

Here's What's Happening at FCC



I have always believed laughter is one of the ways God sneaks up on us. I mean the kind of laughter that catches you off guard and takes over your whole body. At our church picnic, Matt and I were partners in the egg toss and the water-balloon toss. Somewhere along the way, we managed to egg each other, soak each other, and lose whatever dignity we had left. We laughed those deep belly laughs, the kind where you cannot catch your breath and no longer care who is watching. And I believe God laughed with us. There is something holy about that kind of laughter.

Maybe that sounds strange. We are used to talking about God being with us when we cry, when we pray, and when life hurts. But what if God also draws near when joy gets loose and laughter takes over? What if God does not merely tolerate our delight, but shares in it?

That is the beautiful image Daniel Ladinsky gives us in this poem, drawn from the words of the eccentric Persian saint Hafiz:

*I think God might be a little prejudiced.
For once He asked me to join Him on a walk through this world,
and we gazed into every heart on this earth, and I noticed He lingered a bit longer
before any face that was weeping, and before any eyes that were laughing.
And sometimes when we passed a soul in worship,
God too would kneel down. I have come to learn:
God adores His creation.*

I love that image of God lingering. God does not rush past the person who is crying. God does not glance at the hurting and say, "Well, they will get over it." God stops. God stays. God pays attention. But the poem says God also lingers near the laughing.

Sometimes we make it sound as if God only shows up when life is falling apart. We expect God to be present in hospital rooms, in frightening diagnoses, and in those moments when life begins to come apart.

We sometimes forget that God is also present around a kitchen table when somebody tells the same ridiculous story for the hundredth time and everyone still laughs. God is there when children are giggling in the back pew, when friends laugh so hard that the story no longer makes any sense. God is there when joy breaks into an ordinary day and reminds us that being alive is still a gift.

Nehemiah 8:10 says: "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Maybe that means joy is not a distraction from faith. Maybe joy is one of the ways God holds us up.

Jesus understood joy. He ate with people. He went to weddings. He welcomed children. He spent enough time around tables that the religious people started wondering if he was enjoying life a little too much. Jesus never acted as if loving God meant walking around with a sour look on your face.

For those of us who were taught that God was always watching, mostly waiting for us to mess up, Jesus showed us a God who was not standing there with a clipboard. This was a God who noticed sparrows, counted every hair on our heads, searched for the one who was lost, and ran down the road to welcome a child home.

In Jesus, we see that God does not merely put up with creation. God delights in it. God adores it.

God adores every person. The one who is weeping and the one who is laughing. The one kneeling in worship and the one who has not been inside a church for years. The person whose life seems put together and the person holding it all together with duct tape, caffeine, and one last nerve. God loves them all.

Jesus invites us to look at people the way God does. To linger a little longer. To notice the tears. To join the laughter. To stop deciding who deserves love, because God settled that question long before we arrived.

"For God so loved the world," Jesus said.

The whole world. The weeping world. The laughing world. The messy, beautiful, barely-holding-it-together world. God loves it all.

And maybe that is why the joy of the Lord is our strength. When we know we are loved like that, joy has a way of holding us up.

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Mark

FOOD FOR FAMILIES

Missions is asking for help with providing items for the Food for Families program. The Church provides groceries to families at Clarendon Avenue School who qualify for free or reduced lunches. Bags of food items are given to the families for a student to take home.



There is a list of needed items for the program next to the bulletin board in the narthex. While family sized or bulk items might be more cost effective when shopping at Costco or Sam's Club, it is difficult for a young student to carry large items. It is also difficult to pack loose items for the students to carry.

There will also be a featured "Food of the Month." For the month of September, we are asking for canned chicken, tuna, or Spam.

The list will help with finding food items that are on sale. Check the expiration dates! Check the size of the package! Check off on your grocery list 1-2 items that could be donated to Food for Families!

Thank you!

Joanne and Janine



**Please Keep These Loved Ones
in Your Prayers**

Those facing illness or health concerns:

- Dorothy C.
- Sue P.
- Carol B.
- Oliver
- Gary (from Sue R)
- Rae-Ellen

Those facing grief:

- Family of Kathy Wilson

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" **2026 Giving Program**



"The Shared Table"
Giving Sunday Focus for 2026

**Here is our program
for this year's giving focus.**

Theme: "The Shared Table"

A healthy church operates exactly like a great potluck: everyone has a seat, and everyone brings their unique measure of Time, Talents, Presence, Prayer, and Finances to the mix.

The 3-Week Sermon Series

- **September 6, 2026:** Pulling Up a Chair (Presence & Prayer)

The gift of making space, showing up, and holding the community in prayer.

- **September 13, 2026:** Passing the Plate (Time & Talents)

Using our 168 hours a week to serve one another and pass what we have to our neighbors.

- **September 20, 2026:** Staying Late & Clearing the Table (Finances & The Full Measure)

Pooling our resources, giving what we have, not what we don't have, to keep the lights on and the doors open. **Sunday Potluck**



Help Wanted: Maxwell Street Days Parking Fundraiser! September 12-13

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.

Alzheimer's Walk

This year I'll be walking again in the Alzheimer's Walk in Walworth County on Saturday morning, September 9th. The walk takes place in Lake Geneva, along the lake front, for a total of 3 miles. There is also a shorter walk through the historic district of 1 mile.

The walk itself starts at 10 am, but the ceremony starts at 9:40.

I would love for you to join my team and walk with me that day! I'll be walking the lake front route of 3 miles, but if you choose to do the shorter walk, that's fine. We will plan on going to lunch somewhere afterwards.

Another thing you could do is to support my walk by donating to it. Currently, I am a Grand Champion for having raised over \$1,000. My goal is to once again join the Elite Grand Champions club by raising over \$2,500. I'm a little more than \$1,000 from that goal. You can donate to my page and/or join my team by going to my page: [Joanne's Alzheimer's Walk](#) or by grabbing one of the donation sheets on the table in the Narthex. Or... you could just hand me a donation before September 19th.



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.

Also needed are 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.

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!

Women's Agape Group Special Events



On Friday, September 11, at 7:00pm, the Women's Agape Group (and husbands) will be attending the musical *Big Fish*, presented by the Mukwonago Village Players at the Greenwald Foundation Performing Arts Center. Adult tickets are \$15 and senior tickets are \$12. Please let me know ASAP if you want to go and how many tickets you need.

Jean Bocker, Chair
262-470-9949

On Saturday, December 12th at 7:00pm, Grace Notes Orchestra will present a free concert entitled *A Journey to Bethlehem Christmas*. It, too, will be held at the PAC. Please join us! This is a great way to start off your Christmas season!



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. We will have lunch first and then gather at the PAC. We are planning to get a block of tickets and sit together. More information to follow.

Painting Day October 3rd



Women's Agape Group is asking members of the congregation to help them paint the railings in both stairwells on Saturday October 3rd at 10am. Please bring your own 2-inch paintbrush, small rollers, and trays if you have them. Please sign up at the Communication Table.

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

["Then I Will"](#)

Lauren Daigle

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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!