

Established 1856

Talk of the Tower

You are welcome at First Congregational U.C.C., wherever you are on your spiritual journey.

May 24, 2017



**GOD'S
PEOPLE
GATHER**

SUNDAY, MAY 28

John 17:1-11

10:00 a.m.

† Worship—Sanctuary

No Sunday school is held today. The nursery is open and unstaffed; worship can be viewed there on a TV screen via live feed from the sanctuary.

11:00 a.m. Fellowship

SUNDAY, JUNE 4

Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21

8:30 a.m. Worship, Chapel

10:00 a.m. Worship, Sanctuary—
Communion, Care 'n Share

11:00 a.m. Fellowship

5:00 p.m. Koinonia

SUNDAY, JUNE 11

Genesis 1:1-2:4a

8:30 a.m. Worship, Chapel

10:00 a.m. Worship, Sanctuary—
Baptism

11:00 a.m. Fellowship

WHAT'S HAPPENING



SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE BEGINS JUNE 4

Worship in air conditioned comfort in the Chapel at 8:30 a.m. on summer Sundays. The service will be similar to the traditional 10:00 service in the sanctuary. This schedule will continue through August 27.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

June 1, 7 p.m., June 11, 11:15 a.m.

We are excited about launching a new pastoral care program called the Stephen Ministry. Stephen Ministers are lay caregivers who provide care to the bereaved, hospitalized, terminally ill, and those who are facing a crisis or life challenge. If you'd like to learn more about this ministry, we have two informational meetings planned: Thursday, June 1st at 7 p.m. and Sunday, June 11 after worship. Another way to find out more is to contact Mary Barnes in the church office or Tim Fritz at 608-215-2387 or tfritz1118@gmail.org

SUMMER BOOK STUDY

GOD IS NOT ONE: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World by Stephen Prothero

Thursdays 6/15, 6/29, 7/13, and 7/27
10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. (snacks served)

This summer join Pastor Mark and Shannon Joshi as they co-lead a 4 part discussion. *New York Times* bestselling author and religion scholar Stephen Prothero argues that persistent attempts to portray all religions as different paths to the same God overlook the distinct problem that each tradition seeks to solve. Delving into the different problems and solutions that Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Yoruba Religion, Daoism and Atheism strive to combat, *God is Not One* is an indispensable guide to the questions human beings have asked for millennia.

COMING UP IN JUNE

June 25 following worship

Mark your calendars for the Spring Annual Meeting for the purpose of electing new officers, passing the 2017-18 budget and making a change to the bylaws.

The meeting will be followed by the ever-popular All-Church Potluck! More information will be available in the next *Talk of the Tower*.

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends in Christ,

"I believe; help my unbelief!" cried the father in Mark's gospel seeking healing for his child (Mark 9:24). This is the first text that comes to my mind when my fundamental trust that God will provide us with the resources required to carry out the work that we believe God has entrusted to us is challenged as it always is in May and June. I typically don't sleep very well during the follow-up to the Stewardship Drive which almost always turns out very well.

This year is no exception. The good news is we have nearly as many households pledging at this point in our Stewardship Drive as we did at the conclusion of last year's effort. And 26% of our households have increased their giving for the coming fiscal year! Sixty percent have kept their pledge constant, and, only 8% of our households have had to decrease their giving. That is a good response at this point in the process.

In dollars we are about \$70,000 behind the total amount we pledged for our present fiscal year. To fully fund our 2017-2018 fiscal year which begins July 1, we need to receive an additional \$145,000 in pledges and gifts. This represents an amount equal to about 20% of our anticipated investment in ministry in the coming fiscal year.

It may be that in reviewing our expectations for the coming fiscal year we can trim 4% to 5% without significantly affecting program or personnel. Still, this requires our receiving about \$120,000 in additional pledges and gifts by June 14, 2017 to fully support the life of our congregation as we have come to know it and to lay a secure foundation for the life of our faith community going forward.

Here's what we can do:

- ⇒ If you have not already done so, now would be a great time to pledge.
- ⇒ If you have already pledged, you may consider an increase.
- ⇒ You may choose to make a one time gift in addition to your pledge as some households did for this fiscal year and without which we would not have been able to accomplish what we have. If you would like to make a larger one time gift and have planned your charitable giving for 2017, remember our fiscal year extends to June 30, 2018 allowing for a gift in the first half of the next calendar year.
- ⇒ In all cases, please inform our Financial Secretary, Mary Ann Minton, of your wishes at finance@firstucceauclaire.org by or before June 14, 2017.
- ⇒ We can all pray that God will continue to send us the resources required to carry out the ministries God has entrusted to us; be grateful for the challenges and the opportunities God places before us; and, celebrate God's promise to be with us always as we seek to ever more faithfully embody the presence of the Holy One in our time and place.

