

OCTOBER 2025

Volume 40 - Issue 9

The Congregational COLUMNS

A Time to Serve

By Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith



Oh, my goodness! September has been a whirlwind of re-connections, trying some new ideas, and experiencing the joys, griefs, times of struggle, as well as inspiration. I am so grateful to live all of these with you. As we step into October, I pray we continue to grow together in the knowledge AND expression of our faith.

Some of our hopes and intentions for October reverberate with a couple of “new ideas” we have begun implementing. — our Covenant sessions with our youth and expanding our time together. The team of Tonia, Chip, and I are supported in the facilitating of these ideas by the deeper relationship with, and support of, those who agreed to be mentors. There is also a youth Bible study on the third Sunday morning of each month that began because the youth requested it. New classrooms, teacher teams, and the growing response from those of you drawn to be part of that is, again, so encouraging. These are just the youth-related things. You will see other articles and opportunities related to adult formation.

I would also like to make you aware of the Agape Tables that we offer near the Milwaukee and Madison college campuses. Rob Fredrickson (From Ozaukee Congregational) and I meet with college students and young adults in the area for dinner and conversation. Our upcoming dates are October 15 on the Madison campus, and October 29 near the Milwaukee campus. While we do have contact information for some of the students from our churches, please let me know if you are aware of a student or young adult that we might also invite.

One of the “newish” and growing opportunities we have is our morning Saturday Serve on October 18. It offers a variety of ways to reach out with compassion.

On site at church: Make bag lunches for St. Vincent or make Plarn (plastic yarn made from recycled grocery bags) which will be knit into waterproof sleeping mats for unhoused or currently homeless people. Enjoy yard work? Help prepare some of the church grounds for winter.

Offsite: Go to Milwaukee Rescue Mission to serve lunch or spend the morning at the Congregational Home serving breakfast, chat with residents, help transport residents to Chapel for exercise, followed by another program. Or could go to one of the Bridge to Brighter apartments to work on cleaning and painting. The apartments are for youth who aged out of Foster Care.

These opportunities are for all ages. Find more details about particulars on the sign-up sheet on the Gathering Table in the Atrium.

We look forward to holding another fall session that will bring visitors and church members together to learn about Congregationalism and First Church. If you're interested, please put your name on the sign-up sheet on the Gathering Table as soon as possible.

Finally, in addition to reading the number of articles others write, I am grateful for the work our moderator JC Moore is doing to keep you updated on some of the behind the scenes work and meetings. If you have thoughts or questions, please do speak up and let us know.

In gratitude and hope,
Julie

THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN WAUWATOSA

Worship & Discovery

Women's Ministry

*Tuesday, Oct. 7th, 14th, 21st, & 28th
from 8-9^{am} in the Library*

Join the group on Tuesday mornings from 8-9^{am} in the Library when you are able, or just obtain the 365-Day Devotion for your at-home quiet time. You do not need be a member to join the discussion. Consider inviting a friend or neighbor to come along and give this morning gathering a try. All are welcome.

Discovery: Experiencing God

Sundays from 9-10^{am} in the Lounge

"Experiencing God" is our theme this year. How do we as members of First Church and members of our local communities experience God? This will be a series of exploratory sessions involving interaction and conversation. Questions to consider, based upon our Covenant: What are God's gifts to this community? What are our individual gifts? How do we return them to God? Facilitated by Chip Smith.

2025 Devotional Plan

The 2025 devotional will span five weeks – Sunday, November 30th through Sunday, January 4th. Each week will have a theme:

- Week 1: Waiting with Hope
- Week 2: Watching with Peace
- Week 3: Wonder with Joy
- Week 4: Witnessing with Love
- Week 5: What Now.

A scripture will be assigned to each day during Weeks 1 through 4. Writers can choose their own scripture during Week 5.

There are two ways to sign up for the date you prefer:

Online at <https://signup.com/go/EqepUqn> or on the sign-up board in the Atrium. Deadline for signing up is November 2nd.

Advent Devotional Team,

**Hank Collis, Peggy Griffith, Patty Reddy
Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith**

Men's Ministry

*Wednesdays, Oct. 8th, 15th, 22nd, & 29th
from 9-10^{am} in the Parlor*

The group is currently reading and discussing *Practicing the Way* by John Mark Comer, which offers ways in which we can be more like Jesus in who we are and what we do. For information contact Hank Collis via email: CaptainHarry30@outlook.com.

