



Congregational Connections

Monthly E-Newsletter of First Congregational Church, UCC | Port Washington, Wisconsin | August 2022

QUESTIONS OF FAITH - PART THREE

This summer I have used this space to address some of the questions the Confirmation Class was asking about as each member wrote a personal statement of faith back in May. Each year I have found Confirmation Class inspiring and challenging to lead because Confirmands often ask some of the deepest questions. So, the last in this series will be the one that all of us ask at one point or another, **“Why do bad things happen to good people?”** It really gets to the root of the problems of the world in which we live and our expectations and faith in a loving God. If God is in control and made everything, why are there natural disasters that cause thousands of people to suffer? If God loves me, why do the people I love die? Why is there cancer? Why is there so much violence and innocent lives lost?

The simple answer is, “I don’t know.” There are many possible answers out there, some are better than others. For instance, I don’t believe that God moves us around like pieces on a chessboard. And if that is true, then there is quite a bit of freedom in the world—among us human beings and even in the larger creation. I don’t believe that God causes suffering. However, because of my experience of Jesus, and understanding of who Jesus is, I believe that God’s heart breaks as much as our hearts break when we experience pain. When we weep at the death of the ones we love, or experience despair for the loss of the dreams we have, or experience suffering ourselves, or suffering of the ones we love—God feels that pain, too. God’s own Son suffered and was executed by those in power. Jesus was abandoned even by his closest friends, the disciples, in their confusion and fear. In fact, Jesus made his life more difficult by following God’s path. By loving those who were outsiders, by challenging the religious authorities of his day, by offering an alternative vision of the way God wanted the world—the religious, political, economic and military forces of the world conspired to kill him and silence that vision.

God has given us free will, but God is with us always. We make our own choices and follow our own paths, but God, through the Bible and the life of faith, *...continued on the next page...*

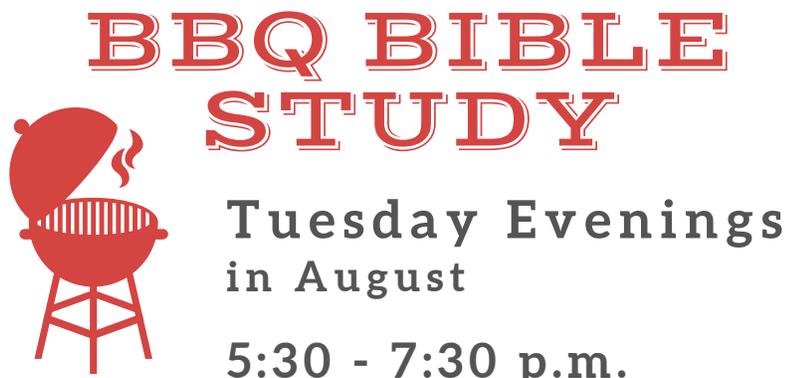
...QUESTIONS OF FAITH, continued...

has offered us guidance. We are shown a path that will help lead ourselves and others to a more meaningful and fulfilling life. As the Bible proclaims, God has shown us what is good—to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God. Jesus used the Hebrew scriptures to highlight for his disciples ways to live in God’s light: to love God with all our heart, mind and spirit, and love our neighbors as ourselves. Simply, to treat others the way you would like to be treated. But none of these is a guarantee that things will always go your way, or that you will never face hardship and pain. When bad things happen, God is with us and can help get us through.

Yours In Christ,
Pastor Scott

BBQ BIBLE STUDY ON TUESDAY EVENINGS THROUGH THE END OF THIS MONTH

Beginning last month, we have been having a cookout at church every Tuesday night at 5:30 followed by a little Bible study focusing on the Gospel of Luke. You are invited to join us! Pastor Scott will cook up some hotdogs, bratwurst, or cheeseburgers for everyone in attendance. All those who attend can participate in the meal by bringing something to share; chips, salads, desserts, etc. We’ve had some great feasts! After our dinner outside on the patio, or inside if its rainy, we discuss some of the things that make Luke’s gospel so different from the others. The BBQ Bible Study is finished up by 7:30 and everyone is ready to head home. Come and join us for dinner and conversation!

