

JULY 2022

Volume 37 - Issue 7

The Congregational COLUMNS

Thank You for Supporting Our Youth

It is with the most heartfelt gratitude that I thank our congregation for their continued love and support of our youth over the past year, as well as your flexibility and adaptability with the events celebrating our children and teens. Since March of 2020, Covid has affected many of our First Church traditions, and yet, our youth have found ways to stay connected to the church and to one another.

It was great to kick off the school year on Rally Sunday, as we handed out Bibles to our 3rd graders and kicked off the new Sunday School and PF season in person! Even though we only had two Sunday School classrooms for the year, our teachers were determined to offer the best lessons for our children each and every week. On top of that, we were able to hold Sunday morning PF meetings in the Friendship Lounge or the 3rd floor, depending on attendance for that day.

Our K3/K4/K5 class was able to act out our favorite Christmas Pageant in person again, which was as sweet and innocent as ever! Our middle and high schoolers were also able to offer our annual PF Play for the 4:00 family service on Christmas Eve and presented "The Polar Express" flawlessly in front of our members. It was so nice to be together in the Nave, and great that it was available on YouTube for those who could not attend in person.

Our treasured Christmas Workshop was held in the Social Hall again, and it was a fun, festive afternoon making Christmas ornaments and special gifts for loved ones. Having our families together warmed my heart. The other heartwarming Christmas event that we brought back from many years ago was "Breakfast with Jesus" - a wonderful family event that included a breakfast and the Jones family dressing as Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus, as well as shepherds and animals of the nativity.

We were able to offer Faith Finders meetings in the spring, once we realized that there were enough 1st-5th graders available to participate. This is such a unique fellowship opportunity for the kids, so I am looking forward to getting started in September again.

The Secret Buddies program was back in full force, and we had 11 adults and 11 children take part as pen pals during Lent. They then met one another on the two reveal days, and the usual gifts were exchanged, and stories shared.

We had a somewhat "normal" Covenant experience this past year and had a meaningful retreat to get the year started on the right foot. A couple of classes were held on Zoom, but most of the classes were held in person. The Confirmation service on May 15th was beautiful, and an incredible chance to highlight our four Covenant teens.

Having a huge Children, Youth, & Education Sunday was an amazing blessing and a phenomenal ending to a great year! On June 5th, our middle and high schoolers served as greeters, ushers, readers, and actors, and we were able to honor our graduating seniors and our FCC Scholarship recipients. The Junior Choir sang, and the Sunday School classes did sweet presentations for the congregation. Mason King and Aubrey Moore offered a lovely rendition of "Look Up, Child" for the Offertory, and I was thrilled with the finale - ALL of our children and youth were up front singing and doing motions to "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" as a large group.... priceless! And no Education Sunday would be complete without ice cream, so our Board of Christian Education handed out novelty treats to be enjoyed in front of the church.

It truly was an awesome year, and I am looking forward to WCA Summer Camp and Vacation Bible School in the coming months, as well as a strong 2022-2023 school year. Our Mission Team also just arrived home from a week in Pennsylvania, which you can read more about on page 7. There is so much to be thankful for, and First Church is blessed in so many ways!

-Tonia

THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN WAUWATOSA

Worship & Discovery

Women's Ministry

*Tuesdays, July 5, 12, 19, & 26
at 7:30^{am}*

Women's Ministry meets in the Library, Tuesdays at 7:30^{am} for an hour, moving outside to the Parking Lot entrance when weather permits. Contact Pat Reddy with any questions.

Men's Bible Study

*First & Third Wednesdays,
July 6 & 20 at 7:00^{am}*

Men's Bible Study meets at 7^{am} on Wednesday mornings. Join us in Room 107 for interesting studies and good conversation.

Men's Ministry

*Second and Fourth Wednesdays,
July 13 & 27 at 7:00^{am}*

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

Adult Learning Hour

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



The Tailgate is Back!

Nothing says summer like the Men's Softball Tailgate! John Sgarlata is firing up the grill **Tuesday, July 19, at 5:30^{pm}** in Hart Park. He's making his signature Italian sausages, brats, hot dogs, and Italian pasta salad. Beverages will be provided. You are encouraged to bring a dessert to share. Seating is very limited, so bring a lawn chair and/or picnic blanket for you and yours.

Cost is \$6 per adult & \$3 per child under age 12.

Children ages 5 and under eat free!

