

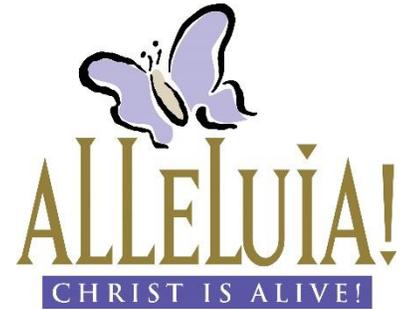


April 2021 Bell Tower

First Congregational
United Church of Christ

We Are Open and Affirming

1111 North Chicago Avenue,
South Milwaukee, WI 53172



Pastor: Rev. Beth Abbott * pastor@firstconguccsm.com * (414) 762-3121
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Cemetery congcemeterysm@gmail.com

Like us on Facebook: First Congregational United Church of Christ South Milwaukee

Dear Church,

Happy Easter! From Easter Sunday, we'll share in the **Easter season** all month. Known as "The Great 50 Days," we'll revel, throughout most of May as well, in **God's unrelenting love** and in the miracle of **Jesus' resurrection**.

We'll train our eyes to see **new life forging from death**. The resurrection story is never just a story of the past but a present and ever-emerging one...

New life in the awakening again to explore white supremacy in our history, culture, institutions & everyday life...

Bulbs popping up from the once-frozen ground and blossoming soon in beauty...

A fresh breath comes to our awareness anew of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) neighbors & their meaningful contributions to society...

Captivated by characters of Beverly Cleary's imagination and clever writing, those childhood readers now pass on that passion for reading to the next generation...

Each hug (a year in the making) & each event we get to put on the calendar (less tentatively than in the last 12+ months) as moments of resurrection and renewal...

What signs of new life and Jesus' resurrection will you see in April? They are everywhere once we start looking!

Pastor Beth

Rev. Beth Abbott

Worship Online ‘Together’ This Easter Season:

Join us **10a Sundays** or after 6a via **FirstCongSMUCC** on YouTube ‘Subscribe’, Facebook, or weekly church email. Re-watch anytime & share with friends & family!

Apr. 4 **Easter Sunday: *Again & Again, The Son Rises***

Celebrate Jesus’ Resurrection: [Mark 16:1-8](#) & communion

Apr. 11 **2nd Sun of Easter**

Rev. Dr. Karl Kuhn & Rev. Dr. Julie Mavity Maddalena of Lakeland University explore the faith-filled questions of Thomas [John 20:19-31](#)

Apr. 18 **3rd Sun of Easter: *Christ Among Us***

Learning to be a community [Acts 4:32-35](#) & [Psalm 4](#) questions “How long?” suffering will last--both fitting for our “post-pandemic” life

Apr. 25 **4th Sun of Easter: *Enfolded by Love***

The famous & beloved “Lord is My Shepherd” [Psalm 23](#) is paired with [John 10:11-18](#) Jesus as the Good Shepherd

May 2 **5th Sun of Easter: *Abiding in Love***

“Abide in God’s Love” [1 John 4:7-21](#) will prepare us for a lens-of-faith look at the story of the Ethiopian eunuch [Acts 8:26-40](#)

New Life Emerges with New Members

When the lockdown began, no doubt our worst fears for the church flooded our minds. How would being apart impact our congregation? What would happen to our church?

While understandable, those fears didn't stand a chance against what would emerge. Now we welcome 4 new members (none of whom has worshiped with us at a Sunday morning in-person service!) However, each has felt the Holy Spirit guide them to the church through our extravagant welcome, outward focus, and vibrancy in our ministries--all which 'shows up' in our online services. Thanks be to God! *(And 1-2 more joining soon!)*



(Rev. Dr.) **Martha Brunell** *(she/her)*, our preacher at our Fall 2019 Installation Service, joins us via letter of transfer. Martha loves to write, read, enjoy God in nature, connect with her two adult daughters, and dwell in the possibilities retirement offers after many years of faithful, ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ. Welcome, Martha!

Terry Leonhardt *(she/her)*, in conversation with us in our Racism work, loves to read, scrapbook, make cards, theater, travel and spend time with family & lives her faith by teaching English & citizenship prep International Language Center & volunteering at Resource Center (free clothing bank)--among other Welcome, Terry!



who is already 40 Days of Anti-enjoy movies & friends. She at the Father Gene's pursuits!



Michelle Majerus-Uelmen *(bottom left; she/her)* & **Brad Uelmen** *(bottom right; she/her)* intentionally became a part of the United Church of Christ many years ago because of the warm welcome of all of God's children. They are eager to continue to grow their faith now with us! Michelle you'll see at the South Milwaukee Performing Art Center as their Marketing Director. She loves Door Co. trips *(pictured)* & time with family/friends. Brad is now the co-owner of Ken Cook Co. & enjoys cheering on WI teams! Welcome, Michelle & Brad!

