



Your April *Wide-Open Door*

Pastors Pen

The hardest part of the Lord's Prayer is the first word. Jesus bowed his head and said "Abba". We translate this "Our Father". But a better way to understand the ancient and timeless word, "Abba", is to see that Jesus was calling God, "Papa". He was using a word more intimate than Our Father conveys.

I don't know about you, but I had a Papa once. That was the word I called my grandfather. He left a lasting impression on me, though I only knew him for just under nine years. My Papa loved me, and I knew it. He owned a small business, a nursery. I felt safe and happy playing there among the trees. I imagine he was watching out for me, but I always felt free in that nursery. I remember him hard at work in the greenhouse, and out back planting or digging up trees. I remember him resting at the kitchen table on hot a afternoon. He was kind and quiet, with a twinkle in his eye.

The reason I describe him here is because the word Papa conjures such warm memories for me that I have trouble making those images of my own Papa synch up with what I have learned about God. What does it mean to imagine that God could be called Papa? What is Jesus saying?

I think Jesus is putting us on notice here that God is not as scary or un-approachable as we often imagine. God is not so distant, or such a formidable judge as we often fear.

We know this because when Jesus approached God, he came with complete trust. What if God was not an anchorman in a booth, making curt comments on the human game of life below. What if God was not a judge in a courtroom, impervious and unflinching. What if God was not someone to fear, but more like someone you could call Abba?

Would that one word – Abba – make a difference in the way you see God, in the way you trust God, or in the way you live your life? As for me, most days I'm still trying to get my head around that first word in the Lord's Prayer...Abba.

Blessings, as you ponder all this.
Pastor Susan



Congregational Life

Embracing God, welcoming others, knowing ourselves

2023 Women's Spring Retreat Friday, April 21 – Sunday, April 23

Our 2023 Women's Spring Retreat will be at Moon Beach Camp near St. Germain, Friday, April 21– Sunday, April 23. Julie Garner will be our retreat leader. She led our fall 2022 retreat and participants enjoyed her. She is a licensed UCC pastor and a Spiritual Director/Retreat Leader and Registered Nurse as well as a Certified Yoga, Group Exercise and Personal Training Instructor. She is on the board of UCCI, which is Wisconsin UCC's camps.

Julie says, "My present vocation (and my passion) as a Spiritual Director is to help people "Open their Hearts to God", through individual and group spiritual direction sessions and in retreat settings. I believe we are created in God's image to be God's image. Living out that journey is our call."

The retreat will be centered on *Exploring what connects us and sustains us in creation, our relationships, and our faith.*

It will be guided by the wisdom of Diana Butler Bass in her book *Grounded*. You are NOT required to read the book; Pastor Mary Jo has 10 used copies of the book available for \$4. (This book was on the 2020-2021 Wine & Word reading list, but I do not remember reading it.)

NEW WAY TO REGISTER Please register and pay in the **Realm Event:**

[Womens Spring Retreat April 21-23.](#)

The cost is \$170. You may also send a \$170 check to the church office and they will register you. Scholarship funds are available – contact Pastor Mary Jo or Barb Uehling. Registration closes April 1. Please register early!

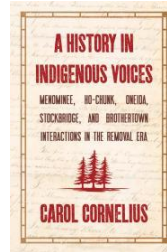
Please join us in April! It is "good for your soul" and a great way to meet more FCC women.

Contact Barbara Uehling with any questions via email buehling@gmail.com or phone 920-475-2212.



History of Indigenous Voices During the Removal Era

For those who wish to learn more about Indigenous history and the systematic government removal of Indigenous peoples from their land, please consider "The History of Indigenous Voices During the Removal Era" being held at the Neenah Public Library.



Everyone is welcome. If accommodations are needed to attend, please contact the library administrative office at 920-886-6315 or by email at library@neenahlibrary.org at least 24 hours in advance of the program.