FCC's Men's Softball Team goes head-to-head with the team from St. Matthew's Methodist Church at 6:30. Our guys were number one in the church league last year and played in the finals, so stick around following the tailgate and enjoy a good game!

Please sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium. Pre-pay at the Office.

Operating Statement Summary Year to Date as of May 2022

	Current Year	Prior Year	
Pledge base Received	44%	44%	
Pledge income	\$204,088	\$208,284	
Total Income	\$316,654	\$281,388	
Total Expenses	\$191,688	\$203,868	
Net Income	\$124,966	\$77,520	Detailed financials available in the office.

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

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From the Search Committee

The Pastoral Search Committee has been hard at work in the past several months to attract applications for our open pulpit. The staffing shortages that have plagued businesses in the past year amid “the Great Resignation” have impacted the ministry as well. A study by the Wisconsin Council of Churches conducted in July 2020, only a few months into the Covid-19 crisis, found that 25% of clergy had considered retiring or resigning. This was further confirmed by another nationwide survey in early 2021 conducted by Barna Group reporting about 29% of clergy considering retirement or resignation. Earlier this year, in March 2022, Barna Group reported an updated survey showing that number had grown to a staggering 42%. There are 27 open pulpits listed on the NACCC website.

What does this mean for First Church? It means that we are embarking on a pastoral search like no other. It is no longer sufficient to simply post open pulpits in various Christian magazines, seminary job boards, and newspapers and watch a steady stream of resumes come into our inbox. It is going to require more aggressive and proactive recruiting efforts, as well as leveraging our personal networks to find our next settled minister. The Search Committee has been thinking outside the box on ways to become more proactive in our search. Ideas include contacting seminaries, researching other churches, leveraging the upcoming NACCC Annual Meeting for networking opportunities, and even “geo-farming” to target populations in geographic locations that meet our search criteria.

And now for the good news.

In the past two months, we have held two additional open conversations for those who were either unable to participate in the small-group sessions or whose sessions did not get to discuss their hopes for a new minister going forward. In addition, we have had a small conversation with a group of PF Youth. The Committee continues to be inspired by these conversations.

The common theme we have observed is that we are looking for a candidate with a balance of talent, maturity, energy and enthusiasm, and a willingness to walk with our congregation in our mission to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in our community. Other key values include transparency, openness to suggestions and modern ideas, showing emotional investment and engaging with the congregation.

To date, we have received three letters of interest, and we are moving forward to the next level of conversations with one of those candidates. While the pool of candidates will be smaller than those of pastoral searches in the past, we remain encouraged that God will call the spiritual leader who will make First Church his or her home.

In closing, the Search Committee is grateful to this congregation for your continued prayers and interest in this important time in our church.

Pastoral Search Committee:

Mike Huitink, Peggy Griffith, Pat Reddy, Hank Collis, Rick Nowacki, Dylan Thomas, Randy Sitzberger, Sarah Blake, and Jim Harris

Introducing Reverend Gorman

Finding someone to fill the pulpit during this transitional period has been a challenge. We are pleased that the Reverend Jim Gorman has agreed to preach every third Sunday.

Pastor Gorman was pastor of Evangelical and Reformed Church of Christ in Waukesha for ten years ending in 2014. Prior to that he spent 20 years as pastor of Faith United Church of Christ

He is currently retired.

Pastor Gorman earned his Master of Divinity degree from Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis.

Please welcome Pastor Gorman when he next preaches on Sunday, July 17th.



The Bloomin' Costs Have Gone Up!

For many years, Rose's Flowers in Wauwatosa charged First Church \$60 per arrangement for the Chancel flowers. We're sad to report that Rose's owners, Phil and Monique, retired last month. The Office has been "auditioning" prospective florists in the hopes of finding a quality florist at a reasonable price.

One thing has become crystal clear: the church had a good thing going with Rose's. It is virtually impossible to obtain an appropriate floral arrangement for that price.

Going forward, if you want to donate the flowers on a particular Sunday, the cost will be \$75 for the arrangement. (First Church will no longer be ordering

two arrangements for a worship service unless the donor requests two and is comfortable paying for both.)

As always, members are welcome to use a florist of their own choosing or create the arrangement themselves.

Flowers enhance the Nave with vibrant color, and we hope the new cost isn't an impediment.



Thanks, from the NACCC

The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) has presented First Church with a Certification of Appreciation for its support as a Fair Share Plus church.

"Fair share" means that First Church made a contribution to the NACCC this year that exceeded the amount recommended as fair for member churches.

