

JULY 2023

Volume 37 - Issue 7

The Congregational COLUMNS



for Supporting Our Youth

It is with heartfelt gratitude that I thank our congregation for their continued love and support of our youth programming over the past school year. We were able to kick things off on Rally Sunday, as we handed out Bibles to our 3rd graders and Covenant teens while beginning the new Sunday School and PF season. Even though we only had two Sunday School classes again this year, our teachers had full classrooms as they shared meaningful lessons for our children each and every week. On top of that, we were able to hold Sunday morning PF meetings on the 3rd floor.

Our K3/K4/K5 class was able to act out our favorite Christmas Pageant, which was as sweet and innocent as ever! Our middle and high schoolers offered our annual PF Play for the 4:00 family service on Christmas Eve and presented "Live From Bethlehem" flawlessly for the our families in attendance. 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 another success, and it was a fun, festive afternoon making Christmas ornaments and special gifts for loved ones. Having our children, parents, and adult and teen volunteers together in the Social Hall warmed my heart. The other heartwarming Christmas event that we brought back in 2021 and offered again this year was "Breakfast with Jesus" - a wonderful family event that included a breakfast and the Davis family dressing as Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus, as well as a little sheep.

We were able to offer Faith Finders meetings all year, which was super to have back on a regular basis. This is such a unique fellowship opportunity for the kids, with time for food, faith, and fun, too!

The Secret Buddies program ran smoothly, with 11 adults and 11 children participating as pen pals during Lent. They met one another on the reveal day, and thoughtful gifts were exchanged and stories shared.

This year's Covenant class was a small one, but, size is overrated! We had a meaningful retreat to get the year started on the right foot, then met twice each month to dig deeper into the Bible, prayer, Congregationalism, church history, and much more. The Confirmation service on May 21st was beautiful and an incredible opportunity to honor Drew Welch and Meghan Jeide.

Having a huge Children, Youth, & Education Sunday was an amazing blessing and a phenomenal ending to a great year! On June 4th, 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 recipient. The Junior Choir sang, and the Sunday School classes did sweet presentations for the congregation. And no Children's Sunday would be complete without ice cream, so our Board of Christian Education handed out novelty treats that were enjoyed on Ridge Court.

It was another wonderful year, and I am looking forward to WCA Summer Camp and Vacation Bible School in the coming months, as well as a strong 2023-2024 school year. Our Mission Team also just arrived home from a week in Pennsylvania, which you can read about in the August Columns. 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 11, 18, & 25 from 8-9^{am}

Women's Ministry is meeting on the porch on the west side (Ridge Court) of the church. Please bring a lawn chair. In the event of bad weather, we will meet in the Lounge.

Adult Learning Hour

Adult Learning is on summer hiatus and will return in the Fall.

SMILE!

You'll be happy to learn that the Board of Deacons and Office staff are in the planning stages for a new, pictorial church directory! Our goal is to create a directory that can be easily updated.

Rather than contract with a professional photography studio for the photos, we are hoping to use volunteer picture-takers from the congregation. The Office will mail you a form requesting your preferred and most up-to-date contact information, as well as your approval for being included in the published version of the directory. We will also set up convenient dates and times for having your picture taken in early fall.

Please watch for more information in the Green Sheet as we start putting plans in place for the 2024 Directory. In the meantime, please contact Patty Reddy at patreddywauwatosa@gmail.com or the First Church Office if you're interested in serving as a photographer.

Men's Ministry

July 5, 12, 19 & 26 at 9^{am}

Men's Ministry meets every Wednesday morning in the Lounge. (There is no meeting on fifth Wednesdays of the month.) We also set up Zoom sessions for those out of towners, those not able to attend in person, and members of FCC South (Florida) or any other warm weather retreat! We are currently planning our summer study. If you want to be added to our mailing list, let Bill Edens, Hank Collis, or Jim Harris know. Thanks. And we'll see you on Wednesday!



Men's Softball Tailgate Picnic

Celebrate the mid-summer at the Men's Softball Tailgate on Tuesday, July 18, at 5:30 pm in Hart Park. Grill master John Sgarlata will be 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. The FCC Men's Softball Team plays Fox & Fox at 6:30 pm, so stick around to cheer on our guys.

Cost is \$6 per adult & \$3 per child under age 12. Children ages 5 and under eat free! Please sign up and prepay at the Office.



