

The Country Church Herald

...Proclaiming the Word of God

ST. JAMES UCC
13312 Pioneer Road
Newton, WI 53063
920.693.8100



ST. MARK'S UCC
W1307 Orchard Road
Cleveland, WI 53015
920.693.8361

PASTOR: Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz

APRIL, 2024

April 7th —

St. Mark's: 9:00am Worship
Sunday School 9-10 at both churches
St. James: 10:30am Worship Service

April 14th—

St. James: 9:00am Worship
Sunday School 9-10 at both churches
St. Mark's: 10:30am Worship

April 21st —

St. Mark's: 9:00am Worship
Sunday School 9-10 at both churches
St. James: 10:30 Worship

April 28th—

St. James: 9:00am Worship
Sunday School 9-10 at both churches
St. Mark's: 10:30am Worship



Sunday bulletins & links to prayer requests are posted under the 'Messages' link on our church website: <https://www.stmstjucc.org/>

Worship Services are recorded weekly and uploaded to our church YouTube channel: St. Mark's & St. James UCC

ST. MARK'S CONSISTORY MEETING

March 7, 2024

Larry Perronne called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Members present were Larry Perronne, Ben Grunwald, Judy Steinbeck, Linda Schroeder, Tyler Bramstedt, Janell Davis, and Brenda Miota. Pastor Schultz was absent.

Judy offered the financial report. She passed out printed sheets from January and February. The property taxes have been paid for the buildings. She also handed out statistical sheets on various funds. Judy conveyed the results and proceeds from the Youth Chili Dinner. Linda made a motion to accept the report. Tyler seconded. Motion carried.

I offered up the secretary's report. There was no discussion and there were no corrections. Ben made a motion to accept the report. Linda seconded. Motion carried.

In Pastor's absence, Larry read us an email. Pastor shared a health update. He conveyed his vacation dates (April 1 - 8) and that Dr. Julie Mavity-Magdalene from Lakeland University will lead service on April 7, 2024. In addition he mentioned two baptisms to take place at St. James. Bible studies will resume after Easter. Finally, his update on the Mission/Vision Planning Team was tabled until next month.

Work on the bell tower remains on the agenda as we wait for warmer weather.

Larry submitted the paperwork to move forward on the parking lot project. Tyler suggested considering having lines painted for the basketball hoop as well. Tyler will research distances for both free throw and 3-point lines and make a recommendation at the April meeting.

Larry passed around a copy of an Occupancy Agreement for us all to look at. We will discuss the specifics of the agreement with Pastor at the April meeting.

Janell asked that we table the discussion of emailing reminders to upcoming greeters.

Larry asked Linda to call the phone company and re-hook up the elevator phone. A follow-up inspection will then be scheduled.

There was discussion of a raise for one of the church staff. Larry will ask him to submit a list of duties for future people who hold that position. We will continue the discussion at the May meeting.

The Canopy Fund has officially been dissolved.

Now that the bylaws have been amended, they will need to be edited on paper. Judy will email me those changes and I will make the adjustments.

Larry requested the discussion of the Consistory duties and the tour of the church for new members be tabled until the April meeting.

Janell shared a document she prepared on Pastoral Benefits. There was discussion and alterations were made. Janell will email the document to the St. James Consistory for their information. Karen will include it in the April newsletter for the congregation viewing. We will discuss the Pastoral Contract with Pastor at our April meeting. Linda made a motion to accept and Tyler seconded. Motion carried.

Judy suggested that the OCWM goal remain at \$6,000 again for this year.

Continued on the next page....

ST. MARK'S CONSISTORY MEETING—continued...

Easter services:

- Good Friday service on March 29, 2024; Ben and Linda will set up; two additional congregants will be asked to fill in to assist with Communion
- Easter Sunday service on March 31, 2024; Ben and Tyler will set up

Linda will purchase bread for both services.

Judy offered to pick up altar candles at Sonlight Books. She also agreed to purchase AAA batteries for the battery operated candles. It was decided that we would utilize the battery operated candles for regular service and use the more expensive, real candles for special occasions.

The next meeting is set for April 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Janell made a motion to close the meeting at 7:13 p.m. Linda seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Miota

PASTORAL BENEFITS

To help clarify and preempt any questions you might have about when the Pastor is not in church on a Sunday, St Mark's Consistory is putting out this statement as to the Pastor's time off agreement.

