



Blessing our Community

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

110 E. Hancock Street, New London, Wisconsin 54961 - 920-982-3731

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Stephen Savides

PastorSteveSavides@uccnl.onmicrosoft.com

Secretary: kathyphillips@uccnl.onmicrosoft.com

A Stephen Ministry Church



FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

THE BRIDGE OF LOVE

Perhaps my favorite writer is Thornton Wilder. Wilder is unique among American writers not just because he received three Pulitzer Prizes for his writing, but because he received them in different categories; drama (for his plays *Our Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth*) and fiction (for his novella *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*).

The first of Wilder's most celebrated works, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, was written in 1927. Back in my day, it was a standard required text for my High School English class. It tells the stories of five unrelated people who happen to be on a bridge in Peru when it collapses, killing them all. Wilder uses this incident to plunge us deeply into questions of fate and providence. Why those five people? Why at that specific moment in their lives? Was this part of some divine plan or purpose?

Through the character of Brother Juniper, we undertake a quest to find patterns in the tragedy that would make sense of the event. Were these victims innocent and undeserving of their fate, or had their lives come to some kind of completion, making their deaths a kind of heavenly reward?

Brother Juniper's work finds no easy answers in his search; in fact, he himself is condemned as a heretic for attempting to discern God's patterns of providence. The end of the book finds us giving up on the quest for answers. Even those closest to the victims have fading memories of the people who died on the bridge. Wilder uses the character of Madre Maria to muse on the meaning of it all:

"Even now, she thought, "almost no one remembers Estaban and Pepita, but myself. Camila alone remembers her Uncle Pio and her son; this woman, her mother. But soon she shall die and all memory of those five will have left the earth, and we ourselves shall be loved for a while and forgotten. But the love will have been enough; all those impulses of love return to the love that made them. Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning."

As people of faith, we believe such love is the mark of God, a love that blesses us and raises us. May you be blessed with such love this Valentine's Day!

Your friend and fellow minister,
Rev. Steve Savides



HEAR OUR PRAYERS, O LORD”

Of Healing and Comfort for:

- ☀ Emily Calabria
- ☀ Gaylord Hedtke
- ☀ John Pieper
- ☀ Jerene Managan on her battle with cancer



WE DON'T SAY THANK YOU ENOUGH

Maybe you have someone to thank for doing things, especially behind the scenes, to make things happen here at church. If you have a thank you to offer, please submit it in writing to Kathy in the church office, or by email.

- ♥ Thank you to all those that have volunteered on Sunday mornings.
- ♥ Thank you for your continuous support of First Congregational United Church of Christ.
- ♥ To Lois & Sandy Cuff for organizing the storage room.
- ♥ To our snowplow team: Sandy Cuff, Jason Behling & Tim Schmidt.

Do you have a thank you to offer? Please let Kathy know in the office for the next newsletter.

Thank you for giving of your Time, Talent, and Treasure.

Our Church will use these precious resources to further our vision of "Blessing Our Communities." Together, the efforts of our church members, friends, guests, and visitors are changing lives.

AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE FOR DECEMBER- 105

GENERAL OPERATING INCOME TO DATE IN 2023: \$126,594.38

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES TO DATE IN 2023: \$141,886.58

NET INCOME: \$ -15,292.20

ECUMENICAL ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Pancake Dinner – 6:00 P.M.

Worship Service – 7:00 p.m.

We will be hosting a special Ecumenical Ash Wednesday Service on February 14th. This will be a blessed way to begin our observance of Lent as we gather in our sanctuary with our neighbors and friends from St. John's Episcopal Church, Trinity Lutheran ELCA, and New London United Methodist Church. Pastor Steve will lead the service and Pastor Chuck from Trinity will be our preacher. The 7 p.m. service will feature communion and the imposition of ashes and will be preceded by a 6 p.m. Pancake Dinner.

Please invite a friend or neighbor to join you for dinner and worship on Ash Wednesday!

