First
Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

October 25, 2026

serve *courageously* give *joyfully* live *gratefully*

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 two-year-olds every Sunday. 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 Group: Our PreK - 5th graders begin in worship. After the children's message, they walk together to the CYF wing for 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

October 25, 2026 9:30AM
Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost ~ Reformation & Heritage Sunday
Final Sunday of Stewardship

PRELUDE

Grave & Allegro from Concerto Saint Marc Tomaso Albinoni (1671–1750)

RINGING OF THE BELL

**Please rise in body or spirit*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Across time and place, people of faith have gathered to praise God's holy name.

All: As we seek to understand who we are, we praise God's holy name.

One: May God teach us to be seekers in our worship and our daily lives.

All: As we seek to understand who God is, we praise God's holy name.

One: May God teach us to be curious about how God will be revealed to us.

All: As we grow into who we will be, we praise God's holy name.

*OPENING HYMN #80

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past ST. ANNE
arr. John Rutter

St. 1: All
St. 2: All in harmony
St. 3: Choir
St. 4: Low voices in unison
St. 5: Choir
St. 6: All

WELCOME

LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY MUSIC SCHOLAR INTRODUCTIONS

*CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

One: Jesus says, if you continue in my word,
you are my disciples; and you will know my truth,
and the truth will make you free.
We try to live in Christ's truth, but we still fall short and find ourselves bound.
Let us pursue God's word through our confession.

**All: God of the ages, you have been faithful to us,
but we have not been faithful to you.
You have established covenants with us, but we have not upheld our part.**

We have distorted your word for our own gain.
We have claimed you as exclusively ours.
We have focused on power more than discipleship.
We beg your forgiveness.
Reform us again and make us into the image of your true church.

One: I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more, says the Lord.

All: The story continues. God is not done with us.
We are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

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

Salvation Unto Us Has Come from Cantata BWV 86 — J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
Text by Paul Speratus

Sanctuary Choir

SCRIPTURE READING 1 Timothy 6:17-19 — Debbie Hoogesteger

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but rather on God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

SERMON *"Live Gratefully"* — Pastor Nick Hatch

*HYMN #469

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God — EIN' FESTE BURG

Sts. 1, 2 & 4: All
St. 3: Choir

MOMENT FOR MISSION: Stewardship Campaign — Andy Burton

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

Andante from Concerto Saint Marc — T. Albinoni

*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.

CALL TO PRAYER

Behold Us Lord — LaVahn Maesch (1904-1994)

Behold us Lord, a little space from daily tasks set free, and met within thy holy place to rest awhile with thee.

Maesch was organist and music director at FCUCC from the mid-1920s until 1972. He also served as Professor of Organ from 1926-1969 at Lawrence University as well as Dean of the Conservatory from 1954-1970.

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 5)