Author and Oneida Nation member Dr. Carol Cornelius shares the history of the 1800's removal era from the indigenous perspective. Many treaties and agreements were made in the formation of cities like Neenah and Menasha. Carol will lay out how these treaties took Indigenous lands in Wisconsin piece by piece from the Menominee, Ojibwe, Ho-Chunk, Lakota and Potawatomi. Carol completed her Ph.D. at Cornell University in 1992. Her major was curriculum and instruction, and minor American Indian culture and history. She taught at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay for three years and helped build the First Nations Studies undergraduate program.

History programs are sponsored by the *Neenah Historical Society* and co-sponsored by the *Neenah Public Library*

April 20, 2023 @ 07:00 pm

Event Age

[Adults](#)

[Teens](#)

Event Type

[History](#)

**Madison Action Day /
ESTHER Fox Valley**
Thursday, April 27, 2023 (All day)
Location: State Capitol, Madison

Ride and Rally for Reform!

We are excited for Madison Action Day 2023 on April 27! We will gather at the Wisconsin Masonic Center and then make our way together to the Wisconsin State Capitol Building.



Ride... the bus to Madison
Rally... on the Capitol Steps
Relay... your views and values
to your legislators
Reignite... your fire for justice!

Register Now: **MAD2023**

We are excited for Madison Action Day 2023 on April 27! We will gather at the Wisconsin Masonic Center and then make our way together to the Wisconsin State Capitol Building.

Community members from all across the state will be coming together for this special event. There will be food, speakers and opportunities to meet with legislators . . . who make the decisions that impact our lives and our state!

Buses will be filling up in the Fox Valley to transport people to Madison.

Now is the time to JOIN US in making your voice heard for issues you care about whether it be mass incarceration, environmental justice, immigration or so much more!

Please register by April 6 so we can begin to organize our visits to legislators.

A booklet outlining our budget priorities will be provided to each participant prior to Madison Action Day to help with preparations for our visits. Each legislator will also receive a copy of the booklet.

At each district visit, we need a facilitator and someone to speak for each budget priority. You can volunteer to speak or come along to show support for these recommendations.

48th Annual Airo Powwow

If you are interested in learning more about Indigenous cultures, a fun way to get started is to attend a powwow! There will be periodic posts about area powwows in this newsletter. The one listed today is an indoor powwow and people and children of all ages are invited. FREE over age 55 or under 5! We have attached a link to an article about powwow etiquette to help you understand the ceremony. See you there!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Barb Weyenberg at 920-574-2728

[Pow Wow Etiquette Article](#)

The poster for the 48th Annual Airo Powwow is set against a background of various Native American beaded items. At the top, it reads '48th Annual AIRO POWWOW' in large, bold letters. Below this, it specifies the location 'UWSP Quandt Gym' and the date 'May 6, 2023'. The address '2040 Fourth Ave, Stevens Point, WI 54481' is listed. Event details include 'DOORS OPEN AT 10AM', 'GRAND ENTRY AT 12:00 PM AND 6:30PM', and 'FEAST AT 4:30PM'. The 'HEAD STAFF' section lists roles such as Host Drum, Emcee, Arena Director, Head Female Dancer, Head Male Dancer, and Color Guard. The 'SPECIALS' section lists activities like Potato Dance, Two Step, Singer Dance, Outgoing Princess, and Tiny Tots. The 'INVITED DRUMS' section lists groups like Giitaa'se, Tomahawk Circle, Maple Tree, War Thunder, Chief Hill, Lake Delton, Little Thunder, and Fire Nation. The 'ADMISSION' section provides pricing for non-students, UWSP students, and children. Logos for the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point and the Native American Center are included. Contact information for vendors and questions is provided at the bottom.

Voting Issue

We, the First Congregational “Mind the Gaps” Bible Study Group that met in the fall of 2022 and led by Rev. Sekinah Hamlin, explored cash bail as an economic justice concern and wanted everyone to be aware of a critical issue appearing on the April 4th, Wisconsin General Election ballot. In addition to candidates for various offices, ballots will include a cash bail measure. We feel that our Congregation needs to be aware of the stance of the UCC General Synod on the issue of cash bail and how it relates to the Wisconsin election referendum.