LENTEN NOON BOOK STUDY Wednesday, Feb. 21 – Wednesday March 27

“Intrinsic Hope: Living Courageously in Troubled Times”

During the six Wednesdays in Lent, we will be reading together Kate Davies wonderful book “Intrinsic Hope” as we enjoy a soup luncheon together. The class will meet from noon to 1:15 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. A sign-up list is on the round table in the narthex. Let us know if you’d like us to order the book for you.

In her book, Kate Davies offers a powerful antidote to the feelings of fear, despair, and grief that many feel in the face of climate disruption and growing social inequality. She lifts up “intrinsic hope,” a powerful, liberating, and positive approach to life based on having deep trust in whatever happens. Pastor Steve will integrate Biblical texts that illuminate the radical hope that is our gift as followers of Jesus Christ.

Please join us over lunch on the six Wednesdays in Lent for this helpful and hope-filled study!

“*YOU CAN MISSION TRIP*” TO BELIZE – "SHOES FOR BELIZE"

The mission trip to Belize that many support with donations of both money and gently used shoes is an annual event that helps the school-age children of Belize attend school. This effort is organized by the YouCan Mission Group.



At an auction on February 29, 2024, we will use your donations to purchase new boys and girls athletic shoes of all sizes at a cost of only **\$10.00 a pair**. (*Picture on right is some of the shoes that were purchased last year at the auction because of help from you*).

If you would like to support this mission, please send a check or cash to New London United Church of Christ and mark the envelope "Shoes for Belize." We can never thank you enough for helping the mission reach this year's goal of sending 3,000 pair of shoes to Belize in April. In 2023 we raised enough money to purchase 380 pairs of shoes and we had hundreds of new and used shoes donated. In each of the past 4 years our congregation has been able to raise enough money to purchase more than 300 pairs.

We hope and pray we will be blessed with \$3,000 again this year.

Blessings to you and your family,

Jim and Debi Williams

ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report will be emailed out to those with email addresses and mailed to those that don't have an email address. Hard copies of the Annual Report will be available on the round table in the narthex. **The Annual Meeting is Sunday, February 11th after the 9:00 a.m. service**, with Souper Bowl Sunday following the Annual Meeting in Fellowship Hall.

UCC CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 8, 2024 – 6:00 PM

1. Call to Order at 6:06pm/Roll Call – Council Members Present: Dorea Brandt, Tina Clegg, Steve Savides, Lois Cuff, Sherie Bressler, and Dave Thiel. Staff & Members Present: Billy Brandt
2. Opening Prayer by Steve.
3. Approve Meeting Minutes from December 11, 2023 – Motion by Dorea to approve the minutes from December 11, 2023. Motion seconded by Tina. Motion carried.
4. Pastor's Reports - Pastor Steve provided the Council with a written report of the various activities he has been working on over the past month, as well as highlights from all of the activities that occurred in the Church over the past month. He also covered the following topics: Worship Service Highlights & Worship Schedule for January & February; Adult Study; Community Outreach; Larger Church Outreach.
5. Ministry Chairs' Reports – Tina provided candy bar updates, and Dorea provided updates about the youth offerings. Lois mentioned that the storage area in the basement has been cleaned up and organized.
6. Financial Reports – The council discussed the final 2023 operating budget numbers. The December Last Mile Giving Campaign was very successful, and the Church ended the year with a \$15,292.20 deficit. That was significantly less than the adopted 2023 operating budget deficit of \$37,989.06.
7. Tower & Roof Repair Projects – All of the work on the Tower has been completed. Dean Peterson will be constructing a new railing for the steps that lead into the Tower.
8. Removal of Church Members – A request was received from Tim, Anthony & Samantha Schmalz, as well as Anita Mannino, to remove them as members of First Congregational UCC New London. Motion by Lois to remove said members. Motion seconded by Tina. Motion carried.
9. 2024 Budget – Motion by Steve to increase, by \$1,000, the yearly salary for the Choir & Bell Director positions. Motion seconded by Lois. Motion carried with one member abstaining (Dorea). Motion by Tina to approve the proposed 2024 Operating Budget. Motion seconded by Steve. Motion carried.
10. 2024 Annual Meeting – The Congregational Annual Meeting will be held on February 11, 2024, with Soup-er-bowl Sunday following the meeting. Motion by Dorea to approve the proposed agenda for the 2024 Annual Meeting. Motion seconded by Dave. Motion carried. Motion by Tina to approve the recommendation by the Mattick Committee to move the balance of funds in the Mattick Fund, except for \$10,000, to the General Operating Endowment Fund. Motion seconded by Sherie. Motion carried with one member absent (Steve).
11. New Business – Dorea discussed the future youth nights and the themes she will be using (including a camp-themed youth night in March). Discussion regarding the next Bell Choir trip. Billy will begin the conversation with the Bell Choir members and associates, as well as inform the congregation.
12. Adjournment – Motion by Lois to adjourn. Motion seconded by Tina. Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 7:49 p.m.