A graphic for BBQ Bible Study. It features a red icon of a charcoal grill on the left. To the right of the grill, the text "BBQ BIBLE STUDY" is written in a large, red, outlined, serif font. Below this, "Tuesday Evenings in August" is written in a dark grey, sans-serif font, and "5:30 - 7:30 p.m." is written in a dark grey, sans-serif font. The entire graphic is enclosed in a rounded rectangular border with a light orange background.

BBQ BIBLE STUDY
Tuesday Evenings
in August
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

WORSHIP WITH US - SUMMER SERVICES

We have one service at 9:00 during the summer months (sorry, no nursery care provided in the summer). Our program year will start on September 11th, with two services at 8:00 and 10:00.

CLICK AWAY

Remember to be on the lookout for orange text throughout this e-newsletter. The orange text is linked up to other documents or web pages that you might find helpful and interesting.

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEXT E-NEWSLETTER

If you have any celebrations, concerns/prayer requests or other contributions that you would like us to include in a future e-newsletter, let us know. Please email us 7-10 days before the first day of the month.

SUPPORTING THE FOOD PANTRY IN A TIME OF NEED THIS SUMMER - AUGUST FOOD PANTRY DRIVE -



Dear Church Friends,

I had the wonderful opportunity to visit The Food Pantry here in Port Washington on Tuesday afternoon, July 26. Our church has had a long history of working closely with them and we are excited to continue this relationship.

Unfortunately, the needs for our local food pantry are greater now more than ever. They are averaging close to 30 new families just this year and donations have remained stagnant. Summer is always a time when donations are down.

The good news is we can all help! They have some hard-to-fill needs:

Paper Products (specifically toilet paper and paper towels)

School Supplies (listed below are specific school supplies they are requesting)

Bed Sheets (for migrant families working the fall and summer)

Over the next several weeks, let's plan on putting some of these items together. Please drop them off at the church and I'll plan a delivery to The Food Pantry on Tuesday morning, August 16th and a second drop for Tuesday, August 30th. Thank you so much for your support!

Sincerely,

Eric Olson

Community Outreach Team Representative

School Supplies Needed:

- Crayola Crayons (24 pack)
- Crayola Colored Pencils
- Crayola Markers
- Folders
- Wide-lined Notebooks (red, green, blue, and yellow)
- Multi-subject Notebooks (red, green, blue, and yellow)
- Ticonderoga Pencils
- Composition Notebooks
- Regular-sized Scissors (Age 12+)
- Pink Pearl Erasers
- Wide-lined Paper (150 count)
- Clorox Wipes



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PLANNING TEAM

The Capital Campaign Planning Team made up of Bill Bond, Carolyn Heatwole, Jeanne Mantsch, Joe Mueller, Karen Oftedahl, Ray Shupe, and Pastor Scott was able to meet in July with the Rev. Andrew Warner, the Director of Development at the Wisconsin Conference, UCC. They are currently exploring several different ways to engage the whole congregation in conversation about a campaign to raise the funding needed to take care of several different long-term repairs of the building.

You will be hearing more from the group in the coming months as they begin putting their ideas into action. As many of you are aware, there are repair issues that will soon need to be addressed with our beautiful stained-glass windows on the east side of the sanctuary, as well as repairs that need to be made to the exterior of the stained-glass windows on the south and north of the sanctuary. The largest ticket item is the roof on the “new” section of the building which is now over 20 years old and is coming to the end of its expected lifespan. The cost of these repairs is larger than we believe can be handled by our normal yearly stewardship campaigns. Please look for more information to come in the fall



CONFIRMATION

Pastor Scott is excited to begin this year's Confirmation program in September. Parents of 8th graders, please be on the lookout for more information in the coming weeks. If you would like, you may email Scott at pastorscott@portucc.com to confirm that your child will be participating.