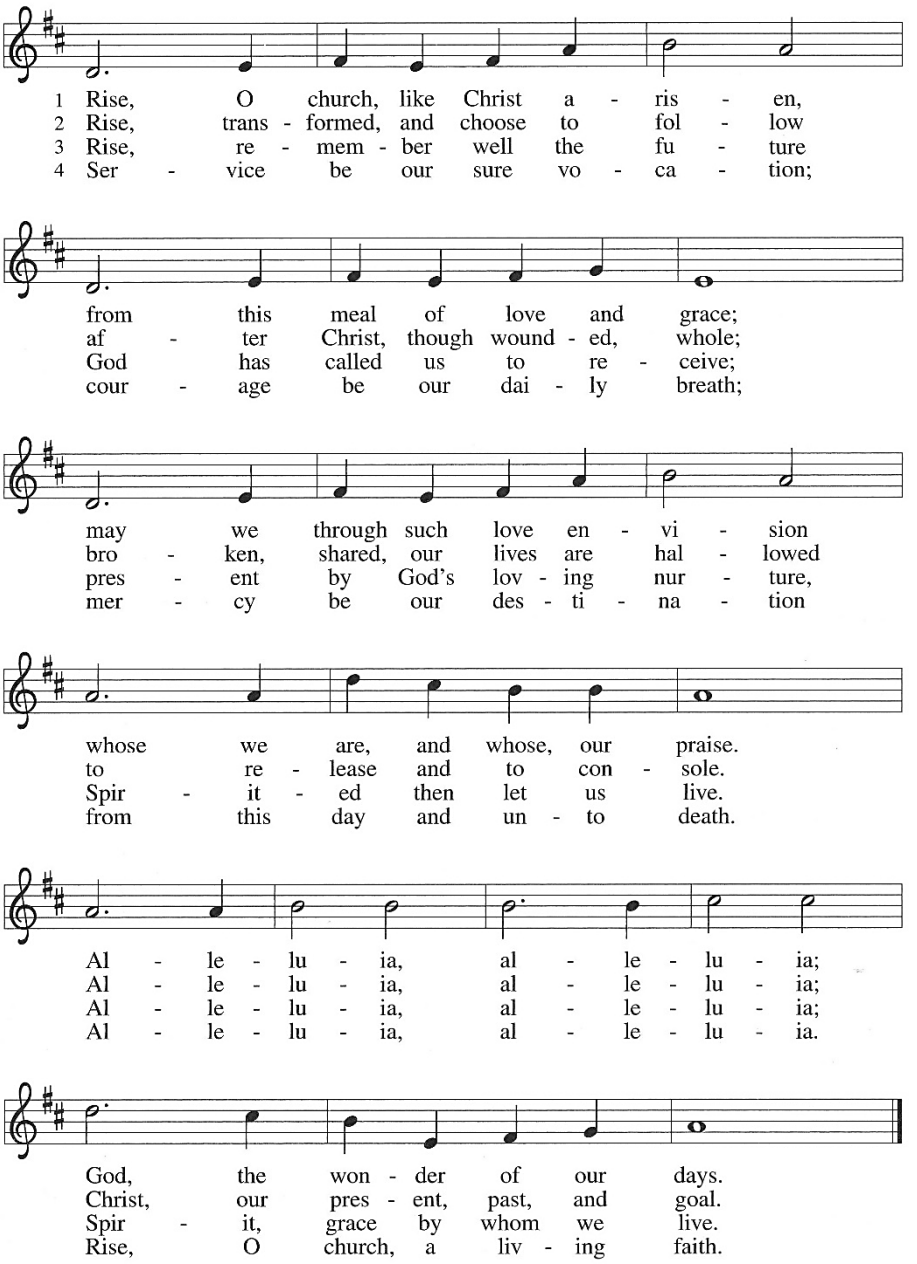
Rise, O Church, like Christ Arisen — SURGE ECCLESIA

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Allegro from Concerto Saint Marc — T. Albinoni

Rise, O Church, like Christ Arisen



Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953
Music: Timothy J. Strand, b. 1958

Text © 1997 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress
Music © 1997 Augsburg Fortress

SURGE ECCLESIA
8 7 8 7 8 7

Alternate tune: PRAISE, MY SOUL

THANK YOU TO TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey, *Co-Pastor*
Pastor Nicholas J. Hatch, *Co-Pastor*
Debbie Hoogesteger, *Lay Reader*
Sanctuary Choir; John Daniel, *trumpet*; John Aaholm, *timpani*
Dr. Nathan Birkholz, *Director of Music Ministries*

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USHERS/AUDIO/VIDEO

TODAY'S USHERS: Mike Weaver, Liz Dettwiler, Doug Gilbert, Becky Gilbert, Wayne Lannoye, Susan Forsythe
AUDIO & VIDEO: John Aaholm, Shannon Glenn, Jake Guyette

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR NEXT SUNDAY

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost/ All Saints Sunday Pastor Nick Hatch
Matthew 5:1-12 Sanctuary Choir

ON THE CALENDAR

Oct 25 & Nov 1	10:45AM-12:00PM	New Member Classes
November 4	5:45-7:30PM	Hopefest

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.**
Ralph and Carol DiBiasio-Snyder James Grimes Pat Streur Donna Haberland Michael Weaver Steve Hirby 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.

The Open Door Announcements

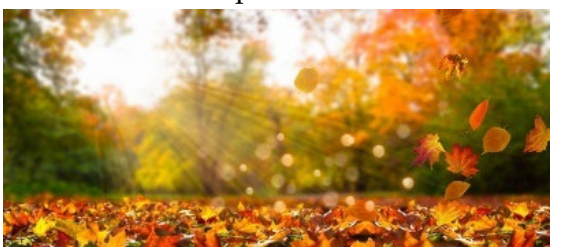
For more information on these announcements and other events, please visit our website, weekly e-newsletters, and social media.