The Pastor will have 2 days off a week for Sabbath and renewal. Currently he is taking off Monday and Fridays. If the Pastor is continually working over 55 hours for 5 days a week he will inform the Joint Consistory and a re-evaluation will occur. (These days may change if the Pastor has the agreement of the Consistory).

The Pastor is given 12 days of sick leave per year and up to 5 personal days per incident, not to exceed 10 days per 12 months of service. Sick days may/could fall on a Sunday.

The Pastor is able and encouraged to participate in continuing education and is given 2 weeks of paid leave, including 2 Sundays.

The Pastor has graciously agreed to a reduced compensation package in exchange for 5 weeks of vacation, including 5 Sundays, to use throughout the calendar year.

Any wider church service such as summer camps, mission trips, conferences, etc. will be considered part of his work week and may extend into a Sunday.

After 6 years of service to the church the Pastor can take a 3 month Sabbatical leave. Sabbatical leave will be determined by the Pastor and the Consistory and will allow the Pastor to increase his knowledge and church outreach. Once he returns he will share his experiences in the service of the church and sermons. St. Marks/St James is currently looking at the 6 year mark. The Pastor is currently reviewing possible Sabbatical options and will bring those to the Consistory once he has decided on the best options for him.

~St. Mark's Consistory

ST. JAMES CONSISTORY MEETING

March 5, 2024 6:28 pm

- The meeting was called to order by President Jackie Mueller. Members present were Jason Riesterer – Vice-President, Sheila Hemb – Treasurer, Wendy Meyer, Secretary, Tanya Boman, Jamie Henschel, Scott Henschel and Pastor Patrick Schultz.
- Absent: none
- Prayer led by Pastor.
- Motion to approve the Secretary's Report made by Jason and seconded by Tanya.
Motion carried.

- Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report made by Scott and seconded by Jamie.
Motion carried.

- Pastor's Report:
 - ◊ Two baptisms this week.
 - ◊ Pastor will be on vacation April 1 – 7. Julie Mavity Magdalene will be covering.Mission/Vision Committee – no meeting

- Building and Grounds:
 - ◊ Yard clean up will be held April 20 at 9:00 am. Rain date April 27. Remind everyone to have wreaths removed before then.
 - ◊ A special thank you to the following for the work they performed:
 - Thomas Heckman and Scott Henschel trimmed trees.
 - Jamie Binversie replaced the furnace pump and filters.
 - Jason & Austin Riesterer oiled the bell and closet doors.
 - Scott Henschel cleaned out the drains.
 - Jackie Mueller for changing the batteries in the AED system.
 - ◊ Fred Reindl will be contacted to consult on the slow drains in the kitchen and bathrooms.
 - ◊ Septic tank was pumped.

- Committee Reports:
Vision of Hope:
 - Reviewed the following recommendations:
 - ◊ Love Feeds the World \$500 & Samaritan Hands Inc \$500. Motion to approve the recommendations
Was made by Jason and seconded by Sheila. Motion carried.Stewardship Committee: No meeting
Christian Board of Education: No meeting
Service Committee:
 - Sheephead tournament on February 25. 10 people attended. March 17 next date.
 - Bunco will be held on April 18.Audio Visual: Jason has a few things to complete.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE.....

ST. JAMES CONSISTORY MEETING—continued...

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- Old Business:
Safe Sanctuary helper – Nobody signed up from St. James. Youth Group to always meet at St. Marks until further notice.
- New Business:
 - ◇ Leadership Forward - \$6000 for 5 years. Wendy to add in the newsletter, mailchimp, and bulletins and research the website for promotional information.
 - ◇ Wendy to add an article in the newsletter for anyone who didn't get an annual report and would like one mailed to them.
 - ◇ Mission Fest speaker idea: The Haven. Pastor will be delivering homeless care kits to them.
- Congregation concerns: reviewed
- Next meeting date: April 2 at 6:30 pm
- Motion to adjourn made by Scott and seconded by Jamie. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at: 7:36 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy S. Meyer

ST. JAMES YARD CLEAN-UP—Saturday, April 20
at 9:00 am, rain date of 4/27. Please remove cemetery
wreaths by Friday, April 19.



STJ Annual Reports

If anyone didn't get a copy of the St James Annual Report and would like one, contact Karen in the church office at: stmstjoffice@gmail.com or call (920) 693-8361 and a copy will be mailed to you.