A “NO” vote is consistent with the UCC General Synod position. At their biennial meeting in July 2021, the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted *A RESOLUTION TO ADVOCATE AND ACT TO CHANGE THE CASH BAIL BOND SYSTEM TO ELIMINATE RACIAL AND SOCIAL INJUSTICES INHERENT IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM.*

The following links can supply you with more information to help as you reflect on your personal stance on this very important issue.

- [Cash Bail Reform - Communityucc.org](https://www.communityucc.org)
- [Background on the cash bail issue as well as the April 4th Wisconsin Supreme Court race.](#)
- [Review the final UCC Resolution, pages 224-226.](#)

College of Menominee Nation Scholarships



In recognition that our church is located on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous peoples, the Mission and Service Ministry hopes to raise \$2000 a year to be able to give a new, named \$1000 scholarship each semester to a Menominee Nation member, or descendant, who is in good academic standing at the College of Menominee Nation (CMN).

The CMN is an accredited Land Grant institution chartered by the Menominee Nation with a flagship campus in Keshena (1993) and a second campus in Green Bay near the Oneida Nation. Both campuses welcome students from many American Indian tribes and all ethnicities/races. Most students need financial aid. CMN will select a qualified student through their usual vetting process.

To donate to this fund, please send a check made out to FCUCC with CMN in the notes line or donate through Realm. Our gift for the fall semester is due by June 1st. Any amount is appreciated!

There will be an information session in the Upper Lounge after our Worship Service on Sunday, Oct. 24.



Toward One Wisconsin

Join us Tuesday, April 25th– Wednesday, April 26th, in Appleton for Wisconsin’s leading equity, diversity and inclusion conference. Toward One Wisconsin brings together leaders, professionals, and advocates from a broad range of sectors. The conference features a variety of speakers including Rev. Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister of Justice and Local Church Ministries for the United Church of Christ. All three of your pastors will be leading a delegation as an extension of our mission to be the *Church of the Open Door*.

Just Follow These Three Steps:

1. Register YOURSELF online at the [Toward Wisconsin 2023 website](#) and pay your registration fee. *Talk to Pastor Nick if you need a scholarship, we just want you to come and grow with us!*
2. When you’re done with Step One, let us know by completing the sheet in the narthex or by calling the church office. We will keep a list of participants and communicate with our group via that list.
3. Check your email! Pastor Nick will email you 1-2 weeks in advance with information.

Hope to see you there! *Pastor Nick*

Worship and Music

*A diverse community practicing faith,
finding spiritual connection and experiencing
the Holy through artful sound*

Sonya Bach

April 16, 4:00...

First Congregational Church, UCC



Praised by BBC Music Magazine for her 'eloquent precision and immaculate technique [...] clean, jewel-like tone, [and] alert articulation', Sonya Bach has appeared on the most prestigious concert stages of Europe, North America and Asia, and has been invited by Cadaques Festival and Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, and to perform

in a recital promoted by the Catalunya Government for the victims and survivors of Ravensbruck Women's Concentration Camp and to be featured as the first classical musician to perform at the Community Theatre and Arts Centre in Dubai, UAE under the patronage of HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum. In 2012, Sonya performed to commemorate the Fifty Years of Diplomatic Relations between Korea and Switzerland at the Swiss Residence in Seoul, Korea.

The recent seasons saw London orchestra debut as a soloist with the English Chamber Orchestra at the Kings Place, the release of her debut recording "Sonya Bach plays JS Bach" featuring Bach's complete concertos for keyboard and orchestra with the ECO with the U.K. label Rubicon Classics which was chosen as a Presto Classical Editor's Choice, performances of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue with the Seoul Pops Orchestra and premiere of Iloh Yang's Piano Concerto with the Songpa Philharmonic Orchestra were, an extensive tour in Portugal with the CentusPerTempora Ensemble broadcast live by the RTP Portuguese National Broadcasting Corporation, and performance of Rachmaninov Concerto No. 2 and Yun Concerto with the Ureuk Symphony Orchestra in New York's Merkin Hall to critical acclaim.

As a devoted performer of rarely performed repertoire, Sonya made the Korean premiere of Turina's Rapsodia Sinfonica with the Seoul National Symphony Orchestra (SNO). Recently Sonya has successfully toured Korea once with the SNO featuring Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1

Sonya Bach started playing the piano at the tender age of three, gave her first public concert at age five and orchestra debut at age nine with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra of her native country.

