FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH • MUKWONAGO

NOVEMBER 20, 2026



Here's What's Happening at FCC



Jess's daughter Kennedy reached out and let me know she had found a baby bird that had fallen out of its nest. The mother bird had either abandoned it or maybe been eaten by the neighborhood cat. Either way, she had this tiny baby bird in her hands and needed someone to take care of it because she couldn't with her school schedule.

Now please understand, I did not, in any way, shape, or form, want this assignment. But I did it. I love Kennedy. I admire her love for animals and nature. She has a big heart. And she knew if she asked me, I couldn't say no. Because I have a big heart too and I would walk through fire for her. Barefoot.

So she dropped off this alien-looking reptile. No feathers. All skin. Huge beak. All head. Wobbly. Constantly falling over. I dug out an old reptile tank from my son's snake phase, set it up on a heating pad, added a basking light, and lined the bottom with a soft cloth. Then I went out and bought nightcrawlers because apparently cartoons had convinced me that's what birds eat. I chopped them up. (Extra gross.) Used tweezers to feed her. A baby medicine syringe for water. I'm calling this bird a "she," but in all honesty, I had no idea. She vomited the worms back up.

So naturally, I Googled it. Turns out, if you want to feed a baby bird worms the "right" way you're supposed to chew them, swallow them, and regurgitate them. Nope. Hard pass. So I went with the alternative, dog food soaked in water.

Because she was a nestling, I had to feed her every 2-3 hours during the day. Then her eyes opened. Feathers started coming in. (To be clear, this did not improve her looks right away.) Eventually, I could stretch feeding to every 4-5 hours. Finally, Kennedy was able to take her back, a soon-to-be fledgling, and nurse her the rest of the way. I still don't know how she taught her to fly.

The unexpected gift in all of this was that Kennedy and I bonded. Over a baby bird. That bird was fragile. And, if I'm honest, our relationship was a little fragile too. Her mom had been hurt before, and Kennedy wanted to protect her. She liked me. She trusted me with her mom's heart but she was still watching. Still wondering. And somehow my willingness to care for this tiny, helpless bird helped something settle in her. It was like she could see: maybe my mom is safe here. That shared care, that tag-teaming of this little life, connected our hearts.

As I think about this, Jesus' words in Gospel of Matthew 10:29–31 come to mind:

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows."

These words come right in the middle of what is basically a pep talk Jesus is giving the disciples before sending them out, like sheep among wolves. He tells them they will face resistance. Possibly arrest. This is not a safe mission. And right there, in the middle of that reality, he talks about sparrows. The cheapest birds in the marketplace. If God is present when one of those falls, then God is certainly present with you in your hardest moments. Jesus isn't promising they won't get hurt. He's telling them they won't be alone in it. That they are seen. Known. Held, down to the number of hairs on their head.

The disciples were being sent out to love people with that kind of love. And here's the truth: Loving people, really loving people, and trusting others with your heart is always risky. There's no way around it.

Mother Teresa once said, "Love until it hurts." And I think she was onto something. Because that kind of love, the kind that gives without measuring, that shows up for the hungry, the lonely, the vulnerable, that love will cost you something. But it also connects you to something sacred.

In the end, Jesus wasn't asking the disciples to be overwhelmed by the bigness of their mission. He was calling them to do small things, with great love, for the person right in front of them. The one standing next to them. The one holding something fragile.

And when two people step into that kind of risky love together, something shifts. It moves from ordinary to sacred. That's what the church is meant to be. A place where we don't just talk about love, we live it. Especially for the most vulnerable.

May we find the courage to love like that, even when it's messy, inconvenient, and a little gross. Knowing we never fly alone.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Mark



Please Keep These Loved Ones in Your Prayers

Those facing illness or health concerns:

- Kay R
- Bernie F
- Marty H
- Dorothy C.
- Sue P.
- Rae-Ellen
- Debbie
- Nancy
- Sue R's friend's son
- Jan
- Rick
- Brianna

Those needing ongoing love and support:

- Our shut-ins and all who live with chronic health challenges
- Our church leadership, as they serve and discern
- All who are struggling or in need—seen and unseen
- The Mission School of Hope & Clinic and the communities they care for

May God's healing, strength, and peace surround each one.

