First Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

September 13

- BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS (BRING YOUR BAG OR LAPTOP)
- 1ST DAY OF PROGRAMMING
- PICNIC LUNCH AFTER SERVICE

2026 - 2027 CYF & Music Program Registration

Welcome to the 2026-2027 program year! We pray you are having a wonderful summer and enjoying a variety of blessings. We are excited to kick off our fall registration for Music Ministry and Children, Youth and Family Ministries (CYF) here at First Congregational UCC (FCUCC).

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As you may have heard, summer brought changes to our church staff. Renae Salvia, Associate Director of CYF, accepted a full-time position in a Menasha school library – something she has been prayerfully hoping for! Our Director of Music Ministries, John Albrecht, began enjoying retirement. Our organist, Nathan Birkholz – Mr. B. or Dr. B. to the children – took over as their director. This leaves our church seeking to fill two roles: Associate Director of CYF and Associate Director of Music Ministries. If you possibly feel called to either of these positions, or know someone who may be, please see our website for details: https://uccappleton.org/news-2/

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You are your child's first faith teacher, and we are grateful to walk alongside your family on this journey. To continue growing and strengthening our faith-filled programming, we need, and deeply value, every family's involvement. Your time and energy mean more than you know. If every child had one adult who volunteered once or twice a year, we would be fully equipped to offer rich, consistent programming *while allowing our regular volunteers more chances to participate in worship themselves*. Please consider giving even one hour of your time this year – it truly makes a difference. We know it's not always easy to commit in advance with busy and shifting schedules, but we do appreciate it when volunteers are able to sign up ahead of time. We also love last-minute volunteers – as well as parents who just want to see what Sunday School or Youth Group is like. You're always welcome to assist in your child's room any day that you're at church, just walk across the bridge with us! Thank you for supporting not just your own children, but the wider church community, by being present, caring, Christians in their lives.

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If you're able to, please register using REALM. It will be a big help in our organization and efficiency. We did include paper copies of the registration forms in case you prefer to mail or bring them to the church office at your earliest convenience. If you have more than one child and want to complete paperwork instead of registering on REALM, you can put everyone's info on the same sheet. For health and safety reasons, children and youth who will be participating in any of our ministries must have new registration completed each year.

We thank you for allowing us to be a part of your family's journey as you ***GROW, DEEPEN, NAME, and LIVE*** *your faith here at First Congregational!*

Sarah Wilterdink – Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries
Dr. Nathan Birkholz – Director of Music Ministries

2026 – 2027 Music Registration Form

Dr. Nathan Birkholz, Director of Music Ministries
217-621-4819, nbirkholz@uccappleton.org

Love music? Want to get more involved? Check out all our musical opportunities below! We recommend trying something new this year. The below children's music opportunities are ordered by age group, youngest to oldest. Our 6th graders attend Middle School Youth Group but are invited to still participate in children's music groups!

Child or Youth's Name _____ **Grade Level** _____

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE PAGEANT, 10:00AM SERVICE **YES____ NO____**
Open to all children of all ages with a few larger parts. **Rehearsals within Children's Choir and on Sunday, December 20.** More information TBA.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR **YES____ NO____**
Open to all children in 2nd – 6th grade who enjoy praising God by singing! **Begins on Sunday, September 27**. Rehearsals are Sunday mornings, following worship and Children's Ministry. We rehearse in the choir room 10:45-11:30AM, including a snack. Children will sing in some worship services and will also help lead the 10:00 AM Christmas Eve service with a pageant!

CHURCH FAMILY HANDBELLS WORKSHOP **YES____ NO____**
Open to elementary aged children through adults as a one-month commitment of inter-generational music. **Begins on October 25.** Rehearsing October 25, November 1, November 8, and November 21 at 10:30AM, after worship. We will ring in worship on Sunday, November 22.

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE **YES____ NO____**
Open to upper elementary through adults. Dates and rehearsals TBD. Short-term commitment.

SANCTUARY CHOIR **YES____ NO____**
The Sanctuary Choir is open to all high school youth through adults who love to sing; no audition required! **Wednesday rehearsals begin on September 2**, 7:00-8:30PM.

