

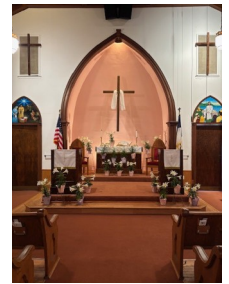


Newsletter of the First Congregational Church
Rochester, Wisconsin

August, 2026

Contents this month:

Calendar, Lectionary
Pastor's Ponderings; Congregationalism,
Council/Committee Reports; Other News
Devotional: Made for Perfection



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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2 Sunday Service 10AM	3	4 Tai Chi 9AM	5	6	7 OCC Crafting 10-2	8
9 Sunday Service 10AM Communion	10	11 Tai Chi 9AM	12	13	14	15
16 Sunday Service 10AM Council Meeting after church	17	18 Tai Chi 9AM	19	20	21 OCC Crafting 10-2	22
23 Sunday Service 10AM	24 Book Club 6:30	25 Tai Chi 9AM	26	27 Choir rehearsal 5:30	28	29 Music in the Park
30 Sunday Service 10AM Church picnic on the lawn	31					

Next month's Newsletter deadline: email JoAnne, mrspotts51@hotmail.com, by August 24

August Lectionary

August 2: Isaiah 55:1–5, Rom. 9:1–5 (6–13), Matt. 14:13–21

August 9: Job 38:4–18, Rom. 10:5–17, Matt. 14:22–33

August 16: Isaiah 56:1, 6–8, Rom. 11:1–2a, 13–15, 28–32, Matt. 15:21–28

August 23: Isaiah 51:1–6, Rom. 11:33–12:8, Matt. 16:13–20

August 30: Jer. 15:15–21, Rom. 12:9–21, Matt. 16:21–28

Pastor's Ponderings

Dear Friends in Christ,

August often arrives with a mixture of fullness and transition.

The gardens are heavy with growth, summer schedules are beginning to shift, and families start looking toward a new school year and a new season of routines. In the life of the church, this is also a good time to pause and remember that God is present not only in the worship time on Sundays but also in the ordinary days that shape our faith.

As we move through August, I invite you to look for God in the simple places: around the table, in the fields and gardens, at work, in school preparations, in conversations after worship, and in moments of quiet prayer. The Spirit continues to form us, strengthen us, and send us into the world as witnesses to Christ's love.

May this month be a time of gratitude for what God has grown, grace for what is changing, and renewed trust in the One who walks with us through every season.

Just a Pastor pondering...

Pastor Joe

The Congregationalist Church-United by Covenant

Each Congregationalist Church has its own covenant with God and with one another. We bring our different gifts and understandings of God as we walk, work, worship, pray, and celebrate together. Mutual respect for diverse expressions of sincere Christian belief is a primary conviction of the Congregational way. This means that we are not carbon copies of one another and this is by intention. We are a rich tapestry of different understandings and that as we live and worship together, we are all made richer not by our similarities, but by the patience we develop and the genuine desire to learn from one another.



August Birthdays!

Brought to you by your Pastoral Care Commission:

Kim Ball	August 4
Jeanine Hall	August 7
Christine Gall	August 11
Wayne Ball	August 22
Ruth Frost	August 26



Council Meeting Report.

First Congregational Church, Rochester Wisconsin

Minutes Council Meeting July 19, 2026

Present: Joe Hackett, Ruth Frost, Rose Seeger, Brian Mingus, Kelly Ball, Steve Dolphin, Sue Beach, JoAnne Potter, Bev Jensen

Called to order 11:10 AM with prayer. Minutes from May 17 read. Sue Beach moved, seconded by Rose Seeger, that they be approved as written. Vote unanimous.

Pastor's Report and Education Committee-- Joe Hackett

- Attended National Association Meeting via Zoom. Next year meeting will be in East Lansing, Michigan on June 22-29. There is a \$2500 grant available for VBS use.
- Pastor will be gone from August 30 through Labor Day
- 5 youngsters attended camp.
- Sunday school is being planned.
- Wisdom Books Bible study will be held for six weeks following Labor Day offered as an evening session.
- Background checks for Sunday School teachers will be done.

Treasurer's Report/IT – Mark Dahms

- No finance committee meeting will be held in July
- There is a \$1600 income deficit in June and a \$5700 income deficit YTD but that is not unusual for this time of year and with Music in the Park and Day in the Country coming up, not a matter for concern.
- Will advertise for Music in the Park and Day in the Country in the Highlighter and on Facebook.

