

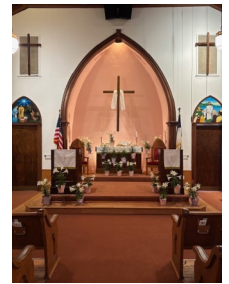


Newsletter of the First Congregational Church
Rochester, Wisconsin

October, 2026

Contents this month:

Calendar, Lectionary
Pastor's Ponderings; Congregationalism,
Council/Committee Reports; Other News
Devotional: The Call



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Choir Rehearsal 5:30	2 OCC Crafting 10-2	3
4 Sunday Service 10AM Worldwide Communion	5	6 Tai Chi 9AM Wisdom Books Bible Study 6PM	7	8 Choir Rehearsal 5:30	9	10
11 Sunday Service 10AM New member reception	12	13 Tai Chi 9AM Wisdom Books Bible Study 6PM	14	15 Choir Rehearsal 5:30	16 OCC Crafting 10-2	17
18 Sunday Service 10AM Sunday School Council meeting 11am	19	20 Tai Chi 9AM	21	22 Choir Rehearsal 5:30	23	24
25 Sunday Service 10AM Fall Meeting after church	26 Book Club 6:30	27 Tai Chi 9AM	28	29 Choir rehearsal 5:30	30	31 Trick or treat!

Next month's Newsletter deadline: email JoAnne, mrsports51@hotmail.com, by October 24

October Lectionary

Oct 4: Isaiah 5:1–7 Psalm 80:7–19 Phil. 3:4b–14 Matt. 21:33–46, **Oct 11:** Isaiah 25:6–9 Psalm 23 Phil. 4:4–13 Matt. 22:1–14, **Oct 18:** Isaiah 45:1–7 Psalm 96:1–9 (10–13) 1 Thess. 1:1–10 Matt. 22:15–22 **Oct 25:** Rev. 14:6–7 Psalm 46 Rom. 3:19–28 Matt. 11:12–19 or John 8:31–36

Pastor's Ponderings

Dear friends in Christ,

October has a way of reminding us that God is faithful in every season. The green of summer gives way to the colors of autumn, gardens are cleaned out, fields are harvested, and our calendars begin to settle into the rhythms of fall. All around us, creation quietly bears witness to the goodness of the Lord who provides, sustains, and renews.

This October, I invite you to take time to give thanks—not only for the blessings you can easily count, but also for the quieter gifts of grace: a word of encouragement, an answered prayer, a renewed friendship, a chance to serve, a moment of peace, or the steady promise that God is near. Gratitude opens our eyes to God's presence, and it often opens our hands to love our neighbors more freely.

As our congregation continues in worship, study, fellowship, and service this fall, may we remember that every act of faithfulness matters. A prayer offered, a meal shared, a child taught, a visitor welcomed, a gift given, a burden carried—these are all ways Christ's love is made visible among us.

May the Lord bless you and keep you this month. May He deepen our gratitude, strengthen our faith, and send us out with joy to serve in His name.

In Christ's peace,

Pastor Joe



The Congregationalist Church-Church of the Pilgrims? Really?

Congregational churches are sometimes known as the "Church of the Pilgrims" after the small congregations of the early 1600s. It sometimes seems like a heritage with little application in modern life, but the idea that the people of these first congregations moved from England to the New World in pursuit of religious freedom might bring a bit more perspective. From them, we inherited a wonderful spiritual heritage, one that is uniquely suited to our contemporary world. This is a tradition that has deep convictions based upon the Word of God as each person interprets that Word according to the dictates of conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. This naturally attracts men and women of genuine conviction, of adventurous faith, and of gracious regard for each other's sincerity to the Congregational Christian fellowship. It also, because of the adventurous nature of its structure, makes daily congregational life a bit messier than more doctrinal homogeneous organizations, but it in this cooperative adventure that special strength and an ability to function in a sometimes hostile world can be found.



October Birthdays!

