

Welcome to First Congregational

Donating to First Congregational UCC

You are invited to donate via virtual offering. Please visit our webpage and click “Give” to make your weekly offering, or text FCUCC GIVE to 73256.

References to God

References to God in traditional prayers, readings, and hymns in our worship may sometimes be gender specific. As we pray and sing together, you are invited to substitute terms that reflect your understanding of the full inclusiveness of the spirit of God.

Land Acknowledgement

Our church is located on the ancestral homelands of the Menominee Nation. We acknowledge this indigenous community who stewarded this land throughout the generations and pay respect to their elders past and present.

Online Streaming and Podcasting

Audio and video recordings of our sermons and a written transcript are accessible at www.firstcongoappleton.org/sermons.

You can watch a live stream of First Congo services on [Facebook.com/1stCongo](https://www.facebook.com/1stCongo) or at www.firstcongoappleton.org/worship-with-us/livestream.

Online Documents and Information

Official documents of First Congregational and links to announcements, news and other information reside on our website: www.firstcongoappleton.org.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 10, 2020

9:30 AM

Rev. Dr. Stephen P. Savides, Senior Pastor
Rev. Nicholas J. Hatch, Pastor for Youth and Family Ministries

PRELUDE

Chorale Preludes on *Our Father Who Art in Heaven*

J. S. Bach
Telemann/Culli

Kristen Henke, *trumpet* David Cook, *assistant organist*

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER (in unison)

Surprising and persistent God, you never give up on us. You seek us, call us, beckon us. You shine in every star, glow in every sunset, sing in every waterfall, always trying to get our attention. You surround us with friends who care, families who love us in spite of our difficulties and the church which carries us in prayer. So open us this morning, to this amazing grace in the songs we sing and stories we tell. May your healing grace fall afresh on us today, Amen.

OPENING HYMN #215

Joy Dawned Again on Easter Day

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

Stanza 1:

Joy dawned again on Easter Day,
the sun shone out with fair array,
when to their longing eyes restored,
the apostles saw their risen Lord.

Stanza 2:

O Jesus, source of gentleness,
come now yourself our hearts possess
that we may give you all our days
the willing tribute of our praise.

Stanza 3:

O Savior, now with us abide
in this our joyful Eastertide;
from every weapon death can wield
your own redeemed forever shield.

CHILDRENS MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 21:1-14 (NT, p. 141)

FAMILY MEDITATION

“Returning to Normal?”

Rev. Nicholas Hatch

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Up, Up My Heart with Gladness

J. Crueger
arr. Jenkins/harm. Bach

Heather Hallett, *soprano*

(During this time, you are invited to a virtual offering. Please visit our webpage and click “Give” to make your weekly offering, or text FCUCC GIVE to 73256).

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS & MOTHER DAY LITANY

(You are welcome to submit your prayer requests throughout the week to the church office, email to a pastor for confidentiality or share your prayer requests in real time in the Comments section under the live stream video.)

Leader: So, to all who are mothers in flesh and spirit,

People: We honor you.

Leader: With those who are pregnant, however anticipated, expected, or surprising,

People: We support the flourishing of new life.

Leader: With those who gave birth this year,

People: We celebrate with you.

Leader: With those who are in the trenches with little ones every day and wear the badge of food stains and spit up,

People: We appreciate you.

Leader: With those who lost a child this year,

People: We mourn with you.

Leader: With those who experienced loss this year through miscarriage, failed adoptions, or children leaving home,

People: We ache with you.

Leader: With those who walk the hard path of infertility, fraught with pokes, prods, disappointment and tears,

People: We walk with you.

Leader: With those who are foster moms, mentor moms, and spiritual moms,

People: We thank you.

Leader: With those who have warm and close relationships with your children,

People: We rejoice with you.

Leader: With those who have disappointment, heart ache, and distance with your children,

People: We sit with you.

Leader: With those who lost their mothers this year,

People: We grieve with you.

Leader: With those who experienced abuse at the hands of your own mother,

People: We minister to your pain.

Leader: With those who miss your mothers,

People: We sympathize with you.

Leader: To those who lived through driving tests, medical tests, and the overall testing of motherhood, we are better for having you in our midst.