Worship Committee – Rose Seeger

- Working on a flyer for the website and for the newsletter
- Music in the Park, August 29, will have a professional sound person this year.
- Special music is arranged through September

Fellowship Committee – Kelly Ball

- Held a Fathers Day coffee in June
- In lieu of church picnic at the lake, will hold on the church lawn August 30
- Next Sunday cake and coffee for Mary Krall's 90th birthday

Missions Committee – Sue Beach

- Checks for \$583.50 each will be given to Love Inc and the Transitional Living Center
- Discontinuing May rummage sale next year
- Rose and Bev will run the 9/19 rummage sale
- Love Inc meals July 27, Sept 28, and Nov 23 this year. Next year, we will have the first 6 calendar months.
- Considering community Thanksgiving in cooperation with Honey Creek Baptist 2027

Building and Grounds – Steve Dolphin

- Wayne has serviced the zero turn
- There is painting and maintenance to be done on the parsonage
- We are getting a quote for the Pastor's office windows.
- The chime stand needs repair
- Wayne says the yard barn needs paint and repair.

New Business

We need more church t-shirts before Day in the Country in some smaller sizes. Sue will work on an updated design.

Meeting adjourned, moved by Joe, seconded by Kelly, at 11:35. Next meeting August 16

Council Vacancy 2027

JoAnne Potter has completed more than 2 terms on the council as Clerk and will be rotating off to take up the newsletter and become more involved in Love Inc. This position should have candidates before October so that the new council member can be elected at the Fall Meeting. Council Clerk candidates should fill the following requirements:

- Be an active member of the church
- Commit to attending monthly council meetings and take notes
- Maintain the roll of members and keep track of significant sacramental community celebrations like funerals, weddings, baptisms, and confirmations.
- Have enough digital expertise to generate online minutes and distribute them by email
- The Clerk has a one year term and is eligible for reelection.

Anyone interested should approach JoAnne or any council member.

COMMUNION SCHEDULE

DATE	TABLE SETUP	TABLE SETUP	BREAD/ JUICE
9-Aug	Cher Fritchen		Chris Hackett
13-Sep	Christine Gall	Joyce Gerard	Chris Hackett
Oct 4 Worldwide Communion	Sue Beach	Tom Beach	Ruth Frost
8-Nov	Anne Gorski	Cher Fritchen	JoAnne Potter
13-Dec	Lisa Hilgenberg	Greta Frost	Chris Hackett
10-Jan	Brian Mingus	Kim Mingus	Melanie Mingus
14-Feb	Sue Pope	Lisa Hilgenberg	Greta Frost
March 25 Maundy Thursday	Sue Beach	Tom Beach	Ruth Frost
11-Apr	Christine Gall	Joyce Gerard	JoAnne Potter
May 16 Pentecost Sunday	Sue Beach	Tom Beach	Ruth Frost

First Congregational Church Music in the Park Icecream Social



10:45AM - 11AM
CAROLINE AND DADDY



11AM - 11:45AM
JUBLIEE



12PM - 12:45PM
HOLY CROWE

Picnic Table Seating Available
or Bring Your Lawnchairs



1PM - 1:45PM
KR BLUEGRASS

2PM - 3PM
TIN BUCKET



Hot dogs, Brats,
Chips, Cookies
Rootbeer Floats

Sandman and Crash Audio
Production



103 S. State St.
Rochester, WI.
August 29th, 10am - 3pm

Choir Life: Time to Make a Joyful Noise!

Our choir rehearsals will resume on Thursday August 27th at 5:30 p.m. We welcome all voices! There is new music to learn and old favorites to sing joyfully in praising God to the fullest! If you love to sing and share fellowship with others, please come and join us! Together we will make a joyful noise!

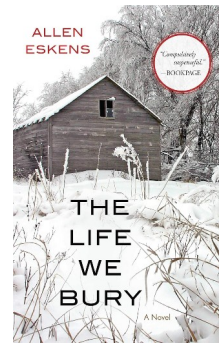
Vicki Will
262-343-1326

Community Book Club

A selection with a thought provoking title for August!
A story about unraveling the past...

The Life We Bury by Allen Eskens

Join us on Monday evening, August 24
6:30 PM in the parlor



Bible Study: The Books of Wisdom - Harmony in Contradiction

After Labor Day, the next Bible study will begin. Only six weeks, but it will be packed with the background, structure, and meaning of the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job. We will talk about how all of these books were written to explain the mysteries of how to lead a good life, but that they all come to very different conclusions and we'll try to find the common thread in them all.

