First Congregational
United Church of Christ
420 Wilson Ave.
Menomonie, WI 54751
(715) 235-5838
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The Bell

November 2026



November Activities

Sunday Services: November 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th
8:30am Contemplative Service (**not on 22nd**)
10am Traditional Service (in-person & livestream)

Sunday, November 1st, 8th, 15th, and 29th
11:30am Bible Study, R1

Wednesdays, November 4th, 11th, 18th
9:30am Tour of Homes crafts, R1 (**Nov. 18th in R3**)
4pm Kid's Club, R2
5:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal, Sanctuary
6:30pm Bell Choir rehearsal, Music Room

Thursday, November 5th
3:30pm Executive Committee, R1

Saturday, November 7th
9am-3pm Quilt Tour, FH

Sunday, November 8th – Bridge Coffee Hour

Tuesday, November 10th
5:30pm Christian Education, R1

Tuesday, November 12th
10am Mission for Peace and Justice, R1
5pm Congregational Support Committee, R1
6pm Church Council, R1

Saturday, November 14th
10am Mission Committee: Video Presentation, FH

Sunday, November 15th
9am 'Curious about membership?' FH

Wednesdays, November 18th
9am Thursday's Table Committee, R1

Sunday, November 22nd – Heritage Sunday & Turkey Dinner

Church Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday, 9:00am-2:00pm; Friday – closed
Thursday, November 25th – Thanksgiving Day, closed



🧵 SEW FULL OF HOPE: QUILT TOUR 2026 🧵

Join us for a beautiful day celebrating creativity, community, and a meaningful cause at The Bridge to Hope's Sew Full of Hope: Quilt Tour 2026!

📅 Saturday, November 7, 2026
⏰ 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM
📍 Menomonie, WI
🎟️ $10 Admission: Tickets available at the door only!

Explore FOUR unique locations featuring stunning quilts crafted by SIX talented quilt guilds! Your $10 admission gives you access to all four locations:

🧵 Our Saviors Lutheran Church
🧵 Christ Lutheran Church
🧵 First Congregational UCC
🧵 Cedarbrook Church

✨ What can you expect?
• Beautiful quilt displays at every location
• Multiple vendors to shop and explore
• Raffle prizes—including handcrafted quilts! 🎟️🧵
• A fun day connecting with fellow quilt lovers and community members
• And we're exploring the possibility of offering a chili lunch to warm you up along the way! 🍲

Best of all, all proceeds support The Bridge to Hope, helping us provide free and confidential services to individuals impacted by domestic abuse, sexual assault, and human trafficking. 💜

Grab your quilting friends, make a day of it, and come stitch together a community full of hope!

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Beloved Children of God:

The 2026 midterm election is now literally around the corner. I will be spending the day as a poll chaplain: someone who is 100 feet outside a polling location to be a welcoming, de-escalating presence, while watching to ensure eligible voters can safely vote without fear, interference, or intimidation.

I have heard people say, "I can't wait until the election is over!" Well, friends, election day will be done and the campaign ads, calls, and texts will hopefully be as well. But I'll breathe a little bit easier AFTER January 3rd when the duly elected congress is to be seated.

As I continue with the public facing ministry of election protection/defense, I share the following that Wisconsin Council of Churches have on their website, "loving you neighbor in election season."

On Sunday, October 18th, I offered this prayer for all working the upcoming elections.

A Prayer for Election Heroes by Rev. Jo Wiersema

O God of all creation, we thank you for all people made in your image. We thank you for the strength, tenacity, and thoughtfulness of the people who ensure voting is accessible to all. We thank you for poll workers, election office staff, municipal and county election clerks, boards of canvassers, and state election officials. We ask in your everlasting comfort that you care for these people. Keep these good and kind servants safe in their work. Wrap them in your great arms, O God, care for them in their steadfast dedication to justice, and support them in their passion for equity. God, help us to care for those who care for us in our voting rights. God, bless these election day workers, not just when we see them at the polls, but in their daily work to ensure they are loved, cared for, and safe in their communities. Amen.

