First Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

August 23, 2026

We are the Church of the Open Door.
No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.

Welcome to The Church of the Open Door.

Our door is open to you at whatever point you are in your journey of faith.

New Here? Be sure to pick up a 'Welcome Bag' from the welcome desk near the front doors. It contains lot of information about our church community.

Contact Us: Scan this QR code to find our contact information, signup to receive our church and/or children's ministry e-newsletter, contact a pastor, or find out about becoming a member. Baptism Application and Room Rental forms are also available here.

Open Door Announcements can be shared by emailing opendoor@uccappleton.org or calling the office.

Online Streaming and Podcasting are available on Facebook: FCUCCAppleton or Youtube: First Congregational UCC Appleton.

Baptisms are held on the third Sunday of each month. To schedule a baptism, contact the church office six weeks before your desired baptism date.

Childcare is available for infants through kindergarteners every Sunday in summer. Guests are invited to join us anytime! A nursing room is available downstairs. See an usher for directions to either room.

Sunday School and Youth Groups will resume in September. Let an usher know if you would like to receive further information.

Communion: The sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. Communion elements are gluten and alcohol free. All are welcome to join us!

References to God in our worship may at times be gender specific. You are invited to substitute terms that reflect your understanding of the inclusiveness of God.

Hearing Loop: Need help hearing our service? Ask an usher. They can help get you in the loop!

Hearing Loop
Switch hearing aid to T-coil

Flowers: If you would like to donate flowers for a special day or loved one, please email or sign up in the church office. Today's flowers were arranged by Cindi Ritcey Fox.

~ The flowers are in celebration of 37 years of marriage for Richard & Karen Gosse. ~

Ways to Donate to First Congregational UCC, Appleton ~ Thank you for your support.

Giving envelopes and checks can be dropped in the offering plate or mailed to the church

Visit our website at uccappleton.org and click "Give Now" for a one time gift or to sign up for automatic giving

Text FCUCC GIVE to 73256

*Messages and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

August 23, 2026 9:30AM
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDE

Ossian: Two Ballades, Op. 4 Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869)

CALL TO SILENCE & RINGING OF THE BELL

INTROIT

Dona nobis pacem (Give Us Peace)

WELCOME

**Please rise in body or spirit*

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Inspired by Psalm 124)

One: Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

All: We belong to God.

One: When we feel overwhelmed,

All: God is on our side.

One: When we are afraid,

All: God is with us.

One: Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

All: Blessed be the Lord!

*OPENING HYMN #238

The Church's One Foundation AURELIA

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

One: Knowing that Jesus meets us where we are,
let us offer our prayers of confession.

All: Merciful God, we acknowledge our guilt and seek your forgiveness.
We have not offered steadfast love to you or each other.
We have not moved forward in faith,
but have allowed ourselves to be stifled by fear.
Revive us and raise us up, that we might live before you,
rejoicing in the knowledge of your love.

One: People of God, hear and believe the good news:
Christ came to bring healing, forgiveness, and new life to all who sin and suffer.

All: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(During the Children's Message, the Prayer Request and Connection Cards will be collected. After the Children's Message, the children may return to be with their families.)

CHILDREN'S HYMN

Jesus Loves Me JESUS LOVES ME

St. 1: **All**

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

ANTHEM

Beautiful City from Godspell Stephen Schwartz

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 16:13-20 Karen Gosse

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

SERMON *"Hope of the World"* Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey

*HYMN (see bulletin page 4)

Hope of the World

St. 1: Solo

St. 2-5: All

Hope of the World

WORDS: Georgia Harkness, 1954, alt.
MUSIC: V. Earle Copes, 1963

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Words © 1954, renewed 1982, The Hymn Society; used by permission of Hope Publishing Co. ; music © 1963 The United Methodist Publishing House

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OFFERING

CALL TO THE OFFERING

(To give online please visit our website at uccappleton.org and click "Give Now" for a one time gift or to sign up for automatic giving, or text FCUCC GIVE to 73256.)

