



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
31 W. MILWAUKEE AVE., FORT ATKINSON, WI 53538

June 2026
First Congregational UCC Broadcaster

It was with full appreciation that a room full of folks who love this church gathered a few weeks ago to speak with representatives from the WI Conference UCC. We talked about the energy and family communal feel that this congregation gives. Mentions of the future struggles were present in the room with ponderings and wonderings about who will come next to take the message of God's love into new dimensions.



Though there were no answers given, and the ambiguities still remain about the future of the church...what was certain is that the vibrant goodness exists in the here and now. There is great gratitude and hope in the air. In covenant we share what we have and support those in our community who have fallen into challenging times. Our mission and vision are clear, and with this we are living all faithfulness.

With a heart full of gratitude,

Pastor Sara

Save the Date- Outdoor Prairie Worship

Saturday June 6, 2026 @ 10am (Canceled if raining)

Prairie Church: Experience worship outdoors with the beautiful wildflowers, pollinators and birds chirping with delight. This experience will bring us calm and deepen our spiritual connection to God.

The Glendon's Prairie
N5913 Zeibell Rd
Jefferson WI 53549



Council Highlights – May 2026

Fort Atkinson Preschool and Childcare: The transition to close the Center on June 5 is going smoothly. Inventory of all items has been completed. Church members will have an opportunity to purchase items from the Childcare Center on June 12 from 9 AM – 12 PM.

We will honor all the teachers, students and parents from the Childcare Center at our worship service on June 7, 2026, to express our gratitude for 57 years of childcare in our community. Please plan to attend!

TDS Presentation: Representatives from TDS attended the meeting to give Council a proposal for a new telephone system. The system will feature a fiberoptic rather than cable system. We would also receive new telephone sets with updated features. The monthly costs would be less than what we are currently paying. Council members are reviewing the information and will decide on the proposal within the next few months.

Outdoor Prairie Service: This will be held on Saturday, June 6 at 10:00 AM. We will experience wildflowers, birds and all nature's blessings! Glendon's Prairie N5913 Zeibell Road, Jefferson.

Church Relations will be hosting the Barrie Park Concert ice cream social on Monday, June 15th. Please sign up to bake bars, pies or cookies.

Church Access Changes: When the Childcare Center closes in June, there will be limitations in gaining access to the church. The Facilities Ministry is working on possible options. Stay tuned!

Remember! Worship Time Change to 9:00 AM begins Sunday, June 7th:
Next meeting is June 16, 2026.

Complete Council Minutes are available in the church office.

Pastor Sara Summer Home Visit Opportunity

Summer days are approaching and time spent visiting is a unique opportunity and characteristic of the enjoyment of summertime. Pastor Sara is eagerly willing to visit the homes of church members during the summer months. Please call the church office or email Pastor Sara and she would enjoy visiting you in your home.

revsarafortucc@gmail.com

A day in the life of a church delegate at the Wisconsin Conference UCC 2026

Hello everyone! This was my second time attending the UCC conference. Carol Maasz graciously wrote the conference report last year. It is my turn this year. I would like to walk you through my experience as one of our church delegates to the UCC conference.

We drove to the Green Lake conference: <https://glcc.org/about/our-history/> . What a beautiful setting! There are plenty of lodging options and places to walk. The lake is serene. You can feel a shift in your mind set just being present on the glorious grounds.

Upon arrival there was the customary check in and then we were off to the opening worship service. The theme of this year's conference was *Cultivating Community: Rooted in Christ and Bearing Fruit*. This was reflected throughout the conference in a myriad of ways. Our guiding scripture verse was: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5. Behind the speakers was beautiful artwork reflecting the vines and grapes of God's work that was made by the Art Committee. The worship music was heart felt and uplifting and spoke about the Holy Spirit connecting us all. What incredible musicians we were privileged to hear!

Next up, was the annual business meeting. The business meeting's agenda included a financial update and several presentations. Rev. James Schleif, UCCI Executive Director, presented on all the efforts to update the properties of Moon Beach, Daycholah Center, and Cedar Valley and make them financially solvent. I had no idea the church had such a long-standing outdoor ministry. It was interesting to hear about all the good work that has been done to update the properties and balance the budget.

I found the presentation on the Civil Rights Tour enlightening and fascinating. Several church leaders and members traveled from Selma to Montgomery. They shared their experiences of visiting the Brown Chapel, the Edmond Pedis bridge, and the National Civil Rights Museum all while reflecting on Dr. Martin Luther King's words. I was reminded of how recent all those Jim Crow laws were in effect. It led me to ponder: what can and should a follower of Christ be doing to assure equality for all is real? The business meeting concluded with the recognition of churches that are open and affirming (this included us!) and who support 5 for 5 (this is us too!).

We were then off to lunch. The lunch hour had several options to congregate with either first-time attendees, those interested in racial justice, or with new friends. Of course, the food was delicious and plentiful.

