

Here's What's Happening at FCC



I love my two dogs, Zuni and Agnus. Zuni is an eight-year-old boy, and Agnus is a four-year-old girl. They are short-haired German Pointers who are terrified of loud noises, absolutely hate water unless it's bath time, and love to point at birds with intense, ancestral focus, even though they would have absolutely no idea what to do with one if they actually caught it.

Usually, when I pull into the driveway after grinding through a long day, I am greeted by a glorious, unbalanced symphony of noise. I can hear Zuni barking his head off and Agnus howling because she is deeply convinced, she is part hound dog. It's the sound of being wanted.

I had spent all day standing in the storm of other people's needs, and by the time I pulled into the driveway, I felt like I had earned one quiet evening. Not a parade. Just a quick trip to the dog park. Just dinner, the couch, and maybe ten minutes where nobody needed me for anything. I parked my truck. I walked up to the door. Nothing. No dogs in sight. Just the sound of silence.

I opened the door, and immediately, a physical wall of dog-poop smell smacked me right in the face. Just... yuuuuuuck. I stepped inside, literally gasping for clean air, trying to breathe through the fog of it. I look up, and there they both are, standing there with completely blank expressions that clearly said, "Nothing to see here, folks."

Then I walked further into the house. And there it was. A twenty-foot-long line of dog diarrhea, trailing all the way from the family room, through the dining room, and right into the kitchen. I lost my stuff. I yelled, "Who did this?!"

Instantly, Agnus bowed her head and began the slow, miserable walk of shame to her kennel. Now, you'd think that was a confession, but it wasn't. Agnus is the patron saint of internalized shame. Anytime anything goes wrong in our house, whether she has a hand in it or not, she assumes it is her fault. She does the walk of repentance. She is so good at it that you instantly know she is sorry for all the sins of the world.

Zuni, on the other hand, just stood there staring at me. No guilt. No remorse. Just, "What? I didn't do anything." This is his standard response. Once, I came home to a stuffed animal that had been violently murdered. It was a crime scene. Stuffing everywhere. And there stood Zuni, looking at me like he was completely innocent, despite having a giant piece of poly-fill stuck right to his lip.

After some brief detective work, I realized Zuni was the one with the upset stomach. The evidence was overwhelming. But did I get any repentance? Any look of sorrow? No. Zuni just looked at me like, "Hey dad, glad you're home. Dog park now?" No, buddy. We cannot go to the dog park. I have to clean up twenty feet of your biological disaster.

I am just going to be real with you: I was mad. I was level 10 mad. I went and got plastic surgical gloves. Jess is a nurse, so thank God we have them in the house. I started cleaning. And of course, Zuni decided to supervise which only enraged me more. How could you do this? I cussed at my dog. I grumbled under my breath. Of course, this happens on a night when Jess comes home late, so I'm stuck dealing with it. Spraying the cleaner. Gagging. Wiping it up with paper towels. Gagging again. Mopping the floor. More gagging. Taking a kitchen-sized trash bag full of dog waste out to the trash bin. Gagging the whole way.

I was furious because I had wanted peace, and instead, I got the literal raw end of life. I felt profoundly ripped off. And honestly, to make it worse, I was still mad that Zuni hadn't apologized. I don't know what I expected him to do, maybe write me a nice note, or weep softly in the corner?

And right there, kneeling on my clean kitchen floor in blue surgical gloves, the sheer absurdity of that expectation hit me. I expected a dog to offer me a formal apology for having diarrhea. I started to laugh. It was the laugh of defeat. The kind of laugh that comes when you realize how ridiculous you've been. And somewhere in the middle of it, I found my stuff again. I looked over at Zuni. He slowly walked over to me. I reached out, petted him on the head, and told him, "It's all good, buddy."

And then, unexpectedly, my anger was completely replaced by empathy. I looked at him and thought about how long he must have held that in. I pictured him pacing the house, trying so hard to be a good boy, fighting it for hours until, finally, his body just gave out and nature happened.

That is when it hit me, Zuni wasn't being stubborn. He was just worn out. He had spent the whole day trying to hold it together, and his little body finally said, "Nope. We're done." I know that feeling. I think a lot of us know that feeling.

We are just trying to hold it together. We are trying to keep the house clean. We are trying to keep the mess hidden. We are trying to act like we're fine, even when we're tired, overwhelmed, embarrassed, or falling apart on the inside. And then life happens. The mess gets out. The thing we were trying so hard to manage finally spilled over. And when it does, we usually assume God is standing over us with a disappointed look on His face, waiting for us to explain ourselves.

But that is not the picture Jesus gives us. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." God is not standing at the door demanding a walk of shame. God meets us right in the middle of the mess, seeing how hard we've been trying to hold it all together, and says, "Come here. You are still loved. Let me give you rest. It's all good."

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.
- Dave F.
- Cindy
- Amy
- Shirley
- Pam W.
- Debbie
- Adrienne C.

Those facing grief or life challenges:

- Family of Dave F.

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!

July 17-19

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!



Annual Church Picnic – Sunday, July 26

On Sunday, July 26 the Fellowship team will host our annual church picnic. We will provide hot dogs, brats, buns, and beverages. Sign up on the communications table to bring a dish to pass – salads, desserts, condiments, chips, relishes, etc. There will be Bingo inside, as well as outside games. Bring a lawn chair, or plan to eat inside, if it's too hot that day!



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!

Parsonage



The Parsonage Committee is delighted to inform the congregation that 4 days after the parsonage officially went on the market, we have sold the property! We received 5 solid offers. After much discussion with each other and our REMAX Realtor Heidi Bergstedt, we accepted one of the offers. The offer was to purchase the parsonage for \$425,000, with net proceeds (after fees and closing costs) of approximately \$399,950.



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!.

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

Praise PLAYLIST

Sunday's Praise Song Sneak Peak
"God of Revival" by Phil Wickham

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!