Adult Education: The Story

Sundays from 9-10^{am} in the Lounge

Adult Education continues its journey through *The Story*, edited by Randy Frazee, with Chapters 20 and 21 during October.

You can come any Sundays that work. Didn't do last year? Not a problem...join us now. The book available in the Office. Cost is \$6.

Please contact Patty Reddy with any questions: patreddy@wauwatosa@gmail.com / 414.254.2638.



A group from Women's Circle visited the peaceful and restorative Conservancy for Healing and Heritage in September. Pictured: Sally Boyle, Margie Idzikowski, Colleen Foster (standing) and Lucy Miyazaki, Sharon Nortman and Carmen Berte.

Operating Statement Summary

Year to Date as of August 2025

	2025	2024
Pledge base received	58.0%	57%
Pledge Income	\$319,402	\$300,931
Total Income	\$430,800	\$445,741
Total Expense	\$413,943	\$395,009
Net Income	\$16,857	\$50,732

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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Focus on the Boards: Fellowship *by J C Moore, Moderator*

Welcome back to the latest chapter of “Focus on the Boards.” This month I was able to meet with Jane Boyd to discuss the Fellowship Board. When you think of Fellowship, all the fun church events come to mind. While it does provide a lot of fun, Fellowship serves a greater role than merely entertainment coordinator for the church. As Jane put it, Fellowship is “the glue” that brings us together as a church community. It organizes the many social events that allow us to come together, enjoy each other’s company and connect as a congregation. Indeed, our church motto espouses the importance of “faith, freedom and fellowship.” As I think back on my time at First Church, it’s often the events and the friendships that are built at them that stand out. Thanks to the work of the Fellowship Board, we are able to gather regularly, have fun, connect and, just maybe, have a little food.

Jane reminded me of some events that were held over the summer, and others that are scheduled for the fall. These include the lunches during the Midday Music series, the Tailgate Potluck in August, where we were able to eat and watch the Brewers win on the big outdoor screen, and the church BBQ picnic on Rally Sunday. I (and my expanding waistline) can attest to the fun and food at each.

Following 10 am worship on October 12, members of the congregation will share their favorite comfort foods, many with a cultural twist, at the Culture and Comfort Food Potluck. The Fellowship event on November 23 is a personal favorite: the Pie Fest (AKA the Great Congregational Baking Show), where we can all sample the wares of some of our church's master bakers. Sorry, no handshakes from Paul Hollywood (for you British Baking Show fans), just the mutual admiration of those of us with a sweet tooth. Last but not least, let's not forget our weekly post-service coffee hours, many of which are themed – such as the “churro hour” during the summer, and the kringle hour during Advent.

As anyone who has attended these wonderful events knows, they are labor intensive. So, if you want to be part of the group that provides us with opportunities to “reach out to each other with love and understanding,” then give the Fellowship Board a try. If some other aspect of church life interests you, there are plenty of opportunities for service on other boards on which I’ve focused. If you want to help, but you’re still not sure, chat with the board chairperson or one of its members to see if it might be a good fit for you!

Stewardship and Benevolence

“The Board of Stewardship and Benevolence has been hard at work these past few months. We have recently launched the Pledge Campaign, “Hearts to Serve, Hands to Give.”

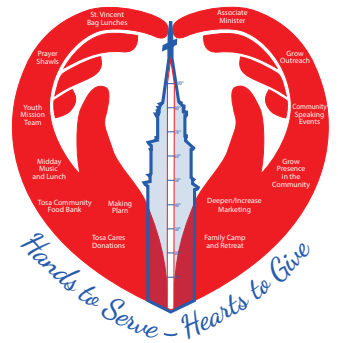
We have also been busy with the benevolent aspect of our responsibilities. The Board has voted to give to One Great Hour of Sharing to support victims of floods in both Texas and Southeastern Wisconsin, Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative, Hope House, St. Vincent's, the Myanmar Mission, the Fishers of Men mission, and others. Additionally, we have used Raise Right gift cards to give to Habitat for Humanity and provide Lowe's and Home Depot gift cards for members of our church who were affected by the August flood.

Please look for the Benevolence Bulletin Board, located across from the Friendship Lounge, that highlights the work the board is

doing and provides a drop box for your suggestions. If there are any organizations you would like the board to consider donating to, please fill out a form and put it into the box.