With you in Christ's service,

Mark

PRAYER CONCERNS



Please keep Shannon Joshi on the death of her aunt, Margi Namejunas, Ethee Magaw, Richard and Cathy James' son-in-law Darcy, Katie Berg, Anne Sather, Clarence Stock's sister Mary, Dan Reali's sister Mary Lou, Jackie Solberg, a child's healing, a family of the church dealing with mental health issues, Helen Nordstrom's mother, Chris Goodman's grandmother, Steve Landkammer, Zoey Berger, Ben and Jan Proctor's brother-in-law Steve Lahner, Nancy Miller's brother-in-law Wayne Myers, Pine Ridge Retreat Center and Rev. Karen Ressel, Annie Bailey's mother Olive Jean, those suffering with health concerns and chronic pain, victims of natural disasters, caregivers of loved ones at home, and all those affected by war and terrorism, in your thoughts and prayers.

Please alert the office if you know someone who is ill, is dealing with the loss of a loved one, or is having a difficult time in their life. We try not to miss anyone but sometimes it does happen and we do apologize. And please remember our shut-ins and our nursing home residents with your prayers, a card, a visit or a call.

CHURCH VIPs

Worship attendance

May 14 – 243 May 21 – 221

Ushers: May 28 – Craig Falkner, Capt; Richard Arnold, Charlie and Lucy Bauer, Jeff Herman, Jeff Reuter, Matt Gundry

June 4 – Dave Pulkrabek, Capt; Joel Klink, Jake Jacobson, Dave Turner, Will Pooley, Greg Barnes
June 11 – Corbet Peterson, Capt; Darrell Beeksmas, Mark Haugsby, Brett Schroedel, Bob Massey, Jerry Siler, Cherie VanderVoort

Liturgists: May 28 – Penny Kolloff June 4 – Katrinka Bourne June 11 – John Urice

Tellers: May 28 – Melani Orendorff, Karen Taylor June 4 – Ann Lamoureux, Corinne Liegel June 11 – Jerry Foote, Amy Steigerwald

Greeters: May 28 – Religious Education June 4 – Spiritual Life June 11 – Stewardship

MISSIONS IN MOTION

SOAP SUNDAY IS JUNE 11TH

What is SOAP Sunday? It is the time each year when we collect hygiene products (large and small) and cleaning supplies. We also have an offering so that you can give money to buy these products.

What do we do with the products we receive?

Travel size items will be given to the Chippewa Valley Street ministry to give to the homeless.

Regular size items will be given to the Salvation Army Hygiene Bank, the only place that those in need can regularly get such products in Eau Claire.

Money will be used to buy products for the Hygiene Bank.

What type of products do we collect? Anything that can clean a person or a house.

Toothpaste and toothbrushes

Shampoo, body soap and lotion, combs

Shaving cream and razors

Feminine hygiene products

Dish and clothes detergent

Household cleaning supplies of all types

Why is this important? Approximately 18% of Eau Claire residents live below the poverty line (\$23,850 for a family of 4). While they can get assistance for food, health care, and, in some cases, housing, there is no assistance for hygiene items. Food Share (food stamps) cannot be used for any of these items. And Feed My People Food Bank almost never gets these items donated from manufacturers, as they do with food.

As you go down the aisles of the grocery or discount store during the next few weeks and see items on sale, please pick up a few extra for our struggling neighbors. And if you would prefer that we do the shopping for you, monetary contributions are greatly appreciated!



Announcing Chippewa Valley Ex-Prisoners Organizing's Inaugural Fundraiser, Tuesday, June 6, 5:00 to 6:30 PM, at First Congregational UCC, in Ingram Hall.

For over 10 years, JONAH (Joining Our Neighbors, Advancing Hope) has been a leader in the Chippewa Valley in the fight to transform our criminal justice system. Through the collaborative efforts of JONAH's Criminal Justice Reform Team (CJRT) to develop treatment alternatives to incarceration, Eau Claire County has created four treatment courts. **These specialty courts save money and save lives by treating the root causes of addiction and crime and restoring those convicted of crimes to responsible and productive citizenship.** The CJRT are now joined by Chippewa Valley Ex-Prisoners Organizing (CV EXPO) and broadening their reach.