Volunteer Opportunities: Are you willing and available to help out with occasional projects? The Facilities Committee is seeking to add to its pool of volunteers to assist with building and grounds maintenance and improvements. These are one-time needs where having extra hands would be helpful. If interested, please reach out to Vince at vsalvia@uccappleton.org or (920) 851-9455.

Church Family Handbell Workshops – Come Ring! Church Family Handbell Workshops begin today, **October 25,** in the Amistad Room at 10:30AM (right after worship.) Come experience ringing our Whitechapel Handbells and have fun learning a variety of techniques under the leadership of Beth Vercouteren. Open to elementary age through adults; *families are encouraged to come ring together!* Workshop rehearsals continue at 10:30AM on November 1 & November 8, with NO REHEARSAL on November 15 (you do not need to attend every week), and a dress rehearsal on Saturday, November 21, (time tba, based on schedule of the participants.) We will perform at 9:30AM worship on November 22, with special music that celebrates Thanksgiving. To register, please contact the main office for Beth's information, or speak with Nathan Birkholz, *Director of Music Ministries.*

E2F (Empty to Full) Pans: Today, **October 25**, First Congregational UCC will participate in a project to allow members to prepare pans of food, in their own home, primarily to serve Pillars, with a smaller number going to COTS & Apricity. Willing participants can pick up an empty pan that contains the recipe & shopping list to prepare & fill the pan with an easy recipe. (Cost is approximately $16) The recipes are so simple...no cooking or basic cooking required. This is a great activity for all ages and skills. (**The pans are not baked; the shelter will do this**.) The prepared pan is returned on Sunday, *November 1, before the church service. * Note: If you're unable to bring the pan back on November 1, it can be placed in the church kitchen freezer the week before. Any questions please contact the main office for Cindi MacSwain's information.

We're OFF to Mosquito Hill Nature Center: Outdoor Fun and Fellowship invites you to take a walk to catch the last of the fall colors on the trails of Mosquito Hill Nature Center. We'll walk for about an hour on easy trails with only small hills. Saturday, **October 31**, 10:30AM. Meet in the parking lot. N3880 Rogers Rd, New London. Group lunch afterwards for those interested. Please contact the main office for Nancy Brown-Koeller's information.



Thank You for all the donations we brought to Henderson Settlement last week. The staff at the Thrift Store, a.k.a. Opportunity Store, were totally amazed. The towels and hygiene products are definitely needed and will be welcomed by the people of the Henderson Settlement area. Your generous spirit of giving will be felt, received, and appreciated by those in need. -LouAnn Graf

The Turtle Trek Fundraiser for our mission partner on the Pine Ridge reservation, Re-Member, will end on Sunday, **November 1**. If you have pledged to support one of our trekkers, you have two options for payment:

1. Contribute directly at: https://www.re-member.org/give-online
   (Please indicate in the box marked "additional gift information and comments" that this is for the FCUCC Appleton Turtle Trek)
2. Make out a check to "FCUCC Appleton" with a note in the memo indicating "Turtle Trek Challenge" and send to the church office by November 15.

The Indigenous Peoples' Allies Committee is hosting a talk by Gracie Waukechon on "Wild Rice Restoration and Current Challenges: How Line 5 Threatens the Rice Beds of the Great Lakes." Gracie is an enrolled member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, a Menominee descendant, and an intern at the College of Menominee Sustainability Institute. Her talk will take place on Sunday, **November 15**, in Fellowship Hall following church service. All are invited to attend!

Outreach Ministries Bulletin Board: Each month the Outreach Ministries bulletin board in the narthex, across from the elevator, highlights our mission partners. This month features **ESTHER - E**mpowerment **S**olidarity **T**ruth **H**ope **E**quity **R**eform. Founded in 2004 by six faith communities (FCUCC being one). As an interfaith social justice organization, it aims to build collective power in the Fox Valley to address social and economic injustices and work for more equitable communities that embrace diversity. ESTHER works with congregations and individuals in collaboration with community partners and public officials so that everyone can have a voice and role in bringing about strong and just communities. ESTHER sometimes seeks to mobilize support for or opposition to particular legislation or rule-making; we do not, however, advocate for candidates or parties. To learn more, connect with Sara Companik or Karen Pfefferle (call church office 920.733.7393 for contact info) or go to https://esther-foxvalley.org/about or use the QR code.

The 2026 - 2027 Ministries & Activity Guide is now online! Misplaced your hard copy of the guide? From any page on the FCUCC website, scroll to the banner at the bottom to find the **26-27 Activity Guide** button or scan this QR code.