YOUTH HANDBELLS **YES____ NO____**
Open to grades 7-12. Many ringing techniques will be explored with our *newly refurbished handbells.* Basic music-reading skills are needed. **Begins on Wednesday, September 23**. Rehearsals are Wednesdays 5:45PM-6:25PM. Youth groups meet right after this! On evenings when youth groups are "on the road," youth handbell participants will not miss anything. Our directors and pastors worked hard to create schedules together so you can participate as much as possible.

YOUTH INSTRUMENTAL & VOCAL MUSIC **YES____ NO____**
Grades 7 –12 are invited to present solo/small ensemble music in worship.

2026 – 2027 Children, Youth & Family (CYF) Registration Form

Sarah Wilterdink, Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries
920-540-2576, swilterdink@uccappleton.org

Child/Youth's Name_____Date of Birth_____

Circle the Grade or Age *as of September 1, 2026*:

Infant	3-Year-Old	Kindergarten	Grade 3	Grade 6	HS Freshman HS Junior
1-Year-Old	4-Year-Old	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 7	HS Sophomore HS Senior
2-Year-Old	5-Year-Old (Who is NOT attending K this year)	Grade 2	Grade 5	Grade 8	

Parent/Guardian Name(s) _____

Parent/Guardian Email Addresses for Monthly e-Newsletters _____

Full Address, with City and Zip Code _____

Youth's Email _____(MS and HS youth who check their own email. Adults will still receive.)

Youth's Phone _____(MS & HS, for occasional reminders of events or reminders.)

***PreK – 5th Grade**:* This ministry is only possible with volunteer teachers and assistants! All thirty-minute lesson plans are thoroughly written and prepped. An adult or youth should be in the room to work with you. Volunteers attend the 9:30AM service through the children's message and then exit the service with the director and children.

Please circle how often you will help with Children's Sunday School this year:

Once or Twice *Once Every Month or Two* *Possibly on a Regular Basis*

Instead of working in a classroom, I prefer to do help with prep work at home or church. Sarah will reach out if something is needed: *I Prefer to Help Outside of the Classroom*

***6th Grade – HS Seniors**:* The MS and HS Youth groups will be separate some weeks and combined other weeks. Either way, smaller group discussions usually lead to more talking by the youth. It is amazing to hear youth interact with each other. Joining us on a Wednesday evening or two requires no prior experience or deep Bible knowledge that you need to share – just a willingness to be present while youth share their questions and thoughts with each other!

Please circle how often you can assist with Youth Group on Wednesday evenings this year:

Once or Twice *Once Per Month* *Possibly on a Regular Basis*

Health and Safety Information

Safety & Privacy: The church has my permission to have my child's picture/likeness featured in church produced publications and on social media. Child names will not be included with photos. Photos may be printed or shared on social media to show members all the great things our kids are doing!

Yes _____ No _____ If No is selected, a form will be sent out which a parent/guardian must sign and return.
Media Images Opt-Out Forms are also available at our website www.uccappleton.org

List any allergies your child has: _____
List any special needs your child has: _____
What else would you like us to know about your child to better serve them?_____
_____
_____

Children & Youth Participation in Services

What might your child possibly want to do a couple of times throughout the year? A pastor or director will contact you ahead of time to be sure your child is available on a particular Sunday.

_____ Arrive at 9:20AM to Light the Candles (All ages)
_____ Usher (MS & HS Youth)
_____ Help with Children's Ministry (MS & HS Youth)
_____ Read a Prayer (All ages)
_____ Serve Communion (HS Youth)

CYF Calendars

Full color paper copies of all CYF calendars are available at church entrances. Pick up the ones you need the next time you're at church. You can also print colored calendars at home anytime by going to our website or Facebook page.

Remember that friends, family, and guests are ALWAYS WELCOME to attend CYF events!

REGISTERING ON REALM

Don't have an account? If you haven't activated your Realm account yet, you will need to go to our website to activate it first. https://www.uccappleton.org/realm/joining-realm/ Once activated, you can complete the online registration process!

Follow these steps to complete CYF registration.

1. Go to www.uccappleton.org/realm Under Community, click on **Events**.
2. Click on **Children/Youth/Music Registration 2026-2027.**
3. **Check the box next to each child** you are registering, then click **"Next."**
4. Answer all the questions.
5. Click on the **blue "Next" button**.
6. Click on the **blue "Register" button**.
7. Please direct questions regarding Realm to Zaina Gonzales, Office Manager, at 920-851-9832.