In view that the light is still fairly long-lasting at that time of year, we are going to try to do an evening session that ends before Daylight Saving goes away so that those of us who have day jobs are able to join if they want. At this time, 6 or 6:30 PM sounds about right but the day of week has not been set. I'm thinking Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday would be best and I'd like some feedback as to what works for those who want to attend.

Catch me in church or give me a call or text. There will be a signup sheet soon.

JoAnne Potter, 608-604-3137, mrspotts51@hotmail.com



Girls Just Want to Have Fun!

On July 11, Rose Seeger hosted a churchwide ladies' luncheon. Lots of food, of course, but more importantly, time to catch up in a beautiful, relaxing setting. Thanks to those who helped organize, everyone who brought their summer best dishes, and to God for providing the perfect day.

JOIN US FOR

1st DAY of SUNDAY SCHOOL!

Come and learn all about Jesus!

 **SUNDAY,**
SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

 **10:00 AM**

 **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF ROCHESTER**
103 S State St,
Rochester, WI 53167

+ *We can't wait to see you there!*



For more information,
please contact



Chris Hackett



414-416-9444



chackett3913@outlook.com

Le Mutt enjoys the Dog Days!

Hi everyone! It's LeMutt again hoping to put a chuckle in your day!
HAPPY Dog Days of Summer 😊 Did you ever wonder where that term came from?
Well if you didn't, the following will tell you.

The phrase refers to the sultry, oppressive weeks of summer (traditionally July 3 to August 11) it traces back to Greek and Roman astrology. They believed that the star Sirius (the Dog Star) rose alongside the sun and its immense brightness combined with the sun's heat to cause the sweltering weather.

So there you are! 🔥



Jokes of the month—hope you enjoy them:

What do you call a snowman in summer? A puddle

Why did the can crusher quit his job? It was soda pressing

To err is human. To blame other people is management

Have you heard the rumor about butter? Well, I shouldn't be spreading this but——

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. It's impossible to put it down

Why did the cowboy get a wiener dog? He wanted to get along doggy

How does NASA organize a party? They planet.

I thought I was done until I read this next one, actually twice!

One time I was so depressed I asked my pastor for advice. He said "Cheer up! At least you are not like Jeremiah trapped in a hole in the ground full of water" I said, "Trapped in a hole in the ground full of water"? I know he meant well!**

I leave with this quote from Warren Buffett:

Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago" 🌳 🌳

So, until next month, blessings and keep smiling —Le Mutt

Thoughts – Made for Perfection

- JoAnne Potter

Mediocrity.

Good, comfortable, mediocrity.

No one rises above anyone else. No one keeps score in case someone might show themselves more able, more bold, than someone else. We are not only all equal in our dignity and humanity but we are all the same in our abilities and our courage.

There are no heroes. There are no innate leaders. We are not challenged. We are satisfied.



I don't think so.

Even Jesus knew that a society founded on mediocrity doesn't work.

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth." -Rev 3: 15-16

I am often mocked for finding truth in philosopher (and fierce capitalist) Ayn Rand, but sometimes, I just can't help it. Some of what she has to say rings true:

We don't want any great men. The great is the rare, the difficult, the exceptional. Set up standards of achievement open to all, to the least, to the most inept, and you stop the impetus to effort in all men, great or small. You stop incentive to improvement, to perfection.

This is why Jesus spits the mediocre out of His mouth. He wants excellence. He made us for perfection.
"Be ye perfect, like my heavenly Father is perfect." - Matthew 5:48

Perfect. And He's not kidding.

We may forget that we were made in God's image, but He hasn't. He did it and we are expected to live up to it. That means to be the best we can be, the most Christ-like, the most holy. We are to strive, not slump into perpetual, amused relaxation.

There's a reason for this.

There will always be venal men or women who will exploit our ennui. They will take advantage of our contentedness with the average and rise above, not with ability or nobility but with shrewdness, greed, and calculated corruption. Look around. We already live, at least partially, in a world like that. Do you wonder why? Look in the mirror.

To what extent have you been given a vision of a life, a community, that offered something more than vanilla and done little to work toward it?

When have you been satisfied not with your best, but with just good enough?

To what extent have you traded the hours of your god-given life for comfortable amusement?

We are responsible for preserving what we've been given and this is done one soul at a time. It is done starting with each one of us.