MUSICAL REFLECTION

How Great Thou Art — Text by Carl Boberg, adapt. Stuart K. Hine; Swedish Folk Tune

*DOXOLOGY

All: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host:
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

(You are welcome to submit your prayer requests throughout the week to the church office, or email to a pastor for confidentiality.)

One: The Lord be with you.
All: And also with you.
One: Let us pray.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN (see bulletin page 6)

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less — MELITA

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Lord of the Dance — Text by Sydney Carter; Shaker melody

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

Text: Edward Mote, 1797–1874, alt.
Music: John B. Dykes, 1823–1876

MELITA
888888

THANK YOU TO TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey, *Co-Pastor*
Pastor Nicholas J. Hatch, *Co-Pastor*
Karen Gosse, *Lay Reader*
Jack Murphy, *piano, guitar & vocals*
Michael Murphy, *guitar & vocals*
David Murphy, *cajón & vocals*
Lori Murphy, *violin*
Dr. Nathan Birkholz, *Director of Music Ministries*

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USHERS/AUDIO/VIDEO

TODAY'S USHERS: Team 3: Mark Shropshire, JoAnn Shropshire, Kevin Gentile, Susan Houston, Cathy Paynter, Ryan Smith, Chris Calhoun, Ryan St. Clair, Lorenzo Pisan and Team 5: Abby Schmidt, Andy Schmidt, Rick Behm, Peter Carmen, Jeff McLaughlin
AUDIO & VIDEO: Seb Pershey, Rod Reynolds, Matt Feuerhelm

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR NEXT SUNDAY

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost Pastor Nick Hatch
Jeremiah 15:15-21
Music: Karen Leigh-Post, *mezzo-soprano*

ON THE CALENDAR		
September 13	9:30AM-12:00PM	Rally Sunday, Blessing of the Backpacks and Rally Sunday Picnic
September 25-27		Women's Retreat
October 10	9:00AM-3:00PM	Men's Retreat

WORSHIP NOTES (space for your personal notes/thoughts)

Joys and Concerns of Our Faith Community

Please keep these people in your prayers and greet them with a loving word when you see them.

Please call the church office if you have a prayer request or to request a pastoral visit, 920-733-7393.
In cases of a pastoral emergency, please call 920-810-2600.

Phyllis Zeiss
Tonya Griswold
Harley Davies
Paul, struggling with MRSA
Jack Vanden Boogaard
Victoria Williams
Ann Oberschlake's nephew, Jon in ICU
Bill Platt's sister in relocation, Ron, with ALS, and a friend healing after knee replacement
Donna Haberland
Mike, having foot surgery next week
Cameron George, National Guard serving in the Middle East
All those affected by the recent storms and tornado
The family and friends of Bob Barlament upon his passing
Anika
Abraham Slowinski
Ann Hage
Jill Anthony and her nephew
Katie Behl and Barb Behl

Unless a prayer request comes in with a request to remain in print continuously, prayer requests will be included for four weeks. Of course, you are always welcome to re-submit requests at any time.

The Open Door Announcements

For more information on these announcements and other events, please visit our website, weekly e-newsletters, and social media.

Please support this year's Turtle Trek Challenge! This year's Turtle Trek Challenge will run **Sunday, August 23 through Sunday, November 1**. TTC is a fund-raiser for our mission partner, Re-Member, which serves the Oglala Lakota people on the Pine Ridge reservation. You can raise funds by trekking (walking, running, skating, ambling, etc.) 100 miles in 10 weeks. Please find trekker information with the QR code or open this link: Turtle Trek sponsor sheet. If you can't trek, please consider sponsoring our trekkers in any amount. There will be a sign-up table for trekkers and sponsors in the narthex today. For more information, contact Eilene.Hoft-March@lawrence.edu