First Church has been a leading member of the NACCC for many years and has enjoyed the benefits offered by the organization. One example is our participation in the Congregational Investment Trust, which has performed very well over the years. First Church has also been very active in the NACCC's mission program, supporting the good works of missions such as the Congregational Church of Myanmar and the Panamerican Institute, which have been vetted by the NACCC.



In late June, Jim Harris and Marianne King traveled to Wichita for the NACCC's Annual Meeting and Conference. Dick Berger, our Year Round Delegate, participated online. The event is an opportunity to meet with ministers and members of other Congregational churches, sharing common challenges and solutions. For more information about all the NACCC offers, go online to naccc.org.

Discover Professional Baseball That's Udderly Different!

This summer's baseball outing comes with a twist! Fellowship Board has purchased group tickets to the Milwaukee Milkmen game on Sunday, August 7, at 1:00 p.m.

The Milkmen will play the Winnipeg Goldeyes at Franklin Field, which is located near 76th Street and Rawson Avenue in Franklin. The Milwaukee Milkmen are an independent professional baseball organization. Games are accessible, family-friendly events that offer good food and good fun. (The team's mascot is Bo Vine!)



Cost is \$14 per person, which includes the game ticket, a hot dog and soda, and a drawstring bag. (Children 2 and under are admitted free of charge.) Adult beverages and other food items are for sale. Parking is free.

Fifty tickets are available, so you are encouraged to sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium as soon as possible. Deadline for sign-ups is July 3rd.



Congratulations, College Grads!

June was cap and gown season, and many members of our church family celebrated the achievements of children and grandchildren who walked across the stage to accept a diploma or degree. We offer our blessings to all graduates as they enter a new phase of their lives.



Michael Elwing, son of Mike and Holly Elwing, graduated from UW-Madison in December 2021 with a Mechanical Engineering degree and commissioned as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy. He currently attends Nuclear Propulsion Training at the Naval Nuclear Power Training school in Charleston, South Carolina.

Ryan Elwing, son of Mike and Holly Elwing, graduated from UW-La Crosse in May 2022 with a Bachelor of Science in Finance degree. He was commissioned as a second Lieutenant in the Army and currently serves in the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Jeff Mason, son of Sarah DeYoung and Scott Mason, graduated from Lawrence University in June 2022 with an English major and a minor in Mathematics.



Tessa Russ, daughter of Steve and Michelle Russ, graduated with distinction from the College of Liberal Arts - University of Minnesota in May 2022. She majored in Dance with a minor in Business. Tessa is still working for Starbucks when she is not rehearsing or performing with a modern dance company, Black Label Movements, or dancing in other dance festivals taking place in the Twin Cities.



JUST FOR YOUTH

July 2022



Summer Sunday School

**Begins Sunday, June 12th
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

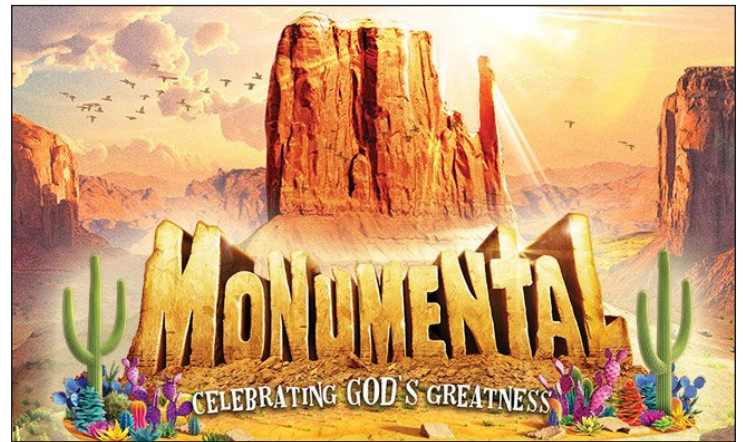
It has been a successful year of food, fellowship, and fun for our middle and high school teens. We will try to meet once a month this summer so that we can stay connected, and we will hold our meetings out on Ridge Court. Look for e-mails from Tonia to find dates that will work for our busy youth.

Vacation Bible School 2022 August 8th-12th • 9-noon

I hope that all of our FCC youth will join us for this summer's Vacation Bible School... August 8th-12th.
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."