CV EXPO is a group of individuals who have been impacted by Wisconsin's criminal justice system. Their membership includes:

People who are incarcerated

Citizens who have returned to our community from jail or prison

Individuals who have had contact with the criminal justice system at some point

Community members who have loved ones who are currently or formerly incarcerated

CV EXPO lifts the voices of those who have direct experience with the criminal justice system to the forefront of the movement to end mass incarceration. **They share their stories to shed light on the injustices of the penal system and the barriers faced by people with conviction histories.** They strive to assist in the reentry of people who are leaving jail or prison so they can achieve the quality of life that all of us seek.

CV EXPO needs your support to:

Train leaders

Host public events

Hire a full-time organizer

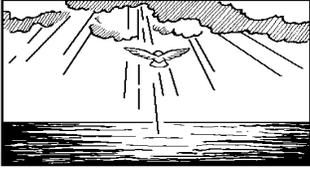
Provide mentoring and peer support for people released from Eau Claire County Jail or prison

Continue research with UWEC

Print brochures, sustain social media, etc.

Please join us on **Tuesday, June 6, at 5:00 PM**, at First Congregational UCC, in Ingram to support the work of CV EXPO.

CONNECT, LEARN,



Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.

-John 4:14

LEARNING IN JESUS' NAME

SHANNON JOSHI, DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

THANK YOU!! VOLUNTEERS!

Sharing time in Sunday morning and week night fellowship programs for children and youth is not about teaching. We share our faith when we share our life and life-view, and that in God, we are not without hope.

We thank all who have shared their time and enriched their own faith and that of our children this past year. As you look at these names, marvel at the number of people who love our children and this congregation with these gifts of time. If you see one of the persons, please acknowledge our gratitude for their caring ministry.

In this program year 2016-2017, our children and volunteers were present in worship on communion Sundays which correspondingly reduced our volunteers and volunteer hours. This past year we enjoyed the help of **62 (non-duplicated) volunteers** in our Sunday morning children's ministry, confirmation and youth fellowship programs. These volunteers support the work of our administrative task forces, and our full and part-time staff members. We had 2 part-time young adult leaders Mitch Brown with middle school and Katie Griffith as the lead Nursery teacher.

With new leadership, you are invited to help us build new vision. If you are a first time volunteer, you will be surprised at the small amount of time required to lead a Sunday morning lesson and the large amount of support and preparation that is done for you. If you would like more information about our Sunday school and youth programs, please contact Shannon Joshi at Shannonj@firstucceauclaire.org.

THANKS FOR



VOLUNTEERING

Nursery Volunteers:

Shannon Joshi, Manish Joshi, Shana Schmidt, Abbie Oelson, Maddie Falkner, Leo Lonzarich, Emily Ruth, and Eliza Wiegel

Grades 2-5 Volunteers:

Jayne Woodburn, Kristen Gundry, Jeanne Herman, Karen McMahan, Celena Reuter, Sue Haake, Leah Olson-McBride, Jackie and Kurt Wiegel, Shana Schmidt, John Murphy, Dave Johnson, Paul Braun, Laura Bergh, Brooke Johnson, Liz Falkner, Tom Giffey, Sandy Ayres, Beth Ivankovic, Marian Smith, Gina Caldwell, Peter Hart-Brinson, Becky Dyar, Madi Braun, Mary Barnes, Kristin Rossi, Meredith Ball, Kelly Nordstrom, Sannon Joshi, and James Hazelton

Middle School, High School and Confirmation Volunteers:

Kristi Kampa, Kurt and Jackie Wiegel, Kate Spranger, Kristen Gundry, Lean Olson-McBride, Mary Beth Tusing, Angie Stokes, Abby Seveland, Julie Weinkauff, Marian Smith, Mary Burt, and Maegan McHugh

GROW - IN COMMUNITY

SUMMER IS ALMOST UPON US

By now, you should have received a copy of our Summer Slice of Bread for the Journey. (If you haven't, I encourage you to swing by the church office to grab a copy or request that one be e-mailed to you.) In Summer Slice you will find numerous summer activities for you and your family to participate in. What can you expect to find? A 4 part book study on the 8 major religions of the world (see the details on the front page); an evening picnic at Carson Park followed by an Express baseball game; our 25th annual Making Connections Camping trip paired with a Summer Fun Day, for those who aren't camping, at Coon Forks Public Beach; a summer book offering for The Twelve, fellow congregant Jeff Herman's *The Source Labyrinth*; plus an opportunity to volunteer at Feed My People Food Bank. Please, come one, come all! RSVP to Shannon Joshi, 715.834.2668, shannonj@firstucceauclaire.org

A NIGHT AT THE EXPRESS

New! A summer tradition, picnicking and baseball! This summer let's do it First Congo style. We'll be meeting at Carson Park for family fun activities, a potluck picnic in the pavilion, then it's off to the Express baseball game. First Congo will provide the grillin' meat, please bring a dish to pass. RSVP with the number of attendees so we can pre-purchase tickets and plan food and games accordingly.