Learn about Re-Member: What do you know about our church's mission partner, Re-Member, on the Pine Ridge reservation? Learn about this remarkable organization, among the longest serving and most trusted non-profits on Pine Ridge. Executive Director Will Paese and former Executive Director Cory True will talk about Re-Member's current work, challenges, and aspirations in a presentation on Sunday, **August 30** in Fellowship Hall immediately after service. Light refreshments will be served. Contact person: Eilene Hoft-March Eilene.Hoft-March@lawrence.edu

September Collection for Henderson Settlement: A large group will be serving at Henderson Settlement in Frakes, KY, October 11-17. This year the need is for bath towels and washcloths. These items do not need to be the top of the line, however durable towels that dry and absorb are the request. We are also collecting personal hygiene items: shampoo, conditioner, men and women's deodorants, body wash, bar soap, hand soap. Items should be regular size, not travel nor extra-large. All items can be placed in the blue bin in the narthex. We realize there is a great need right here in the Fox Valley for many items due to the tornado. The need at Henderson Settlement is a continuing one. Whatever you are able to donate will be greatly appreciated!

From the Indigenous Peoples' Allies Committee: Attending one of our local pow wows is a great way to learn more about our Indigenous community. The Ho-Chunk Pow Wow will take place from **Saturday, September 5 through Monday September 7** at W8426 Highway 54, Black River Falls, WI 54615. For helpful information about pow wow protocol and how to be a good guest, consult this resource WI Powwow Calendar or QR code.

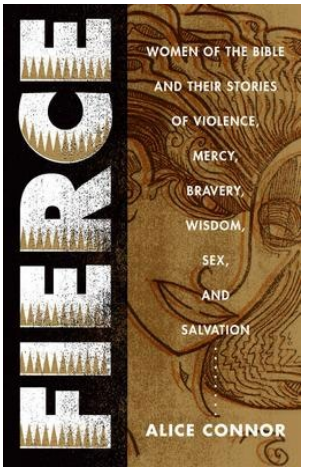
Library News: The theme for August is fiction. We have lots of great fiction books. Come check them out! Here are a couple: *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *There There* by Tommy Orange.

Sunday Morning Main and CYF Entrances Security Communication: Beginning on Sunday, **August 30**, we will be locking the main (West) church and the CYF entrances at 9:35AM until our church service ends. Locking the doors allows the congregation to be safe and secure during our worship service. Ushers and/or members of the safety team will be monitoring both doors to facilitate entry after the service has started. If you have questions, please check with anyone on the Safety and Security Committee: Wayne Lannoye, Shannon Glenn, Tim Hanna, Dennis Korth, Bruce Danz and Rick Behm.

Habitat Faith Build 2026: Do you want to improve the life of a family and make a difference in your community? This is your opportunity! On Thursday, **September 24**, First Congregational Church volunteers will be installing drywall. The build site location is 2111 East Esther Street, Appleton. We need 8 construction volunteers and several food providers. Jose and Cecillia's family would appreciate your efforts. Help represent our church in this meaningful partnership by signing up! For more information you can call or text Tim De Hart (ask office for information), or email at **tdehart@new.rr.com**.

Women's Fall Retreat: Pastor Katherine will lead our 2026 fall women's retreat at Moon Beach, **September 25-27**. Our theme this year is Journey of Prayer. We will consider the many ways we can pray – in words or silence, through community or solitude, by movement or meditation. The cost of the retreat is $200. Please register as soon as possible, no later than September 7. **Click here to register.** Scholarship monies are available; please contact Pastor Katherine at kwpershey@uccappleton.org.

Join us for a new season of Chrysalis beginning September 1!
Our women's spiritual formation group builds community through book study, fellowship, and prayer. We reflect on our spiritual journeys and share our joys, sorrows, experiences, and hopes to connect with one another and deepen our relationship with God. We meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month from 1:00-2:30PM. Our first book for the year is *Fierce: Women of the Bible and Their Stories of Violence, Mercy, Bravery, Wisdom, Sex, and Salvation* by Alice Connor. The book costs $12 and will be available for pick up at our first meeting of the fall, September 1. The group is facilitated by Sheryl De Hart, Trish Brehm, and Pastor Katherine (**kwpershey@uccappleton.org**).