NO CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES THIS MONTH

The June Church Council Minutes will be approved at the August 11, 2022 meeting. They will appear in the September newsletter.



SAVE THE DATE - INVITATION FROM FRIENDS FOR JUSTICE TO AMERICA'S BLACK HOLOCAUST MUSEUM



Friends for Justice is inviting members and friends to join the group for a tour of America's Black Holocaust Museum (ABHM), located at 401 W. North Avenue, Milwaukee, on Sunday afternoon, September 25th. The ABHM's mission is to “build public awareness of the harmful legacies of slavery and Jim Crow in America and promote racial repair, reconciliation and healing”. The gallery and exhibits are described as both historical and memorials of the Black Holocaust, from pre-captivity in Africa to the present day in the United States. Be on the lookout for more details in the September newsletter. For more information on ABHM, please visit abhmuseum.org.



MISSION TRIP REPORT

The Mission Trip to Hazard, Kentucky, working with the Appalachia Service Project (ASP), was a great success. Josh Jacque, Taylor Ulicki and Pastor Scott were able to complete some important work in helping a family with some repair projects that will make their home a safer and more comfortable place to live. Taylor Ulicki and Josh Jacque were great representatives of the youth of our church; they worked hard and kept up great attitudes in the face of some very hot, humid weather and ice-cold showers. The staff from ASP helped the group learn more about the culture and economic history of Eastern Kentucky that has led to such a difficult environment in which to live. And in daily devotions and reflection they all learned a little about what it means to put faith into action in loving our neighbors as we love ourselves. Most importantly, everyone made it back home safely!

We will be having a special presentation of stories and pictures from the Mission Trip in worship on Sunday, August 14th. The group from Grafton, Pilgrim UCC will join us in worship, sharing the experience and thanking everyone for their support in making the trip possible and for their prayers while we were away. Please join us for this special worship and if you are interested in a mission trip experience, mark your calendars for July 8-15, 2023, as the most likely dates for the next one!



SCRIP GIFT CARD PROGRAM

NEXT FCC ORDER IS AUGUST 21ST

Through our new gift card fundraising program, also called Scrip fundraising, through a company called Raise Right, the church can raise money when members and friends use retail gift cards to pay for everyday purchases (like gas and groceries) and more, instead of paying by credit card, cash, or check.

There are hundreds of gift cards you can purchase from retail stores, online merchants, restaurants, gas stations, entertainment, even flights and travel purchases; and each can be turned into a small percentage of money that will go directly to our church. Click here to check out our church's new order form to see the retailers and the percentage back that they offer.

Jennifer Dimmer and Rhonda Thompson, our church Scrip/Raise Right Coordinators, will be placing an order on Sunday, August 21. The gift cards will be available at the church for pick up starting on Sunday, August 28. You can enroll and place an order ahead of time on the company website, RaiseRight.com/enroll. Our church enrollment code is **P8I47VHNX56H**. Or, you can complete the **paper form** and write out a check to the church and mail it to church or bring it to the office or with you to church on Sunday.

We understand that the program might seem overwhelming or confusing at first. If you are not familiar, and would like to learn more and sign up, Jennifer is happy to meet with you or discuss over the phone. She is available to walk you through the process of setting up an account and placing an order. If interested, please reach out to her directly (jenniferdimmer@gmail.com or 414-303-1813).



You buy a gift card

You get the full value.



The brand gives back

No extra money comes out of your pocket.



Your organization earns

Impacting what matters most to you.

Shop 750+ popular brands

Getting your morning coffee. Doing DIY projects around the house. Ordering takeout. Conveniently raise money by doing everyday things.



"It's super convenient. All I need to go shopping is my phone—I don't even need credit cards or my purse. I'm going to pay for these things anyway, I love being able to use gift cards so we get something in return."

Jen H., earns for hockey



THEMES FOR WORSHIP IN AUGUST

August 7: Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 Luke 12:32-40

9th Sunday after Pentecost

This week's passage from Hebrews: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Through these texts we glimpse the dynamic nature of faith, and consider our call to reflect, learn, and grow from the past for the sake of the future.



