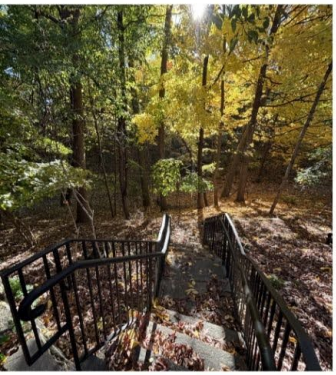
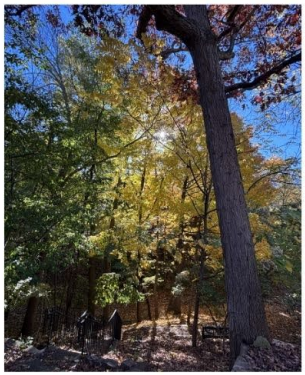
First Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

September 27, 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 Our PreK - 5th graders begin in worship. After the children's message, they walk together to the CYF wing for our Children's Ministry Sunday School. Kindergarten – 5th graders may enjoy a communion mini-lesson on the 1st Sunday of the month. Children begin in worship, leave with the director, and return to partake in communion with their families. Youth gather on Wednesday evenings.

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!

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.

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

September 27, 2026 9:30AM
Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDE

Allemande & Courante in E Minor Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

CALL TO SILENCE & RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME

**Please rise in body or spirit*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Listen, people of God!

All: Hear the wonders of our Creator!

One: God split the sea;

All: Walls of water towered above.

One: God guided our ancestors in faith:

All: Clouds by day, lightning by night.

One: God split open the rock;

All: Water flowed like rivers.

One: God split open the heavens and met earth.

All: God meets us still.
Let us Praise our God of heaven and earth.

*OPENING HYMN #439

Every Time I Feel the Spirit PENTECOST

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

One: God does not take pleasure in our suffering or delight in our failures.
Rather, God constantly invites us to turn back to Jesus's way and find eternal life.
Let us make our confession.

All: Holy God, we confess to you:
We are not of the same mind.
We do not share the same love.
We act in selfish ambition and do not regard others as better than ourselves.
We have not looked to the interests of others instead of ourselves.
We do not embrace the humility of Jesus Christ.
Forgive us. Continue to be at work in us,
that we might serve each other as you served us,
and reflect your glory in this world.

One: When we lift up our souls to God, God does not put us to shame.
God forgives us, leads us in the truth, and leads us in what is right.

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(During the Children's Message, the Prayer Request and Connection Cards will be collected. After the Children's Message, the children will follow their teachers to the CYF building.)

CHILDREN'S HYMN

Jesus Loves Me JESUS LOVES ME

St. 1, sung by **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

Lord, For Thy Tender Mercies' Sake Richard Farrant (c. 1530-1580)

Sanctuary Choir

Lord, for Thy tender mercies' sake, lay not our sins to our charge,
but forgive that is past and give us grace to amend our sinful lives.
To decline from sin, and incline to virtue,
that we may walk with a perfect heart before Thee now and evermore. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 21:23-32 Susan Forsythe

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors

and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

SERMON *"Whose Authority?"* Pastor Nick Hatch

*HYMN #110

Jesus Shall Reign DUKE STREET

HENDERSON SETTLEMENT COMMISSIONING

Tom Graf, LouAnn Graf, Ken Jahnke, Penny Boehlen,
Veronica Flower, Jerry Dees, and Mary Dees

All: We offer our prayers of support and encouragement for your service in Christ's name. May God's grace guide you and be your source of hope, strength and joy. May the presence of the Holy Spirit fill you with courage to be a gift of God to the world each day. Amen.

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

Träumerei (Dreaming) from Scenes from Childhood, Op. 15 No. 7

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

*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.)