She received musical educations on full scholarships at the Juilliard School in New York with Olegna Fuschi where she was chosen by the Director to perform at the Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall the same year, at the Accademia Pianistica "Incontri col Maestro" in Italy where she was admitted as the youngest pupil of the late Lazar Berman. As a teen, she studied with Cheng Zong Yin, one of China's most eminent pianists, under the Russian Piano School of Neuhaus, and frequently visited Mordecai Shehori with whom she mastered Horowitz's techniques while in New York.

A protégé of the late Alicia de Larrocha, she has earned Master in Spanish Music at the Academia Marshall in Barcelona, Spain. Sonya's numerous prizes include the First and Grand Prize as well as the Eugen d'Albert Interpretation Award at the Eugen d'Albert International Music Competition, Gina Bachauer Memorial Award and the Special Prize at the 12th Viotti-Valsesia International Music Competition as the youngest participant.

Sonya's instrument collection includes numerous concert grand pianos of the past centuries of prestigious makers Erard, Pleyel and Steinway. Sonya Bach is a Steinway Artist.

<https://www.sonyabach.com/>

Music for Food Concert

Students from the piano studio of Lawrence professor Catherine Kautsky will perform on **Sunday April 30 at 4 p.m. in First Congregational's sanctuary.** Program will include works by Bach, Haydn, Chopin, Scriabin, and others. Also performing on Native American flute is special guest and student from the studio of Professor José Encarnacion, Quintin Wade Fernandez. All free-will donations from this concert will go via Music for Food directly to the Menominee Nation's Food Distribution Program in Keshena, WI.

Music for Food is a musician-led initiative to fight hunger in local communities. Learn more at <https://musicforfood.net>.

Mission and Service

Building relationships, serving others, pursuing justice



Summer Camp Info is Here!

Have extra time this summer?
Know a college student looking to make money?
Click below to read about great opportunities to support UCCi camps this summer!

[SUMMER JOB Opportunities at Our Camps](#)

[Camp Awesum Volunteer Opportunities](#)

They NEED amazing, loving, volunteers like you at their incredible camps for children on the autism spectrum and their families on June 11-17, June 18-24 and August 6-12!

Youth and Families

Faith, fun, and service

A Note from Your Director

How is it April?? I am beyond thankful for everyone's support through my first program year as your Director of Children's and Middle School Youth Ministry. Your kind words and great suggestions help me strive to continue growing the amazing CYF programs that I walked into. I look forward to talking with many of you this summer! I will be calling and visiting members as much as I can in the coming months. I truly believe that personal connections make all the difference in a thriving community. Please call or email me if you'd like to meet for coffee, come see my office or share how you saw your child grow in his or her love of Christ this year.

This invitation is NOT just for families with little ones, though. I love to connect with church members and visitors of all ages. Let's get together!

Sarah Wilterdink: 920-540-2576 or swilterdink@firstcongoappleton.org

Summer Fun

More information will be coming your way, but in case you want to get the dates on your calendar, check out some summer offerings for our children, middle schoolers, and high schoolers!



Summer Job Opportunity!

Love to Work With Kids?

Do you love cuddling babies and hearing toddlers talk? Would you love some extra cash for summer adventures? If so, we have the perfect thing for you! We will need two childcare workers soon.

In June, Danielle will move to her parents' home in California. Don't worry, she is planning to return to Lawrence University and to us next school year. Yay! Luckily, we will still see Kalyn around church, but she is pursuing other endeavors in the coming months as well.

Please stop by, call 920-540-2576 or [email](#) Sarah Wilterdink with questions, recommendations, **and of course to apply for this important, fun, and rewarding parttime position.**

5 hours per week that correlate with worship services and other ministry times.

