



First Congregational Church

Rochester, Wisconsin

May 2026 Newsletter

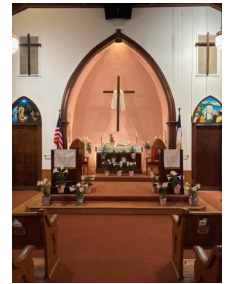
Contents this month:

Calendar

Lectionary

Pastor's Ponderings; Congregationalism,
Council/Committee Reports; Other News

Devotional: Just the Two of Us



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					OCC Crafting 10-2 1	2 WCA Workshop, 8 - 4
3 Sunday Service 10AM Spring Business Meeting	4	5 Tai Chi 9AM	6	7 Choir practice 5:30	8	9
10 Sunday Service 10AM	11	12 Tai Chi 9AM	13	14 Choir practice 5:30 (maybe)	15 OCC Crafting 10-2	16
17 Sunday Service 10AM Council Meeting after church	18	19 Tai Chi 9AM	20	21	22	23
24 Sunday Service 10AM Pentecost Communion	25	26 Tai Chi 9AM	27 Book Club 6:30	28	29 OCC Crafting 10-2	30
31 Sunday Service 10AM						

Next month's Newsletter deadline: email JoAnne, mrspotts51@hotmail.com, by May 27

May Lectionary

May 3: Acts 6:1–9; 7:2a, 51–60, 1 Peter 2:2–10, John 14:1–14 **May 10:** Acts 17:16–31, 1 Peter 3:13–22, John 14:15–21, **May 14: (Ascension)** Acts 1:1–11, Eph. 1:15–23, Luke 24:44–53 **May 17:** Acts 1:12–26, 1 Peter 4:12–19; 5:6–11, John 17:1–11 **May 24: (Pentecost)** Num. 11:24–30, Acts 2:1–21, John 7:37–39 **May 31:** Gen. 1:1–2:4a, Acts 2:14a, 22–36, Matt. 28:16–20

Pastor's Ponderings

April 2026

FCC Rochester People,

As we step into the sunny and warm month of May, I am reminded of the renewal and hope that comes with spring. This is a season when God's creation bursts forth with new life, and we, too, are invited to embrace spiritual renewal in our journey with Christ. May is often filled with celebrations of mothers, graduations, Memorial Day and the promise of warmer days—each a reminder of God's love and faithfulness.

I encourage you to take time this month to reflect on the blessings in your life, and to seek ways to share God's grace with those around you. Whether through acts of kindness, joining our upcoming church activities, or simply spending time in prayer, let us be a community that uplifts one another and shines God's light in our community and beyond.

Thank you for your commitment to our church and to each other. May God bless you abundantly in this Month of May.

In Christ,

Pastor Joe



Christ and the Congregationalist Church

Editor's note: Please take a few minutes to read this. You may find it both enlightening and encouraging, as I did.

Congregationalist churches accept Christ alone as the head of the church and are completely responsible for hearing and responding to Christ's guidance as they understand it. Each church is autonomous and self-governing, free from outside church authority to follow the leading of Christ's spirit. The relationship between Congregational churches is one of mutual respect and kindred fellowship. Decisions are only recommendations and advice. They have only as much authority as there is truth in them. When you join a Congregationalist church, you accept the comprehensive view that all believers are one in Christ – regardless of organizational affiliation.



May Birthdays!

Brought to you by your Pastoral Care Commission:

Steve Dolphin 5/2

Sue Pope 5/3

Ellianna Mingus 5/4

Joyce Gerard 5/9

Joan Konecke 5/11

Ann Gorski 5/14

Lisa Hilgenberg 5/23

Kathy Filicetti 5/24

Rose Seeger 5/26

John Gorski 5/29



Council Meeting Report, April 19

First Congregational Church of Rochester, Wisconsin

Minutes of Council Meeting April 19, 2026

The meeting was called to order with prayer at 11:10AM with Pastor Joe Hackett, Ruth Frost, Rose Seeger, Beverly Jensen, Sue Beach, Joyce Gerard, Wayne Ball, Mark Dahms, and JoAnne Potter present.



The minutes from March 15 were distributed and Joyce noted that the Fellowship Committee report was omitted from them. That report was added and Beverly moved, seconded by Joyce, that the minutes be accepted as corrected.