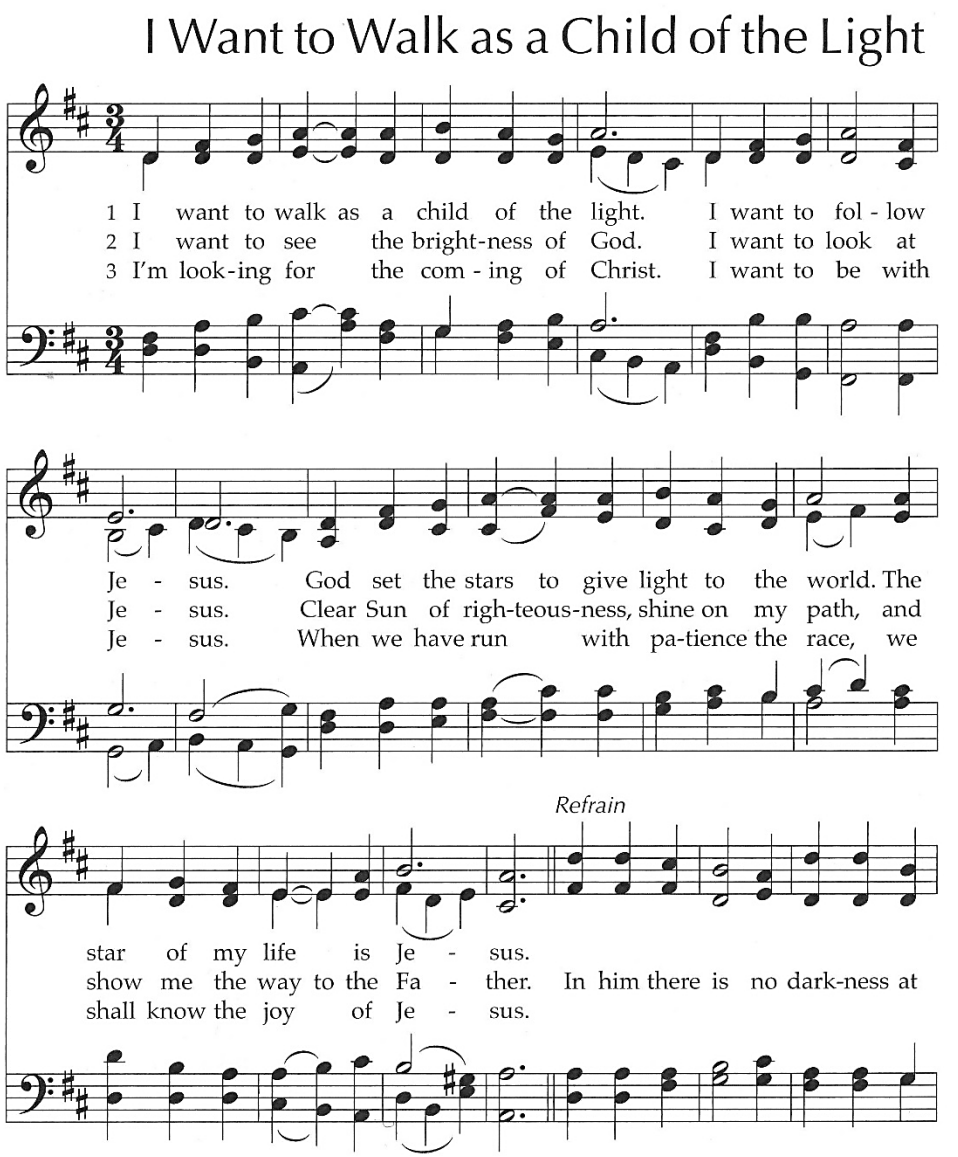
One: The Lord be with you.
All: And also with you.
One: Let us pray.

