First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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The Bell

October 2026



October Activities

Sunday Services: October 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th
8:30am Contemplative Service
10am Traditional Service (in-person & livestream)

Thursday, October 1st
3:30pm Executive Committee, R1

Monday, October 5th
10am Care Ministries, R1

Wednesdays, October 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th
9:30am Tour of Homes crafts, R1
4pm Kid's Club, R2
5:30pm Chancel Choir rehearsal, Sanctuary
6:30pm Bell Choir rehearsal, Music Room

Thursday, October 8th
10am Mission for Peace and Justice, R1
6pm Church Council, R1

Sunday, October 11th – Bridge Coffee Hour

Saturday, October 17th
9am Mission for Peace and Justice event, FH

Tuesday, October 20th
4pm Early Service Committee, R1

Wednesday, October 21st
11:30am Women Fellowship, FH

Church Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday, 9:00am-2:00pm; Friday – closed

Thursday's Table:
Community take-out meal each Thursday 5-6:00pm

Community Meetings:
AA Meetings, Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 6:30am
Al-Anon Meetings, Mondays, 6:00pm
NA Meetings, Tuesdays, 7:00pm; Fridays, 6:30pm

Presentation by

Neil Koch

Retired Hydrologist with the US Geological Survey

Saturday, October 17 at 10 am
In the Fellowship Hall, 1st Congregational UCC

Coffee, snacks, time for questions and discussion



- Making sure our drinking water is safe for the next generation.
- Preventing future water related illnesses.
- Transforming Wolske Bay into a Wetland.

For more information, check our Facebook page
https://www.facebook.com/MenomonieUCC/
or email hjerrie34@gmail.com

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Beloved Children of God:

The 2026 midterm election is just around the corner. Much of my current public facing ministry is focused on loving our neighbors in this election season including voter engagement/turn-out and election protection/defense. I know and fully trust our election process including the local people who oversee and work elections: our county clerk, city clerk, town clerks; all election and poll workers. These are neighbors, friends, relatives, or church family members who have and continue to work hard ensuring free and democratic elections take place, protecting the vote you cast and every individual in their care.

The following is an excerpt from my statement at a July press conference about clergy's involvement in the upcoming elections:

> *These elections, especially Congressional District #3, have national implications which will impact our lives. Each eligible voter has the right, duty, and obligation to vote. The United States was built on the belief that voters should pick their leaders; not leaders picking their voters.*
>
> *Clergy of all faiths must play a vital role to ensure the voters' voice is heard, votes accurately counted; for election officials to bravely and safely do their job as state laws are followed for a free and democratic election to happen once more.*
>
> *Jesus didn't sit on the sidelines when communities needed help, so neither can we. God made us for a time such as this: get involved; use our voice, power, and authority to ensure love, truth, and justice prevail in the upcoming elections.*

One way to "Love Your Neighbor in Election Season" is to sign the "Churches for Democracy Pledge" provided by the Wisconsin Council of Churches. I will be sharing this with council leadership for discussion and decision. It is very much in alignment of being a Just Peace congregation, with the right in participation in community decision-making and the political process.

I'm including it here for all to read. Throughout October, watch the e-news for other ways to support all who work with and support election efforts, including "Love Your Election Worker Sunday" on October 18.

Churches for Democracy Pledge

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. "This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
Matthew 22:36–40 NIV

"The role of government is to seek justice for all people and to uphold the common good. But justice cannot be achieved when the democratic process is not just and fair for all."
Wisconsin Council of Churches Statement on Economic Justice[1]

At this time when democracy in the United States is precarious, we come together as local Christian congregations across America to pledge our commitment to democracy. We stand up together to say what we

[1] https://www.wichurches.org/s/StatementonEconomicJustice.pdf

believe both as those who love the Lord, and love America enough to defend it. As local congregations, we practice democracy in our own congregations through parish councils, vestries, sessions, governing boards, councils of elders, and other forms of decision-making. We are practiced in democracy. As the state of our democracy is in peril, we invite Churches across the United States and across the political spectrum to join in this pledge for democracy:

1. **We believe in the power of civic participation.** Our Scriptures remind us of our stewardship of Creation,[2] and encourage us to seek the welfare of the communities we inhabit.[3] We will provide information to all our members about their rights and responsibilities as voters, how to register, and other ways they can participate in the democratic process.

2. **We believe that a strong and vibrant country requires free and fair elections.** Effective policymaking requires the participation of members of the community in the decisions that affect them. We will publicly oppose efforts that prevent or create obstacles to eligible voters casting their ballots.

3. **We believe in abundant life, now and in the life to come.**[4] Working for the common good in a healthy democracy promotes that abundance. Democracy must serve the good of all, rather than the desires of a powerful few who stand to benefit in material terms from the destructive exploitation of people and the earth.[5] Threats to free and democratic elections destabilize the oikos, the society we share.[6] If there are attempts to prevent the counting of votes or the seating of duly elected candidates after the election, we will publicly oppose those efforts. If there are attempts to intimidate or jail journalists, we will publicly oppose those efforts.