August 14: Hebrews 11:29—12:2 Luke 12:49-56

10th Sunday after Pentecost

We remember the faithful witnesses who have gone before us this morning as we listen to a roll call of those whose faith in God is a model and encouragement. We too are called in our own time, to answer God's call to a faith that acts against the odds, sometimes in difficult circumstances.



August 21: Jeremiah 1:4-10 Luke 13:10-17

11th Sunday after Pentecost

Through our scripture texts today we watch as Jesus calls a woman from out of the shadows, listen as God calls the prophet, Jeremiah, to step up to the task. We too are asked to consider how God breaks into our lives, shaking things up and calling us to participate fully in the new life of God's healing reign.



August 28: Jeremiah 2:4-13 Luke 14:1, 7-14

12th Sunday after Pentecost

We hear God's call to authentic community in our scripture texts for this Sunday. We hear God's complaint against communities we have built in the past through Jeremiah's words, but in the Gospel, Jesus paints a picture of an open table where all are invited and where there is enough for all, forever.

AVAILABLE CHURCH SPACE - PLEASE HELP SPREAD THE WORD!

As you may know, we are seeking a new renter for the space that is available due to Port Pre-School closing its doors. Please call the church if you have any leads or questions, or contact Troy for a showing - (414) 899-8190, TroyBretl@RealtyExecutives.com.

**REALTY
EXECUTIVES**

131 N Webster St. Port Washington

For Lease!

**\$12-\$14 per
sq. foot**

Classroom space
Can be separated
Elevator
Full kitchen
ADA Compliant



First Congregational Church in Port Washington will have available very soon over 1600 square feet of classroom space that is perfect for projects, development, training and so much more. Building is handicap accessible with elevator and ADA bathrooms. Rooms can be divided as well.

Rooms measure approximately 39x18, 39x16 & kitchen 20x14

Seeking non-profit tenant

OUR THANKS

To Gary and Meg Tackes, Jane Spalding, Adele Richert, Jennifer and Lily Dimmer, Kathy Bretl, Margaret Niederfrank, and Ryan and Jodi Cowen for serving as Ushers in July.

To Kitchie Allen, Mike Spalding, Jeanne Mantsch, David Franks, and Ken Matthews for serving as Worship Leaders in July.

To Jane Spalding for spending countless hours organizing and cataloging our church history files. Thanks also to Ken Matthews for assisting Jane with important dates and events in our church history. Ken is a lifelong member of FCC!

To Phil Stepanski and Tracy Bretl for their duet version of "One Bread, One Body" for the Communion Service on July 3.

To Craig Modahl and Steve Davidson for leading worship on July 10 and July 17 while Pastor Scott was on a mission trip to Appalachia.

To Mike Dimmer for continuing to do lawncare and edging the sidewalks.

To Dawn Guschl and Bill Bond for continuing to tidy the church pews after each worship service.

To Bill Bond for bringing the garbage cans to the curb every week.

To Dale Palecek for playing the hammered dulcimer with his wife Pru on guitar during worship on July 24.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Karen Oftedahl who retired from the Port Washington-Saukville School District after teaching music for 25+ years. Karen's magnificent productions (holiday programs, talent shows, fourth grade farewells) as well as music class, will be sorely missed!

IN OUR PRAYERS

Bruce Laabs, Sr. who recently moved to Ellen's Home here in Port Washington. Bruce would gladly accept visitors or you can send him a card if you would like:

Ellen's Home
Bruce Laabs, Sr.
1800 Granite Lane, Room #17
Port Washington, WI 53074



Congratulations and a lifetime of blessings to Shaylin Jane Heston, daughter of Kristi and Chris, who was baptized into the Christian faith on Sunday, July 24. Pictured also are brothers, Wade (younger) and Wyatt (older).