....goes to these St. James members who shared their time & talents with the church:

Thomas Heckman and Scott Henschel – tree trimming
Jamie Binversie replacing furnace pump and filters
Jason and Austin Riesterer for oiling the bell & closet



The 62nd Annual Meeting of the Northeast Association of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ will be held Saturday, April 20, 2024 from 9:00am - 2:00pm. at the Daycholah Center in Ripon.

The Annual Meeting is the one time of year we gather as an association for fellowship, to conduct necessary business of the association (budget, elections and ratification of committee reports) and education.

New this year: A Youth Day Camp is offered to children/grandchildren of meeting attendees. Daycholah staff will lead a camp experience for youth in second through seventh grades.

Interested in attending as a delegate? Contact Pastor Patrick for registration.



ST. JAMES UCC WILL HOST ITS ANNUAL “BRAT FRY” ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024. SERVING TIME WILL BE FROM 4:00pm UNTIL 7:00pm. CARRY-OUTS ONLY.

Tell your family and friends so we have a good turn out.

A meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3rd at 6:00pm to finalize plans. All are invited to attend and suggestions are always welcome. There will be sign-up sheets for helpers and donations in the church narthex,

If you have any questions, contact:
Chairman, Mary Ann Vogel at 920-693-8352
or email: wvogel3@yahoo.com



Margene E Karstaedt, 85, village of Cleveland resident, went home to her Lord on March 8, 2024, at Aurora Medical Center in Sheboygan, WI. She was born March 18, 1938, in Elkhart Lake, WI., the daughter of the late Alvin and Verna Brost Sixel. She graduated from Elkhart Lake High School in 1957.

After graduation, she was employed at Sargento. Margene was united in marriage to Milton F. Karstaedt on September 13, 1958 at St. Peters Evangelical and Reformed UCC, Reverend Armin Duchow officiating. The couple resided in the village of Cleveland, and the marriage was blessed with three sons.

Margene's Husband passed away Oct. 21, 2019 and her son Brice passed away July 11, 2019. She was a member of St. Marks UCC in town Mosel, where she served on the cleaning staff for many years.

Our heartfelt sympathy to the family of Margene Karstaedt, member of St. Mark's .

Her presence is missed in our church family.



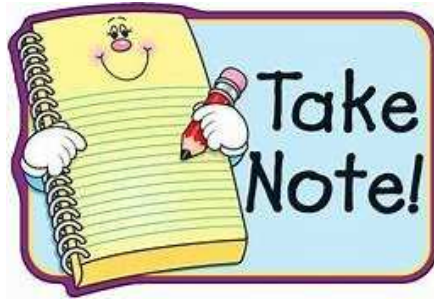
March 10th, What a Day of Rejoicing
With TWO Baptisms at St. James!



Cole Steven Lodes
Son of
Eric & Natalie Lodes

Daphne Jane Lutze
Daughter of
David Lee & Megan Arista Lutze





REMINDERS FOR ST. MARK'S MEMBERS

LEADERSHIP FORWARD CAMPAIGN

This is a reminder so that you don't forget about the Leadership Forward Campaign. We have pledged to support this mission at \$6,000 over the next five years. I am happy to report that I made our first payment of \$700 in March. That's a great start! Please keep this project in mind when preparing your donations. Thank you for your support.

Judy Steinbeck, Financial Secretary of St. Mark's UCC

RURAL CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Looking for Representative from St Mark's

After serving as your representative to the Rural Church Fellowship since 2017, I have decided to step down from this commitment. Please consider donating a small part of your time to this organization. They meet only a few times a year depending on what is happening at the time. I would be happy to accompany you to a few meetings to get you familiar with everything. It is a great organization and you get a chance to see what other churches are doing and how we can all work together. Please contact Judy Steinbeck if you are at all interested or have questions. Thank you.

ST. MARK'S QUILTING/SEWING

GROUP will meet April 2nd and 16th,
9:00 to noon. They have been busy!

Here's a sneak peek...

Come and get a better look at the quilts
in the entry of St. Mark's.





**St. James and St. Mark's
Ladies join us for
BUNCO NIGHT**

**Thursday, April 18th
6pm at St. James.**

**A \$5 participation fee is optional
Please join us and RSVP to
Jackie Mueller or Tammy Serketich
or email tserketich@yahoo.com**

Come Join Us!