Library News: The theme for October is Indigenous People. We have a large selection of books – please come check them out. Here are a couple: *Pow Wow: A Celebration Through Song and Dance* by Karen Pheasant-Neganigwane and *Bud Finds Her Gift* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Are you looking for a way to get involved at church and meet new people, but you really don't have much time? Come volunteer in the church library. We're looking for a few people to help check books out of the library. It's Sunday mornings – set up a display before church and staff the table after church (10:30–11:00AM). Volunteer as often as you want – every Sunday or a few times a year. For more information or to sign up, contact Mary Sullivan through Realm or the church office.

We also need people who are interested in helping to choose books for the church library. We meet a couple of times each year to choose how to spend our budget. Contact Mary Sullivan if interested.

Finally, we need one or two people to help with inventorying the library collection. This would take several hours over a few weeks. We are flexible about scheduling these sessions. Again, contact Mary Sullivan if interested.

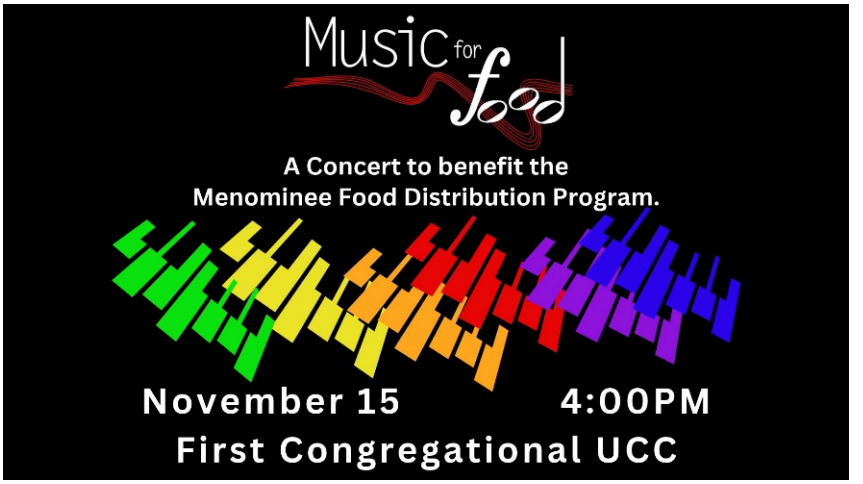
Faith at the Ballot Box: What the 2026 Midterms Reveal About American Christianity: Today, **October 25,** at 10:45AM in the sanctuary. Karen Park returns to First Congregational to help us consider what the upcoming election is revealing about Christianity in American public life. She will not discuss predictions or how Christians should vote, but some of the deeper religious questions underneath our politics: Christian nationalism, immigration and the biblical stranger, human dignity, the common good, and competing Christian understandings of political power. Dr. Park is a historian of American religion, acquisitions editor at Broadleaf Books, and a regular columnist for the *National Catholic Reporter*. She previously taught theology and religious studies at St. Norbert College for seventeen years. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago Divinity School and writes *Ex Voto*, a newsletter about religion, culture, and public life. *Note: this event will be livestreamed via Facebook and YouTube.*

Economic Justice Work Group (EJWG) Our Faith Compels Us: Action-Oriented Levers
Need Your Involvement: EJWG is committed to building stronger, more equitable communities through faith-based action. The current focus is on housing insecurity. We're working alongside community partners to:

- **Welcome people in need** by helping develop sustainable solutions for emergency winter shelter.
- **Advocate for affordable housing and policies** that help our neighbors find safe, stable homes.
- **Build stronger neighborhoods** by discovering community strengths, building relationships, and supporting local initiatives.
- **Exploring opportunities** for all people to have a living wage.
- **Imagine new possibilities** for how churches, businesses, land, and facilities can contribute to thriving communities.

We need your involvement! Please contact: Monk Elmer – monkelmer567@gmail.com or Jo Muehl – josephine.muehl@gmail.com

Shoe and Backpack Drive: Check your/your kids' closets! Menominee Tribal Youth Services helps K-12 youth be equipped for sports and school. They seek new or gently used backpacks and boys' and girls' athletic shoes for all ages. Let's put our best foot forward by dropping off shoes or backpacks in good condition in the blue cart in the narthex during the month of October.