Need Prayer? Send your request to prayer@fccweb.net

Would you like to be part of our Prayer Chain?
Please email the church office at office@fccweb.net to let us know.



A Season of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

Advent and Christmas at FCC

There is something special about Christmas. Maybe it's the familiar carols, the glow of candlelight, the memories of Christmases past, or the simple comfort of being together. In a world that often feels hurried, noisy, and uncertain, Christmas invites us to slow down, take a breath, and remember what really matters.

At FCC, we invite you to walk through this beautiful season with us.

During the four Sundays of Advent, we'll explore the gifts of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Each Sunday, as we light another candle on the Advent wreath, we'll make room in our hearts for the Christmas story and the beautiful promise it holds for our lives today.

And then comes Christmas Eve.

This year, we invite you to join us for one of our two beautiful, traditional Christmas Eve candlelight services at 4:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. Both services will be filled with familiar carols, the Christmas story, and the powerful beauty of candlelight filling the sanctuary as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

There is something deeply moving about standing together, holding a small candle, singing *Silent Night*, and watching the darkness give way to light. For just a moment, the busyness of the season fades, and we remember that the greatest gifts of Christmas don't come wrapped in paper.

They come in the love we share, the hope we hold for one another, the peace we long for, and the joy of knowing we are never beyond the reach of God's love.

Whether FCC has been your church home for decades, you've been away for a while, or you're simply looking for a place to spend Christmas Eve, there is a place for you here.

Come as you are. Bring your family, invite a friend, or come on your own. We'll be glad you're here.

Sunday Advent Worship – 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services – 4:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.

May this Christmas season bring warmth to your heart, peace to your spirit, and the beautiful reminder that love is still being born into our world.



Let's Put a Little More Joy Under the Tree!

Christmas is about love, joy, laughter, and reminding people that they matter. And this year, we have a wonderful opportunity to share all four with our friends at TriSkill!

We're inviting our FCC family to help make Christmas a little brighter for the participants and staff of TriSkill. We'll be collecting names and Christmas wish lists and hanging them on a special Christmas tree in the narthex.

Here's how you can help: Take a tag (or two!), purchase a gift from that person's wish list, wrap it, and clearly mark it with their name. Then bring your gift back to church no later than December 15.

But the fun doesn't stop there!

On December 18 at noon, we'll gather with our TriSkill friends for a Christmas celebration, complete with a meal, presents, and hopefully enough laughter to make Santa jealous!

This is about more than buying Christmas presents. It's about building friendships, sharing a little happiness, and reminding some wonderful people that they are loved and valued.

After all, isn't that what Christmas is supposed to be about? Love becoming something we can actually see, touch, and share.

Grab a tag, do a little shopping, and let's make some Christmas memories together!



Sharing Our Abundance, One Gift at a Time



Thanksgiving is a time when we gather around tables, share meals, tell stories, and give thanks for the blessings in our lives. It is also a time to remember that not every table is full. Some of our neighbors are struggling to put food on theirs.

At FCC, we have a beautiful opportunity to turn our gratitude into something more than words. On November 8, 15, and 22, we invite you to bring nonperishable food items to worship and place them on the altar. The food we collect will be donated to the Mukwonago Food Bank to help individuals and families in our community.

There is something powerful about placing food on the altar. We usually think of the altar as a place where we bring our prayers, our joys, our worries, and our gratitude. This Thanksgiving season, we will also bring something that can make a difference in someone else's life.

A can of soup. A box of cereal. A jar of peanut butter. Insignificant things when we look at them individually. But together, they become a reminder of what happens when people care for one another. And isn't that what Thanksgiving should be about? We give thanks to God for what we have, and then we make room at the table for someone else.