**What a fun way to
get to know the
members of
'the other church'!**

OUR SHEEPSHEAD

GROUP met for the second time on Sunday afternoon, March 17th at St. James. We had a few new faces join us and enjoyed cards, fellowship and refreshments. Thank you to Dorothy Mueller for providing prizes. We will play again Sunday, May 5th at 1:00 pm.

Feel free to bring a friend.

COME JOIN US FOR:



**at ST. JAMES UCC, 1:00pm
SUNDAY, MAY 5th, 2024**

**OPEN TO MEN & WOMEN OF ST. JAMES & ST. MARK'S
*Feel free to bring a friend!***

St. James U.C.C.

Brat Fry

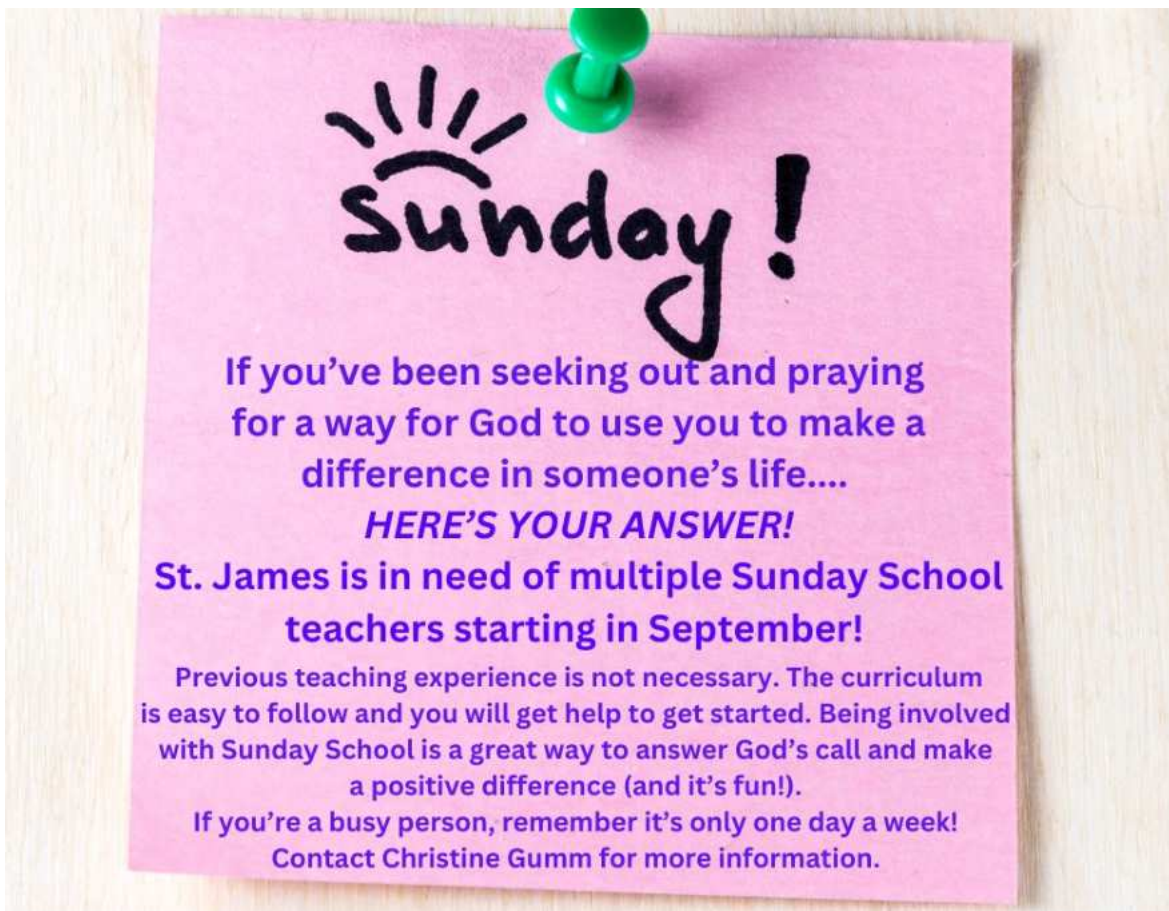
Wednesday, May 8, 2024

4 - 7 PM

**13312 Pioneer Rd., Newton
Spring Valley**

- 
- *brats**
 - *hamburgers**
 - *chicken**
 - *dessert**

**Carry Outs
Only!**



ST. JAMES CHOIR

Rehearsal will be held:

Wed., April 3rd, 6:30pm

Wed., April 10th, 6:30[m



ST. MARK'S CHOIR

Rehearsal will be held:

Wed., April 3rd, 7pm

Wed., April 10th, 7pm

Wed. April 24th, 7pm



NEW DATE FOR ST. JAMES STEWARDSHIP MEETING—

It will be held on Thursday, April 4 at 6:00pm



Last month Pat & Noreen Flook shared an opportunity for us to donate supplies through the end of June to Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Below is a list of supplies that are being sought. Collection boxes are at each church.



Re-Member welcomes like-new, gently used items for distribution via our community giveaway. Goods can be shipped, or brought to Re-Member if you are volunteering with us.

Via USPS (mail)

Re-Member
PO Box 5054
Pine Ridge, S.D. 57770

Via FedEx / UPS

Re-Member
48 County Road 17
Pine Ridge, S.D. 57770

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

- Women: Hairbrush, deodorant, body soap/wash, sanitary napkins, shampoo, conditioner, hair ties, toothbrush/paste
- Men: Comb, deodorant, body soap/wash, shampoo, conditioner, hair ties, toothbrush/paste, razor, shaving cream
- Toddlers: Toothbrush/paste
- Infants: Diapers (sizes 3,4,5), diaper wipes, diaper rash cream, baby bottles w/ nipples, Enfamil w/ iron

CLOTHING

New and packaged undergarments and socks; otherwise, new or laundered, gently-used clothing, shoes and boots

- Infants: baby blankets, sleepers (newborn to age 2); any-sized clothing
- Toddlers/Teens: any sized clothing and footwear; undergarments, socks
- Adults: clothing & footwear (for hot or cold season); undergarments, socks,

WORK-WEEK PROGRAMS

- New toilet bowl seats (round, not elongated)
- New pillows
- New twin sheet sets, blankets

BACK TO SCHOOL

- Backpacks, spiral notebooks & loose-leaf (wide & college rule), composite notebooks, binders, dividers, folders, book covers, crayons, colored pencils, markers, highlighters, pens (black, red & blue), pencils, erasers, pencil cases/pouches, pencil sharpeners, glue, glue sticks, scissors, rulers, memory cards, tissue, zip lock bags etc.
- Socks, underwear (must be new, and packaged; all sizes)

CHRISTMAS/WINTER

- New unopened toys for any age
- Hats, gloves, scarves
- Jackets

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

We are happy to accept Ace wraps, ankle/knee braces, wheel chairs/walkers, canes, and crutches. We respectfully ask that you do not send: medications (new or out of date), syringes/needles, diabetic supplies, nebulizers, ostomy supplies, Vac dressings, or any previously opened personal care/medical products.

Thank you for your support of Re-Member, and the Oglala Lakota people of Pine Ridge Reservation!



Sheboygan County Interfaith Organization

BULLETIN BITES ~ APRIL, 2024

- ◆ As we welcome spring, we embrace spring cleaning! You can help! We are always in need of floor cleaner, all purpose cleaner and hand soap. Thank you so much for your continued support.
- ◆ Sheboygan County Interfaith Organization has been bridging the gap between community needs and partner resources for over 35 years. "There's No Place Like Home" features a wide variety of silent auction prizes, delicious food, a reverse auction, and three impactful speakers that will share how the SCIO programs have created transformational change in their lives. This is our exclusive in-person fundraiser for the year – join us in creating memories for hundreds of vulnerable neighbors who benefit from our programs. <https://www.sheboygancountyinterfaith.org/theres-no-place-like-home/>
- ◆ Two more winter farmers markets on April 6th and 20th from 9am-12pm at the First Congregational Church UCC, 310 Bluff Avenue. The winter market offers fresh produce, meat, eggs, bread, bakery, honey, syrup, preserves, microgreens, coffee beans...plus, prepared food! Summer market will be back in June!
- ◆ Save the Date: Family Pathways Open House, 2123 N 13th St, Sheboygan Wednesday May 22nd from 11am-1pm Supervised Visitation is a great way to enable children to visit with their non-custodial parent in a safe and secure environment. Our Family Pathways program is part of the nationwide Supervised Visitation Network. If you or anyone you know are interested in the program and would like to know more, we would love to see you there!