NEW WEBSITE

Our new website is up and running. Check it out at firstcongouccnl.com. On the website you will find Pastor Steve's meditations in print and in audio, newsletters, and so much more.

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 11, 2024

Hello Everyone! We have quite a few new members so I thought I would give you all a little rundown on what "SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY" is all about. It started way back in 1999, quite a while back and grew bigger each year. Course along came COVID so for a few years there was no SBS to celebrate. Last year Dorea Brandt and friends got it going again. So now we are back on track.

For you new folks out there, here is how SBS works. It takes place the same day as the football Super Bowl, but ours is a lot more fun and a lot "tastier" too! Plus, the Packers are not playing in the Football Super Bowl this year even though they had a pretty good season. They surprised a lot of us loyal fans. But enough about that.

Our SBS will begin shortly after the Annual Meeting on February 11th, around 11:30. Fellowship Hall will be set up with lots of tables so find your favorite one and sit down. There will be a number of soups you may sample, plus crackers, etc. and desserts. Everything always tastes so good!

The meal is free of course, BUT donations are "very" welcome. Usually, people will bring cans of soup to donate too which will later be sent to local food pantries. Also "cash" donations are always appreciated, and those offerings will be shared between "Camp AweSum" and "Mission of Hope House".

If you have any questions regarding the upcoming SBS please contact me, Stosh or as my mother always called me Gale. Any other long-time member can also tell you what SBS is all about as well. I assure you that you will enjoy it! In 2013 we took in \$475.00!! That is the highest amount ever for SBS. We are still trying to exceed that amount and hopefully that will happen this year. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex if you can bring dessert, crackers, etc. And also, if you will be bringing soup.

Stosh Wandke....SBS secretary

PS. Once again Dale will "not" be available on the 11th and that is probably a good thing. We think he is now living where it is a lot warmer.



WASHINGTON CENTER COMMUNITY CUPBOARD

Open every Wednesday 8 am to Noon and 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm

SOUP AND SNACKS NEEDED



Winter is here and we are still as busy as ever at the Cupboard. Now that the holiday season is over, we will start seeing a drop in donations from the community. Food drives will dwindle but the need for food will not. We truly appreciate your generous donations to The Washington Center Community Cupboard.

One of the things we find a lot of families with school age children will write on their shopping lists are "snacks for school." So next time you are shopping and walk down the aisle that holds things like individual size chips, fruit snacks, granola bars, etc. please think of grabbing a few and putting them on our shelf.

A few other items we can always use are:

Canned soup	Hamburger/tuna helper	Saltine crackers	Pancake mix/Syrup
Cold or Hot Cereal	Dish Soap	Laundry Soap	

Our new space continues to amaze us. There is so much room to move around and shelves for all our goods. If you ever want to take a peek around, let one of us know because we love to show it off. Also, if you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to one of us and we will find a place for you.

Thanks for your support of the Washington Center Community Cupboard and thank you for being a blessing to our community.

Rita, Mike, Michelle and Jim

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD - UCC SISTERHOOD MEETING

Marly's Restaurant
520 South Pearl St.
New London
920-982-5390

Let's brave the cold again!! Last month, 16 ladies came out for lunch—between two snowstorms! UCC Sisterhood strong!

With the weather, we will be staying in New London for February. We will meet at Marly's Restaurant at 11:30 on February 23rd. I will need to let them know on Monday, February 19th a count of how many is coming so they can prepare.

Hopefully, as the weather turns to spring (fingers crossed) we will “get out of town”. For now, we will stay “at home” and make the best of it.