4. **We believe that we the people should choose our leaders.** A system where leaders can lord their power over their constituents, without fear of electoral or judicial consequences, runs contrary to an ethic of public service.[7] As the Church, we will oppose any measures that create obstacles—including national anti-voter efforts, intimidation by armed law enforcement, federal takeover of elections, or any legislative, executive, or administrative actions that keep people from voting or keep trusted election officials from counting all eligible ballots.

We insist the will of the people prevail and will oppose attempts to overturn results or refuse to seat democratically elected candidates. As people of faith, we will unite with other organizations to stand in defense of free and democratic elections.

Adapted from https://www.businessfordemocracypledge.org/national-pledge

Prayers and blessings for you all~

Pastor René

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[2] Genesis 1:28, 2:15

[3] Jeremiah 29:7

[4] John 10:10

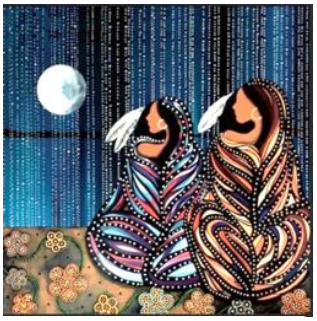
[5] https://www.wichurches.org/s/EnvironmentalJustice-Statement1207.pdf

[6] *Oikos,* the Greek word for “household," is the common root of “ecology,” “economy,” and “ecumenism.” It refers to the basic unit of society.

[7] Matthew 20:25-26

From the Director of Faith Formation

Karen Miller



"Sister" by Betty Albert, First Nations Canadian Cree

In Native American tradition, strong relations are formed through the giving and receiving of gifts. This makes us brothers and sisters. As a member of this faith community for nearly eight years now, I have received many gifts, in many forms, from many of you. This month I wish to reciprocate by sharing some gifts that are a part of my Native American spirituality and practice.

On October 11th we will celebrate Indigenous Peoples Sunday. The worship service will include some traditional Indigenous elements that you have experienced before, like smudging but without the risk of setting off a smoke alarm in the sanctuary! I am using this month's column to give you some information on the purpose and meaning of the Indigenous worship service elements that you will experience on October 11. I hope this information will make the service more meaningful for you.

In traditional Indigenous practice, it is customary to purify our mind and heart before entering any ceremony. We do this with a purification ritual called "smudging." The medicine we use to smudge is called Mashkode wiingashk, or sage. I use Giizhik, or cedar for its spirit purification and protection qualities. You will be offered the opportunity to smudge outside the building before you enter the west entrance. You always have the option to not smudge.

I assembled and crafted the liturgy and will deliver the sermon, but Pastor René will lead us in worship. The "Ringing of the Bell" will be followed by a call to worship with the traditional Conch shell and reading. This is followed by a combined "Call to Worship with Opening Prayer" which includes a call to the Seven Grandfather Spirit Directions. Our Opening Hymn will be Taizé followed by Scripture and contemporary readings accompanied by music. After the sermon, we will sing all of the original Lakota verses to the Dakota Hymn. The remainder of the service will follow its usual sequence.

I look forward to sharing Indigenous Peoples Sunday with all of you.

May the Spirit of Wisdom be upon you, as long as water flows, or grass grows upon the earth, or the sun rises to show your pathway.

Karen

For those of you who worry about appropriating Native American culture or practices, let me remind you that it is not appropriation when it is given as a gift.

Rally Sunday

Rally Sunday was a success for all as we gathered together to shine God's light throughout our church and greater community. Of course, the potluck meal was fabulous as always, and dessert was seriously yum. The deacons and committee helpers were creative and happy to have volunteers sign up for the activities that keep our congregation moving forward. Rally Sunday is all about sharing our talents and there was plenty of opportunity to help in a variety of ways.

How will you shine your light?
We are willing and able folks! The following are just a few of the responses to the question of how you will shine your light.

To watch and help where needed in any way that I can. Trying to see what can be done without being asked. Thursday's Table. Being kind to everyone. Being at church. Say "yes" as often as I can. Help when I see or hear of a need. I will remember the goodness in others and myself. Make and send cards. I will give my music and share in mission. By helping others. Partner with another for coffee hour. Desserts for Thursday's Table. Coats for kids. By cooking for Thursday's Table and volunteering where needed.

Our prize winners
The raffle was especially fun, with donations, helpers and winners. Thank you to those who donated the wonderful prizes – we couldn't do this without you. A special shout out to our friend and helper, Eric Cody!

- A case of toilet tissue won by Doris Win
- Paperless towels won by Neal Koch
- Stained glass piece created by Nancy Jackson, won by Toby Ellison
- Kwik Trip certificate won by Margea Schultz
- Paint by Number won by Eric Cody
- Maple syrup crafted by Jill Noreen, won by Pinckney Hall
- Guitar won by Lisa Cody
- Car detailing kit won by Rick Nagler
- Maple syrup crafted by Jill Noreen, won by Luci Black
- Red Cedar Body Work certificate won by Sandy Lindow
- Bamboo toothbrushes donated by Peace & Justice, won by Jeanne Rothaupt
- Plastic bag dryer won by Sherry Bernick
- Greeting cards created by Deanna Schultz, won by Benjamin Burgess

There were also committees who held their own question and raffle prizes, plus the Christian Education kindness trellis that is now on the front lawn of the church. If you were thinking of signing up to help but didn't, the Time and Talent clipboards are located in the parlor. Signing up ahead of time helps the committees with their tasks and keeps our church going!