50 Tickets Available
Includes bleacher seat
with dog, drink & bag

**Sign up
in the church office.**

**Game
Sunday,
August 6**

for \$13

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!

Operating Statement Summary

Year to Date as of May 2023

	2023	2022
Pledge Base Rec'd	41%	43%
Pledge Income	\$202,141	\$203,683
Total Income	\$307,417	\$316,654
Total Expense	\$239,615	\$191,688
Net Income	\$67,802	\$124,966

Detailed financials available in the office

A Strange Lesson in Generosity

By Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith

Many of you were recently part of an unexpected lesson on email scams when you thought you had received a message from me about a “confidential” matter that then proceeded to ask for the purchase of gift cards to be given to others.

The Office responded as soon as we became aware, noting this had not come from me (different email that looked similar), and that I would never make an “ask” in this manner. It is discouraging how “real” these emails looked, even signing off in a way I often do. So, yes, we might say that a good thing came out of it, because we learned something about how insidious these scammers can be.

But here is the thing I learned. You are a people with large and generous spirits. I found myself getting over the frustration and surprised by a sense of gratitude, hearing from many who had leapt toward generously responding before we were able to communicate that this was a scam. (And I am glad the scammers lost!)

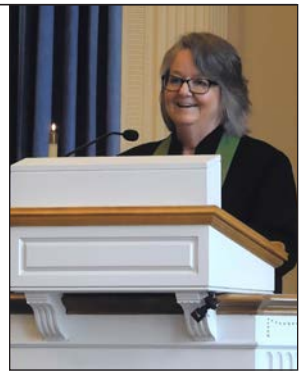
In “The Book of Joy” by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, they claim there are Eight Pillars of Joy in

life: Perspective, Humility, Humor, Acceptance, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Compassion, and Generosity, saying, “When we practice a generosity of spirit, we are in many ways practicing all the other pillars of joy.”

With a grateful note of another joy — it is wonderful to have Tesha join us in the life of this community. I hope all of you enjoy reading her note below.

July brings us our first of two summer hymn sings, youth and adults heading to the Wisconsin Congregational Association Camp week, a special Laity Sunday, a MomsCONNECT gathering, softball and tailgating at Hart Park, a chance to experience walking a labyrinth at Hartung Park, and the beginning of work on our Chancel as we enjoy worship and fellowship in the Social Hall.

Check the calendar for several ongoing ministries to engage in and find ways we might practice these “Pillars of Joy.”



From Tesha Kathryn Urban, Associate Minister

Dear Friends,

I'm excited to return to our First Church family and open to a new ministry opportunity, serving as our associate minister.

Your warm welcome has been a hug for my heart, and I hope you can feel mine too! Your spirit of love is what drew me into the fold almost 20 years ago, when I was searching for a church home and entered our doors of First Church for the first time.

Crossing that threshold was one of the most meaningful experiences of my life, because I met many of you and then entered into a whole new spiritual “journey” of awakening to the vocation of ministry. You helped initiate me into this calling, and you supported me with encouragement through my studies, formation, and ministries. I'm so very grateful for you and our community.

And, now, here I am, returning “home” again — and very much looking forward to sharing the journey of life and faith with each of you. I'm also looking forward to partnering with Rev. Julie. I connected with Rev. Julie many years ago when I was first contemplating leaving my work in the corporate world and entering into ministry after a health crisis. Julie has been wonderfully inspirational, and here, too, it feels like a “coming home” to join and assist Julie.

While Rev. Julie and I believe it is important and necessary to listen to God's promptings for the direction ahead, there are some areas we hope will be nurturing and formative for my ministries of care at First Church. For example, I will be focusing on pastoral care and outreach. Some of you know that I served as the chaplain at our church-initiated Congregational Home for a few years, and I hope to continue to deepen this connection for us and our members. I will also serve on our Care Board and help provide pastoral care and outreach. Additionally, I will be focusing on the spiritual development and needs of our church and beyond, including opportunities for

intergenerational journeying and formation, as well as opening to spiritual and faith practices and ways to experience God and one another. I will have a listening ear for opportunities to serve the needs of our church and surrounding communities, while opening my heart and hands to build connections and community. I will preach occasionally, as well, during worship services and be added to the rotation with lay ministers, who will continue to share the fruits of their contemplation with us.