Pastor's Report – Joe Hackett

- Attended NA minister's convocation – 50 total attended
- Will attend Massachusetts meeting virtually
- Holy week services went very well with good attendance, including persons from Honey Creek
- WCA Meeting May 2 – 19 people registered so far. Planning on 30 +
 - Sandwich platter lunch
 - 8:30 – 9 Registration
 - Program 9 to noon
 - Lunch noon to 1
 - Annual meeting and worship after
 - Setup on Friday, May 1
 - Our expenses will be reimbursed in full by WCA on that day
- FCCR was included in research for a dissertation re: 100+ year old churches
- Joe will be out of town May 12-14, June 14-20 (Lora arranging pulpit supply), July 5-11 (Steve in the pulpit), August 28-30 (JoAnne in the pulpit), and September 2-6 (Ruth in the pulpit)
- Joe's contract is up January, 2027. Would like prospective renewal to be determined before Christmas 2026

Education – Joe Hackett

- Chris will lead prayer bead making April 26
- Planning for Sunday school 2026/7
- Still looking at an August Friday/Saturday VBS
- Investigating doing joint confirmation class with English Settlement

Treasurer's Report – Mark Dahms

- As attached
- \$2700 is available for camp tuition
- Expenses are exceeding income but income this year is up and we have an operating surplus from last year
- New choir chairs cost \$1409 with \$800 coming from the Bill Thompson memorial
- Parsonage garage and shed added to insurance policy
- Basement will be painted before WCA meeting for \$2887
- Well pump will be replaced for \$1700 to \$3300 if a pressure tank is needed
- Building and grounds has already spent its budget and the committee asks they get prior approval for expenditures. Wayne stated that new mower blades are needed and the expense approved.
- Attendance was 49 in March and 40 for the year

IT – Mark Dahms

- No report

Worship – Rose Seeger

- Music for lent and Easter was wonderful
- Will have honor guard for memorial day
- Lining up special music for the summer
- Jubilee will sing for Memorial day
- Rose needs chime platform balanced
- Same band will perform for Ice Cream social with the addition of Daniel Mitchell and his daughter Caroline

Fellowship – Joyce Gerard

- Coffee and cake next week for last day of Sunday school
- Will host American Legion for lunch on Memorial Day
- Kringles and donuts for WCA breakfast, sandwiches for lunch
- Charlie Mingus graduating May 29th

Missions – Sue Beach

- Love Inc appreciation luncheon April 22 noon to 1
- Taking rummage for sale beginning May 3
- OCC crafting every other Friday, will be asking for donations
- Will put OCC shipping collection jar out early this year

Building and Grounds – Wayne Ball

- Steve spread new wood chips around the yard
- Jay will mow and wants to both seed, and weed and feed
- Spring cleaning next Saturday. Outside in good shape. Inside needs dusting and oiling
- Wayne and Jay will come in Tuesday to get ready for painters
- Hardware will be replaced before next Saturday
- Wayne wants to paint the shed

Next meeting May 17

Spring meeting May 3

Joyce moved for adjournment 12:05, seconded by Sue.

Pull Up A Chair and Sing!

You may have noticed that the choir's backsides have new accommodations. The chairs were purchased after Vicki's careful research and paid for primarily out of Bill Thompson's memorial fund. The balance came from private anonymous donations. Thanks to the Thompson family. We will use them well.

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.

Celebrating Our Gifts — from the Finance Committee

In a Congregationalist church, the life and strength of the community depend on the shared commitment of its parishioners to a common purpose. We, the faith community at the Congressional Church of Rochester, are particularly blessed with devoted congregants who continuously offer the gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

The gift of time is often the most visible expression of stewardship. Whether we offer our time to prepare for worship, mentor our youth, support our charitable outreach, organize events, represent our congregation to various constituencies, or perform the essential activities required to keep the lights on, there is an ever-present willingness to be actively engaged in the shared life and purpose that connects all of us with our faith.

Talent, too, plays a vital role in advancing the church's mission. At the risk of being boastful, we have great talent amongst us. From the world-class music that elevates our worship to the expertise that keeps our lovely church functional and inviting, we have created a faith environment that is welcoming and vibrant. The never-ending desire to learn and grow together in our faith is supported as each of us freely shares personal challenges and triumphs that propel us forward. The delightful food central to our celebrations and charitable efforts, always made with love, and the collective talents that keep us organized and resourced to live out the mission of our church, are continual examples of our willingness to use the gifts that God has bestowed on each of us.

Finally, treasure represents the financial support fundamental to sustaining church operations. It is remarkable and humbling to witness the collective commitment that never fails to meet our financial commitments. We pool our collective gifts to maintain our facilities, support our small but mighty workforce, give benevolently to our ministries at home and abroad, and respond swiftly to the unexpected expenses that often occur in a church and parsonage with such deep historical stature. Sharing the treasure that God has given us allows the church's mission to flourish with great impact. A common question that we are asked is about the "right" way to contribute financially. The truth is that there isn't one right way. The best way to give is whatever works for each person and family. The following offers some additional background on when and how our congregation shares our collective treasure:

· When - some give weekly, monthly, quarterly, once a year, or whenever they can. For example, last year half of those who gave, did so weekly and that accounted for 48% of the dollars. The table below gives a complete breakdown.