Next is a resource for strength and courage for the days and time ahead, as recent history has shown with current unlawful threats are bombarding us to realize: the election is not done until the leaders the voters choose are certified and sworn into office.

Seven Prayers with Seven Scriptures

You can pray one each day of the week, when you read the morning news or social media, at your lunch break, or at the end of a troubling day. Or, you can pray the prayer you need in that moment.

On your way to the polls, conventions, or demonstrations

When our anger leads us to roads of rage;
Spirit of Wisdom, guide us to take hopeful action.
"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it." - Psalm 34:14

When the news is disturbing
When hopelessness troubles us;
Gentle God, may we know Your presence is with us.
"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." John 14:27

When social media posts or politics threaten friendships
When politics and systems of the world threaten to divide us;
Prince of Peace, reign in us.
"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful." - Colossians 3:15

As political signs are posted
When we see our neighborhoods covered with blue and red signs; Creator God,
remind us You created every one of us, all our neighbors, in Your image.
"If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." - Romans 12:18

When we feel defeated, or don't want to engage with others
When our despair causes us to withdraw;
O Lord, remind us that we belong together.
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." - Matthew 5:9

When your mental health is affected
When our anxiety keeps us up at night;
God Who Watches Over Us, grant us restful sleep.
"I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety." - Psalm 4:8

When fear of what might happen overwhelms us
When hope seems but a glimmer;
Eternal One, remind us that seeds take time to be planted.
"And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace." - James 3:18

And through it all, remember that God is with us and encouraging us to work for love, truth, and justice for ALL people.

Prayers and blessings are with you~
Pastor René

From the Director of Faith Formation

Karen Miller



As Election Day approaches, I feel a sense of relief. Finally, an end to the endless political attack ads, the daily report card of who performed well and who committed political suicide, the chatter of "pre-election" statisticians with their magical voter turnout maps.

I also feel a sense of anxiety. Election Day will only tell us who is "in" and who is "out." It won't fix or erase most of the problems we face as a fractured nation. I don't believe the election will make us better citizens, better communicators, listeners, or problem solvers. Then there is the unknown dread – how will those that win and lose react or respond to the outcome? Will we witness further assaults on political institutions and politicians at the local, state, and national level? Will you and I have to take to the streets to demand that democracy and the people rule? Will we gloat over our side's wins and the other side's losses?

And what about Thanksgiving? Will family and friends be able to put aside their vehemently felt political beliefs for a few hours to express gratitude for all that they have been blessed with? Or will more of us decide to stay home, limiting our expression of gratitude for those that agree with us? No, I no longer believe elections alone solve the problems humans face in governing themselves.

Engaging with those that disagree with us is not an action to be lightly undertaken. Like many issues in life, family dynamics can frustrate the most well-intentioned attempts to engage in real dialogue. Old roles, old resentments, and unspoken hurts surface so easily when we feel we are under attack. Even the best of friends will choose to not talk about politics for the sake of their friendship.

If you are spending time with family and friends over the coming holiday season and are worried that you may encounter a few "difficult" conversations concerning politics, consider joining the "Turkey Talk – Families and Politics" workshop presented by the local chapter of the national Braver Angels organization. The workshop will

- provide you with guidelines should you choose to engage in political discussion with family members or friends;
- help you identify some of the common roles family members play in political discussions;
- provide you with strategies to deal with challenging family members and friends; and
- provide you time to practice using the strategies and conversing with other participants.

The workshop is on **Wednesday, November 18, 1:30 to 3:30 PM** at Menomonie United Methodist Church. Light refreshments will be served. The workshop is **FREE**, but you **must register** on the Braver Angels website: **BRAVER ANGELS REGISTRATION.** Enter code BRAVER to be issued a free ticket.

Vote respectfully!

May your faith serve you well,

Karen

Together for Tomorrow Initiative
It's Our Turn to Help the Next Generation



In 1892, the people that came before us gave us this beautiful church building. And 100 years later, in 1992, the gift of our fellowship hall was given. The *Together for Tomorrow* initiative is an opportunity to provide a gift to the next generation through building the General Endowment.