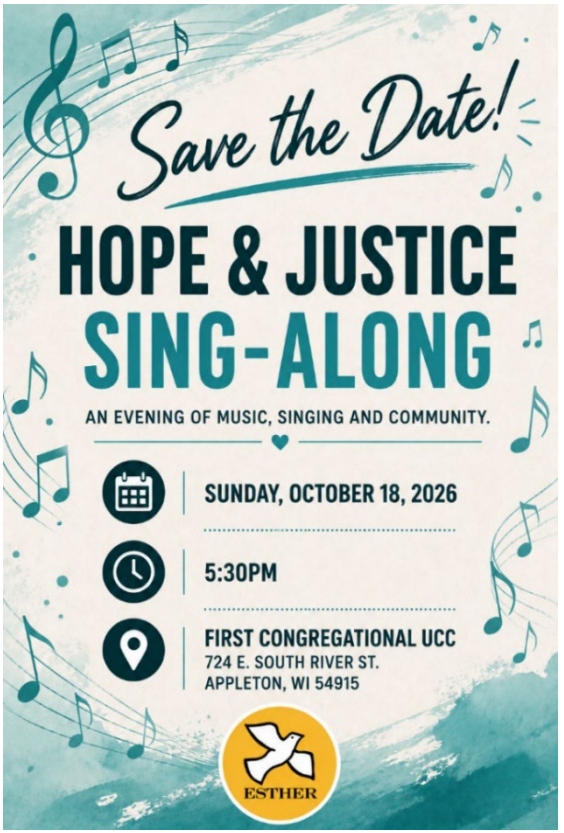


Fall Fire & Faith: Join Pastor Nick **September 2, 9, 16, & 23** from 6:30-7:45PM in the labyrinth for a campfire fire and faith-filled conversations. We will discuss "Spirituality 101" by learning about common misconceptions and important practices in Christian spirituality. Then, we will be "Discerning What God is Doing" through a brief study of the book of Acts. This is a great way to make new connections and enjoy brisk fall weather. Join on the weeks you are available. All are welcome to come early or stay late to walk the sacred path of our labyrinth. Our rain day location will be the chapel. Please bring: your own chair, a headlamp for reading, reading glasses if you need them, and an open heart. Dress for fall weather success! All other materials will be provided.

AAUW 89th Annual Used Book Sale: The Appleton Branch of "American Association of University Women" is holding its 89th annual used book sale "Books are a Window to the World" **October 15-18, 22-25, and 29-31** at the Fox River Mall. We are accepting contributions of books from the community. This includes hardcover & paperback books, children's books, books on CD, sheet music, CDs, DVDs, puzzles, & games. (Please, no magazines, textbooks, or VHS tapes.) For book pick-up & drop-off, please call 920-284-7098; 920-205-7370; 920-687-1084; or 920-540-7751. Profits provide scholarships for women.

NOAHH Requests: Items needed include couch/loveseat, a dining table and chairs, bottles, wipes, clothing, toys, burp cloths, baby shampoo/soap, and a queen mattress. Call Barb Mincheff, Outagamie County Health & Human Services Volunteer Services Coordinator at 920-832-5515 for pick-up or drop-off.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH
Workshop
4 Part Free Workshop Series
6:30-8:00PM Thursdays in September
Presented by:
Grace Christensen, MSW, LCSW, CSAC
Register Here


Save the Date!
HOPE & JUSTICE
SING-ALONG
AN EVENING OF MUSIC, SINGING AND COMMUNITY.
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2026
5:30PM
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
724 E. SOUTH RIVER ST.
APPLETON, WI 54915
ESTHER