People: This Mother's Day, we honor you.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (In unison)

**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 #54

For the Beauty of the Earth

DIX

Stanza 1:

**For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies,
for the love which from our birth over and around us lies,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

(continued on next page)

Stanza 2:

For the beauty of each hour of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

Stanza 3:

For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

Stanza 4:

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

Stanza 5:

For each perfect gift of thine unto us so freely given,
graces, human and divine, flowers of earth and buds of heaven,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Te Deum

Charpentier
arr. Mitchell-Wallace/Head

Kristen Henke, *trumpet*

TODAY'S MUSICIANS

David Cook, *assistant organist*

Heather Hallett, *soprano*

Kristen Henke, *trumpet*

John Albrecht, *Director for Music Ministries*

**Livestream our Worship Service on Sundays at 9:30 AM on Facebook
or at www.firstcongoappleton.org/worship-with-us/livestream/**

Daily Prayer Chapel Live on Facebook: Monday-Friday at Noon

Upcoming Worship Schedule

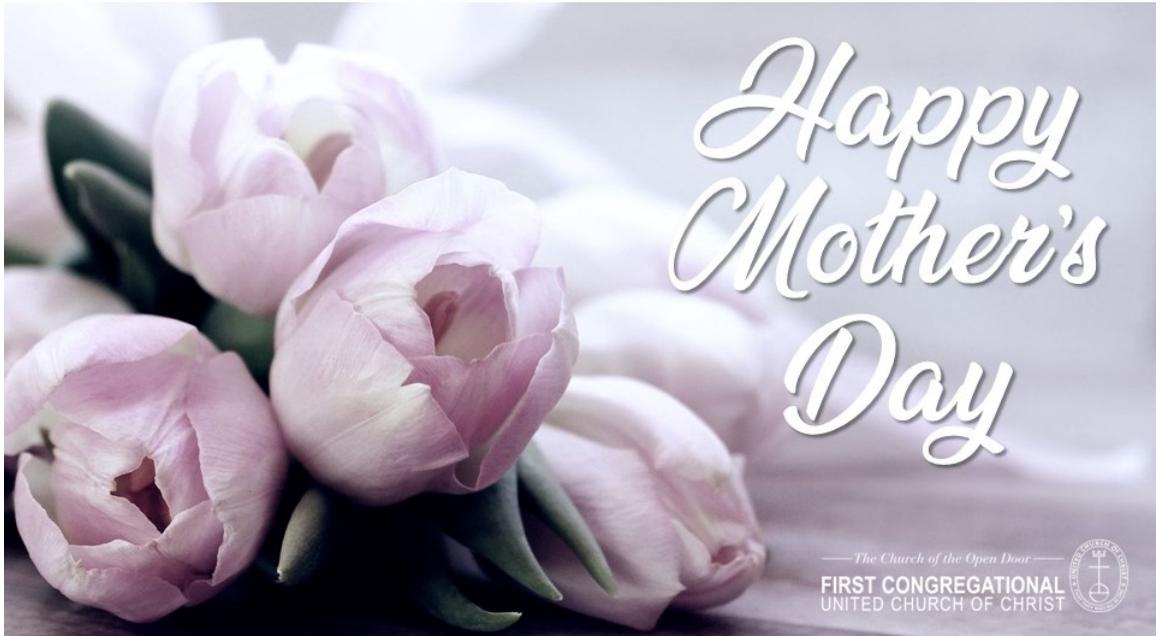
May 17, 2020

Rev. Steve Savides

Livestreaming at 9:30 AM

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Music: Bianca Pratte, *flute and soprano*; Shelley Nulton, *assistant organist*



JOYS AND CONCERNS OF OUR FAITH COMMUNITY

Members of our church family benefit from our prayers, support, and words of encouragement as they celebrate special times or struggle with difficulties in their lives. Please keep these people in your prayers and greet them with a loving word when you see them.

If you are in the hospital, please let the church know, as we are not always notified. In cases of a pastoral emergency, please call (920) 810-2600.

Jill Anthony's sister
Paul Bauman
Katie Behl
Arlene Beyer
Judy Burdick, Megan Burdick-Grade's mother
Olive Bopp
Alyssa Villarreal Brooks
Don Brittnacher
Dick Casperson
John Cawthon
Paula Chandler upon the death of her sister-
in-law, Caryl Herziger
Steve Chapin
Lynn Cook
Michael, Dick and Kathy Devries' son-in-law
Jim Edwards
A friend diagnosed with cancer
Margitta Furnner
Esther Gehrt
Ken Geiger
Ivo Geurts
Linda Glancey, Lane Pittner's mother
Maggie Hendrick
Ken Hocking
Carolyn and Jim Huddleston
Immigrants/refugees seeking a better life
Jean Jepson
Our Kenyan partners and students
Sylvia King
Ervin Klesmit
Rick Kramer, Richard Miller's son-in law
Rev. Kathryn Kuhn

