

SEPTEMBER 2022

Volume 37 - Issue 9

The Congregational COLUMNS

WELCOME!

Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith

By an overwhelming majority, the members of First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa elected to call the Reverend Julie Sheridan-Smith to be our Senior Minister. Voting took place in person and via Zoom at a Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, August 21st, following the worship service led by Pastor Julie. She will join us officially on October 1st.

Pastor Julie comes to us from North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point where she is currently the Associate Minister.

Prior to that, Pastor Julie, her husband, Tom, and her children became Congregational members at First Church.

In her letter to the congregation, Pastor Julie wrote, "I am excited by the Spirit that surrounds, and I believe is growing, within your church. I sense a desire to seek and become more of who God is calling you to be at this time: being the Church, NOW, emerging from the changes, grief, and restrictions, as well as new formative opportunities that we have all encountered these past years. So much has changed within the institution of the Church and the surrounding community. I see in you a bubbling up of God's spirit to come alongside, not isolated within the church, but by being the church wherever you are."

These are exciting times at First Church as we welcome our new senior minister, complete the installation of a new elevator, and embark on a new program year. Though First Church faces the same challenges as other churches, with the leadership of Pastor Julie and the enthusiasm and creativity of our congregation, First Church is on the brink of a new and healthy future within our walls and as part of a growing and vibrant community.

We are grateful to our Search Committee – Peggy Griffith, Mike Huitink, Patty Reddy, Hank Collis, Rick Nowacki, Dylan Thomas, Randy Sitzberger, Sarah Blake, Jim Harris – for their diligence in finding a senior minister equipped to lead us into the future. We would also like to extend our appreciation to Dr. Gerry B. Krupp, Interim Minister, who has guided First Church during this critical transition.



THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN WAUWATOSA

Worship & Discovery

Women's Ministry

Women's Ministry has enriched the faith journey of FCC women since it was begun in the late '90s by Mary Beth Rygh. I was invited to participate when other morning demands had lessened and this early hour gathering was offering something I was seeking. The group was small and regular attendance wasn't a demand, and work priorities wouldn't be compromised, so I tried it out and have never regretted that decision.

Over the years we've gone through Bible studies prepared by well-known authors, teachers and scholars. We've read books on a range of Christian topics. And we've worked our way through many books of the Bible, as well as a number of devotionals. Based on the participants' responses, one of our favorite studies was the Book of Daniel. The hardest "sell" was the Book of Revelation, and in retrospect I know I was blessed with a season of great personal growth from preparation of this study.

The mission of the group, if it were to have one, would be to grow in our knowledge and expression of our faith, while growing in our relationship with each other and with our Lord.

Moving forward the group has been challenged to read through the Bible in one year. Starting in January of 2023, we will use the book, *One Year of Praying through the Bible*, by Cheri Fuller. The book offers 365 devotionals along with a prayer tied to each daily scripture, which if read daily, will take us through the Bible in one year. Our discussion will focus on our individual insights and/or challenges encountered through each week's readings.

We meet Tuesdays at 7:30 am. During the summer months we take advantage of the sunshine and met on the portico outside the Parking Lot entrance. As the weather cools, we move inside to the Friendship Lounge. Any woman is welcome to attend Women's Ministry, and it is not necessary that you come each week to participate and follow along with our study. Books for the coming year will be available in the Office sometime later this fall.

- Patty Reddy

Men's Ministry

*Second and Fourth Wednesdays,
August 10 & 24 at 7:00^{am}*

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^{am}*

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

Adult Learning Hour

Adult Learning is on summer hiatus. The group will start up again in September.

Start date TBA.

Save the Date...



Operating Statement Summary

Year to Date as of July 2022

	Current Year	Prior Year
Pledge base received	55.0%	54.0%
Pledge Income	\$260,184	\$270,360
Total Income	\$382,324	\$361,713
Total Expense	\$272,323	\$294,083
Net Income	\$110,001	\$67,630

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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Like us on Facebook!

St. Vincent Meal Program Update

For decades, First Church has been a staunch supporter of the St. Vincent Meal Program. When the pandemic threw the program a curveball, both St. Vincent and the First Church meal team stepped up to the plate.

In response to COVID-19, St. Vincent discontinued the meal serving line. Food was put in to-go packaging by volunteers and distributed outside the church by St. Vincent own staff. The revised procedure required the meal and the serving volunteers to be at the site by 3:30 pm.

When the old elevator became inoperable in April, the stairs presented too big an obstacle to cooking in the upstairs kitchen. To keep the program going, longtime volunteers Barb Dunham and Jane Boyd switched their operations to the St. Vincent meal site on the south side. The kitchen is small and cramped, with just enough room for the two of them to function. In addition to spending two mornings cooking at St. Vincent, they hauled the necessary groceries and cooking pans to the site. St. Vincent greatly appreciated their commitment, especially since many churches simply quit providing a meal.

This fall, St. Vincent plans to return to its pre-pandemic operating procedures and hours. Once again, meals will be served by volunteers in the dining hall. As soon as the new elevator is operational (early October), Barb and Jane will return to cooking here at the church.

The congregation has always backed our mission to St. Vincent, but the last few years have taken a toll on our volunteers. Sadly, two of the meal preparers, Randy Goelzer and Ellen Devlin, have passed away. Even before the pandemic, our list of volunteer servers had seriously dwindled.

A big thank you is due Barb and Jane for continuing to prepare the meal under challenging circumstances and Casey Zoss and Jim Santelle for serving as volunteer meal packagers.

As we begin First Church's new program year, consider helping with the St. Vincent Meal Program. Volunteering is a wonderful way to assist people in need and to help our teens develop a habit of giving back to the community.