· How - most members give by check, but some give cash, some have their banks issue a check by mail, some do direct IRA distributions or even a recurring credit card payment.

2025 Contributions

Frequency, Dollars, % of Dollars, Count of Contributors:

Weekly	\$37,037	48%	22
Monthly	\$21,470	28%	6
Quarterly	\$5,825	8%	2
Annually	\$7,800	10%	5
Other	\$4,410	6%	12
Total	\$76,542	100%	44

This is a time to recognize and celebrate the generosity of our congregation as we freely give of the gifts that have been bestowed on us, whether it be time, talent or treasure. We are blessed to have such a generous and vibrant community in Christ!

Praise the Lord!

Mark, Mary, Rose, Dave, and Christine of the Finance Commission



Memorial Day Rummage Sale Dropoffs begin after May 2



COMMUNION SCHEDULE

DATE	TABLE SETUP	TABLE SETUP	BREAD/ JUICE
May 2, WCA Workshop	Rose Seeger	Sue Beach	Ruth Frost
May 24, Pentecost Sunday	Lisa Hilgenberg	Sue Pope	Greta Frost
21-Jun	Brian Mingus	Kim Mingus	Melanie Mingus
12-Jul	Lisa Hilgenberg	Greta Frost	Sue Pope
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

Pastoral Care Commission Report

Well the committee has collected a lot of birthdates from the congregation to update our records, and we want to thank everyone for being so supportive! If we missed you, it wasn't intentional so please reach out to us. Also, keep in mind to let us know if we should add a name to the prayer list in the bulletin or make contact with one of our members. Don't be shy about doing so! That's what we're here for! Our gift bags for guests and children are here and ready to go. And, as we mentioned before, we will start greeting people as they arrive on Sunday and please offer to do that also!

Any concerns or thoughts about our committee please feel free to reach out to us.

Have a wonderful May! 🌸 🌸 🌸 Amanda, Pat, Ann and Claudia

Editor's note: The committee is indeed hard at work! I was the recipient of one of their get well cards in April and its reminder to **GET MY BUTT BACK IN CHURCH** was just what I needed to hear. Thanks, Amanda!

Love Inc Meals Report

Our next scheduled meal service would have been Memorial Day and had thus been canceled, but replaced with Thursday, June 18. On that day, we will serve a summer picnic-type menu: pulled pork, coleslaw, baked beans, potato salad, buns, and dessert. As of this writing, all spots are still open, so let Lisa Hilgenberg or Sue Pope know what you can contribute! The meal following this one will be the regularly scheduled one in July.

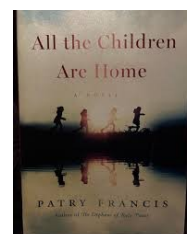
Community Book Club

Meeting: WEDNESDAY, May 27

Place: Church Parlor- enter via side ramp

Time: 6:30 pm

Under discussion: All the Children are Home by Patry Francis



Le Mutt is Back!

Hi everyone! Well it's May the month we celebrate Mothers Day! So I have gathered some jokes having a Mom theme. Enjoy!

Silence is golden. Unless you have kids. Then silence is suspicious.

Of all the evil moms, aren't you glad you got me?

I smile because I'm your Mother, but I laugh cause there's nothing you can do about it!

When your mom asked you if you want advice, remember it's a rhetorical question. Good moms let you lick the beaters after they make brownies. Great moms turn them off first.

And finally 😊 Why do moms feel the need to tell bad jokes? We just want to help you groan up. 😊

The thought for the month:

A partnership with God is Motherhood/HAPPY MOTHERS DAY 🌸🌸🌸



Name the Newsletter?

What's in a name? Well, sometimes a lot but sometimes, not so much. It's been suggested that this newsletter, which seems to be growing every month, needs a formal name and, if it does, it should probably be put out to all of you to decide, just like everything else.

So, what do you think? If you want to propose a name (and the reason for it), let me know. We'll publish the results and if there are more than one, vote on them.

Thoughts – Just the Two of Us

"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them"- Mt. 18:20

Boy, is that a familiar verse! And it's usually brought out when we want to remind ourselves that God is present in our gathering together – our church services, our celebrations, and any meeting together done in His name.

But that's not exactly what it says, is it?



It doesn't say that God will be among 20 or 50 or 300. It says 2 or 3. That's a completely different promise, a much more intimate one. This is God reminding us that He works best when He can get us alone, when He can look us individually in the eye, when we can hear His still, small voice.

The productive work and revelation of our spiritual life isn't primarily done in communion. It's done alone with God and only later becomes the bedrock of our communal lives together.