FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH • MUKWONAGO

OCTOBER 16, 2026



Here's What's Happening at FCC



There's an old church rallying cry often attributed to Cardinal Richard Cushing that church folks love to dust off when they want to light a fire under the pews:

> "If all the sleeping folks will wake up,
> and all the lukewarm folks will fire up,
> and all the dishonest folks will confess up,
> and all the disgruntled folks will sweeten up,
> and all the discouraged folks will cheer up,
> and all the depressed folks will look up,
> and all the estranged folks will make up,
> and all the gossipers will shut up,
> and all the dry bones will shake up,
> and all the true soldiers will stand up,
> and all the church members will pray up -
> and the Savior for all is lifted up -
> then..You can have the world's greatest renewal."

It has a nice rhythm to it. You could put it on a church sign. You could print it in the bulletin in bold letters. You could probably build an entire stewardship campaign around it.

But pour another cup of coffee and listen to what it is actually saying. If you are tired, wake up. If you are discouraged, cheer up. If you are depressed, look up. Problem solved.
I am sure depressed people everywhere are relieved that somebody finally thought of that.

The trouble is, underneath all that rhyming is an old religious idea I'm not sure has helped us very much: Get yourself together, and then God can really get to work. Try harder. Believe harder. Pray harder. Get more excited. Stop being so tired. And if nothing changes, well, apparently you did not try hard enough.

That is not the Gospel I see in Jesus. Jesus kept finding his way to people who were already worn out. People carrying grief. People with questions. People religion had shoved to the side. Jesus did not wait for people to get better before he came near them.

Some days I do not feel particularly fired up. Some days I am tired. Some days the news makes me want to turn off the television, unplug the internet, and move into a cabin where nobody has discovered social media. Some days faith comes easy. Other days it feels like hanging on with two fingers and hoping nobody notices. I suspect I am not the only one.

I like the Cardinal's rhyme. I'm just not sure Jesus would put things in that order. The Gospel does not say, "Cheer up and look up so God can love you." It says worn out does not mean God is finished with you. Which is considerably different from standing nearby yelling, "Have you tried cheering up?"

I keep coming back to Ezekiel's strange vision of the valley full of dry bones. Nobody is organizing a revival. Nobody is singing louder. Nobody is trying to think positive thoughts. They are bones. Dry ones.

Renewal starts when we stop pretending everybody is fine. When tired people can admit they are tired. When somebody is hurting and we let them hurt without trying to turn it into a life lesson. When somebody can say, "I'm not doing great," without being handed a Bible verse, a three-step plan, or advice they did not ask for.

But that is not where the story ends. God does not lecture the bones. God breathes into them. And then they move. They stand. They live.

If you woke up this morning tired, discouraged, cranky, grieving, unsure what you believe anymore, or simply not in the mood to "fire up," I am not going to tell you to try harder. I have a feeling you have heard enough of that.

But grace is not God shrugging and saying, "Well, I guess this is as good as it gets." The bones do not stay in the valley.

So no, I am not going to yell at tired people to "fire up." But if God starts rattling your bones, you might want to pay attention.

Grace and Peace
Pastor Mark



Please Keep These Loved Ones in Your Prayers

Those facing illness or health concerns:

- Dorothy C.
- Sue P.
- Rae-Ellen
- Debbie
- Nancy
- Norma B. & Sandy
- Gertie
- Sue R's friend's son
- Jan

Those facing grief:

- Family of Monty

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.

Hayride / Bonfire Fellowship Event



Sunday, October 18 at 2 PM
(Rain date- Sunday, October 25)



The Fellowship Team will be hosting a hayride/bonfire out at the Rowntree Farms.
Thanks to Kay and Tom for hosting this wonderful event! We will enjoy some apple cider & s'mores around the bonfire and everyone will enjoy a hayride around the property. We hope you can join us!

Here are directions to the Rowntree's farm. We will also have copies out on the communications table.

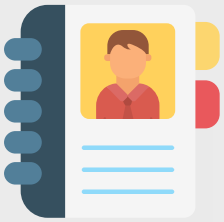
Directions to Rowntree Farms -
Go south on Hwy 83 toward Waterford. Hwy 20 will join Hwy 83 by the Cotton Exchange. Stay on 20/83.- At the next stop sign after the 2nd stoplight, turn right (south). Go south past the Catholic Church until you come to the stoplight at Hwy 36 (there is a Burger King at this intersection). Turn right on Hwy 36/83 toward Burlington. Stay on Hwy 83/36. Go past the stoplight at Hwy D and take a left at the next intersection which is Hwy J. Go south on Hwy J and take the first left (east)-this is Rowntree Rd. Go east on Rowntree Rd. until you see a large red barn on your right. There will be traffic cones at the drive on the west side of the barn where you enter the farm property. Drive back to the woods.

There is no bathroom so plan accordingly!

HOPE CENTER
HELPING HANDS BUILDING HOPE

Hello, church ! This month we are switching over to 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!



Church Directory

Would you like to be in the Church Directory? You can fill out the directory form **HERE.** If you would like to include a photo please email them to office@fccweb.net.

Dear Supporting Congregation,

Formerly known as Cooperating Congregations of Waukesha County, Hope Center celebrates over 50 years of service to disadvantaged women, children, and men in Waukesha County. We are grateful for your continued support of our outreach and programming efforts to reduce the poverty-related risks that contribute to homelessness by providing the basic needs of food, clothing, hygiene items, and housewares, all free of charge.

To continue providing these services and items at no cost, we will be hosting our annual fundraising dinner on Thursday, November 19th, 2026, at the Brookfield Conference Center. This year's theme is "Gathering Hope," which focuses on the idea that we are stronger together. When we gather, we can strengthen our community and deepen our collective impact.

If you would, please share this exciting event with your congregation in the following ways:

- Encourage them to attend- Purchase tickets **HERE.**
- Make a gift basket for the silent auction.
- Become a sponsor.

We have enclosed a **flyer** that can be posted on your information board, inserted into your weekly bulletin, or distributed to groups and individuals.

Additionally, if you plan to donate an auction item, please fill out the included **Auction Donation Factsheet** and return it to us with your item(s) no later than Friday, November 6th. We ask that all baskets be valued at a minimum of $100, as this is the most effective value and garners the highest bids. If the value is less than $100, we may combine it with another basket. You can also sponsor a basket by donating $100, and we will make the basket in your name.

If you have any questions, please contact Becky at (262)549-8726, or email at rarnold@hopecenterwi.org.

Thank you,

Becky Arnold
General Manager
Hope Center

HOPE CENTER
HELPING HANDS
BUILDING HOPE

FOOD FOR FAMILIES

Thank you for those of you who were able to help with the September "Food of the Month" for the Food for Families. There are now 9 families participating in the program.

For the month of October, we are asking for donations of pancake mix, syrup, and a 6-pk of apple sauce. There is a list of needed items for the program next to the bulletin board in the narthex. The list will help with finding food items that are on sale when you are shopping. Your donation of one or two extra items in your grocery cart will help the families who we are servicing!



Thank you!
Joanne and Janine

Worship This Weekend

We will be worshiping 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

Praise
PLAYLIST

Sunday's Praise Song Sneak Peak
"Rescue" Lauren Daigle

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!