***Together for Tomorrow* is Wrapping Up**. The *Together for Tomorrow* initiative is coming to an end with Heritage Sunday.

Why support the *Together for Tomorrow* initiative? It strengthens the General Endowment, which helps fund our church each year. Donations remain intact as principal and generate investment income. Under the Special Gifts and Bequests Policy, the endowment distributes 4% of its total assets, valued on April 30th each year, to support church operations and programs. This annual distribution provides vital support for our church.

At present, the General Endowment holds assets of about $190,000. In the beginning of the *Together for Tomorrow* initiative (Heritage Sunday, 2025) we had about $150,000, yielding approximately $6,000 of financial support for the general budget. If our General Endowment grew to $200,000, it would provide $8,000 every year to the church. These resources support the choirs, children's programing, outreach to UW-Stout, and much more. Your one-time donation to the General Endowment continues to provide for the church, year after year.

Please join in the initiative by adding your name to the tree! Donate online at menomonieucc.org, "*Together for Tomorrow*," or in person, indicating "*Together for Tomorrow" on your envelope or check.*

To help us mark the end of Together for Tomorrow, Andrew Warner will again join us for our Heritage Sunday worship. Please mark your calendars and join us for any of the following events:

- Saturday, November 21st 4:00-6:00pm
  A fun and informal wine and cheese reception at Lee and Jill Schwebs' home. Please RSVP to Jeanne at 715-619-1970 or rothauptj@gmail.com

- Saturday, November 21st 6:30-8:00pm
  Supper with Andrew at the Wood and Vine restaurant at Tanglewood Greens. (Own expense). This is a great opportunity for fellowship and small group discussion. Please RSVP to Jeanne by 11/16/26 so that we can reserve a table.

- Sunday, November 22nd 11:00-11:30am
  Q&A time in the sanctuary after service with Andrew. In addition to planned gifts, Andrew will also provide information on tax-smart gift options. (This is especially helpful for those with traditional IRAs.)

These are wonderful opportunities as we wrap up *Together for Tomorrow.* All are encouraged to participate.

Questions? Please ask Jeanne Rothaupt, Past Moderator and Planned Giving Chair 715-619-1970 (rothauptj@gmail.com)

Music in Worship: Thoughts from Your Music Deacon

By Deanna Schultz

Music plays an important role in our Sunday worship services and is often what brings people to church each Sunday. We all probably have different experiences in our past with church music, so I wanted to explore the role of music during a worship service and share what I find with you.

To start with, I've been doing a little research on singing hymns during the worship service, especially in planning for some "hymn sing" Sundays. I came across writing by Robert Morgan in his book, *Then Sings My Soul*, that seems fitting to share as we sing what some might consider old but familiar hymns on October 25 around the theme of unity.

> *Hymns connect us with generations now gone. Each week, millions of Christians in local settings around the world, using hymns composed by believers from every era and branch of Christendom, join voices in united bursts of praise, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord.*

I found comfort in the idea that singing hymns passed down over generations helps connect us to others around the world and to saints who have gone before us. I would welcome hearing your thoughts about what singing "old," often familiar hymns means to you.

Watch for more thoughts on music in worship in upcoming editions of The Bell.

Morgan, R. J. (2003). *Then sings my soul: 150 of the world's greatest hymn stories*. Thomas Nelson Publishing.

November Worship Volunteers

	Flowers	**Coffee Servers**	**Readers**
November 1st	Doris Win	Sherry Bernick	Kim Blomquist
November 8th **Bridge Sunday**	Renee Howarton		Susan Hall
November 15th	Margi Stauss	Diane Mercil and Ellen Ochs	Sherry Bernick
November 22nd **Heritage Sunday**	Dave and Sue Halama	Turkey Dinner potluck	
November 29th	Sally Conklin	Nancy Jackson	