You do not need to bring a grocery cart full of food. Bring what you can. Every gift matters, because behind every item is a person saying to a neighbor they may never meet, "You matter. We haven't forgotten you."

We hope that by Thanksgiving Sunday, our altar will be overflowing. Not simply with food, but with the generosity, compassion, and the love of a congregation that understands something important about gratitude.

The best way to give thanks for the blessings we have received is to make sure those blessings do not stop with us.

Let us fill the altar. And in doing so, help fill a few tables beyond our church doors.

HOPE CENTER
HELPING HANDS BUILDING HOPE

Hello, church ! This month we are donating toddler clothes and diapers for the Life Connection in Mukwonago and continuing this drive through November.

They said they have plenty of donations for newborns, but virtually nothing for older children. I will transport our donations to them when we have a carload. For those who wish to continue donating backpacks and small household appliances for The Hope Center, they would greatly appreciate it. I will transport those items to them as well. Thank you so much for your generosity!



Poinsettias can be ordered through the church Flower Committee for $8.00 for a 6 ½" potted plant. The plant color available this year is red. The deadline for ordering plants is Sunday Dec. 6. The flowers will be delivered on Dec. 18. Plants can be picked up after 10:00 am that day for gift giving, if needed. Questions? Call Rae-Ellen Preuss at 262-594-2740.

The Drowsy Chaperone

Fellowship Event ~ November 22nd

Fellowship Ministry and Women's Agape Group is teaming up for a matinee show at the Greenwald Foundation Performing Arts Center on Sunday, November 22nd. The Drowsy Chaperone is being presented by the High School drama department at 2:00pm. Winner of five Tony Awards, including Best Book and Best Original Score, The Drowsy Chaperone is a loving send-up of the Golden Age musical, featuring one show-stopping song and dance number after another!

We will have lunch first at noon at Sol de Mexico. We will order off the menu and have separate checks. Around 1:30ish we will gather at the PAC.

We are planning to get a block of tickets and sit together so please sign up ASAP at the communication table in the narthex. General admission is $15. If you don't want to go to lunch, please indicate that when you sign up. Likewise, if you want to join us for lunch but not go to the play, indicate that on the sign-up sheet.

Questions? Contact Jean Brocker



Click HERE to view the latest Mission School of Hope Newsletter.



Once again this year, we will be sharing our Christmas kindness with our shut-ins by sending them Christmas cards.

A box containing Christmas cards will be in the narthex starting November 29th. There are 10 people we will be remembering this Christmas. Each plastic bag contains the names of shut-ins and a packet of ten cards.

Please take a packet and add a personal greeting to each card. When you have finished your message place the cards in the Christmas gift bags or leave them in the box and they will be placed in the gift bags for you.

Thank you for helping us spread Christmas cheer to our shut-ins!



One of the joys of the Christmas season, is listening to beautiful Christmas music. I want to share with you several upcoming opportunities.

On Friday, December 4 at 7:30 PM, the Mukwonago Area Community Choir will be performing "An A Cappella Christmas" at the Greenwald Foundation Performing Arts Center at Mukwonago HS. This is a FREE concert, but we encourage you to support the Mukwonago Food Pantry by bringing some non-perishable food items or household goods. Joanne Himebauch and Edith Fork sing with this choir.

Grace Notes Community Woodwind & String Ensembles will be giving a FREE concert in our church on **Wednesday, December 9 at 7 PM** right here in the FCC Sanctuary. They have been practicing on Wednesday evenings in our church, so I hope many of you come out to support them!

On Saturday, December 12 at 7 PM, the Grace Notes Symphonic Community Orchestra & Voices of Grace Choir will be performing "A Journey to Bethlehem" at the Greenwald Foundation Performing Arts Center at Mukwonago HS. This concert is also free. Claire Albrecht sings with this choir.

On Sunday, December 13th you can join a group of us **caroling for our shut-ins.** We will meet in the church parking lot at 4:30 pm, carpool to Linden Ridge to sing first, and then we will visit various church members, offering cookies and song.