Cost: \$8.00 per person

Date: Sunday, June 11

Time: 3:00-5:00 PM (games & food in the park)
5:00 Express Game

FEED MY PEOPLE FOOD BANK

Come volunteer and learn more about your area food bank! Volunteers can expect to help repack bulk food items such as pasta or cereal or help label cans. Activities are kid-friendly and children as young as 8 are welcome to volunteer with a parent. RSVP contact information below.

Date: Wednesday, August 23

Time: 5:00-7:00 PM

Location: Feed My People Foodbank
2610 Alpine Road, EC 54703

25th ANNUAL MAKING CONNECTIONS CAMPING

Grab your tent and pack a swimsuit, we're off for our annual First Congo camping weekend. Campers will enjoy nightly hospitality around the campfire, swimming and games at the beach, and lots, lots more.

A First Congo summer tradition! Join us whether it's your first time, or 25th!

Date: July 21 - 23

Location: Coon Forks Campground

Leader: Mary Barnes, 715.834.2668
maryb@firstucceauclaire.org



SUMMER FUN DAY: **New!**

Pack your swimming gear and meet up at the Coon Forks Public Swimming Beach (west side of the lake). Join in for a day of games, food, and fun in the water and sun! This event coincides with our Making Connections Camping event. Not able to camp for the weekend, no problem, join us just for the day! Bring a dish to pass and some sunscreen, we'll do the rest. You'll find free parking, a covered pavilion, and restrooms for our convenience. RSVP so games and food can be planned accordingly.

Date: Saturday, July 22

Time: 10:00-2:00

Location: Coon Forks Public Beach

WELCOME H ME

LGBTQ+ EDUCATION, ADVOCACY &
CONNECTION

The new LGBTQ+ Education, Advocacy & Connection group is kicking off with our first event - a booth at Eau Claire Pride!

The event runs from 9:00 AM - 1:30 PM on Saturday, June 10th in Riverside Park.

We are looking for volunteers to take 1-hour (or more) shifts to advertise our welcoming church community.

For details or to sign up, contact Shannon Joshi at Shannonj@firstucceauclaire.org.

OPPORTUNITIES IN MINISTRY

MEET ANOTHER HOUSEHOLD



Our Church Family

Joining the church family in April:

Justin and Abbie Oleson, Ellie, Maggie, and Piper

Thank you for welcoming us into the church! We have three daughters: Ellie (7), Maggie (5) and Piper (3). Justin works for Fastenal in Menomonie and Abbie is a reading teacher at Lakeshore Elementary and an adjunct faculty at UW-Stout. We both grew up in central Wisconsin, but came to UW-EC for college. We loving being a part of the Eau Claire community and are thankful to be a part of the community of First Congregational, as well. We're glad you are Olesons!

FAREWELL, MY FRIENDS...

What a privilege it has been to serve you in ministry. God called me to First Congregational United Church of Christ to collaborate with you and with those who have gone before you; to care for each other, for those around us, and away from us. Being an office manager has a wide-ranging job description!



As part of that job (vocation) I spent part of my time crafting words. Now, as I leave, I find myself at a loss for words. Thank you for your interest in my life and your tender care dating back to the last century! The May 7 retirement party was so thoughtfully planned and implemented. I was honored by so many of you who took part in the celebration. The generous gifts from the congregation will go a long way to support Brad's and my plans to travel. We'll take a little of each of you down the road with us. And, for your personal gifts and well wishes, thank you.

To the staff: I know you will continue with the team spirit we've carefully honed – enjoying hard work and fun equally. That was evident with the over-the-top party, games and gifts you offered this month. I will miss our camaraderie, our tolerance, and our working together through the Holy Spirit. (And what will I do without Monday morning staff meetings?)

Friends, I pass the Christ torch to Pam Braun with confidence you are in capable loving hands.

I will not miss the daily routine (a total of 40 years of 9 to 5). What I will miss is walking into your beautiful building at 3rd and Broadway, knowing it has housed God's people like you for generations and will for generations to come.

To have had a small part in that history has been an honor. God bless you all.

See you in the community! – Jan



IN THE CONGREGATION

† A service of celebration for the life of James Benning will be held on Thursday, May 25 at 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary with visitation one hour prior to the service.

♪ Ben Kittilstad will host a Piano Recital in our sanctuary Saturday, June 3rd at 3 p.m.