Brought to you by your Pastoral Care Commission
Vicki Will October 3
Claudia Williamson October 11
Dennis Sanders October 13
Bill Gerard October 29



Council Meeting Report

Minutes of Council Meeting, September 14, 2026

Present: Joe Hackett, Mark Dahms, Ruth Frost, JoAnne Potter, Rose Seeger, Beverly Jensen, Brian Mingus, Steve Dolphin, Kelly Ball

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm

Minutes from August 16 were read. Bev moved, seconded by Rose, that they be accepted.

Pastor's Report – Joe Hackett

- Francheska and Derek Wallace have moved on to another church and request they be removed from our roster.
- There has been a request for members of the congregation to read scripture and open the services.
- A membership growth publication was handed out and council members asked to return to the next meeting with ideas.
- Communion Sunday moved to October 4. New members will be received on October 11.
- Submitted the annual report from the NACCC
- Trick or Treat will be October 31, 1-4

Education – Joe Hackett

- Sunday school will begin Sept 20. A schedule for the year was handed out.
- Background checks for teachers are being conducted right now
- Pastor is selecting an Advent Study

Treasurer's Report – Mark Dahms

- Music in the Park grossed \$820, netted \$320.
- Renewed streaming license.

IT Report – Mark Dahms

- Advertising Rummage sale for Day in the Country
- Rummage sale signs to be put up on the day of the event.

Worship Committee – Rose Seeger

- Special music arranged through the end of November.
- Will arrange for a music piece to be sung during communion.
- A portable mic was requested so that announcements from the congregation can be heard, but Joe suggested an alternative to maintain confidentiality in view of the livestreaming that goes on during services. He will introduce a way to manage that.

Fellowship Committee – Kelly Ball

- There will be a new member reception on October 11
- The Fall meeting will be held on October 25
- Trick or Treat will be held on October 31

Missions – Rose Seeger/Bev Jensen

- Rose is setting up the cash boxes for the rummage sale. Christine will help count afterward.
- Wayne and Brian will handle loading up what is left in Wayne's trailer.

Building and Grounds – Steve Dolphin

- Will set up 3 tents on Friday and the picnic tables
- Joe put gutter extensions on the parsonage. Had some flooding downstairs.
- Steve will call Wayne regarding painting the parsonage porch.

New Business

Christmas Tree lighting will be held Friday, December 4 6PM

Bev moved and Joe seconded the meeting be adjourned.

Next meeting held Sunday, October 18 after services.

Financial Report – August 31, 2026

In August, income got a boost from Music in the Park that resulted in an \$887 surplus for the month. From January through August, total income reached \$48,588 (about the same as last year), while expenses totaled \$54,599, resulting in an overall loss of \$6,011. Unrestricted cash remains healthy at \$19,615 heading into September. Additional details can be found on the reverse page.

Attendance averaged 35 in August, the same as last August. That puts the year-to-date average at 38, which is 1 fewer than the same as last year.

Deposits for the month included: regular offerings of \$5,864 and \$820 from Music in the Park

Disbursements for the month included:

- \$352 to Christian Copyright Solutions (CCS) to renew the WorshipCast streaming license.
- \$425 to reimburse Rose Seeger for Kwik Trip gift cards given to the 17 musicians who performed at Music in the Park (17 x \$25 gift cards).
- \$75 to Cathy & Jim Bergles for driving more than 2 hours to perform at Music in the Park.

Other Topics:

1. Music in the Park Ice Cream Social – this year's event raised \$820 for the church from "free will" offerings for food and beverages and netted \$320 after cash expenses.

This Year Last Year

Income	\$820	\$775
Cash Expenses	\$500	\$425
Net Income	\$320	\$350

2. Day in the Country – this year’s event is scheduled for September 19. Last year’s events raised a total of \$6,150 (\$3,605 for the church, \$2,545 for Missions). Food raised \$2,081, Bake sale raised \$1,224 (from 322 containers), rental space on the lawn raised \$300. Missions rummage sale raised \$2,545 (the highest since 2022) that was split evenly between Love Inc and Transitional Living Center

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
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

Community Book Club

Our October selection is

The Burning Girls, by C.J. Truder

An unconventional vicar moves to a remote corner of the English countryside, only to discover a community haunted by death and disappearances both past and present--and intent on keeping its dark secrets--in this explosive, unsettling thriller



Bible Study: The Books of Wisdom - Harmony in Contradiction

On the Tuesday after Labor Day, the next Bible study began. Only six weeks, but it has been 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.

