

Here's What's Happening at FCC



I love the poem like story written by Dr. D.H. “Dee” Groberg:

Whenever I start to hang my head in front of failure's face,
my downward fall is broken by the memory of a race.
A children's race, young boys, young men; how I remember well,
excitement sure, but also fear, it wasn't hard to tell.
They all lined up so full of hope, each thought to win that race
or tie for first, or if not that, at least take second place.
Their parents watched from off the side, each cheering for their son,
and each boy hoped to show his folks that he would be the one.
The whistle blew and off they flew, like chariots of fire,
to win, to be the hero there, was each young boy's desire.
One boy in particular, whose dad was in the crowd,
was running in the lead and thought "My dad will be so proud."
But as he speeded down the field and crossed a shallow dip,
the little boy who thought he'd win, lost his step and slipped.
Trying hard to catch himself, his arms flew everywhere,
and midst the laughter of the crowd he fell flat on his face.
As he fell, his hope fell too; he couldn't win it now.
Humiliated, he just wished to disappear somehow.
But as he fell his dad stood up and showed his anxious face,
which to the boy so clearly said, "Get up and win that race!"
He quickly rose, no damage done, behind a bit that's all,
and ran with all his mind and might to make up for his fall.
So anxious to restore himself, to catch up and to win,
his mind went faster than his legs. He slipped and fell again.
He wished that he had quit before with only one disgrace.
"I'm hopeless as a runner now, I shouldn't try to race."

But through the laughing crowd he searched and found his father's face
with a steady look that said again, "Get up and win that race!"
So he jumped up to try again, ten yards behind the last.
"If I'm to gain those yards," he thought, "I've got to run real fast!"
Exceeding everything he had, he regained eight, then ten...
but trying hard to catch the lead, he slipped and fell again.
Defeat! He lay there silently. A tear dropped from his eye.
"There's no sense running anymore! Three strikes I'm out! Why try?
I've lost, so what's the use?" he thought. "I'll live with my disgrace."
But then he thought about his dad, who soon he'd have to face.
"Get up," an echo sounded low, "you haven't lost at all,
for all you have to do to win is rise each time you fall.
Get up!" the echo urged him on, "Get up and take your place!
You were not meant for failure here! Get up and win that race!"
So, up he rose to run once more, refusing to forfeit,
and he resolved that win or lose, at least he wouldn't quit.
So far behind the others now, the most he'd ever been,
still he gave it all he had and ran like he could win.
Three times he'd fallen stumbling, three times he rose again.
Too far behind to hope to win, he still ran to the end.
They cheered another boy who crossed the line and won first place,
head high and proud and happy -- no falling, no disgrace.
But, when the fallen youngster crossed the line, in last place,
the crowd gave him a greater cheer for finishing the race.
And even though he came in last with head bowed low, unproud,
you would have thought he'd won the race, to listen to the crowd.
And to his dad he sadly said, "I didn't do so well."
"To me, you won," his father said. "You rose each time you fell."
And now when things seem dark and bleak and difficult to face,
the memory of that little boy helps me in my own race.
For all of life is like that race, with ups and downs and all.
And all you have to do to win is rise each time you fall.
And when depression and despair shout loudly in my face,
another voice within me says, "Get up and win that race!"

A lot of people think faith is about keeping perfect balance. Never falling. Never making a mistake. Never getting your grass stains on the knees of your church clothes. Some people act like the goal of faith is to be practically perfect in every way. And if you fall? Well, bless your heart, apparently that means you are disqualified. You failed the test. You disappointed everybody. You let God down.

But can we just tell the truth over a cup of coffee? That is a mighty small way to understand our walk with God. Because when you read the Bible, you discover a messy, beautiful, complicated story of faith. And it is filled with people who fell flat on their faces. Over and over again.

Abraham stumbled. Moses lost his temper. David made a royal mess of things. Peter talked a big game and then folded before sunrise. The Bible is not a museum of perfect people. It is a testimony of a faithful God who keeps working with imperfect people.

Proverbs says, "Though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again" (Proverbs 24:16).

Falling is part of being human. Nobody gets through this life without scuffed knees and a bruised ego. We fall in our choices. We fall in our relationships. We fall in our confidence. We fall in our faith. Sometimes we trip over something life put in our path, and sometimes we trip over our own two feet.

And that is where grace enters the story. Grace is God's holy reset button. Grace is the breath you did not earn when the wind has been knocked out of you. Grace is the hand reaching down when you are still trying to decide whether you have enough dignity left to get up.

And here is the thing: the version of us that gets back up is not always the same version that fell down. Sometimes we get up softer. Sometimes we get up wiser. Sometimes we get up with a little more mercy for the person beside us who has scraped their knees too. Because once you have needed grace, you ought to be a little less stingy when somebody else needs it.

I believe we were never meant to get up alone. We live in a world obsessed with pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. But faith tells a different story. Sometimes the holiest thing we can do is admit, "I cannot get up by myself today." Faith gives us permission to reach out a hand. To look at our community of faith and say, "I do not have the strength today. Can you help me carry this?"

Faith does not promise that we will never hit the pavement. But it does promise that the pavement is not the end of the story. Because in the kingdom of God, falling down is not final. Falling down is not failure. Staying down is where the story gets dangerous. And even then, God has a way of getting down on the ground with us and whispering, "Come on. Let's try again."

Peace and Blessings
Pastor Mark



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!.



**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.
- Tom

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!

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!



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!

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
"Sprit Move by Bethel Music"

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!