WE WILL NOT BE SILENT:
AN IMMIGRATION VIGIL
Join ESTHER for an evening of remembrance, reflection, and solidarity with immigrant and refugee families in the Fox Valley.
Together, we will honor lives lost due to immigration enforcement, uplift the voices and experiences of immigrant communities.
SEPTEMBER 15
5:30 PM – 6:30 PM
Menasha Public Library
Company E Room
• COMMUNITY SPEAKERS
• REMEMBRANCE SPACE
• RESOURCES
• LIGHT SNACKS & REFRESHMENTS
RSVP TODAY! SPOTS ARE LIMITED
ESTHER

This Week's Schedule

Monday, August 24

11:00AM-12:00PM	Finance Committee Meeting – *Upper Lounge*
5:00-7:00PM	Kenya Meeting – *Upper Lounge*

Tuesday, August 25

2:00-4:00PM	Library Committee Meeting – *Library*
4:00-5:30PM	Outreach Ministries Meeting – *Upper Lounge & by Zoom*
6:00-7:30PM	Council Meeting – *Upper Lounge & by Zoom*
6:30-7:30PM	Living Sober AA – *Common Grounds*
7:00-8:30PM	Scout Troop 67 – *Fellowship Hall*
7:30-9:00PM	Fireside AA – *Common Grounds*

Wednesday, August 26

Thursday, August 27

12:00-1:00PM	AA Search for Serenity Group – *Common Grounds*
7:00-8:00PM	Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Friday, August 28

10:00-11:30AM	Bulletin Folders – *Library*
7:00-8:00PM	Al-Anon – *Upper Lounge*
7:00-8:30PM	N.A. – *Common Grounds*

Saturday, August 29

1:00-5:00PM	Women's Craft Circle – *Upper Lounge*
4:00-5:00PM	St. Julia's Worship Service – *Chapel*
7:00-8:00PM	Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Sunday, August 30

9:30-11:00AM	Childcare – *Childcare Room*
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday Worship – *Sanctuary, Upper Lounge, Chapel, Common Grounds (for nursing mothers)*
10:30AM-12:00PM	Re-Member Presentation – *Fellowship Hall*
7:00-8:00PM	First Things First AA Meeting – *Fellowship Hall, Common Grounds*
7:00-8:00PM	Al-Anon – *Chapel* / Alateen – *Upper Lounge*

The Gathering Hub

Capital Campaign Update: The **Let Our Light Shine** Capital Campaign building project continues to make progress! The schematic design phase was completed in June, and the project is now in the design development phase where more details emerge related to fixture, decor and building materials to be used. Immediately following worship today, **August 23**, an update will be provided to the congregation on our progress. Refined visuals including rationale will be shared on a big screen and also live streamed for online worshippers. Our vision of being more useful, to more people, more of the time is becoming real!

We are glad you are here today! You are welcome to worship in person with us in the sanctuary or watch it livestreamed in the upper lounge, narthex or chapel. The nursery also has livestreaming, on the other end of the building.

TODAY AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

9:30-11:00AM	Childcare – *Childcare Room*
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday Worship – *Sanctuary, Upper Lounge, Chapel, Common Grounds (for nursing mothers)*
10:30-11:00AM	Building Plans Update – *Sanctuary*
10:45AM-12:00PM	New Member Class – *Chapel and by Zoom*
7:00-8:00PM	First Things First AA Meeting – *Fellowship Hall, Common Grounds*
7:00-8:00PM	Al-Anon – *Chapel* / Alateen – *Upper Lounge*

We are proud to be an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. This designation is given to congregations that have made a public covenant to welcome fully persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Appleton, WI is a WISE congregation. This designation is given to congregations that have made a public covenant to welcome fully and promote inclusion and compassionate support for persons of all mental health experiences.

WISE Congregations for Mental Health® — Welcoming Inclusive Supportive Engaged

Interested in joining First Congregational? The next New Member Classes are October 25 and November 1.

724 E. South River Street | Appleton, WI 54915
920.733.7393 | uccappleton.org | info@uccappleton.org
Office hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00AM-3:00PM
For pastoral emergencies: 920.810.2600