As always, invite your friends, neighbors, or someone you haven't seen in a while—every lady is welcome!

See you then!

Blessings,

Sandy Conrads

sandy.armin@yahoo.com 920-538-4114

MISSION OF HOPE HOUSE

RESILIENCY - What is it? How do we build it? What role does a community own?

Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult/challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary further defines resilience as an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.

Mission of Hope House's Resiliency Center is the 12-bed peer supported living environment here in New London that offers programs and services designed to help individuals break free from poverty, substance abuse disorder and homelessness.

In our community we all play a role in supporting the resiliency efforts. How? In our willingness to learn about addiction, trauma, issues that stagnate others, we can be part of managing the perceptions of these issues. We model resiliency when we are open and transparent as we face challenging times and demonstrate successful coping strategies. When we engage with efforts and initiatives in our local community that address poverty, addiction, stigma attached to emotional issues and hear judgmental "conversations", we can become part of the solution - or add to the problem if we do nothing.

To have a healthy community, we need healthy individuals - physical health, emotional, spiritual, social, personal well-being. Mission of Hope House's Resiliency Center is a beacon of hope for making a difference in the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

Please visit our website at www.mohwi.org to stay informed of the services, classes, connections and ongoing ways you can be a supporter of this resiliency.

In appreciation,

*Patricia Toney, President of the Board
Mission of Hope House*



Pastor: Rev. Dr. Stephen Savides
PastorSteveSavides@uccnl.onmicrosoft.com
Church phone number- 920-982-3731

Secretary/Financial Secretary: Kathy Phillips (kathyphillips@uccnl.onmicrosoft.com)
Secretary's Office Hours:

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday: 8:10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Bookkeeper: Bill Fleese (billfleese@uccnl.onmicrosoft.com)

Financial Liaison: Rita Thiel - 920-810-4480

Custodian: Amy Hord

Stephen Ministry Leader: Mary Schulz – mryschulz@yahoo.com

Facebook manager: Mary Schulz – mryschulz@yahoo.com

Christian Education:

Sunday School Facilitator: Wendy Dallman

Youth Group Coordinator: Dorea Brandt

Camp Scholarships: Tina Clegg

Music Coordinators:

Praise Connection Director & Organist: Lois Cuff – cufflois@gmail.com

Organist & Accompanist: Lu Ann Rupnow

Choir & Bell Choir Director: Billy Brandt-bilybrandtv@gmail.com

Check out our new website: firstconougocnl.com



www.facebook.com/UCCNL



Leadership Teams:

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Stephen Savides: 920-982-3731 – PastorSteveSavides@uccnl.onmicrosoft.com

Church Council:

Moderator: Dave Thiel: 920-810-0865– davethiel56@gmail.com

Vice Moderator: Lois Cuff: 920-359-0531 – cufflois@gmail.com

Fellowship Chair: Sherie Bressler: 920-982-5798 – mrs.hbbressler@gmail.com

Education Ministry Chair: Tina Clegg: 920-982-7952 -tlclegg29@gmail.com

Mission Ministry Chair: Peter Lauer: 920-875-0195 – p.lauer@tractorpartsasap.com

Operations Ministry Chair:

Worship Ministry Chair: Dorea Brandt: 920-875-0197 - lauerdorea@gmail.com

Financial Liaison - Rita Thiel: 920-810-4480

UCC Tech Team – Sound & Stream: Carl Sternhagen, Tim Schmidt, Billy Brandt

Media Shout: Gary Henke, Wendy Dallman, Kris Drath, Chou Lee

Ministry Support Team: Debi Williams, Bonnie Wandke, Rita Thiel, Gary Prost, and Pat Toney

Pastoral Support: Pastor Kevin Dembinski

FEBRUARY SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8:00 a.m. -Adult Study

9:00 a.m. – Worship Service: in person and virtual

<https://m.facebook.com/UCCNL>

10:00 a.m. – Sunday school 1st & 3rd Sunday's

10:00 a.m.-Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall



*Communion will be on
February 4th*



January 2024						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

March 2024						
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/ 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