Signup sheets are by the west entrance & near the coat closet

Announcements

Save the Date

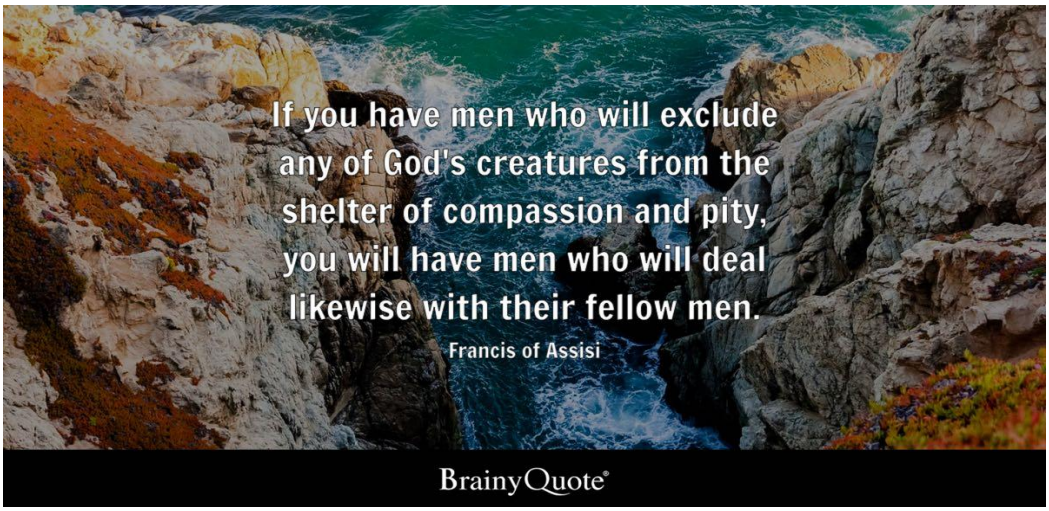
Please join us on **Saturday, November 14 at 10am** in the Fellowship Hall as The Mission for Peace and Justice Committee is sponsoring a Video of Robin Wall Kimmerer. Robin Wall Kimmerer is a mother, scientist, decorated professor, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She is the author of *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, which has earned Kimmerer wide acclaim. Robin's newest book, *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* (November 2024), is a bold and inspiring vision for how to orient our lives around gratitude, reciprocity, and community, based on the lessons of the natural world. Join us for this inspiring presentation, as Robin Wall Kimmerer guides us toward a future where gratitude shapes our relationship with each other and the living world. Learn about the Honorable Harvest, her "Plant, Baby, Plant" movement, and what we can learn from our non-human relatives. We will have coffee and treats. Copies of her book *The Serviceberry* will be available for attendees to borrow if they are interested in participating in a book discussion at a future date (possibly January).

Curious About Becoming a Member?

Gather with us on **November 15th at 9:00 a.m**. in the Fellowship Hall to have your questions answered. We'll have coffee and snacks. It will be a relaxed gathering to get to know each other, and talk about some reasons for becoming a member, or whatever else is on your mind. This is a no-pressure occasion, and everyone is welcome.

Creation Justice Reflection for November

St. Francis of Assisi was a 13th century mystic, poet, and Catholic friar who was named the patron saint of ecology in 1979 by Pope John Paul II. He is credited with the following quote:



Heritage Sunday Potluck Meal on November 22nd.

Join us for a wonderful meal following our service on the 22nd. We will have turkey and the fixings, along with an array of potluck dishes. Everyone is welcome! The sign-up sheet for roasting turkeys, mashing potatoes, kitchen help, and other chores will be in the Fellowship Hall starting October 25th.

In Case You Are Wondering!

You may have noticed (and maybe been surprised by) a new addition to the west entrance area of the church. The Mission for Peace and Justice Committee has been planning, with approval from the church council, to place the raised planter that you see as a visible reminder of our Creation Justice Covenant. The plan is to fill the planter with native plants next spring. A plaque honoring our covenant will be placed on or near the planter.

Until then, we plan to decorate and/or fill the planter with appropriate fall, Christmas, and winter decor. We would like to hear your ideas on how and what we should include to do this. You may have something you would like to include. Let anyone on the Mission Committee know, or you can email Agnes at aawelsch@gmail.com.

The planter and fill has been donated by members of the Mission for Peace and Justice Committee members.

LINK TO THE FULL CHURCH CALENDAR: https://www.menomonieucc.org/monthlycalendar

Thank you!