ST. JAMES USHERS

APRIL

*Dale & Doris Sprenger
Ashley Lutzke
Ethen Lutzke
Linda Lutzke
Charles & Ruth Ann Kolb
David & Christine Gumm
Corra Gumm
Elliott Gumm
Everit Gumm
Dean Sprenger

MAY

*David Lorfeld
Rick & Donna Wippermann
Tim & Noel Wippermann
Cindi Wippermann
Sara Wippermann
Lindsay Wippermann
Tom Urness
Alan Wippermann
Linda Lorfeld

ST. MARK'S USHERS

APRIL

Jay Sommer
Colten Sommer
Glenn Grunwald

MAY

Dianne Kaczmariski
Margene Reyer

READERS

April 7— Sandy Perronne
April 14— Scott Siekman
April 21— Lori Roelse
April 28— Jacob Grunwald

HOSPITALITY

April 7 — available
April 14 — available
April 21 — Margene Reyer
April 28 — available

***If you're interested in hosting one of the 'available' Sundays, please contact the office.*

Please report any corrections or additions on the birthday and anniversary lists to Karen in the church office: stmstjoffice@gmail.com

OR call 920-693-8361

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

<u>St. James</u>		<u>St. Mark's</u>
51	March 3	46
30	March 6	--
60	March 10	49
--	March 13	26
52	March 17	47
35	March 20	--
50	March 24	55



ST JAMES APRIL CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

- 7 Karen Becker
- Dale Sprenger
- 11 Bonnie Langenhahn
- 12 Michael Stolzmann
- 13 LaVern Wippermann
- 14 Alivia Maxey
- 15 Lee Schmitz
- 16 Dorothy Mueller
- 17 Brenda Schultz
- 19 Julianne Luebke
- Terri Schmitz
- 23 Mark Stolzmann
- 24 Sarah Lutze

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Rev. Patrick & Brenda Schultz
- 6 Jason & Jenny Riesterer
- 9 David & Christine Gumm
- 14 Dean & Emily Sprenger
- 22 Allen & Sandra Kracht-Jones

If you or a family member are in need of pastoral care, please contact Pastor Patrick at 920-693-2858 or leave a message on the church's answering machine at: 920-693-8361.

Pastor Patrick has designated Mondays & Fridays as his day of Sabbath and his day out of the office. During those two days each week, you may contact him in case of an emergency only at 608-352-9544.

Confidentiality laws make it difficult for pastors to obtain information about anyone in the hospital. If you or a loved one will be in the hospital, please call the church office 920-693-8361 or contact Pastor Patrick at 920-693-2858.



VISION OF HOPE- ST. JAMES

"Application for Funding" forms are available in the narthex, from VISION OF HOPE Committee members, or under "More" on our church website. We welcome specific requests as well as your suggestions for using our semiannual gifts from the Wagner Foundation.

STUDENTS! Use this form for tuition help (currently \$1,000) each year.

ST MARK'S APRIL CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Carol Weiland
- 2 Glenn Grunwald
- 3 Dale Dirks
- Chris Schnelle
- 5 Karen Binversie
- 12 Gene Kaestner
- Johnathan Grunwald
- 16 Jerry Jetzer
- 17 Ann Adams
- Brenda Schultz
- 18 Kathy Kaestner
- 22 Ann Grunwald
- 23 Karen Mansker
- 24 Erick Heling
- 28 Abby Herrmann
- 30 Ryan Binversie

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Rev. Patrick & Brenda Schultz
- 22 Dick & Karen Binversie
- 23 Bruce & Karen Mansker
- 28 Jack & Wendy Schnelle
- 29 Ron & Sue Vandoske
- 30 Gene & Kathy Kaestner
- Thad & Crissy Athorp

INVITATIONS FROM NEIGHBORING CHURCHES...

St. Peter Evangelical Church Town Of Rhine Chili Supper

WITH TORTE FOR DESSERT

-----One Mile West of 57 on CTY FF-----
W5375 Cty Rd FF

Tuesday April 16th

Sponsored By
St. Peter Evangelical Ladies Aid



Serving from 4-7 p.m. in the church basement
Adults \$10.00
Children 6-12 \$3.00
Under 6 Free

TAKEOUTS AVAILABLE EVERYONE WELCOME

SMOKED PORK CHOP DINNER

Thursday, April 25, 2024

Drive-thru

4:00 – 6:30 p.m.