First Congregational UCC February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:30 p.m.- Angeli Choir	2	3 10:00 a.m.- AA in Fellowship Hall
4 <i>Communion</i> 8:00 a.m.- Adult Bible Study 9:00 a.m.- Traditional Service 10:00 a.m. – Sunday school 10:00 a.m.- Fellowship	5 4:30 p.m.- Overeaters Anon.	6 7:30 a.m.- Contemplative Prayer on Zoom	7 6:30 p.m. - Spirit Bells	8 6:30 p.m.- Angeli Choir	9	10 10:00 a.m.- AA in Fellowship Hall
11 8:00 a.m.- Adult Bible Study 9:00 a.m.- Praise Service 10:30 a.m. – Annual Meeting After the Annual Meeting: Souper Bowl Sunday	12 4:30 p.m.- Overeaters Anon. 6:00 p.m. – Council Meeting	13 7:30 a.m.- Contemplative Prayer on Zoom	14 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 6:00 p.m.- Pancake Dinner 7:00 p.m.- Ecumenical Ash Wednesday Service	15 10:00 a.m.- Fellowship Hall in use 6:30 p.m.- Angeli Choir	16	17 10:00 a.m.- AA in Fellowship Hall
18 8:00 a.m.- Adult Bible Study 9:00 a.m.- Traditional Service/ Choir/Bells 10:00 a.m. – Sunday School 10:00 a.m.- Fellowship	19 4:30 p.m.- Overeaters Anon.	20 7:30 a.m.- Contemplative Prayer on Zoom	21 Noon- Book Study 6:30 p.m. - Spirit Bells	22 6:30 p.m.- Angeli Choir	23 11:30 a.m.- UCC Sisterhood 4:00 p.m.- Youth Group	24 10:00 a.m.- AA in Fellowship Hall
25 8:00 a.m.- Adult Bible Study 9:00 a.m.- Praise Service 10:00 a.m.- Fellowship	26 4:30 p.m.- Overeaters Anon.	27 7:30 a.m.- Contemplative Prayer on Zoom	28 Noon – Book Study 6:30 p.m. - Spirit Bells	29 6:30 p.m.- Angeli Choir		

February Worship Volunteers

Please sign up to fill the open dates.	February 4, 2024 Traditional Service	February 11, 2024 Praise Service	February 18, 2024 Traditional Service	February 25, 2024 Praise Service	
	Lay Reader	9:00 a.m.- Mary Schulz	9:00 a.m.- Wendy Dallman	9:00 a.m.- Pat Toney	9:00 a.m. – Deb Calabria
	Media Shout	9:00 a.m.- Wendy Dallman	9:00 a.m.- Kris Drath	9:00 a.m.- Kris Drath	9:00 a.m.-Wendy Dallman
	Fellowship	10:00 a.m.- Krake/Marcks	10:00 a.m.- Manthe's & Bressler's	10:00 a.m.-Thiel/Cuff	10:00 a.m.- Manthe's & Bressler's

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1-Grayson Doehling | 15-Karen Pieper |
| 5-Megan Herzfeldt | 17-Pete Thorpe, Travis Lehnerr |
| 7-Kris Drath, Grace Golla, Gabe Randel | 18- Donn Howard, Kerry Griebenow |
| 8- Jack Baumgart, Jim Buschke | 19-Steve Malliet |
| 9-Nancy Zirbel | 20- John Wiesner, Karen Laedtke |
| 10- Larry Laedtke, David Gerlach | 22-Shelly Bethke |
| 12-Andrew Parker | 24- Gloria Kjer |
| 13-Jennifer Van Straten, Katelyn Schmidt | 28-Alison Fontecchio, Emma Blum |
| 13-Jen Lubinski | 28-Scott Oberstadt |

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 13-John & Robin Ernst
14-Jeff & Linda Huntley

If your birthday or anniversary is missing, or incorrect, please contact Kathy at the church office.

Online services can be seen at
<https://m.facebook.com/UCCNL>
If you would like to get your offering in, you can mail it, drop it off at church on Monday, Wednesday or Thursday mornings between 8:15 & noon, use Venmo or PayPal or set up automatic withdrawal through Kathy.