AUGUST BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 - Connor Cowen | 17- Kelly Schowalter |
| 2 - Shane Stimac | 19- Drue Nelson |
| Carter Schlehlein | 21- Andrew Arthur |
| 4 - Matt Schlehlein | Travis Franke |
| Pru Palecek | 22- Shandy Roehrig |
| 5 - Jessica Jacque | Lucas Schneider |
| Kyle Guschl | Lori MacRae |
| 6 - Joshua Jacque | Chloe Rychtik |
| 7- Reese Kasza-James | 23 - Will Pradel |
| 8- Jodi Cowen | 24- Hope Gilhooly |
| Brady Calder | Julie Schlehlein |
| Jeanne Kasza | 25- William Kincaid |
| 9- Marcus Karrels | 26- Ella Hoffmann |
| Justin Schuessler | Logan Schuessler |
| 11- Paul Ehrlich | 27- Sean Gilhooly |
| 12- Kierstin Cira | Ella Gilhooly |
| 13- Neil Johnson | Anthony Nau |
| 14- Doug McManus | Emily Mitchell |
| 16- Ken Matthews | |

AUGUST WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6 - Terry and Kathy Bretl | 18 - Craig and Carolyn Heatwole |
| 8 - Don and Ginny Laubenstein | 23 - Tim and Kierstin Cira |
| Chad and Miriam Mitchell | Dale and Pru Palecek |
| 11 - Mark and Lori MacRae | 28 - Jeanne Kasza and Anthony James |
| Matt and Sarah Riemer | |
| 16- Dennis and Heather Brede | |

Please contact Beckie Perez, at office@portucc.org, if you would like to add a Birthday or Anniversary.



FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR OFFICE HOURS

Phil Stepanski, our Financial Administrator, will continue to hold office hours on Mondays, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the church office. Phil invites you to reach out at anytime! His email is phil@portucc.org.

AUGUST 2022 CALENDAR

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
	1	2 5:30 pm BBQ Bible Study	3	4 8 am Men's Breakfast- The Beacon 6:30 pm Executive Team	5	6
7 <i>Ninth Sunday after Pentecost</i> 9 am Communion Service	8 4 pm Finance Team 6 pm Friends for Justice (Zoom)	9 5:30 pm BBQ Bible Study	10	11 8 am Men's Breakfast- The Beacon 6:30 pm Church Council	12	13
14 <i>Tenth Sunday after Pentecost</i> 9 am Worship Service with Mission Trip Presentation	15	16 5:30 pm BBQ Bible Study	17	18 8 am Men's Breakfast- The Beacon	19	20
21 <i>Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost</i> 9 am Worship Service	22	23 5:30 pm BBQ Bible Study	24	25 8 am Men's Breakfast- The Beacon 1 pm Property Team	26	27
28 <i>Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost</i> 9 am Worship Service	29	30 5:30 pm BBQ Bible Study	31			



CHURCH INFORMATION

First Congregational Church - *United Church of Christ*
131 North Webster Street
Port Washington, WI 53074
(262) 284-2022
website - portucc.org, email - office@portucc.org



Summer Church Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday mornings from 8:30 - Noon

Pastor Scott's Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays, and by appointment

Financial Administrator Phil's Office Hours

Mondays from 4:30-6:30

Office Staff

Rev. Dr. Scott McLeod, Pastor - pastorscott@portucc.org

Amy Gilhooly, Communications Director - amyg@portucc.org

Beckie Perez, Office Manager - office@portucc.org

Phil Stepanski, Financial Administrator - phil@portucc.org

STAY CONNECTED

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"First Congregational Church, Port Washington, WI"

Subscribe to our **YouTube Channel**

"First Congregational Church of Port Washington"

Receive our E-Blasts (emails)

Please let us know if you have a new email address

Check out the church website - portucc.org

ONLINE GIVING WITH PAYPAL

PayPal is an easy way to give to the church to pay your pledge and/or make an extra financial gift. You can find the **PayPal** button on the home page of the church website (portucc.org) or use this QR code. Thank you!