**Look for more information.
Registration form included.
Additional copies can be found
in the church Atrium.**



WCA Camp

The Wisconsin Congregational Association (WCA) summer camp will be held at Mt. Morris Camp & Conference Center, located near Wautoma, WI, from Sunday, July 10-Saturday, July 16. Camp is for youth who have completed grades 3 through 12. Our theme this year is titled: **GODAPALOOZA**.



Who can come to camp?

- **Mini Kamp** – completing grades 3-5 in the spring of 2022.
- **Junior High** – completing grades 6-8 in the spring of 2022.
- **Senior High** – completing grades 9-12 in the spring of 2022.

You don't have to be an official Congregationalist to come to camp! Friends from other denominational backgrounds are always welcome. However, please understand that this is a Christian camp, and the program and activities will reflect that tradition.

What do you do at camp?

- **Faith** – worship & singing, small group discussion, campfires, cabin devotions, Bible study, communion, personal reflection
- **Fellowship** – star-gazing, nature hikes, organized activities, free time, games, random dancing, deck party
- **Fun** – swimming, volleyball, ropes course, arts & crafts, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, disc golf

**Full information packet and forms for camp can be found on
the Gathering Table or download online:
wiscongregational.net/youth**

Back To **BUSINESS!** with Hosanna Industries

After two years without an “official” Mission Trip out of state, a small but mighty crew decided it was time to get back to business and lend a hand to those in need!

Bright and early on Sunday, June 19th, the youth mission team gathered at FCC and headed out to Hosanna Industries in Pennsylvania for a week of service. With a small crew of four youth and one adult chaperone, we were able to fit into one van for the trek eastward. We met the team from Ozaukee Congregational Church so we could caravan out together. The first night was spent at Hosanna’s facility in Rochester, and we knew we had to be up and out the door to traverse to Johnstown to do our work for the week first thing Monday morning. Johnstown is in the poorest county in Pennsylvania, so there is a great need for help in that area.

On Monday, we took the two-hour drive and were then tasked with siding and painting two sides of a huge Victorian home that was in rough shape. We worked on the home of Ron and Jackie, whose original siding had seen better days, and it was time for an update to make sure that their home would be safe, warm, and dry. The paint was chipping off in huge chunks, so the brand-new siding covered the walls nicely. The windows and trim needed to be scraped and painted, and members of our crew took care of that project beautifully. Half of the house was completely transformed.... almost unrecognizable from when we arrived in the morning.

Tuesday’s project was siding and painting the rest of the house from Monday. Ron and Jackie were so appreciative of us and were practically in tears when they came out to see the finished product. This large project happened because of a true team effort, and everyone played their roles perfectly. From cleaning up the paint chips, to taking measurements, to holding ladders or pounding in nails, we needed “all hands on deck” to be successful. We also had the most amazing paint crew and made the front porch area look like a million dollars!

On Wednesday, we installed 27 brand new replacement windows! We were assigned to small teams to tackle this project, and our team did everything from tearing out old windows, carrying in new windows and taking down blinds to putting old trim back up, caulking, and serving as the clean-up crew. We were



quite productive! And, like yesterday, the homeowner (Reggie) was extremely pleased with, and thankful for, the work that was completed.

Thursday featured a potpourri of work sites and tasks that needed to be completed before our departure. Our FCC crew prepped and painted the concrete walls of a home, and a fresh coat of white paint looked amazing!! We also organized the basement of James and Karen by removing old junk that we loaded up and disposed of in a dumpster. While we were doing those projects, the OCC team put in a new kitchen floor and cabinets at Reggie’s house. Both groups finished the day by meeting at Ron and Jackie’s house to load the siding supplies and ladders for the Hosanna staff. The love and appreciation that their staff shared with us throughout the week was extraordinary.... such amazing people of faith!!

On behalf of the 2022 Mission Team, we want to send our most heartfelt love and appreciation to our First Congregational Church members who bought coffee and peppermint bark at Christmas time or have supported this team with prayer and well wishes....it all meant the world to us!



The First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa
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In This Issue

- 1
Thank You for
Supporting Our Youth
- 2
Worship & Discovery
The Tailgate is Back
- 3
From the Search Committee
Introducing Reverend Gorman
- 4
The Bloomin' Costs Gone Up!
Thanks, from the NACCC
Discover Professional Baseball
That's Udderly Different!
- 5
Congratulations, College Grads!
- 6
Just for Youth
- 7
Back to Work with
Hosanna Industries

INSERT
VBS Registration Form



Youth Sunday