A big thank you to the following people who volunteered to help with Muffin Mondays this semester:
Regular Bakers: Lyn Collins, June Grambo, Rose McLean, Sara Nagler, Renee Schreifels and Jane Slupe
Hand out Muffins: June and Bill Grambo, Roz and Rog Klanderman, Diane Mercil, Tom Schmelzle and Becky Staiger
Substitute Bakers: Cheryl Huenink, Marie Koch, Diane Mercil, Joan Sandfort, Deb Wesolek and Marilyn Winsor

Thank you to Karen Miller for sharing her gifts from her Native American culture with the Indigenous Sunday worship on October 11. Many were blessed by her sharing and all the readers and musicians who made the service so meaningful. Miigwech.

A Blessing for Uncertain Times

Bless you when you cannot see far ahead. May you do the next faithful thing. By: Kate Bowler

Bless you who do not know what happens next,
who worry about the world we are walking toward.
May uncertainty remind you that you still have choices to make.

Bless you with courage
for the small, faithful thing that is yours to do: to vote,
pay attention, tell the truth,
care for your neighbors,
and keep showing up.

Bless you who cannot carry the whole future.
May you carry what is yours:
a responsibility, a neighbor,
a small corner of this beautiful, terrible world.

Bless you when you cannot see far ahead.
May you do the next faithful thing,
and then the next,
until our small acts make a path
where none was visible before.

First Congregational UCC
Menomonie, WI
Draft – October 8, 2026

Roll Call: Naomi Cummings (Membership/Fellowship), Kathy Colvin (Worship), Sherry Galetka, (Stewardship), Leah Langby (Education), René Mehlberg (Pastor), Rick Nagler (Moderator), Jeanne Rothaupt (Past Moderator), Deanna Schultz (Music), Jill Schwebs (Clerk), Margi Stauss (Care Ministries) and Agnes Welsch (Mission). Jan Erdman (Treasurer), Sue Halama (Vice-moderator), and Lee Theorin (Property) were absent.

The Council was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by the Moderator, Rick.

Rick shared an update on Jan Erdman.

Agnes moved and Naomi seconded a motion to accept the agenda. It was approved.

Margi offered a reading and a prayer. Rick asked for a volunteer to pray next month and Kathy volunteered.

Jeanne moved approval of the consent agenda, including the September minutes, the Deacon Reports and the Pastor's Report. Deanna seconded the motion. Various items were discussed. The motion was approved by the Council.

Sherry Galetka volunteered to lead the Hymn Sing Service on October 25 when René will be out of town.

Naomi, from membership, discussed having an auction this winter for Loaves and Fishes. There was discussion as to who could do it. It would be January 17. Money would go for tables in the Fellowship Hall. There was a favorable response.

Leah reported on an addendum to provide guidance to the Behavioral Consequences Policy, It provides a plan for an ongoing behavioral problem. Additions were discussed and will be taken back to the committee.

Rick talked about Article IV in the Bylaws which had mostly typographical errors. There were a few changes. Jill moved approval. Jeanne seconded the motion and it was approved.

René highlighted her wonders concerning the potential upcoming Capital Campaign in her report. She will be looking for additional committee members. Certain projects have been identified with another still gathering information. René is working with Gail to gather information regarding the larger capital expense items (HVAC systems, water heater) of when last replaced and the approximate cost at the time.

There was discussion regarding committee activities and goals. There was discussion regarding a form or organization of the documents.

Rick discussed the Behavioral Covenant meeting that he, René, Naomi, Rev. Teri Hanson and Rev. Mike Southcombe. The gentlemen offered various ideas for putting together a Covenant or what it should look like. It is a plan for healthy relationships.

A discussion of the Covenants was postponed. Options were discussed.

The Northern Region Congregational Support Committee will meet on Thursday, November 12th, 5pm prior to our Council meeting. Council and membership are all invited.

Jeanne talked about the activities of the November Planned Giving Activities Weekend.

Leah moved adjournment. Agnes seconded the motion and we were adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

The Benediction was sung.

Respectfully submitted,
Jill Schwebs, Clerk