

Here's What's Happening at FCC



I came across a story this week touched my heart. When Schauna Austin was twenty years old and single, she gave birth to a baby boy. She named him Riley. But she also knew something that would break her heart wide open. Riley was not going home with her. Another family was adopting him.

She would have three days with her baby. I cannot imagine what those three days felt like. Schauna held that baby for seventy-two hours straight. She did not sleep. She did not want to miss a breath, a blink, a wiggle, a sigh. She knew her time with him was short, so she made every minute count.

The baby Schauna named Riley would become Steven in another family's home. In most closed adoptions, that would have been the end of the story. A wall would have gone up. Schauna on one side. Steven on the other. The adoptive parents in between. Everybody doing what people often do when life gets complicated: building barriers and calling them boundaries.

Sometimes boundaries are necessary. Some walls protect people from harm. But not every wall is holy. Sometimes we build walls because we are afraid. Sometimes we build walls because we do not know what else to do. But Steven's adoptive parents, Jennifer and Chris Schoebinger, chose another way.

They looked at Schauna, this young woman who had carried their son, delivered their son, held him for three days, and loved him with every ounce of strength she had, and they did not treat her like a threat. They treated her like family.

Chris said something that feels like it wandered straight out of the Gospel: "You can't have too many people loving you, right? Why couldn't he be both of ours?"

So, year after year, Jennifer and Chris sent Schauna pictures. Not one picture at Christmas with everyone wearing sweaters they regretted later. Piles of pictures. Bound books. Major milestones. Minor milestones. The big moments and the little ones. The first steps. The school days. The ordinary days. They were not trying to erase her. They were saving a place for her.

And when Steven was seven years old, he and Schauna were reunited. The woman who had held him for the first seventy-two hours of his life got to step back into his story. She taught him how to fish, and they have been reeling in memories ever since. A mom and a boy with fishing poles. Grace with a tackle box. Grace sitting on the edge of the water saying, "We do not have to pretend the story was simple in order for it to be beautiful."

We live in a world that is very good at making people choose sides. Who belongs? Who is in? Who is out? Who gets to be called family? Who gets a seat at the table? Who gets remembered? Who gets erased?

But every now and then, someone comes along and refuses to play by the rules of fear. Every now and then, someone says, "Maybe love is not a limited resource." And that sounds a lot like Jesus to me.

Jesus kept doing that. He kept walking into places where people had already drawn the lines. He touched the untouchable. He ate with the wrong crowd. He welcomed children when the disciples thought he was too busy. He told stories where the outsider became the neighbor, the lost son came home, and the table got bigger than anyone expected.

Jesus came to show us what love looks like when it gets loose. And love, when it gets loose, starts pulling down barriers that never needed to be there in the first place.

Chris Schoebinger said it this way: "Sometimes we create barriers where barriers don't need to be. And when we pull down those barriers, we really find love on the other side."

We know how to build barriers. We can build them out of theology, tradition, fear, pride, politics, old wounds, bad assumptions, and the sacred church phrase, "We've never done it that way before." But the Gospel keeps asking us a dangerous question: What if love is on the other side? What if the person we are afraid to include is not a threat to the story, but part of the story God is still writing? What if the table does not get weaker when more people are loved? What if it gets holier?

Jennifer and Chris could have built a wall. Nobody would have blamed them. That is just how these things are usually done. But instead, they made room. And because they made room, a boy had more love, not less. A mother was not erased. A family got bigger.

And wouldn't that be just like Jesus? To show us that love is waiting on the other side.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Mark



Please Keep These Loved Ones in Your Prayers

Those facing illness or health concerns:

- Kathy W.
- Dorothy C.
- Sue P.
- Carol B.

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.



The Shared Table: Recipes and Reflections from FCC

Pastor Mark asked the Women's Agape Group for our help to put together a special "cookbook" from the members of our congregation. But this won't be just a standard cookbook. He wants it to reflect the people who make up the First Congregational Church of Mukwonago community!

The cookbook must be ready in time to distribute it at the potluck dinner on Giving Sunday in September, so we need to "get cookin'"! All everyone (yes, guys too!) needs to do is:

- Send us a recipe that makes your family smile.
- Include a short sentence telling what "ingredient" you love bringing to the FCC community.
- Include a short sentence relating a special memory of being at FCC. Example from Pastor Mark: Recipe for meatballs.... "I love our Sunday morning Bible studies. My first time seeing the sanctuary, the person showing me around said, 'We are glad you are here today'."
- Send your recipe, community ingredient, and memory to jlbrocker@yahoo.com. Or, drop a physical copy into the recipe box on the communication table.

We can't wait to compile your submissions and share the final book with you! Thanks in advance for bringing your unique flavor to First Congregational Church of Mukwonago!





Help Wanted: Maxwell Street Days Parking Fundraiser!

August 15-16

Friday Setup: We need a small crew to handle setup on the Friday before, starting at 3:00 PM.

Available Saturday Shifts:

7:00 AM – 9:00 AM
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Sunday Take Down: We need help packing everything up on Sunday at 3:00 PM.

Please see the sign-up sheet on the communication table.



Backpacks Needed

Hello, church! We have received a special donation request from the Waukesha Hope Center. They need backpacks.

Many of their homeless patrons, especially men, carry their belongings in back packs. Like the household appliances, they are used by patrons as soon as they hit the shelves.

Used back packs in good condition are fine. Nancy and I found three back packs on Facebook Marketplace for \$5 each.

If you'd like to purchase a new back pack to donate, Walmart has them on sale for as low as \$5 a piece. We will collecting back packs in the same corner of the lobby as the household appliances.

Thank you so much for your generosity. The coordinator at the Center was overjoyed at the car load of appliances I delivered to them the Friday before last!



Hello, church! We have a need that we hope you will be able to fill. The Hope Center in Waukesha is asking for household appliances such as toasters, microwave ovens, and clothing irons. They said that single moms cannot afford these items, so they come into the Center looking for them.

If you have a household appliance you were planning to replace, or would like to buy a new item, please drop it off at the church office and I will make sure it gets to the Center. Thank you!.



The Missions team invites you to take a Kindness tracker chart, located below the Missions Kindness bulletin board in the Narthex.

This will be a visual reminder to you to pay attention to your good deeds. Smile & say hello to someone you pass. Share kind words. Lend a hand. Check in on someone. Donate what you can. The act of kindness can be as simple or as elaborate as you want to make them!

Catch someone else performing an act of kindness. The project will continue primarily through the summer, but we hope you continue to track your acts of kindness throughout the rest of the year and beyond!

Worship This Weekend

We will be worshipping in-person and via Zoom this Sunday at 10:00 am. Visit these links for important information:

[SONG LYRICS](#)

[ORDER OF WORSHIP](#)

To access worship via Zoom, please use the information below:

[CLICK HERE FOR ZOOM WORSHIP](#)

Phone Number: (312) 626-6799

Meeting ID: 459 288 4444

Password: 2623637249

Adult Bible Study will meet before church in the large classroom at 9:00. You can access the Bible study via Zoom as well:

[CLICK HERE FOR ZOOM BIBLE STUDY](#)

Phone Number: (312) 626-6799

Meeting ID: 459 288 4444

Password: 2623637249



Sunday's Praise Song Sneak Peak

["Love of God"](#)

Brandon Lake and Phil Wickham

CONTACT US

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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!