discussed in small groups, and a modern song was played each session to look for ways to grow closer to God, even through the music of today. The engagement of the teens in this program was awesome, and there was also plenty of time for self-reflection to make the



lessons relevant for everyday life.

We also had two Mini Kamp campers, as Elijah and Peter Jones joined the fun this summer. Julie Sheridan-Smith was the director for this sweet group,

and shared the following thoughts about the week: “MiniKamp was filled with children new to camp, and it was wonderful to see them become part of a “church camp” experience. We learned and sang songs about God, told campfire stories, created an amazing skit for our annual skit night, swam, crafted, played, and showed God’s love for each other. We can’t wait for next year! If you see Eli and Peter at church, ask them about it!”

It is easy to share positive feedback about this transformative week as a discerning adult, so sharing testimonials from the minds and hearts of our FCC youth seems more appropriate...



*I couldn’t have asked for a better camp experience. The bonds with friends, fun with activities, and great music make WCA Camp an amazing experience! – Miles Coppage*

*Camp was such a great experience this year. I enjoyed catching up with old friends while at the same time growing in my faith and relationship with God. Plus the food was awesome! – Riley Stern*

*Camp was super fun! It’s always such a great week, and seeing my friends is something I look forward to year round! – Aubrey Moore*



*This was my second year at camp, and last year was so awesome, but this year was even better because everything was more normal and we didn't have to worry as much about Covid procedures. The counselors, campers, and all of the staff made everything so much fun, and the organized activities were so fun, too. I can't wait for next year!* – **Addison McVoy-Holtz**

*This was my second year going to camp, and I'm so glad that I came back. The friendships that were made last year stuck and it seemed like no time went by at all. I am going to miss all of the seniors, but can't wait to return to camp next year.* – **Maura McVoy-Holtz**

*This was my first year at camp. I really love camp because everyone was kind and the food was great. I never was bored because there was always someone to play with. Camp was one of my best experiences.*  
– **Peter Jones**



*Camp this year was awesome. There were so many new kids which gave me a bright hope for what the future of this camp is. The counselors and staff did an incredible job as always. It was great to see familiar faces and carry on traditions. The week was filled with wonderful fun and a great reminder of how important my faith is. Thank you to the WCA for an amazing week of church camp.*

– **Gunner Sgarlata**



*This was my first time at WCA Camp. It was the best, and everyone was so nice, open, and kind. The swimming pool is so awesome, the food was delicious, Frisbee was so fun, and the snack shack was amazing. I had an amazing time at WCA Camp! The Friday evening party was the best. We had so many glow sticks, fun, and music. I love WCA Camp!*

– **Elijah Jones**



*The welcoming nature of camp, where faith, fellowship, and fun are central to every activity, have a lasting impact on friendships and strengthening relationships with God. This continues to be one of my favorite weeks of the year, and I'm blessed to learn, grow, and connect with wonderful youth and adults. I hope to have even more First Church campers next year!*

– **Tonia**

**The First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa**  
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*This is the NACC's featured ad for the 2023 Conference*

THE **daring**  
endeavor OF

**Being  
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*Save the Dates!*

**June 24-27, 2023**

**A GREAT MEETING  
ON A GREAT LAKE**

Mark your calendar for the  
2023 NACCC Annual Meeting  
& Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

With the provocation theme of  
"The Daring Endeavor of Being Church,"  
the conference promises to be full of  
engaging content, fellowship, and fun  
on the western shore of Lake Michigan.

The Wisconsin Congregational  
Association warmly invites you to make  
the pilgrimage to Milwaukee for a unique  
and unforgettable experience!

New to Milwaukee? Watch the 3-minute video  
on the NACCC website  
[nacc.org](http://nacc.org) to see what's in store.

*Additional pictures from WCA Camp*