Carrie Brooks McClory and her triplets
Mike Mathews
Shari Mitchell
Our country's military around the world
Ellie Olson
Mory, Anthony Padilla's son
Families and children of Palestine
Kathleen Ptacek
Diane Ragus
Steve Reinkober, brother of Chris Brittnacher
Ken Rheingans
Don Roehrborn
Mary Rowland
Judy Schneider
Frank Severin
Jake Smasal
Amanda Spindler
Cole Stoffel
All those in need of suicide prevention and
compassionate caregivers
James Totzke and his mother, Leah Totzke
Beverly Trombla
Jean Van Wagenin
Mya Wardle, Brian and Lecia Wardle's daughter
Jean Wegner
Jennifer Wild
Gary Wisneski
The World in the midst of the pandemic

Pastoral Letter on Reopening

They interviewed her from her car as she leaned out the window. She was in one of the dozens of cars lining the square around the Michigan State Capitol building in Lansing, honking their horns in protest and demanding an end to the stay-at-home orders issued to protect the citizenry. As she leaned out her car window, she displayed her emerging grey roots to the interviewer and asked plaintively, *“How long do I have to put up with THIS?!”*

It reminded me of the one comedian’s observation that, in the next month or so, 80% of all blondes will disappear from the face of the earth.

“How long, O Lord? How long?” It’s a much-asked and essential question of faith, though I believe the Psalmist directed it more towards more serious matters than beauty care.

I don’t mean to be too harsh with that woman and her grey roots – I say that as someone who knows a thing or two about grey roots myself. I’m all for liberating Michigan and Minnesota and our own state of Wisconsin, and all of us in the world who have been living through these challenging days.

I understand the impatience that they feel – I feel it too! I dearly miss being in the same room with my church family, traveling to our favorite places, Opening Day at T-Rats Stadium, sitting in a coffee house or restaurant and pretending to do some creative writing while I’m eavesdropping on all those folks around me. We put on our masks and took a walk through Heckrodt Wetland Reserve, and we just adored seeing all the families with their young children enjoying that special place on a beautiful day.

We all feel that impatience. But there is a danger that impatience will drive us as we make decisions as a church on when to resume a more normal schedule and “reopen” church. So, I wanted to tell you a few things that we are thinking as we consider the next few months here at church.

First, and most importantly, the health and safety of our congregation and community will always be our number one priority in making these decisions. No changes in our present church worship practices will happen without us first seeing clear and consistent headway being made against the spread of this virus. The standard for even beginning to talk about changes is two weeks of declining case counts in the state. Unfortunately, those counts are currently going in the wrong direction, so we clearly are weeks if not months away from any changes in our current schedule.

Second, we will continue to do the best we can to offer online worship, education, and small group opportunities. I have been so pleased with the performance of our staff who, with good guidance and feedback from all of you, has become more and more

effective in providing worship, prayer, and small group gatherings via our online platforms. And thank you for seeking out those opportunities and flattening our collective social media learning curve.

Third, thank you for continuing your financial support of our church. This congregation is doing a wonderful job of giving what they can to ensure a vibrant ministry as we carry out our mission to the church and community. Unemployment has affected many of our families with great financial hardship, and the giving totals to the church the past few months understandably reflect that hardship. It has been gratifying to see other families and individuals step up their support. I have especially appreciated those folks who have switched to auto-giving to ensure that their support reaches the church even when they themselves can't enter the building.

Fourth, we have been blessed by receiving a government loan through the Payroll Protection Program. Special thanks to Siri Witt, Don Hietpas, and our church's bankers for doing such a good job in attending to this opportunity. The church received a \$132,000 loan, 70% of which is forgivable and won't need to be paid back. This money has made it possible for us to keep on our staff through these tough times rather than putting them on furlough or have them lose their jobs.

There is much to celebrate and much to think about as we move ahead as a church. And there is one more message I would like to have us consider as we move ahead. As many in our culture toss about language about "liberation" and, specifically, religious liberty, I would like to remind us what freedom is really all about from a faith perspective.

As Moses stood before the Hebrews clutching the Ten Commandments in his arms, he put freedom in the largest context and the sharpest contrast possible: *"I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live"* (Deut. 30:19),

In our faith tradition, we understand that real freedom is not about choosing your preferred brands of toothpaste or sandwich spread, it is not best expressed in matters of personal preference or convenience. Real freedom is about us having the ability to choose life.

In the book of Acts, the fledgling Christian community was barely standing on its own very shaky and newfound legs. They were ready to collapse save for two things: the strengthening grace of God's Holy Spirit and the determination of the community to share all things in common to safeguard the health of all. *"Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common"* (Luke 4:32). That's how Luke put it in the fourth chapter of Acts.

Among those coming forward to share their wealth were Annanias and Sapphira, who had recently sold a piece of property. But they cleverly concealed part of those proceeds and held it back from the offering for themselves. Their selfishness discovered, Annanias, followed swiftly by Sapphira, fell dead at the Apostles' feet.