My part-time ministry at church will be more active on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, and then on Mondays and Tuesdays, I will be serving as a part-time hospital chaplain. I'm commuting from my parents' home in Fond du Lac for now, and I'm hoping to find a place to live in the area that will feel spiritually nourishing and grounding. If you have ideas or know of people with whom I can connect for a place, please do let me know. I'm excited to be back in Wisconsin and the area!

These last several years have expanded my spiritual and theological formation with widely diverse and special experiences, and I'm sure they will inform my ministries of care going forward. By way of background, I began my ministry through a clinical pastoral education internship at a hospital in Washington, D.C. While I was there, it became apparent quickly that this was the path I was to follow, so I started seminary right away. I've taken coursework at a Methodist seminary in Washington, D.C. (Wesley Theological Seminary), an Anglican seminary close-by in Nashotah (Nashotah House), and the bulk of my studies were at Loyola in University Chicago. I completed a wonderfully-developed dual-masters degree program, both in divinity and pastoral counseling.



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Our Changing Mission to St. Vincent DePaul

For over three decades, First Congregational Church has delivered hot, nutritious meals to the St. Vincent de Paul Meal Program on the southside of Milwaukee. During that time volunteers of all ages have helped cook, deliver and serve the meals. The mission provided the church's families, PF members, Covenant classes and other groups a meaningful opportunity to serve a population in need and extend our outreach to the wider community.

Recently, the Board of Benevolence determined that the monthly preparation, delivery and serving of a meal on the first Friday of each month would be suspended. The financial support for these monthly meals will continue to go to St. Vincent de Paul, and the board will be considering in what ways we will partner with St. Vincent's in the future.

In the meantime, our congregation will continue to make 75 bag lunches during Coffee Fellowship on the third Sunday each month. People of all ages are invited to enjoy fellowship, a cup of coffee (or lemonade), and help make the bag lunches. Check the sign-up sheet in the Atrium if you'd like to contribute food items for the lunches.

The church's mission was started by Katherine (Kay) and Howard (Howie) Millen not long after St. Vincent established the meal program almost 40 years ago. The Board of Benevolence agreed to fund their vision, and the idea took off. Initially there was no set menu. Kay and her team of cooks would come up with the meal plan based on the available ingredients. The first Thursday of the month, sisters Ruth and Barb Dunham shopped for food at Second Harvest, which had an ever-changing selection.

The meal preparation began on Thursday as Kay cooked the turkeys or chickens, which would be deboned and cubed for casseroles, and was completed on Friday. On Friday afternoon, Howie delivered the food to the meal site at the corner of 10th and Madison streets. Barb, Jane, and Ruth, who died in 2005, took charge of meal preparation in 1994 when Kay was no longer able to take the lead. When Howie passed away, the task of loading and delivering the food was taken up by Don Schaeffer, who faithfully continued that effort until a rotator cuff injury required him to retire in 2022.

"Lyle Dobberke loved to make the macaroni," Barb recalls. The late Lyle Dobberke was just one of the many church members who helped with the meal program over the years. Jane Soper was a part of the team. Beej Wakefield took charge of the Jell-O for many years, followed by the late Ellen Devlin. Randy Goelzer assembled the green salad until his death in 2021.

The cooking team continued to vary its "first Friday" menu until St. Vincent's asked that First Church provide the same meal each month. Since we were serving on the first Friday of the month, a fish fry was the natural choice. For years, Barb Dunham, Jane Boyd and crew have prepared a meal of fish, macaroni and



cheese, green salad, a fruited Jell-O, and cookies for anywhere from 150 to 250 people.

Cooking the meals demanded physical strength as well as cooking skills. Hoisting sloshing half pans of Jell-O filled with boiling water onto shelves in the refrigerator; lugging huge, hot pans of macaroni and cheese into warming containers; and pulling scorching, hotel pans of baked fish from the ovens required both strength and finesse. When Phil Callen saw the ladies navigating the kitchen with heavy, hot-from-the-oven pans of fish he volunteered to help, spending one Friday a month baking fish for the masses. When Don Schaeffer was forced to retire as driver, Phil took over.