Thank you for your continued support of our board and for helping to ensure that, as a church, we are following the Covenant to, “reach out with compassion to those in need, to treat each other with love and understanding, and to return to God a portion of God’s gifts.”

Tori Raddemann, Co-Chair



Lend a Hand at Saturday Serves!

“Saturday Serve” gives you an opportunity to help others without a lengthy or ongoing commitment. Meet at First Church on Saturday, October 18th at 8:30 am in the FCC Atrium for coffee and doughnuts. Following a moment of prayer, we’ll disperse to our chosen projects. Most of us will be done by 11:00 am.

Choose from among five projects: Two of the needs – Making Plarn with DdG Wakefield and Filling Bag Lunches for the St. Vincent de Paul Meal Program – will take place here at First Church. In case you're not familiar with it, "plarn" is plastic yarn created from plastic bags. The plarn will be given to an organization that creates weather-resistant sleeping mats for the homeless.

The other opportunities are offsite: Milwaukee Rescue Mission, Congregational Home, and Bridge to Brighter. Volunteers for

Milwaukee Rescue Mission and the Congregational Home will start the morning at those locations.

Please sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium and take a copy of the instructions for the activity you choose.



Kurt Thompson, Elizabeth Strasma, Cynthia Kostick and Carol Hudson served lunch at Milwaukee Rescue Mission last fall.

A Little Respite at the Women's Retreat

Patty Reddy has booked the 2025 Women's Retreat, which will return to the beautiful and convenient ChristPond. The retreat begins Friday, January 16, at 12 noon and continues until 4:00pm on Saturday, January 17. The facility can accommodate 16 overnight guests, but ChristPond is close enough (within an hour from Wauwatosa) that you can come for all or part of it -- whatever works with your schedule. Please contact Patty if you'd like to spend the night. Have someone you think would enjoy a time of fellowship, reflection and contemplation? Invite them, too! All are welcome.

For information contact Patty: patreddywauwatosa@gmail.com



Pickle Ball Anyone?

If you haven't heard, pickle ball is America's fastest growing sport! Think of it as a combination of tennis, ping pong and badminton. It's easy to learn and fun for all, including kids (10 and over) and seniors, easier on your body and good for heart health.

Our own Dr. Bill Gaertner (aka Coach Bill) will teach/facilitate pickle ball sessions for anyone interested in learning to play. No prior experience is needed. You play with a small paddle, which can be provided, if needed.

There are two opportunities to learn that are coming up:

Where: Wauwatosa East Small Gym (enter off 74th Street)

When: October 12th, 1:00 to 3:00 pm and/or October 26th, 12 noon to 2:00 pm

Cost: \$2 per person to offset the court fee. Pay at the door.

Please sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium. Space is limited. For more information contact Bill at bgaertner@sbcglobal.net.



**Create good vibes in your life
through prayer,
meditation, reflection
and conversation**



**Tuesdays
5:30-6:15 pm
Room LL2**

Rev. Tesha Urban & Rev. Julie, facilitators

JUST FOR YOUTH

October 2025



Sunday School

October 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th for ages 4 – 5th grade

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

Faith Finders

Monday, October 13th for 1st - 5th graders

We meet on the second Monday of the month for fellowship, games, and program time. We begin with an optional dinner at 5^{pm}, followed by activities from 5:30 - 6:30^{pm}. Friends are welcome!

No cost, but donations for the meal are appreciated.

Junior Choir

October 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th for K-8th grades - Meet at 9:30^{am} in LL4. Children usually sing once a month.

Covenant Class October 12th & 26th for 9th graders

We will meet the 2nd & 4th Sunday of each month from 4:00-6:00^{pm}.

Pilgrim Fellowship (PF)

October 5th, 12th & 26th grades 6-12

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

More Youth Programing

Youth Gathering October 5th We meet the first Sunday of each month from 4:00-6:00^{pm}, with dinner at 5:30^{pm}.

Youth Bible Study October 19th

Youth meet the third Sunday of each month from 8:45-9:45^{am}.



3rd graders and Covenant teens received Bibles on Rally Sunday, September 7th.



The Fairy Tale Land of Switzerland

Enjoy coffee and dessert as
Carmen Berte shares images and
experiences from her trip to Switzerland

Tuesday, October 14th ~12:30 pm
in the Friendship Lounge

Please sign up at the Gathering Table
in the Atrium if you plan to attend.



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