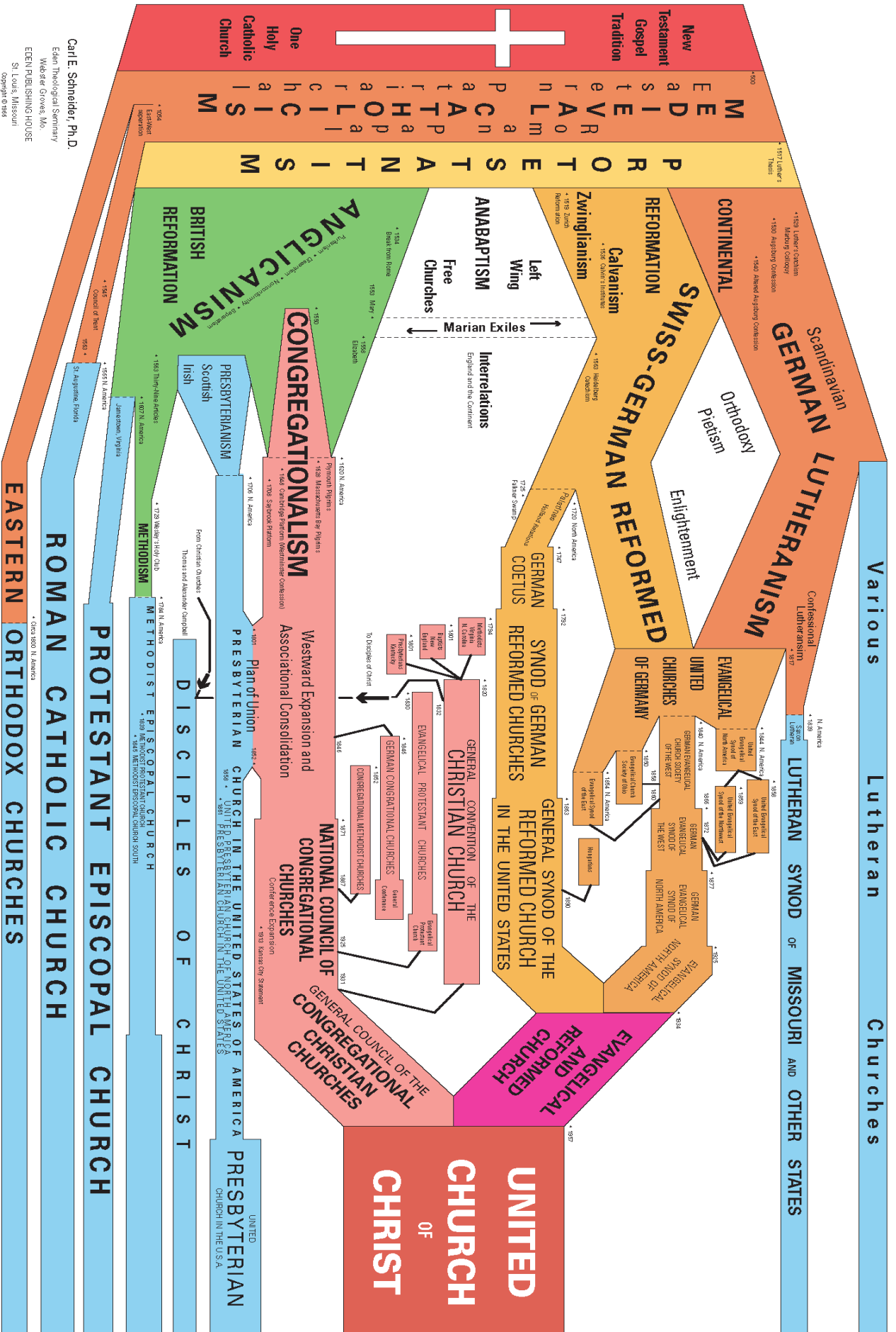
- Currently, Sunday mornings 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM (infants - toddlers)
 - includes one Easter Sunday service and one Christmas Eve service in addition to other Holidays when they fall on a Sunday
- Wednesdays (infants - 4th graders)
 - The Wednesday time frame could possibly be flexible during the summer. During the school year, the Wednesday evening times would be 6:15 PM - 8:45 PM.

This position could be seasonal or continue into the school year, depending on applicant's needs. We are in need of two childcare providers who would work together. Encourage responsible colleagues to apply as well!

[Linked Job Description](#)



Origins of the United Church of Christ



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