September Worship Volunteers

	Flowers	Coffee Servers	Readers
October 4th	Kathy Colvin	Bill and Linda Olson	Sherry Bernick
October 11th **Bridge Sunday**	Margea Schultz	Lisa & April Cody	Colin Kintzinger
October 18th	Sally Conklin	Sherry Bernick & Lucy Black	Dawn Ascher
October 25th	Margi Stauss	Sherry Bernick & Lucy Black	Ellen Ochs

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

Announcements

Attention Crafty People!

It is that time of year again - TOUR TIME. We will be starting a craft group on Wednesdays to work on crafts. You can bring in something you want to work on or we may have some crafts that you could help other people complete or you might even want to just come and sit and have coffee with us. All are welcome and craft ideas for the Tour are very welcome.

We will start meeting on Sept. 23 and meet each Wed. through Nov.18. We are planning on starting at 9:30 until about 12:00. You can come all the time, some of the time, for the whole time or just a short time. We are pretty flexible and would appreciate any time!

Hope to see you there. If you can't make it but have some ideas for a craft for the group to possibly work on, please pass it on to me, Peggykraemer@msn.com, 715-772-3399. Thank You.

Creation Justice Reflection

Wendell Berry was a prolific novelist, poet, essayist, philosopher, agrarian, environmentalist, activist, pacifist and farmer, cited as one of Kentucky's greatest writers. In 2011, he was awarded the National Humanities Medal. He died this August at the age of 92. Here follows one of his most well-known poems, which seems very relevant in our times.

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
Waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Women's Fellowship Meeting

Women's Fellowship meeting is being held on Oct. 21st at 12:30 in the Fellowship Hall. All women of the church and friends of the church are invited. It is quite certain that there will be Tour Talk at the meeting. Please plan on coming, bring lunch if you wish and there will be some treats and coffee. Looking forward to the gathering! If you have questions feel free to call Peggy Kraemer at 715 772 3399 or email peggykraemer@msn.com

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

First Congregational UCC
Menomonie, WI
Draft – September 10, 2026

Roll Call: Naomi Cummings (Membership/Fellowship), Kathy Colvin (Worship), Sue Halama (Vice Moderator), Leah Langby (Education), René Mehlberg (Pastor), Rick Nagler (Moderator), Jeanne Rothaupt (Past Moderator), Deanna Schultz (Music), Jill Schwebs (Clerk), Margi Stauss (Care Ministries), Lee Theorin (Property) and Agnes Welsch (Mission). Jan Erdman (Treasurer) and Sherry Galetka (Stewardship) were absent. Karen Miller (Director Faith Formation) was also present for the beginning of the meeting.

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

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

Naomi moved approval of the consent agenda, including the August minutes (with the friendly addition of adding Jan Erdman to the roll call), the Deacon Reports and the Pastor's Report. Margi seconded the motion. Various items were discussed. There was no Treasurer's Report. The motion was approved by the Council.

Karen Miller talked about the "Safe Ministries, Safe Church" quiz the Council took two months ago. She shared the "Safe Church, Safe Ministries" Policy with the Council. It is in Google docs under Faith Formation. It is reviewed in odd numbered years. This review will cover 2027. The most important rule is the care of two adults, 18 or older and registered with a background check. She went through the report answering questions as she went. There was discussion.

Rick talked about Article III in the Bylaws which addresses the Ordained Minister. Naomi questioned bringing on an interim minister under Section 2, #1. The consensus was to change the wording "to provide pastoral coverage."

Lee reviewed his meeting with the Property Committee, and shared the following potential Capital Campaign projects. The three large stained-glass windows in the Sanctuary will cost about $70,000 for repair. A new heating and cooling system for the Fellowship Hall and kitchen will cost about $92,000. This is still the original system, has leaks, and uses freon. The wood floor in the basement could be replaced for $15,000. 15 new tables for the Fellowship Hall would cost $3,875. Deanna is looking into the cost for ceiling fans for the sanctuary for organ preservation.

René discussed establishing a committee to organize a Capital Campaign. She asked for volunteers from the Council and asked for the suggestion of names of the congregation members who would serve. It was suggested that one-on-one asks will probably be most productive.

Rick introduced the topic of finding someone to cover for Jan Erdman, our treasurer. He would like to have someone who is not on the Council. They would need to be able to review and do a monthly report. Possibilities were discussed, and Rick will follow up.

Deacons were reminded to work on updating or creating current job descriptions.

Rick reported that he, Pastor René, and Naomi will be meeting with Rev. Teri Hanson and Rev. Mike Southcombe to work on the Behavioral Covenant on October 3rd.

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

Rick asked that we look at the covenants he has listed on the agenda. They will be reviewed at a future meeting.

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

The Benediction was sung.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Schwebs, Clerk