There have been many volunteers along the way, such as Bonnie Wiegand, Margie Idzikowski, Dylan Thomas, and Dick Berger, among others. When a driver couldn't be found Bill Trump often filled in. Mark Lund often pitched in with the heavy lifting. That just scratches the surface and doesn't begin to acknowledge all those who gathered in the parking lot and carpooled to the meal site as volunteer servers. Regulars John and Denise O'Meara, the Elwing family, Judy Connor and Shannon Damuth, Caroline Fink, and Jim Santelle, Connie Little, Barry and Sue Szymanski, Bill and Cathy Trump, John and Bonnie Wiegand, the Riofrio family, Mychale and Dylan Thomas, John and Peggy Griffith, Casey Zoss, and many others enjoyed staffing the food line and getting to know the folks who found a much-needed meal at St. Vincent. It was a beloved and well supported mission for almost four decades.

As with so many activities, the pandemic changed things dramatically. Inside dining ended. Volunteers who once served meals on the food line were put to work scooping food into plastic containers and packaging meals in individual bags. Prior to COVID, volunteers reported to St. Vincent at 5:15 pm. During COVID, packaging volunteers were needed at 3:15 pm. The earlier time put volunteering out-of-bounds for church members who were at work or in school at that time of day. For the same reason, the earlier time made it impossible for many willing volunteers to deliver the food. Concerns about personal safety during the pandemic kept many people from volunteering.

The core volunteer group has dwindled further as church members move out of the area or deal with new job or family demands on their time. The untimely deaths of Randy Goelzer and Ellen Devlin were a serious blow.

Another challenge presented itself when work on the elevator

project began in Spring 2022. When full of food, the portable thermal containers were impossible to carry down the stairs. Delivery of the food to the second floor was also impractical. More determined than ever to keep the meals coming, Barb and Jane hauled pots, pans, and food to the southside and prepared the meal in St. Vincent's crowded kitchen throughout the pandemic.

Through all these challenges, the hard work and dedication of Barb Dunham and Jane Boyd, with the support of the Board of Benevolence, kept the program afloat.

Though the pandemic is over, St. Vincent continues to schedule delivery and serving volunteers at mid-afternoon, and

Music Notes



Welcome to Music Notes! Each month, Roxanne Trump-Miles, Director of Junior Choir, Ellen Shuler, Director of Chancel Choir and Jubilation Ringers, or I will share some music ministry news with you.

For this first month, I have an exciting opportunity to share with all singers, regardless of whether you participate regularly with Chancel Choir. We have been invited to perform the National Anthem for the Milwaukee Milkmen pro baseball game on Sunday, August 6th, at 1:00 pm in Franklin! We welcome anyone interested in joining us to attend two rehearsals following worship service: Sunday, July 30th and Sunday, August 6th. We'll meet in the choir room on the lower level for 20-30 minutes to rehearse our National Anthem.

More details about the actual performance will be available soon. Please talk with Ellen or me if you have any questions or want to sing with us. We hope to see you there!!

- Rhonda Kwiecien, Director of Music

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During my studies, I served in part-time chaplaincy ministries. I was at Waukesha Memorial Hospital for several years serving as a behavioral health chaplain and leading spirituality groups for patients. I also lived in community at Marquette University and served as an in-house chaplain/residence hall minister for students. After being at Congregational Home for a few years, and in the midst of Covid, I was called to move to Boston and complete my residency in clinical pastoral education at Massachusetts General Hospital, where I also served as the bereavement spiritual care provider for parents grieving the loss of a child. As I met with hundreds of patients, loved ones, and staff members, I experienced how spiritual formation, beliefs, and community informed our spiritual care visits and their spiritual care needs. I hope these encounters will be insightful in helping me understand and appreciate faith formation in the church setting.

My ministries in Boston were incredibly diverse and meaningful, and made more so, because of an unexpected door that opened for my living situation. During my time there, I lived in a Buddhist Zen Center, where I practiced Zen everyday by chanting, meditating, eating communal vegetarian meals, and sharing intentional and intergenerational community, while also going to church on Sundays!

our long-time food vender doesn't want to deliver to the church anymore... just a couple of the post-pandemic obstacles that made participation in the mission increasingly unworkable

Saying good-bye to a beloved mission, especially one that has involved so many people for such a long time, is difficult. But the Board of Benevolence decided that it was time to consider other, more workable opportunities for First Church to be of service to St. Vincent de Paul.