That's how Luke tells it. Now, I don't doubt that there was probably some exaggeration in Luke's telling, that the real facts were probably far less dramatic – Ananias died of a long illness maybe and Sapphira perhaps years later. The story was probably conflated in the Christian community's memory for dramatic and, I believe, comic effect.

But the message was clear: the power of God's Spirit is the power of life. And those who do not choose the Spirit are dead already, dead in their souls, dead in their hearts, dead in their selves if not yet in their bodies.

Not very subtle, but it sure makes its point: freedom is a matter of life and death and the choice you make between the two is the harvest you'll reap. We are living in a time when we are clearly being challenged to choose life.

Did you see the sign proudly displayed by a Tennessean protester: "Sacrifice the Weak, Reopen Tennessee"? That sign wasn't about freedom. It wasn't about choice. It was bondage, bondage to convenience, slavery to self-interest, slavery to death.

We are being offered the challenge of real freedom in these difficult days. We are being offered the choice of life.

We can choose life by seeking the whole community's health, not the safety, comfort and convenience of the privileged few.

We can choose life by choosing selflessness, understanding that real personal sacrifice – and sacrifice by the church- is required for us to serve the common good.

We can choose life by boldly finding hope for a changed tomorrow because we have endured the struggles and learned the lessons of a difficult today.

Together as First Congregational United Church of Christ, let us choose life so that we and our community and all of our descendants together might live.

Thank you and God bless you,

Rev. Steve Savides

Congregational Life

*Embracing God, welcoming others,
knowing ourselves.*

Boy Scout Troop 8 Anniversary

Saturday • August 8

Troop 8 is celebrating its 100th anniversary this summer!

Please save Saturday, August 8, 2020 to join us in marking this significant milestone.

In keeping with the Scout slogan “Do a good turn daily,” there will be service projects in the morning followed by a celebratory meal and Court of Honor in the afternoon.

The best way to keep up to date with plans is for you to provide your contact information on the signup sheet in church, like our Facebook page (Troop 8 - 100 Year Celebration), email us at Troop8turns100@gmail.com to receive updates via email, or periodically check our website troop8appleton.org.

An invitation with more details will be sent via email as we get closer.



Youth and Families

Faith, fun and service.

Be sure to check out the new CYF Facebook page for videos, activities, updates and more!



Like us at www.facebook.com/First-Congo-Appleton-CYF-Connection-110914357239322.

Mission and Service

*Building relationships, serving others,
pursuing justice.*

Help for the Homeless Hygiene Drive

The First Congo Mission and Service team engages with the local community in a variety of ways through not-for-profit organizations and projects. Last November the team made a donation to support the "Help for the Homeless" Hygiene Drive.

The drive received more than \$428,000 worth of donated hygiene and cleaning supplies this spring for 89 crisis agencies in 15 of their listening communities. Agency staff and volunteers collected, counted and squirreled the donations away in mid-March, just days before COVID-19 restrictions took place. *More than 20,000 rolls of nearly-impossible-to-find toilet paper were included in the mix!*

Since its beginning in 1992, “Help for the Homeless” donations have provided more

than \$3.7 million dollars' worth of hygiene supplies to local Wisconsin crisis programs and those they serve. Donations remain in the communities where they are collected. The goal of "Help for the Homeless" is to supply a year's worth of products to each agency.



Administration

Cybersecurity During COVID-19

Organizations are reporting an increase in attackers trying to trick people into sharing their account access credentials or opening malicious email attachments.

Please do not respond or click on anything unless you are expecting a message from someone.

The Ministry

Reverend Dr. Stephen P. Savides, Senior Pastor
Reverend Nicholas J. Hatch, Pastor for Youth and Family Ministries
Reverend Art Wille, Pastor of Visitation
John M. Albrecht, Director for Music Ministries
Colleen Berry, Director for Christian Education
Renee Taylor, Director for Youth Ministries
Jennifer DeWitt, CYF Coordinator
Carolyn Frederick, Office Manager and Administrative Assistant
Holly Volkman, Administrative Assistant for Communications
Jane Malin, Administrative Assistant
Siri Witt, Bookkeeper
Jonathan Steffen, Technology Coordinator
Bart Forseth, Custodial Supervisor
Theresa Iacullo, Infant/Toddler Child Care Provider
Cassidy Behm, Infant/Toddler Child Care Provider
Tom Ott, Custodial Assistant
Mary Lou Cliff, Custodial Assistant
Lauren Micke, Weekend Custodial Assistant

First Congregational United Church of Christ
724 East South River Street
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Phone: (920) 733-7393

Website: www.firstcongoappleton.org



**Social distance doesn't
mean spiritual distancing.**

Join us online!

**Facebook.com/1stCongo
www.firstcongoappleton.org**