



# Congregational Connections

Monthly Newsletter of First Congregational Church, UCC | Port Washington, Wisconsin | September 2024

## WELCOME TO A NEW PROGRAM YEAR

### A Message From Our Church Council Executive Team

Welcome to the start of the program year! Even though securing an interim minister has taken longer than expected, we have had the privilege of getting to know many worship leaders from across our conference and a few from within our own congregation. It certainly adds an element of variety on Sundays to hear new perspectives! We are thankful for our Church Council and office staff who have stepped up to plan the program year. We welcome back programs such as our choirs, Lunch at Church, and Church School. Our Confirmation program will continue with the help of volunteers and clever brainstorming. We appreciate our new Council members who have brought fresh energy and enthusiasm.

You may have seen the recent announcement that Church Council recently voted to hold one Sunday morning service at 9:00 for September and October. This may continue throughout the program year. We feel it is practical at this time and will help bring a sense of togetherness to our congregation.

Church Council also voted to continue to worship in Fellowship Hall in September and October while our elevator is out of order. We recognize this isn't ideal and everyone wishes to gather in our beautiful Sanctuary. No one could have predicted that we would be in Fellowship Hall for this long. We feel fortunate to have this alternate space where we can be together.

Holding services in Fellowship Hall allows us to continue to honor our declaration as an Accessible to All (A2A) church. In 2009, our church made a commitment to strive to do our very best to make our church fully accessible to persons with physical disabilities. A2A is as much about working to make our buildings physically and programmatically accessible to all, as it is being attitudinally welcoming to people with disabilities. We ask for your continued patience and support as we make the final arrangements to complete the elevator repair this fall.

*(continued on page 3)*

## A Message From Our Church Council Executive Team, continued...

The Executive Team has a new appreciation of what it takes to keep a church running smoothly, as everyone has had to step up in the past few months. Thank you to the office staff, Council members, and church volunteers who have pitched in.

Most importantly, during this time, let's make sure to take care of each other. We are a congregation, united by faith. Reach out to a Council member, the church office, or a fellow member if you need support of any kind or know of someone who does. If there's a program, initiative, or event that you feel should be considered for our church, please share your thoughts with a Council member. As we continue this journey together, we reflect on the words of our Church Covenant: *Depending upon the teachings and life of Jesus for inspiration and guidance, we promise to seek to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength and with all our mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.*

Church Council Executive Team

Jodi Cowen, Moderator, Tracy Greymont, Associate Moderator,  
Rhonda Thompson, Clerk, and Phil Stepanski, Treasurer



## THE SEARCH FOR INTERIM AND SETTLED MINISTERS

**Interim Minister:** We continue our search for an interim minister. Unfortunately, the last candidate we interviewed accepted another position before we could take the next steps in the call process (checking references, discussing benefits package, etc.). We are trying to utilize creative options to secure an interim minister, such as posting our interim position at regional seminaries.

**Settled Minister:** In July, we decided to move forward with the formation of the Search Committee for our settled minister in tandem with the search for an interim minister. Thank you to all who have emailed ideas, interest, and nominations. Church Council has narrowed the list of volunteers to ensure we have diversity in skills and backgrounds and will be reaching out to secure a Search Team Chair, Clerk, and the remainder of the team members. We hope to have team member commitments in the coming weeks and have the team commence meetings later this month.