Many thanks to all who made the mission a success for so long. Many lives were impacted by your generous donation of time and talent.

Delve Into Part 2 of Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World



In June, Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith led a discussion of *Joining, God, Remaking Church, Changing the World: The New Shape of the Church in Our Time*, by Alan Roxburgh. The second part of the discussion is scheduled for Sunday, July 23, at 10:15 am in the Parlor.

The book focuses on an ongoing movement within a "post Christian culture" and what has contributed to this. The author offers practices that help us enter "more deeply into the stories of the Bible, our own stories, and the lives of our neighbors."

If you participated in Part 1, we hope you'll join us for Part 2. If you are new to the book but would like to join in the upcoming discussion, the book is available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle formats. The Office also still has a few copies of the book to loan out.

Please contact Rev. Julie if you have any questions or would like to join the Part 2 discussion.

The experience continues to inform my spirituality and outlook for community life and "together action." Also informing my spirituality and community life is my relationship with a group of Catholic Dominican sisters, who I met many years ago in Racine. I journey with the group as an "associate" companion, and this relationship, too, has guided and nourished me with a deepened spirituality and understanding of inclusive love, social justice, and openness to truth.

As Rev. Julie shared, this whole process of returning home has been directed by the Holy Spirit. Through special conversations, mutual discernment, and nudges by the Spirit, it became clear that my call was to return to our church community and open to God's unfolding grace and love. Some of you have asked me about ordination, and I'm happy to say that the process is starting.

It fills me with joy to be able to share the journey of life and faith with you. Feel welcomed to reach me through our church office or my cell phone, at 262-443-8955.

Thank you, again, for your welcoming spirit — and I join you in faith, hope, and love for what God is up to with us, and through us, at First Church!

Together in God's Love - Tesha

JUST FOR YOUTH

July 2023



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.



Cosmo



Ringo



Luna



Sol



Halley



Astro

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

August 7th-11th

Launch kids on a cosmic quest where they'll have a blast shining Jesus' light to the world.
Stellar rockets kids on an out-of-this-world adventure that's light years of faith-building fun.

**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 9-Saturday, July 15. Camp is for youth who have completed grades 3 through 12. Our theme this year is titled: Rock Solid? Peter's Journey.



- **Fun** – swimming, volleyball, ropes course, arts & crafts, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, disc golf

What will we learn?

The apostle Peter walked on water, and then sank like a stone. Jesus called him “the Rock”, and a moment later called him a “stumbling block”. Peter experienced strong faith and paralyzing doubt – just like us. He was courageous one minute and cowardly the next – just like us. He was loyal to his friends, but not without limits – just like us. Was Peter “rock solid”? Are we? God did amazing things through Peter, despite his faults – and God can do great and amazing things through us, too! Our WCA Camp program will focus on Peter's journey – and ours.

Who will lead us?

This summer's camp is blessed with a tremendous leadership team:

Julie Sheridan-Smith and Alaina Schmitt – Minikamp Directors

Rob Fredrickson – Junior High Director

Bo Wilkinson – Senior High Director

Tonia Wallner – Camp Administrator

Who can come to camp?

- **Mini Kamp** – completing grades 3-5 in the spring of 2023.
- **Junior High** – completing grades 6-8 in the spring of 2023.
- **Senior High** – completing grades 9-12 in the spring of 2023.

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



Name of child(ren) _____ Grade _____

Grade _____

Grade _____

Address *City* *State* *Zip*

Email _____

Allergies/Health _____

Parent Name (s) _____ Home Phone(s) (_____) _____

Cell Phone(s) _____ Work Phone(s) (_____) _____

Emergency Contact _____ Emergency Phone (_____) _____

Cost: \$10.00/first child; \$5.00/each additional child; \$20/maximum per family

☐ Yes, I am interested in helping out during VBS. *Please check all areas of interest.*
☐ teaching ☐ science/imagination ☐ games ☐ where needed

☐ While volunteering, I will need childcare for my children not yet old enough to participate in VBS.

How did you hear about our Vacation Bible School Program?

☐ I belong to the church ☐ I am a guest of _____

☐ Other _____

Photographic Release

I, (print) _____
give consent for any photograph(s) of my child(ren) to be used for promotional purposes.

Signed: _____

The First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa
1511 Church Street
Wauwatosa, WI 53213-2593

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