This Week's Schedule

Monday, October 26

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, October 27

9:00-10:00AM	ADRC Strong Bodies – *Fellowship Hall*
4:00-5:30PM	Outreach Ministries Meeting – *Upper Lounge & by Zoom*
6:00-7:30PM	Council Meeting – *Upper Lounge & by Zoom*
6:00-7:30PM	Community Partnership Task Force Meeting – *Isaiah Room*
6:30-7:30PM	Living Sober AA – *Common Grounds*
7:30-9:00PM	Fireside AA – *Common Grounds*

Wednesday, October 28

5:00-6:00PM	Private Event – *Upper Lounge*
5:45-6:25PM	Youth Handbells – *Amistad Room*
6:30-7:30PM	Bible Study – *Chapel*
6:30-7:30PM	Youth Group @ *The 10th Frame*
7:00-8:30PM	Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – *Sanctuary, Choir Room*

Thursday, October 29

9:00-10:00AM	ADRC Strong Bodies – *Fellowship Hall*
12:00-1:00PM	AA Search for Serenity Group – *Common Grounds*
7:00-8:00PM	Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Friday, October 30

8:30-11:30AM	Private Event – *Scripture Tent, Theater*
10:00-11:30AM	Bulletin Folders – *Library*
1:00-2:30PM	Celebration of Gifts Planning – *Upper Lounge*
7:00-8:00PM	Al-Anon – *Upper Lounge*
7:00-8:30PM	N.A. – *Common Grounds*

Saturday, October 31 ~ Halloween

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

This Week's Schedule continued on page13…

Sunday, November 1 ~ Daylight Saving Time ends

8:00AM-12:00PM	E2F Pan Pickup – *Narthex*
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday Worship/All Saints Sunday – *Sanctuary, Upper Lounge,*
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday School: Chat in the Chapel & Communion – *Chapel*
9:30-11:45AM	Confirmation Class – *Fellowship Hall*
9:30AM-12:00PM	Childcare – *Childcare Room*
10:30-11:00AM	Kwik Trip Fundraising – *Narthex*
10:30-11:30AM	Children's Choir Rehearsal – *Choir Room*
10:30-11:30AM	Church Family Handbells Rehearsal – *Amistad Room*
10:45-11:45AM	New Member Class – *Chapel*
11:45AM-4:00PM	Private Event – *Fellowship Hall, 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 Grounds*
7:00-8:00PM	Al-Anon – *Chapel* / Alateen – *Upper Lounge*

Step into the Wardrobe: Help us Bring Narnia to Life! Have you read the *Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, or perhaps watched one of the movie adaptations? If so, perhaps you've imagined stepping into the wardrobe, pushing past the fur coats, and entering that magical, snow-covered world yourself. On Sunday, December 6 from 3:00-5:00PM, we are doing just that! The Adult Education and CYF teams are collaborating to create a Narnia Night inspired by *Advent in Narnia*, a devotional book by Heidi Haverkamp.

In C.S. Lewis's beloved children's book, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Narnia is trapped under a spell where it is "always winter, but never Christmas" – until the arrival of Aslan, a lion who represents Christ. We want to bring that same sense of joyful anticipation to our community by creating a Narnia-themed Advent celebration.

We will provide copies of the book to all of our families in October – though, to be clear, people do not need to have read the book to enjoy the event!

We need many volunteers to make this event a success. We'll need people to:

- Act as welcomers
- Bake cookies, Turkish delight, & prepare a drink table
- Help with costumes
- Make a lamppost
- Dress up as book characters (the White Witch, Mr. Tumnus, Mr. & Mrs. Beaver, etc.)
- Read a storybook
- Prepare and lead crafts
- Set up our wardrobe of coats and forest of Christmas trees

We will work on the event after worship on Sunday, November 30, and will have shifts to set up, help during the event, and clean up on Sunday, December 6. Use the link or the QR code:

Advent in Narnia sign-up link

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.

TODAY AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

8:00AM-12:00PM	E2F Pan Handout – *Narthex*
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday Worship – *Sanctuary, Upper Lounge, Chapel*
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday School – *CYF Wing*
9:30AM-12:00PM	Childcare – *Childcare Room*
10:30-11:15AM	CYF Committee Meeting – *CYF Wing*
10:30-11:30AM	Children's Choir Rehearsal – *Choir Room*
10:30-11:30AM	Church Family Handbells Rehearsal – *Amistad Room*
10:45-11:45AM	New Member Class – *Chapel*
10:45-11:45AM	Adult Education – *Fellowship Hall, Sanctuary*
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*

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