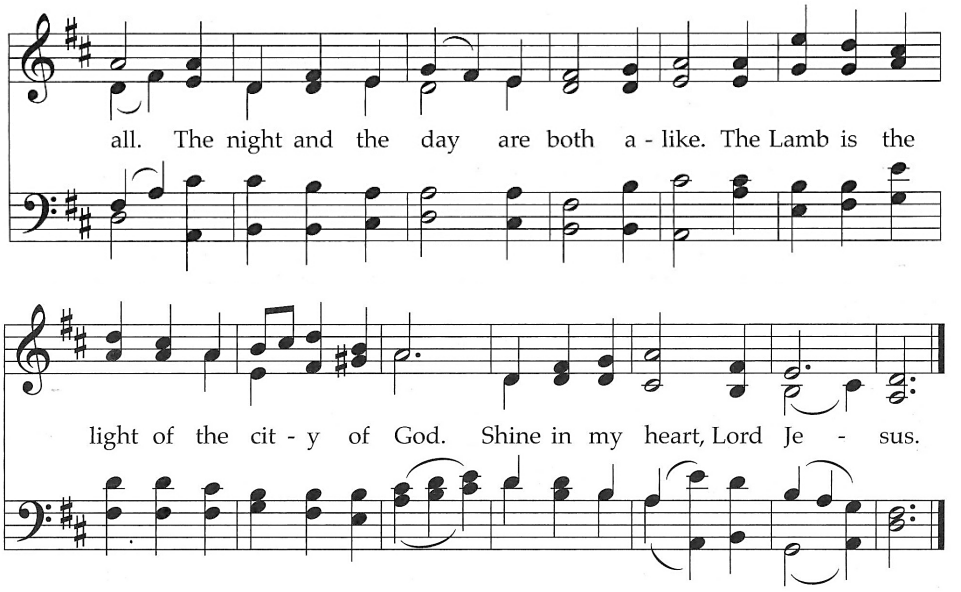
THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light HOUSTON





The author/composer of this unrhymed hymn regards it as a meditation and prayer deeply rooted in many scriptures, most connected with the theme of light: Genesis 1:17; Psalm 139:12; Isaiah 60:19; Malachi 4:2; John 14:8; Ephesians 5:8; Hebrews 12:1–2; 1 John 1:5; Revelation 21:23.

TEXT and MUSIC: Kathleen Thomerson, 1966 — HOUSTON
Text and Music © 1970, 1975 Celebration — 10.7.10.8 with refrain

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

2 Gigues en Rondeau in E — J.P. Rameau

THANK YOU TO TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Pastor Nicholas J. Hatch, *Co-Pastor*
Dianne Droster, *Liturgist*
Susan Forsythe, *Lay Reader*
Sanctuary Choir
Dr. Nathan Birkholz, *Director of Music Ministries*

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Dear friends,

As you may have heard, our skilled and dependable Custodial Supervisor, Bart Forseth, has decided to move on from his position at First Congregational UCC. He will be greatly missed by the staff, church members, and vendors who lean on him every day. His last day will be October 9. If you see him around, please extend a hearty thanks for all of the great work he has done to keep our building safe, clean, and secure for so many years!

In Christ,

Pastor Katherine

USHERS/AUDIO/VIDEO

TODAY'S USHERS: Team 1: Steve Hermsen, Kim Hanson, Dale Hanson, Tom Tatlock, Jim Thaldorf, Logan LaViolette, Luke LaViolette
AUDIO & VIDEO: Rick Behm, Travis Retzlaff, Rod Reynolds, Matt Feuerhelm

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR NEXT SUNDAY

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost World Communion/Kenya Partnership
Pastor Nick Hatch Philippians 3:4b-14
Sanctuary Choir and Percussion Ensemble with Vicky Daniel & John Aaholm

ON THE CALENDAR

October 7	6:00-7:30PM	Dinner & Intergenerational Game Night
October 10	9:00AM-3:00PM	Men's Retreat
October 18	11:30AM-1:00PM	Trunk-or-Treat
October 18	5:30PM	Hope & Justice Sing-Along: An Evening of Music, Singing and Community

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.**
Steve Hirby Prayers for peace and comfort for the loss of our grandson Baby Cooper and his family Gale Korth Phyllis Zeiss Tonya Griswold Harley Davies 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.

Join Our Ministry Team!

If you're looking to use your gifts in a welcoming, collaborative, and faith-filled community, we'd love to hear from you!

***New*Custodial Supervisor** ~ The right candidate for this full-time position is dependable, organized, and takes pride in caring for a welcoming church environment. This position oversees building maintenance, custodial operations, and a small custodial team. Questions or application materials may be sent to vsalvia@uccappleton.org. **Click here for more info.**

Associate Director of Music Ministries ~ The right candidate for this part-time position is passionate about church music, enjoys working with volunteers, and is excited to build on a strong tradition of musical excellence. Questions or application materials may be sent to music@uccappleton.org. **Click here for more info.**

REMINDER:

Our Facilities Committee has established hours of operation for our building.

Outside groups are asked to exit by 9:00PM

Members and staff are asked to exit by 9:30PM

We appreciate your cooperation with observing this schedule. Thank you!