After lunch, Rev. Franz Rigert, WI Conference Minister, presented his annual State of the Conference address entitled “Life in the Vineyard”. He focused on how to connect to Christ, cultivate community, and how we all can blossom. We then had a wellness hour. I attended a centering prayer workshop with Reverend Rachel Bauman. I am pleased to say it moved all attendees to a place of serenity and connection. Carol attended a wellness poetry workshop with Julie Kramer.

The remainder of the afternoon included a variety of workshops to choose from. Carol and I attended one on ‘Ministering to Anxious Kids’ by Reverend Chris Myers. Reverend Myers’ church is in River Falls. He is seeing more and more kids who struggle with anxiety and utter despair which is often linked to smart phone addiction. Hmmm...it reminded me of a recent sermon we heard from our very own Justin Frey. Rev. Myer shared some great book resources: *The Anxious Generation* and *All the Lonely People*.

I then went to a workshop on ‘Developing Allyship with our Indigenous Neighbors’, led by members of First Congregational UCC-Appleton. The workshop covered a brief overview of the UCC Synod’s repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. The workshop leaders then explained how their church supports the Brotherton Nation’s effort to secure federal recognition of tribal sovereignty. We also learned of how they are illuminating the issues confronting Indigenous communities in their geographic area. Many resources were shared. Carol attended the ‘Cultivating an Aging Community in Grace’ where she learned about senior focused ministries, memory cafes, nurturing aging communities, and more.

The day concluded with another delicious meal, a welcome reception, and an opportunity to collectively watch the Bad River Documentary. Whew!

Saturday morning we were treated to gathering music by the Wisconsin Gospellers. Wow! This inspiring and joyful music was followed by worship.

Dr. Edith Guffey then delivered the keynote address. Dr. Guffey served in a variety of roles for the United Church of Christ. Dr. Guffey said she was first attracted to the UCC when she discovered a church that connected faith with justice. She considers advocacy as a legitimate and necessary expression of faith. Her talk was powerful! Her message, in my own words, was: Who is missing from the table? While our hearts long for full inclusion of all, we sometimes struggle to live these sentiments. She asked us to think about “what steps can we take to welcome everyone”? She encouraged everyone to engage with our communities in a full, welcoming, and grace-filled manner. Her delivery was so genuine, so kind, and warm. She was inspiring!

Next up: time for wellness, time to wander the exhibit hall, and to have lunch. We then had a business meeting where our very own Rev. Dr. Sara Rabe, Vice Chair of the

UCC Board of Directors, gave the 2027 annual meeting preview and motioned to install the new church leaders.

Several more workshops were offered in the afternoon. Carol and I wanted to hear all we could from Dr. Guffey, so we attended her question-and-answer session. Dr. Guffey was so approachable with a delightful sense of humor and so much wisdom to share. I left wanting to be more like her. Her closing words were: “I promise to meet you where you are at on your journey”.

The day and conference concluded with a closing worship service.

There were other workshops and wellness activities to attend over the two days. There were many meaningful touches throughout the conference such as drawings for the artwork and guided meditative walks.

I learned so much. I enjoyed time with like-minded people in a beautiful setting. I encourage everyone to attend. Thank you for following along!

Respectfully submitted,
Kathi Cauley, Delegate



Wisconsin UCC Newsletters

At the All Church meeting on Sunday May 3, there was interest in learning about the various newsletters available through the Wisconsin Conference UCC website. Go to the Wisconsin Conference website at WCUCC.ORG. You'll see an information strip.

Click on **NEWS & EVENTS** to find the conference's weekly newsletter. It has news about UCC happenings all over the state.

Click on **ABOUT**. Find the Southern Region and click on Newsletter. Their newsletter, Shalom, has information about what's happening in all the UCC churches in Southern Wisconsin.

Click on **LOVE IN ACTION**. There you'll find information about various justice topics such as creation care, immigration justice, Palestine, LGBTQIA, older adult, and racial justice. Some of these have newsletters, and all have news and information on those topics.

All of these newsletters and webpages are full of information and ideas shared by churches across the state.

Preschool Closure Information

The Preschool is closing on June 5th. Our transition team has determined the following information on the sale of the items left.

The school district will come and get their items either June 5th, or June 8th.

The staff will be invited on June 8th from 1 to 3 pm. Our members are welcome on June 12th from 9 to 12pm.

Finally, the public rummage will be announced at a later date. This will be a cash and carry event only.

There will be a sign up sheet in the Narthex for volunteers for each date. We need at least 3 people per time to be present and collect the money.

The Preschool/daycare staff and families are welcome to attend our Church service on June 7th. We will honor them, and bring closure to this longstanding ministry, here at The Fort Atkinson First Congregational Church – United Church of Christ.