Thank you for your generosity in offering Easter meals to individuals & families in our community!



Trials & Smiles Prayer List

[Trials & Smiles](#) is our ongoing prayer list of concerns/joys. Put anyone on the list if you have their permission (or offer prayers for yourself or any place). You can also call the church office and leave a message and Rochelle will add your prayer to the list for you. Our listed prayers will not be shared during our YouTube worship (additional privacy concerns), but we trust you'll be holding them in your prayers and caring for one another.



Need a Prayer Shawl?

Want to 'Cover' a Loved One with One?

We have prayer shawls of all sizes and colors— all blessed and ready for you to pick up. Contact the church office.

Moment for Mission

Thanks to all who participated in our annual **One Great Hour of Sharing** emphasis in March. \$765 has been collected, so far. It's not too late to contribute! Can you spare one hour of wages – “One Great Hour” – to share – “Of Sharing” – to support the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ? Mark your envelope or your e-giving donation for this Lenten offering.



In April, we wish to highlight **Eras Senior Network** (an agency that replaces the former Interfaith organization) as the special recipient of Benevolent Funds. This agency works to “**Engage, Relate, Advocate, Support**” senior citizens and adults with disabilities, working to help these individuals lead meaningful lives. Programming includes both opportunities for elders to volunteer their time and talents within the community and opportunities for those in need to receive help with transportation, shopping, minor home repairs and outdoor maintenance tasks. The Eras Senior Network is always looking for volunteers to partner with them, putting “**Faith In Action**”. For more information about volunteering or receiving assistance, contact Eras at **(414) 488-6500**.

Desserts are collected for **St. Vincent DePaul** on the second Friday of every month. For April, that means April 9th. Time to start baking! Drop off your desserts (store bought are welcome if you're not baking this month) **Pam Uhrig's house, 421 Hawthorne Avenue, by 3:00 p.m. on April 9th**. Thanks for the treats!



Every time you make a purchase at smile.amazon.com we receive a donation. Select **First Congregational Church UCC South Milwaukee** as your charity.

Community Meal Program

The Covid-19 pandemic has curtailed our church's ability to sponsor a monthly Community Meal. Before putting the brakes on this program in March of 2020, we had routinely been serving approximately 100 guests each month. Participants came as much for the camaraderie as for the meal. Unfortunately, health regulations do not yet allow for the rebooting of this program in our facilities.

In the meantime, and at least until we have our own meal program up and running, the Mission Committee from First Congregational Church is assisting with the meal program operating out of Christ Church UCC on Oklahoma Avenue in Milwaukee. In February, we provided thirty-five healthy lunches for their Friday night program. Our Committee will again organize contributions for meals in both April and May.

Would you like to join our efforts? Come to the church basement on Thursday, April 15th at 6:00 p.m. and/or Thursday, May 21st at 6:00 p.m., to help make sandwiches and stuff lunch bags with fruit, chips, desserts, breakfast bars and water bottles. We would love the assistance! Perhaps there is a committee out there who would like to make this their meeting night (as the Mission Committee has done) and pack lunches prior to conducting "business". Or perhaps there are individual adults or teens who would just like to help with this effort. All are welcome. The more hands involved, the quicker the work! Additional dates will be added if help is available. Christ Church serves these meals each Friday and always welcomes donations.

A reminder: we will be packing lunches on **Thursday April 15 and Thursday May 21, 6:00 p.m.** Come join us!

Volunteers, Leah & Dennis,
Packing Lunches



Time to Register for Camp!

Camp is a wonderful & special experience to nourish faith, enjoy God's creation & create memories.



3 United Church Camps, Inc. (UCCI) Options:

Pilgrim Center, Green Lake

Moon Beach, St. Germain

Cedar Valley Retreat Center, West Bend

Find out more: ucci.org

Register: Select "Yes, Member-UCCI Affiliated Church" when asked if in WI Conference UCC. Select our church from drop down menu.

Southeast Association has pooled scholarship funds with UCCI (no separate application), so be forthcoming in the amount you request. Funds are available & are intended to be used. If you can't pay at registration, put the balance in the box indicated for pay later/mail check.

Additionally, our church likely will apply a scholarship for our youth campers (adults too if funds allow). Because of the fluidity of scholarships, pay the down payment (not full amount) or use pay later/mail check option.

From the UCC's Mental Health Network

Some resources with trained professionals available to assist in crisis:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Board of Trustees

As we approach the end of March I thought it would be good to provide an update from the Board of Trustees. While we have not been able to gather as a faith family, the trustees have been busy behind the scenes making sure that the status of our congregation remains on solid footing, as well as getting many other projects complete.