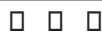
We meet Tuesday evenings at 6PM. You are not too late to join in.

If you have any questions, catch me in church or give me a call or text. There should be a signup sheet at the back of the church.

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



Le Mutt Falls into his Favorite Month



> "I wish that every day was Saturday and every month was October" (Charmaine Forde)

> Guess you figured out my favorite month of the year!!!

> October means eight in Latin had something to do with the calendar they used way back when, I'll let you look it up if you're interested. There will be a Hunters moon on October 26th at 12:12 am EST. The natives called it that because it was good for night hunting as it was an important time to stock up on meat for the long Winter months.

> Holidays abound in October, I'll name a few:

> Oct 9 Leif Erickson day

> Oct 12 Canada has Thanksgiving day

> Columbus Day

> Indigenous people Day

> Oct 19. St Luke's Little Summer

> Sweetest Day

> Oct 24 United Nations Day

> Oct 31. Halloween (all Hallows Eve)

> The whole month is considered Breast Cancer Awareness Month and National Pizza Month

> Many harvest fests are celebrated everywhere, one of the biggest is Germanfest. Farm stands are everywhere with their brilliant colored produce, apples even find non bakers normally making apple pies and desserts!!

> And rides is the country to see the colors changing finally get people off the freeways and on the back roads and to small towns they never even heard of before! And for a few short hours they find no reason to drive fast or rush to get home!

> From Ann of Green Gables "I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers"

> Here's some humor to to share when your out driving may bring a smile or laugh possibly a groan or two:

> Why do demons and ghouls hang out together?

> Because demons are a ghouls best friend!

> Why are ghosts so bad at lying?

> Because you can see right through them.

> Why was the jack o lantern afraid to cross the road?

> He had no guts.



- > Are all Halloween monsters good at math?
- > No unless you Count Dracula
- > What's a tree's favorite song in autumn?
- > "Don't stop Be Leafin"
- > Fall is a season when you can throw all the leftovers in a pot, add water and call it soup"
- > Corn is like a teenager, both have ears, but neither listen
- > You know it's fall when you need a hat and scarf in the shade and shorts and sandals in the sun
- > My new fall sweater is so fluffy, a farmer tried to shear me.
- > and last but not least —I love all the fall beverages, spiced cider, hot cocoa, pumpkin spice coffee and Theraflu!!
- >
- > I hope you get out and enjoy this beautiful month the Lord has given us!
- > Autumn is the time of year when Mother Nature says, look how easy, how healthy, and how beautiful letting go can be.
- > (Toni Sorensen) 🎃 🍁 🦇 🍂 🍵 🍁 🍵

Thoughts – The Call

- JoAnne Potter

Hearing and listening. They aren't the same thing. We can hear before we listen. Listening is intentional. And the difference is important because the whole idea of listening is inherent in developing a deep life of faith.

The admonition to listen is everywhere in the Old Testament - The Israelites are told to listen to God over and over, to listen to their prophets, and to listen to their king. Samuel presents himself to God by telling Him, "Speak, Lord, your servant listens." Psalms and Proverbs, the pleas and the wisdom, all include God and His servants listening. And of course, Jesus ends many parables with the final thought, "He who has ears, let him hear."

And you know why?

Because God is always calling.

And we are not always listening.

Instead, we're usually talking.

"God, I pray for this."

"God, please do that."

"God, why did you do (or allow) this?"

We just need to shut up once in awhile. If there are answers to these questions, they are not in the noise of prayers or even of worship. They are in that still, small voice we keep talking about but rarely heed. They are in the silence because in silence is communion and, in communion, few answers are required.

Oswald Chambers said, "The call of God is like the call of the sea. No one hears it but the one who has the nature of the sea in him."

He who has ears for God will hear Him.