The First Church meal program is the first Friday of every month. For more information contact the Office or talk to Barb Dunham or Jane Boyd.



So Much To Celebrate! *Date Change for Rally Sunday Picnic*

Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith will preach her first sermon as Senior Minister of First Church on Sunday, October 2nd.

To welcome Pastor Julie, we have moved the traditional **Rally Sunday Picnic to October 2nd**. Please continue to sign up for the picnic at the Gathering Table in the Atrium. Costs remain the same.

On Rally Sunday, September 11th, the Fellowship Board will host a **Special Coffee Fellowship** to kick-off the church's new program year and to thank Pastor Gerry for his many contributions as Interim Minister.

Join us for both events as we start a new chapter in the life of First Church.

JUST FOR YOUTH

September 2022



Sunday School

Sunday, September 11, 18, and 25
for ages 3 – 5th grade

Children will begin in church with their families during 10 am worship. They will be dismissed to Sunday School during the service.

Junior Choir

Sunday, September 18 & 25
for K-8th grades

Meet at 9:00 in LL4
Children usually sing once a month.

Covenant Class

Starting in October for 9th graders
Group meets at 8:30 am in the Library.

Pilgrim Fellowship (PF)

Sunday, September 11, 18 and 25
for grades 6 – 12

Teens will begin in church with their families during 10 am worship and will be dismissed to PF during the service.

Ultimate Kick-Off Event

Date TBD

A MONUMENTAL Week of VBS August 8-12, 2022



Vacation Bible School was back in full force this summer, and the church was filled with excitement and enthusiasm from our young attendees. Their energy was awesome, and the week included food, fellowship, and fun for all! Our VBS experience took place from August 8th-12th, and 44 kids, 13 teen helpers, and 10 adult helpers had a blast with the Monumental theme. Throughout the week, the activities helped the kids celebrate God's greatness and form a rock-solid faith for the road ahead. They were encouraged to experience God in new and creative ways - side by side with their peers.

Each day, our 4K – 6th grade VBS attendees moved from station to station with their crews, which allowed them to get to know their fellow Crew Members on a deeper level. Every station was designed to reinforce the Bible message in a hands-on, interactive way, with the goal to keep everyone engaged in the lesson. The 4K and 5K children were grouped together for developmentally appropriate activities, while the 1st through 6th graders were assigned to their groups to make the experience as fun as possible.

At the Imagination Station, the kids were able to experiment with "Sciency-fun gizmos" that incorporated the daily Bible message, and then they took gizmos home to share the learned lesson with their parents.

The children were also active participants in the daily Bible story at Awesome Bible Adventures, which was followed by thought-provoking discussions. At KidVid Cinema, our



attendees “met” five real kids who have seen God’s awesome power and love in everyday life. Next, our attendees were able to run, jump, and play through fun games that reinforced the daily Bible verse at Red Rocks Rec. One of the favorite stations each year is Sing & Play Celebration, and this year was no exception! The kids sang and danced to a mix of classic worship and more contemporary songs. There are so many smiles and so much energy in the room!

Finally, at Oasis Tastes, one crew prepared and served delicious treats that connected to the day’s theme, and all of the crews enjoyed the snack time together in the Social Hall.

The “MONUMENTAL” theme was extremely relevant to all who attended and participated, from the awesome decorations in the Social Hall, stairwell, and Awesome Bible Adventure room to the questions posed at the Imagination Station. Each daily mascot was based on a real animal that God created to thrive and survive in their unique habitat. On Monday, Harley the Gila monster was our mascot and we learned that “God loves you no matter what”. On Tuesday, the children learned that “God is with you everywhere” through the story of Joseph who was imprisoned after his brothers sold him to a caravan of traders. Wednesday’s mascot was Howell the coyote, and the children heard the story of Joseph’s rise to power after interpreting the Pharaoh’s dreams...and ultimately, that “God is in charge.” On Thursday, Rollo the armadillo taught that “God is stronger than anything” through Jesus’ death on the cross and coming back to life. Friday’s mascot, Jet the jackrabbit, shared the theme of “God is surprising” through the story of Joseph being reunited with his brothers and father. What a cool Bible story to wrap up this great week. This week of VBS was an incredible blessing...for the kids, teens, and adults alike!

The memories that were made mean so much more coming from those involved, so I wanted to share a handful of testimonials....



“I loved it all! Quincy and the friends in my group, singing all the songs, the Imagination Station, and playing the ball game!”

– Mabel Raddemann

“My favorite thing about VBS is going to Bible adventures because I like to learn more about Jesus. I also really like playing the games to have fun with friends.”

– Easton Hornung



"I loved the different characters, the Imagination Station, and the outdoor games, especially the noodle gamet."
– Jude Raddemann

"I enjoyed my first year as a teen helper because it was awesome to watch my group develop throughout the week and how they collabored and worked with each other."
– Sienna Hornung





"This was my first experience helping with VBS. The energy, and excitement of the kids was truly amazing and contagious. Tonia had me doing the Bible story and I was struck by how much so many of the little ones already knew of God's Word. I am so grateful to Sunday School teachers, parents, and leaders like Tonia who are committed to making God part of the lives of future generations. I am excited to be part of this again." – **Patty Reddy**



"What I liked about VBS was the Imagination Station with Miss Diane." – **Peter Jones**

"Awesome! It was the best! My favorite part was the singing, the games, Imagination Station, actually, I love all of them!" – **Tess Wergin**



"I liked the music and playing games with Miss Tonia." – **Rachel Jones**

"What I liked about VBS was the snacks and Bible Adventures." – **Eli Jones**



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