Here are just a few of the many things that have been happening:

Door Locks: Keith Scheffler has been working tirelessly to update all of the locks in the building. The Pine Street Entrance now has an electronic lock. This allows us to program and distribute key “fobs” to those who need access. This provides an extra layer of security because if a fob is lost, or we wish to revoke access, the fob can just be removed from the system. No more keys to try and track. Additionally, all the many doors are now on a “system” so that numerous keys are not required to gain access to the various areas. Some other areas such as boiler rooms are now secured so that small children can’t accidentally enter those areas. Thank you Keith for sharing your time and talents with us.

Live Streaming: With the help of Brian Buss, Keith and Jeff have nearly completed the install of a Live Streaming system. This will enable us to Live Stream our services when we return to in person worship. This way we can reach those members may not be comfortable in returning, as well as reach those who may be traveling, or not currently living in the area. One last piece will be installing a TV in the nursery so that those caring for the little ones can be more connected to worship. Towards this end, we are seeking a donation of a TV, or funds. We would like to install a 49” to 55” TV in that space.

Email and Media Updates: In an effort to align our media contacts and update our online presence, we are transitioning to a Google Workspace Environment. This will provide a more unified presence as well as secure our contacts. Please note these new emails. For Pastor Beth - pastor@firstconguccsm.com For Rochelle/Office - office@firstconguccsm.com and for the Worship Production Team (Jeff, Beth, Katie and Keith) mediateam@firstconguccsm.com The old emails will forward to these new emails for the foreseeable future.

Office Painting: Both Pastor Beth and Rochelle’s office are in need of sprucing up. We are looking to use this closed time to apply a fresh coat of paint to both. Are you good with a paint brush and willing to offer your time and talents. Please let us know via the emails above. All supplies will be provided.

Return to Worship Taskforce: Scott Harlan is chair of our return task force and he continues to monitor the status of the pandemic and CDC Guidelines. Rest assured that it is the goal of all of us to return as soon as is safely possible, while being able to provide worship for those who wish to return and those who still may not feel comfortable.

In closing, please feel free to reach out to me at any time if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely

Jeff Kitzman

Chair - Board of Trustees

414-403-2897

jeff.kitzman@gmail.com

Directory Updates in Bold

BRUNELL, *Martha
525 West Hawthorne Place
#1205
Chicago, IL 60657
(314) 607-4852
marthabrunell@gmail.com

UELMEN, *Brad & *Michelle
Majerus-Uelmen
130 E. Stuart Court
Oak Creek, WI 53154
(414) 315-4939 (Brad)
Uelmen10@yahoo.com
(414) 315-4929 (Michelle)
Shelbym2u@gmail.com

LEONHARDT, *Terry
6020 S. Buckhorn Ave. Unit 209
Cudahy, WI 53110
(414) 732-9761
terrybw@yahoo.com

Please notify the office if you have any directory updates or corrections: firstcongsm@gmail.com.

Treasurers Report - Ending February 28, 2021

Operating Account

Beginning Bal.	\$ 7,346.70
Receipts	\$ 10,099.29
Expenses	<u>\$ 10,584.90</u>
Ending Bal.	\$6,861.09

Payroll Protection Program Loan

Beginning Bal.	\$ 0.00
Receipts	\$ 20,262.50
Expenses	<u>\$ 8,190.67</u>
Ending Bal.	\$ 12,071.83

Benevolence Account

Beginning Bal.	\$ 0.00
Receipts	\$ 2,180.32
Expenses	<u>\$ 2,180.32</u>
Ending Bal.	\$ 0.00

We are thankful for your faith-filled giving!

*Whether large and small, your giving enables us to God's calling for us "Beloved, Love."
Thank you for all the ways you give! Further suggestions for supporting our faith community:*

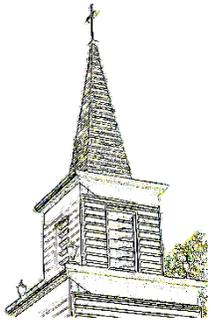
- **Switch to E-giving;** visit firstconguccsm.com to sign up with VANCO
- **Mail a check** (1111 N. Chicago Ave. South Milwaukee, WI 53172) or drop your offering in the secure, parking lot mail slot
- **"Bill pay" your offering** through your bank as you might with other bills
- **Use PayPal** via firstconguccsm.com

*Whichever way(s) you support our ministries, **we are thankful** for your generosity and your deep passion for our church.*

Alternative Methods of Giving

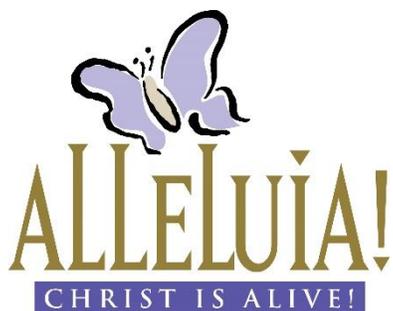
Do you wonder about alternative methods of giving to the church (e.g., stock dividends, IRA disbursements, adding the church to your will, etc.)?

Contact Treasurer Rochelle or a Member of Trustees for more information.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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