The Open Door Announcements

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

Sunday School Volunteers Needed! Did you know you that you do not need to have a child in Sunday School to help our children get excited about Jesus?? All you need is a love of Jesus, a love of children, a passed background check, and a smile! On three Sundays each month, we need at least two adult volunteers to lead about twelve children in their Sunday School class. Please consider volunteering today. Our children gain more with smaller class sizes and when the discussions are age-appropriate because we have less grade levels together. Thank you for considering teaching one or two Sundays in the coming year. 30 minutes with God's children helps their faith grow and you are guaranteed to leave with a smile on your face. Sign Up Here or with the QR code.

Become an Usher: Help us become a more welcoming Christian community by serving as a Sunday morning usher! Ushers are key participants in our worship services. They offer greetings to all who enter the sanctuary, hand out bulletins, gather prayer cards, collect the offering, and foster a safe environment. Won't you consider participating in this vital ministry? Interested volunteers will join an existing Usher Team and help as you are able. Currently a single Usher Team serves for one or two months during the spring, fall and/or winter. Special worship Sundays such as Easter and Christmas and summer Sundays are typically covered by two Usher Teams. If you wish to participate or have questions you are encouraged to call the church office at 920-733-7393 or send an email to info@uccappleton.org.

Pillars Adult Shelter Meal: First Congregational hosts a meal at Pillars Adult Shelter the first Thursday of each month. We can use your help! We have two options to assist: bring ingredients and/or volunteer to prepare and serve the meal. If you haven't helped in the past, please give it a try! Homeless individuals are always very thankful to receive our delicious meals. Check out this **Pillars Sign Up** link or use this QR code to sign up for Thursday, **October 1**.

NAMI Walk: NAMI of the Fox Valley will be at church today to sell "Be Kind" t-shirts and answer questions about the NAMI Walk. Then join us on Saturday, **October 3**, 9:00–11:00AM at Timber Rattler Stadium. The Faith, Hope and Love team from FCUCC and ESTHER are looking for more team members to join us on our walk to support the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of the Fox Valley. It's a 5K with a great group of people and we're raising money to support the wonderful programs offered by NAMI to help those who live with mental health conditions. If you can't walk with us, please consider a donation to help support the cause. Use this link NAMI Walk or QR code to either donate or join us on the walk. Remember our team's name – Faith, Hope and Love. For questions or more information, please contact Mary Sullivan through Realm or the church office.

NOAHH Requests: Items needed include Driver's Education classes and behind the wheel, total cost is $425, multiple bikes for teenagers, cleaning supplies, laundry supplies, laundry basket, full size sheets, paper towels, toilet paper, facial tissues, hygiene items, feminine products, and a small microwave. Call Barb Mincheff, Outagamie County Health & Human Services Volunteer Services Coordinator at 920-832-5515 for pick-up or drop-off.

Library News: It's September so that means it's time for Pastors' Picks again. This year instead of having the pastors pick new books, we'll remind you of the excellent books they've picked before.

Holy The Firm by Annie Dillard. (**Nick**) A personal favorite, while slim, filled with language to name that which is Holy about creation and indispensable in our questions of God.

The Wild Edge of Sorrow by Francis Weller. (**Katherine**)I suspect I have recommended this book about grief to more friends and church members than any other book, and it was the first book I requested to have added to our church library. Weller's wisdom about grief is unconventional and resonant. One of my favorite quotes has carried me through particularly painful seasons of loss: "Grief is an act of protest that declares our refusal to live numb and small."

The Cross and the Lynching Tree by James H Cone. (**Katherine**) James H. Cone was one of the foremost Black liberation theologians, and this book is his most searing and accessible work of constructive theology. The lines he draws between the suffering of Jesus on the cross and the suffering of Black people on lynching trees are indelible. I will never be able to consider one without the other again.

EJWG News: The Economic Justice Work Group, in partnership with faith communities and community organizations, has continued work on initiatives that emerged from the Faith Communities Housing Summit we hosted two years ago. One initiative is building a Fox Cities network of people committed to addressing the local housing crisis. Become a part of this network and help ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing; for further information and link to the sign-up form, visit Ways to be a Housing Champion or use this QR code.

