



# Congregational Connections

Monthly E-Newsletter of First Congregational Church, UCC | Port Washington, Wisconsin | October 2021

## TOWARDS A DE-CENTERED OCTOBER

During the month of September, we celebrated a “Season of Creation” each Sunday in worship. We also began a journey of “Sacred Conversations to End Racism” on Tuesday nights. Much to my surprise, the worship services and the class both began back “In the beginning” by taking a look at Genesis. In worship we used Genesis to talk about God’s creation and the incredible, life-giving gifts of God in the natural world. In “Sacred Conversations...” we used the Biblical account (as well as the scientific account) noting how all of humankind emerged out of Africa—we are not so different, after all.

And, in the worship themes and in class conversation, the idea of “De-Centering” ourselves came up. Decentering refers to a person’s ability to set aside their own personal perceptions and to instead see the world from another point of view. We take ourselves as well as our concerns, our perceptions, our experiences out of primary focus, out of the center, to understand things from a different viewpoint. Now it is not an earth-shattering idea. In fact, it reminds me of the old suggestion that before we make any judgements we should, “walk a mile in someone else’s footsteps”.

I’m sure it is something that most of us can do when we are being mindful of it. But we tend to operate out of our own personal perspective most of the time and forget that our worldview is not the only one possible. As we engage the people around us, it is easy to see ourselves as the center of the world and the only person that really matters. It is about “my” wants and desires, about “our” plans hopes and dreams. The world becomes divided into people like “us” and others like “them”, working towards creating “winners” and “losers”.

Decentering ourselves more consistently is an important ingredient in breaking apart the myths of racism and becoming anti-racist. It is also an important part of becoming better stewards of God’s creation.

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## ...DE-CENTERING CONTINUED...

By decentering my experience and really hearing the experience of others, I learn about my privilege and the advantages I receive every day. My perception of the world shifts and some of the assumptions I carry about others who are different than me begin to fall away.

By decentering myself amidst the wonder of God's creation, I see that God's world is not meant for us to dominate and subdue. We are not the center of the world, but one of God's creations out of many. The natural world has its own wisdom and its own voice that we need to listen for amidst the competing voices for our attention. When we move out of the center, our perception of God's world changes and we can begin to work with the world God has created for our mutual health and benefit.

During this month of October, I know I'm going to try and start a new habit of decentering. It is not that "my" perspective is unimportant, it is simply that I need to be mindful that I am truly not the center of the universe. That old advice, that we need to "walk a mile in someone else's footsteps" will be made new again, as I face the needs of the day. I believe we would all be better human beings and better disciples of Jesus Christ if we could keep that advice in mind.

Courage and Peace,  
Pastor Scott



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS



A warm and official welcome to our new members (left to right): Pastor Scott, Brook (and Jim) Holmes, Adele Richert, and Michelle and Justin Franke. Special thanks to our Moderator, Jeanne Mantsch, for leading the "reception of new members".

## CELEBRATE WITH US!

We celebrate two Sunday morning worship services at 8:00 and 10:00. On the fourth Sunday of every month at 10:00, we celebrate with a Family Service which includes the participation of our children and youth. Nursery care is available at the 10:00 service.

## 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.