FROM THE OFFICE

- ◆ The church office will be closed on Monday, May 29 in observance of Memorial Day.
- ◆ The church office will close at noon on Fridays during the summer months.
- ◆ Church leaders are reminded of the 2017-18 program planning meeting which will be held on Wednesday, June 7 at 12 noon. Lunch provided. Please RSVP.
- ◆ Current church phone directories are available in the office.
- ◆ The fiscal year ends on June 30. Please have your 2016-17 pledge in to Mary Ann by then.
- ◆ Beginning May 30, e-mailed office correspondence may be sent to Pam Braun
pamb@firststuceauclaire.org



PRIMETIME POSTINGS

MARY BARNES, DIRECTOR OF ELDERLIFE

PRIMETIME FRIENDS NEEDS YOUR IDEAS FOR PROGRAMS FOR THE COMING YEAR!

At our June 21 meeting, we will vote on which programs sound interesting for the coming year. But we need YOUR help to come up with some good possible topics and/or speakers. Perhaps you've heard a good program at the Senior Center, or the Retired Teachers' meetings or somewhere...let us know and we'll put it on the list for voting. Thanks for helping make Primetime Friends great!

Trees By [Joyce Kilmer](#)

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

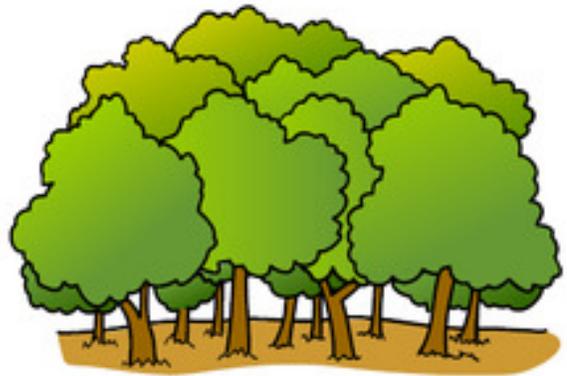
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.



Todd Chwala, Manager of the Parks, Forestry & Cemetery for the city of Eau Claire is our June speaker for Primetime Friends. Todd is a wealth of information about trees in Eau Claire. The City of Eau Claire made history in 2015 by approving a program for diverting the city's trees away from the chipper and into local wood businesses to ensure 100% highest uses for its urban trees. This action effectively matched Eau Claire's forestry department objectives with the sustainability goals of the city. The EC Forestry Division and staff are commended as exemplary stewards of both their budget, and of Eau Claire's urban forest. Mark your calendar and plan to join us to learn more about trees!

First Congregational U.C.C.
310 Broadway St.
Eau Claire, WI 54703

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 311
Eau Claire, WI



“O water-born”

I’ve loved this anonymous invitation since I first read it: “O water-born, go where the Spirit calls.” It’s part of an early Christian prayer (fifth century or older), perhaps used by bishops performing baptisms.

When I Googled the phrase to learn more about it, the search engine asked if I meant “water-borne.” No, I didn’t: We are born of water and the Holy Spirit through baptism.

Then it dawned on me: Aren’t we also borne on that baptismal water infused with the Word of God? The grace of baptism carries us through the ups and downs of life. When we rest in it (like floating on our back in a summer lake), rather than struggling (swimming) against it, we let the water take us gently wherever God’s Spirit would have us go.

—Heidi Mann (Newsletternewsletter June 2013)

TALK OF THE TOWER...

is a publication for members and friends of First Congregational United Church of Christ, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Editor: Jan Smith Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Mark X. Pirazzini

Next deadline: 10 a.m., **Monday, June 12 2017**

Put items (as short as possible) in the “in” basket in the church office or e-mail to pamb@firststucceauclaire.org



First Congregational United Church of Christ

310 Broadway St., Eau Claire, WI 54703

Phone: 715-834-2668

Fax: 715-834-0674

Web site: www.firststucceauclaire.org

E-mail: jans@firststucceauclaire.org (office)
pastor@firststucceauclaire.org (minister)

Office hours: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

Staff

Rev. Dr. Mark Pirazzini, Minister

Shannon Joshi, Director of Faith Formation

Jan Smith, Church Office Manager

Mary Barnes, Director of Elderlife

Brent Podhaski, Custodian

Mary Ann Minton, Financial Secretary

Dr. Gary Schwartzhoff, Director of Music

Judy Lies, Organist

Pam Braun, Primary Education Coordinator

Katie Griffith, Lead Nursery Teacher

Susan Jewett, Social Media Coordinator

Mitch Brown, Student Mentor

Curtis Wetzel, Youth Choir Director