Recycle/Reuse Tips from our Creation Care Team

We're all trying to be good stewards of the earth by recycling and being concerned about what we throw into the garbage. But what about the other things cluttering our homes? How can we be sure those are recycled and/or reused?

Donate to St. Vincent de Paul of Fort Atkinson. They accept clean clothing, all kinds of household items, dishes, glassware, small kitchen appliances like mixers or coffee makers, books, toys and furniture.

What can you do with large appliances, tools, and other large items? Take them to the St. Vinnie's Building Materials division, next to the regular goods St. Vinnie's. Materials accepted and sold at the Building Materials division include working washers, dryers, refrigerators, freezers, stoves, range hoods, microwaves, ceiling fans and lights. Also tools and fixtures from your home workshop. Two from our church volunteer there, so you can ask Larry Narkis or Bob Rose if you have any questions about the Building Materials store.

St. Vinnie's recycles, so if your donation doesn't sell, it still may be recycled and parts reused. They make frequent trips to Whitewater or Janesville with large appliances, and other recyclables to add to the money they earn. They also recycle cardboard, and suggest if you have some cardboard, bring it in to be recycled.

St. Vincent de Paul of Fort Atkinson
1525 Summit Dr, Fort Atkinson.

Home Goods Store Phone: 920-568-1266

Building Materials Division Phone: 920-568-9345



Helper Schedule

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lay Reader	Tech Support
June 7	Tom & Patty Sehnert	Gary & Barb Vorphal	Susan Woods	Kurt Wesemann
June 14	David & Lynn Klug Stedman	Ruth Hammiller and	Bridget Trewyn	Kevin Becker
June 21	Joe & Eunice Ann Slaney	Linda & Jeff Glendon	JoAnn Rose	Bob Buell
June 28	Judy Brown	Trent Topel and Chad	Bob Rose	Kurt Wesemann

The Food Pantry items needed:

- Canned Pears
- Mixed Fruit
- Chili Beans
- Chicken Soup
- Raisin Brand Cereal



June 7th
Communion
Team

Donna Abel, Judy Brown,
Bob Rose, and Sharyl Beranek

Summer Worship Hours

Summer worship will be

9 AM

Starting June 7th



Kindness FORTified launch date!

Fort Farmers Market Booth on Sat, June 20th

Checkout this new initiative to promote a new vision: "To Promote a Community Culture where Kindness is Valuable, Valued and Contagious"



Attention all members!!



We are celebrating the 25 th anniversary of Pastor Sara's ordination, and her 5 th year as Pastor here, at our Fort Atkinson First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.



Please save the date of July 12 th for this very special service. We are blessed to have special guests, and refreshments after the service. You won't want to miss it.

Fort Atkinson Preschool and Childcare

FAREWELL

Backyard Bash

Join us as we celebrate the roots that bind us one last time after 57 years of service to the community!

June 5, 2026 from 1-5 pm

Fort Preschool Gym & Sidewalk

Fun games - Storybook Walk - Snack

All families - past and current - are welcome to drop in on June 5th to celebrate the memories and say one last goodbye before the center closes its doors for good.

SAVE THE DATES

June 5- Fort Preschool Farewell Backyard Bash 1-5 PM. All families, past and current, are welcome to drop in on June 5th to celebrate the memories and say one last goodbye before the center closes its doors for good.

June 6- Prairie Church 10 AM Experience worship outdoors with the beautiful wildflowers, pollinators and birds chirping with delight. This experience will bring us calm and deepen our spiritual connection to God

June 7-Summer Worship Hours begin at 9 AM

June 7- Farewell of Fort Childcare and staff appreciation

June 11- Bob Ehrike Funeral 11 AM

June 12- Members Preschool Sale 9 AM to 12 AM

June 15- Ice Cream Social (See below for more info)

June 16- Council Meeting 6 PM

June 25- The Creation Care Team will meet Thursday, June 25th at 11:00 AM



Bakers Needed!– Ice Cream Social

Bakers and volunteers are needed for our church's annual charity fundraiser to be held in conjunction with the Fort Atkinson Community Band's first concert of the summer. The concert will be Monday evening, June 15th, at the Barrie Park Bandshell on Robert Street. (Rain location is Trinity Lutheran Church, kitty-corner from the park.)

Baked goods (pies, bars and cookies) can be dropped off in the church kitchen on Sunday, June 14th, or by noon the day of the concert. Volunteer shifts include set-up, serving and clean-up. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex, along with take-home reminder slips.

Last year, this event raised \$500 for the local Habitat for Humanity chapter and this year will be supporting the Fort Atkinson Food Pantry! Thank you for your support - from the Church Relations Ministry.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

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Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

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Church Email: officefortucc@gmail.com

Moderator: Linda Glendon jlglendon@tds.net

Rev. Dr. Sara Rabe: revsarafortucc@gmail.com

Church's Website: www.fortfcc.org

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