The Fellowship Team requests that you mark your calendar for upcoming events.

Midnight Magic Christmas Parade



Join us at Gary & Joanne Himebauch's home, 100 Oakland Avenue on **Saturday, December 5th** for a front row spot at the Christmas Parade. Come any time after 2! The parade starts at 3 PM heading from Indianhead Beach up to Parkview MS. Bring a lawn chair, dress warmly, and enjoy treats and beverages inside the Himebauch home.

Baby Shower for Charli Zelekowski and Bryce Baumeister



Charli (granddaughter of Matt & Renee Kowalik) and Bryce are expecting a little girl, Dahlia, at the end of January. We are planning a luncheon and baby shower for them after worship on **Sunday, January 3rd**. Mark your calendars now. More details to follow. If you would like to help Joanne & Renee with the shower, please let us know.

Food for Families

Thank you for supporting Food for Families. For eight of the families, the plastic bag of food is placed in the student's locker to be taken home on Friday. The family then has food items to help with the weekend when there is no school. One family has asked to pick up the food.

For the month of November, we are asking for donations for the Thanksgiving meal for the families. Food donations include: instant mashed potatoes, canned gravy, can of yams, can of cranberry sauce, and box of stuffing mix. If you are interested in donating a turkey, see Joanne. We will be buying a turkey, vegetables, rolls, and a pumpkin pie.

Thank you!
Joanne and Janine



2026
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION

As we gather in this season of gratitude, we give praise to God for the faith that has carried generations of Congregationalists before us. We remember those who came seeking the freedom to worship according to conscience, and we honor the heritage they entrusted to us by living faithfully in our own time. With grateful hearts, we celebrate the blessings of Christian fellowship, the steadfastness of our churches, and the many ways God's grace is made known among us.

May this Thanksgiving draw our hearts toward one another and toward the One who is the source of all good. May we give thanks for those who strengthen our communities, for those who fill our spirits, and for the opportunities we are given to extend Christ's love to our neighbors. In gratitude for creation, may we renew our calling to care for the world God has placed in our hands.

Let our gratitude be more than words spoken for a season. May it shape the way we worship, the way we serve, and the way we welcome others. May thankfulness lead us to generosity, faithfulness, and compassion, and may the hope we have in Christ shine brightly through our lives and congregations.

This Thanksgiving, may we remember God's greatness, rejoice in the blessings we share, and go forth with gracious hearts – giving thanks in all circumstances and glorifying God in all that we do.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever." Psalm 107:1



Worship This Weekend

We will be worshiping in-person and on YouTube.

Visit these links for important information:

YOUTUBE CHANNEL
SONG LYRICS
ORDER OF WORSHIP

Praise PLAYLIST

Sunday's Praise Song Sneak Peak
"Grace Wins" by
Matthew Westdewalk Prophets

CONTACT US

Church Office
262-363-7249
231 Roberts Drive
Mukwonago WI 53149
office@fccweb.net



It's Easy to Give to FCC.....

Because we are flexible! There are several ways:

1. The traditional way, by putting your offering in the collection plate during weekly church services. Offering envelopes are available in the church office. Contact us at office@fccweb.net.
2. Bill Pay through your bank account. You can talk to a teller or Customer Service if you have questions about it. If you like to use Bill Pay to pay your monthly bills, you can add FCC to your list of creditors. It's quick and easy.
3. Online. You can give through Tithe.ly or Paypal (HERE) and click the "Give" Button at the bottom of the page.
4. If you prefer to make lump sum offerings, you can make a Direct Charitable Distribution from your 401(k) or other retirement fund directly to FCC. There are no income taxes on this type of distribution because the money does not come to you; it goes directly to the "charity" of your choice, i.e., FCC. Talk to your financial advisor who can set up Direct Charitable Distributions as often as you wish—monthly, quarterly, annually etc. Making a Direct Charitable Distribution actually makes your money go farther!