Thank you very much for registering at your earliest convenience!

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2026-2027 Sunday School Calendar

SEPTEMBER		
Sunday 13	9:30 AM 10:30 AM	Rally Sunday; Blessing of the Backpacks; Sunday School (SS) Rally Sunday Picnic
Sunday 20	9:30 AM	SS
Sunday 27	9:30 AM 10:30 AM	SS Children's Choir & Adult Connections Group begin

OCTOBER		
Sunday 4	9:30 AM	SS: Chat in the Chapel & Communion
Wednesday 7	6:00 PM	1st Wednesday Dinner & Intergenerational Game Night
Sunday 11	9:30 AM	4th Grader's Bible Sunday; SS
Sunday 18	9:30 AM 11:30 AM - 1 PM	SS Trunk or Treat in CYF parking lot
Sunday 25	9:30 AM	SS

NOVEMBER		
Sunday 1	9:30 AM	SS: Chat in the Chapel & Communion
Wednesday 4	6:00 PM	1st Wednesday Dinner & Hopefest
Sunday 8	9:30 AM	SS
Sunday 15	9:30 AM	SS
Sunday 22	9:30 AM 10:30 AM	SS Churchwide Alternative Christmas Market & Kids' Activity
Sunday 29	9:30 AM	SS: Fall Crafts on the Bridge

DECEMBER		
Wednesday 2	6:00 PM	Dinner & Decorating, 7:00 PM Hanging of the Greens Service
Sunday 6	9:30 AM	SS: Chat in the Chapel & Communion; Advent in Narnia after Worship
Sunday 13	9:30 AM 11:00 AM	SS Caroling on a bus
Sunday 20	9:30 AM 10:45 AM	Family Service & Bell Sunday (No SS) Christmas Pageant rehearsal
Thursday 24	10:00 AM	Christmas Eve Pageant & Family Nativity Service
Sunday 27	9:30 AM	No SS - Congregational Hymn Sing

JANUARY		
Sunday 3	9:30 AM	SS: Chat in the Chapel & Communion
Sunday 10	9:30 AM	Baptism Renewal; SS
Sunday 17	9:30 AM	SS
Sunday 24	9:30 AM	SS
Sunday 31	9:30 AM	SS: Creation Sunday (wear flannel)

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

2026-2027 Youth Calendar

SEPTEMBER		
Sunday 13	9:30 AM 10:30 AM	Rally Sunday/Blessing of the Backpacks Rally Sunday Picnic
Wednesday 16	6:00-8:00 PM	Youth Outing: Escape Room, Appleton
Wednesday 23	5:45 PM 6:30 PM	Youth Handbells begin Annual Youth Kickball Game
Wednesday 30	6:30 PM	Youth Group

OCTOBER		
Wednesday 7	6:00-7:30 PM	6:00 Dinner & Intergenerational Game Night
Sunday 11	10:30 AM	Youth Apple Crisp Field Trip
Wednesday 14	6:30 PM	Community Collabs: Hang Trunk or Treat door signs in neighborhood
Sunday 18	11:30 AM-1 PM	Trunk or Treat in CYF parking lot
Wednesday 21	6:30 PM	No Group
Wednesday 28	6:30-8:00 PM	Youth Outing: 10th Frame Bowling

NOVEMBER		
Wednesday 4	6:00-7:30 PM	6:00 Dinner & Hopefest/Youth Group
Wednesday 11	6:30-8:00 PM	Youth Outing: Odyssey Indoor Rock Climbing
Wednesday 18	6:30 PM	Community Collabs: TBD
Wednesday 25	NONE	No Group: Thanksgiving Eve

DECEMBER		
Wednesday 2	6:00-8:00 PM	6:00 Dinner & Decorating, 7:00 Hanging of the Greens Service
Wednesday 9	6:30 PM	Christmas Party with gift exchange
Wednesday 16	6:00-8:30 PM	Youth Outing: caroling with a bus & dinner Youth Trip Commitment Form due for interested 8-12th Graders

JANUARY		
Wednesday 6	6:30 PM	No Group
Wednesday 13	6:30 PM	Youth Group
Wednesday 20	6:30 PM	Community Collabs: TBD
Wednesday 27	6:30-8:00 PM	Youth Outing: Appleton Axe