\$13.00



Saron UCC

W3830 Cty Rd J
Sheboygan Falls

Reservations are required by April 14th

Call

Joan – (920) 946-4652

Judy – (920) 980-0748



A DISPLAY OF GRACE

SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2024 AT 1:00PM
500 SCHOOL STREET - KOHLER

Come, spend the afternoon and immerse yourself in Grace. A Display of Grace, a program that is part of the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Grace UCC in Kohler, Wisconsin.



Lakeland University Chamber Winds

The afternoon will begin with music provided by Lakeland University's Chamber Winds. The group is made up of music majors and excellent musicians majoring in other fields at Lakeland. They perform a variety of music and are coached by Lakeland's band director, Evan Chancellor.

Following the music performance, enjoy an interesting story of our beautiful art glass windows designed by world renowned artist Conrad Pickel. The book "A Tapestry in Stained Glass" by Gene Moody about Conrad Pickel's life is one of the history items on display in the back of church. The art glass windows of Grace are one of a kind - hand chiseled glass pieced together creating a true work of art.

"One Still, Small Voice"

The quiet voice of Anna Becker, a younger child in the Sunday School, planted the seed that launched a campaign to raise over \$36,000 to unveil the custom art glass windows hand hewn by Conrad Pickel Studios of Waukesha, Wisconsin dedicated on November 27, 1949. Abler Art Glass of Kiel removed the plexiglass coating to reveal the art glass windows.



from the archives of Grace UCC

OUR HOME CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

A NONPROFIT CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF OPERATION



13 Residents

- Developmentally disabled adults
- Attend 10 area churches
- Enjoy Friendship Ministries, Able Fellowship, Special Olympics, Oostburg Library, Rehabilitation Center of Sheboygan
- Employed in the Sheboygan-Oostburg community

20 Staff Members

- Caring, loving, capable, appreciated
- 4 Resident Managers
- 13 Relief Staff
- 2 office staff
- 1 van driver

4 Homes in Oostburg, WI

- Accredited by State of Wisconsin
- Patronizing local businesses
- Governed by local 7-member Board
- Supported by
 - State of Wisconsin
 - Local Churches and Individuals

Resident Manager Position Open: Our Home Christian Ministries is hiring a full-time resident manager to provide care for four adults with disabilities. Benefits include salary, housing, and utilities. Job description includes care of residents, cooking, cleaning, leadership, medication administration, etc. Training provided. We are looking for someone with strengths in communication, compassion, leadership, paperwork, organization, and teamwork. Unique opportunity for doing ministerial work at home.

Please contact Kristin Rozeboom at (920) 564-6933 or office@ourhomecm.com for more information.

Our Home Christian Ministries is a ministry of Christian Adult Family Homes in Oostburg, Wisconsin for adults with developmental disabilities. Our Home is hiring a full-time resident manager to provide care for four adults with developmental disabilities. Benefits include salary, housing, and utilities. Job description includes care of residents, cooking, cleaning, leadership, medication administration, etc. Training provided. We are looking for someone with strengths in communication, compassion, leadership, paperwork, organization, and teamwork. Unique opportunity for doing ministerial work at home. Please contact Kristin Rozeboom at (920)564-6933 or office@ourhomecm.com for more information.

For more information or questions about Our Home Christian Ministries, please contact Kristin Rozeboom at (920)564.6933 or office@ourhomecm.com.



Words from Rev. Franz Rigert, UCC Conference Minister

Dear friends:

Grace and peace to you in the Spirit of our still-speaking God, who makes all things new.

Although I have never sipped wine from a goatskin flask, I've always appreciated Jesus' teaching about not aging new wine in an old wineskin. The old flasks are stretched and stiff and lack the elasticity to withstand the fermentation process.

In the Church, we often assume that great new ideas will flourish in the same old structures – even though new ministries don't easily thrive in old containers. But as Jesus says in Luke 5:39, "When new wine is put into new wineskins, both are preserved."

Last fall, the Wisconsin Conference Board of Directors and staff began to engage questions about the future of one of our wineskins – our associations. These questions were prompted by several concerns, including a lack of committee volunteers and challenges in paying association dues, and larger questions about the purpose and need for a governance structure at the association level.