Relatedly, the City of Appleton is proposing changes to its zoning codes to expand housing options while ensuring development fits the community; to learn more, visit Appleton PZCC or use this QR code to read communications sent to our network on this. Please direct questions you may have to Jo Muehl at josephine.muehl@gmail.com.

This Week's Schedule

Monday, September 28

11:00AM-12:00PM	Finance Committee Meeting – *Upper Lounge*
6:00-7:30PM	Grief Support Group – *by Zoom*
6:00-8:30PM	Fox Valley Flute Choir – *Sanctuary*
7:00-8:30PM	Scout Troop 67 – *Fellowship Hall*

Tuesday, September 29

9:00-10:00AM	ADRC Strong Bodies – *Fellowship Hall*
6:00-7:30PM	Council Meeting – *Upper Lounge & by Zoom*
6:30-7:30PM	Living Sober AA – *Common Grounds*
7:30-9:00PM	Fireside AA – *Common Grounds*

Wednesday, September 30

5:45-6:25PM	Youth Handbells – *Amistad Room*
6:30-7:30PM	Youth Group – MS Room
7:00-8:30PM	Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – *Sanctuary, Choir Room*

Thursday, October 1

9:00-10:00AM	ADRC Strong Bodies – *Fellowship Hall*
12:00-1:00PM	AA Search for Serenity Group – *Common Grounds*
12:00-1:30PM	Theology Discussion Group @ *Holidays Pub & Grill, Appleton*
5:00-6:30PM	Grounds Task Force Meeting – *Isaiah Room*
5:00-7:30PM	Pillars Outreach Dinner @ *Pillars Adult Shelter, Appleton*
6:00-8:00PM	Worship & Music Ministry Team – *Upper Lounge*
7:00-8:00PM	Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Friday, October 2

10:00-11:30AM	Bulletin Folders – *Library*
3:30-5:30PM	Private Event – *Sanctuary*
5:30-7:30PM	Private Event – *Sanctuary*
7:00-8:00PM	Al-Anon – *Upper Lounge*
7:00-8:30PM	N.A. – *Common Grounds*

Saturday, October 3

8:00AM-4:00PM	Private Event – *Sanctuary, Upper Lounge, Common Grounds*
4:00-5:00PM	St. Julia's Worship Service – *Chapel*
5:30-7:30PM	Kenya Craft Sale Setup – *Chapel*
7:00-8:00PM	Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Sunday, October 4

8:00AM-12:00PM	Kenya Craft Sale – *Chapel*
9:30-11:00AM	Childcare – *Childcare Room*
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday Worship/World Communion Sunday/Kenya Sunday – *Sanctuary, Upper Lounge, Chapel*
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday School: Chat in the Chapel – *Chapel*
9:30-11:45AM	Confirmation Class – *HS Room*
10:30-11:00AM	Kwik Trip Fundraising – *Narthex*
10:30-11:30AM	Children's Choir Rehearsal – *Choir Room*
10:30AM-1:00PM	Private Event – *River Room*
5:00-6:00PM	LU Music Scholars' Rehearsal – *Sanctuary, Choir Room*
7:00-8:00PM	First Things First AA Meeting – *Fellowship Hall, Common*
7:00-8:00PM	Al-Anon – *Chapel* / Alateen – *Upper Lounge*

Celebrating Rally Sunday!

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*
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday School – *CYF Wing*
10:30-11:30AM	Children's Choir Rehearsal – *Choir Room*
10:45-11:45AM	CYF Committee Meeting – *HS Room*
5:00-6:00PM	LU Music Scholars' Rehearsal – *Sanctuary, Choir Room*
7:00-8:00PM	First Things First AA Meeting – *Fellowship Hall, Common Grounds*
7:00-8:00PM	Al-Anon – *Chapel* / Alateen – *Upper Lounge*

SUNDAY SCHOOL LOCATIONS FOR TODAY			
Upstairs, to the left	**Downstairs, to the left**	**Downstairs, to the right**	**Upstairs, to the right**
Scripture Tent 2nd & 3rd graders	**Middle School Room**	**High School Room**	**Art Kitchen**
Theater 4th & 5th graders	**Little Angel's Room** Preschoolers	**Lower Classroom** K & 1st graders	
Childcare Room Infants & Toddlers			

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 & 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