The Conference is composed of four geographical associations. In the United Church of Christ, ecclesiastical authority – for example, the credentialing of pastors, ordinations, installations and maintaining of ministerial standing – is vested in each association.

Over the past decade most conferences, including ours, have implemented consistent practices across associations, both in the interest of efficiency and to better protect against litigation. In the Wisconsin Conference, significant "Church and Ministry" functions now are handled conference-wide, with regional representation. Several conferences have shifted this work entirely to a central process, eliminating association structures altogether.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, it has become clear that our associations, created nearly seven decades ago for a Church three times our current size, no longer have the volunteer or program capacity to function robustly. Still, we share rich relationships and endless possibilities for spiritual connection and ministry collaboration across the Conference.

Questions about "associating" in local and regional – and now virtual – spaces are leading us down two different, yet complementary, pathways. One is a pragmatic path, on which we acknowledge the signs leading us into conversations about letting go of structures that may no longer serve us well. The other path is a place where God's Spirit is inviting us into a time of contemplation – a prayerful pause for pondering and appreciating the various ways in which our associational connections are life-giving.

(continued on the next page)

Rev. Franz Rigert—page 2, continued....

I want to share with you the steps we have taken thus far and invite you to be part of this conversation.

After September's Board and staff retreat, at which we focused on the future of our associations, we assembled a 16-person "think tank" consisting of four representatives from each association. That group met several times, joined by the Conference ministerial staff, to share perspectives and prayerfully discern a way forward. Two processes unfolded – a tactical plan and a listening proposal.

The tactical plan involves engaging association leaders in conversations to explore what we value and want to hold on to, what we can better do through our common Conference life, and – most important – what should we relinquish. We are asking pointed questions: What is the purpose of associational governance structures? Do we need them? In terms of the Committees on Ministry, we are imagining how to shift further into a Conference-wide Church and Ministry model while maintaining regional representation and retaining some functionality at the regional level. We are also hearing about the historical importance of mission support and camp scholarships in each association and the desire to continue those ministries. These are all technical changes that can be managed.

The listening proposal involves adaptive changes, which author Ron Heifetz says are questions for which we don't yet have answers. Thus, this prayerful plan invites us into contemplative conversation – listening to God and one another – to imagine new ways of engaging each other in the wider UCC body of Christ. Fostering stronger grassroots ties will prompt collaborative ministry initiatives and exciting opportunities for cross-resourcing.

At this spring's association meetings, time will be dedicated to this type of contemplative dreaming. This is the question I have been pondering as of late: What if we eliminated antiquated governance structures and all the accompanying perfunctory tasks, freeing up more than 60 amazing volunteers, and inviting them instead to engage in leadership that pursues their faith passions and shares their programmatic initiatives? Can you imagine the powerful synergies that are possible? Already, we have tasted the new wine of such efforts in our justice and supportive ministry working groups.

We need new wineskins for new ways of engaging one another. We are envisioning a nimble organizational structure that could revive the old concept of deacons in a new way – identifying gifted facilitators who would provide leadership to new ministries that arise organically, gathering folks to share resources and engage in rich conversations. A deacon could be the one who reignites district clergy clusters. Or the one who facilitates conversations around important justice issues or mission initiatives. In time, a web of connections – local, regional and virtual – would offer people channels for investing their time and gifts where their passions lead them. Imagine the ministries that might arise!

Over the next two months you will have a chance to engage in a conversation about the future of our common life. Look for the invitations, and please join in.

Rev. Franz Rigert– page 3, continued...

Two final thoughts.

Regardless of the decisions we make around associational structures, we are committed to maintaining the staffing configuration currently in place. I regularly hear words of appreciation for the work of our associate conference ministers and believe there is significant value and a fostering of trust through continuity in these relationships.

Finally, the core question around any shift we make is a missional one: Will it better position us to effectively and creatively carry out the ministry of the gospel, and will it advance our ability to model the values we share in the United Church of Christ? While we may gain some efficiencies, there is no economic benefit to these changes. Instead, the fruits would be deeper connections made possible by newly configured ways of connecting throughout the Wisconsin Conference – new wine in new wineskins.

With blessings and gratitude for your thoughts,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Franz".

The Rev. Franz Rigert
Conference Minister