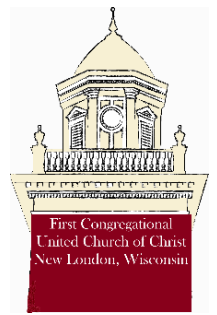




Blessing our Community



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
110 E. Hancock Street, New London, Wisconsin 54961 ~ 920-982-3731
Pastor: Rev. Dr. Stephen Savides ~ email: Pastor@uccnl.onmicrosoft.com
Secretary: newlondonucc@gmail.com
A Stephen Ministry Church

SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

"New Every Morning"

The grass withers
and the flowers fade,
but the word of our God
endures forever.

Isaiah 40:8

I can remember in my High School Economics class learning about one of advertisers' favorite tactics: "*Ain't It Awful!*" The "*Ain't It Awful!*" pitch tries to prey on your natural concerns and fears in order to sell you something. Apparently, once they get your head shaking and your sense of outrage rising, then you will be susceptible to giving them your money (or your vote!). Think of the movies and television shows that begin with bloody murders or horrifying tragedies to grab your attention and steal your time. Think of the politicians who claim we are in a time of emergency in hopes that you might give them emergency powers. Preachers can be the worst of the "*Ain't It Awful!*" pitchers as they try to convince you that the world is going to hell in a handbasket and only they and their church have the heavenly cure.

Contrast those who sound the drumbeat of doom with the bold proclamation of the prophet in the book of Lamentations. In the midst of a truly difficult time of defeat, famine, and exile, the prophet pauses to proclaim:

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
God's mercies never come to an end;
They are new every morning... (Lamentations 3:22-23)*

Even in the most difficult times, the prophet sees reasons to hope and, by hoping, endure.

The fact of the matter is that there are so many mercies happening around us all the time. I've been delighted to discover The Progress Network, a weekly newsletter that shares hopeful facts that are indications of progress all around us. Did you know, for example...?

- The most common causes of premature death—including murder, overdoses, car crashes, and obesity—are all declining.
 - o Homicides have plummeted since the pandemic, and the nation's murder rate may set a record low in 2025.
 - o The CDC reported an unprecedented annual decline in drug overdose deaths this year.
 - o Traffic deaths have declined for 12 straight quarters, and the latest fatality rate is the lowest in six years.
 - o Obesity decreased in the most recent analysis for the first time in more than a decade, as GLP-1 drugs continue to improve.

Continued on next page...

And did you know that...?

- The divorce rate is at a 50 year low in our country.
- Americans are exercising more now than ever before.
- Only 54% of Americans say they drink alcohol, the lowest on record since 1939.
- 13.4 million Mexicans were lifted out of poverty between 2018 and 2024
- The amount of oil spilled worldwide from tankers nowadays is less than one-thirtieth of the amount in the 1970s.
- Helsinki has gone a full year without a traffic death, the result of lower speed limits, more traffic cameras, and better infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

All of these facts are reported in the latest weekly report from the Progress Network. And all of these give the lie to those who try to lull us into submissive despair with their “Ain’t It Awful” pitches.

In fact, the prophet was right. God’s mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. And every morning we can rise with new hope and joy and determination to join in God’s faithful work among us.

Your friend and fellow minister,
Rev. Steve Savides

HEAR OUR PRAYERS, O LORD”

Of Healing and Comfort for:

- ☀ Emily Calabria
- ☀ Gaylord Hedtke
- ☀ Milton Staskal
- ☀ Ann Schneider



Father God, we lift up all those who are facing illness today. We ask that You would bring healing, comfort and peace to their bodies. Calm their fears and let them experience the healing power of Your love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

If you would like to be listed in the prayers, please contact the office.

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 for your continuous support of First Congregational United Church of Christ.
- ♥ Thank you to Dean Peterson and his helpers... Choua, Stosh, Jim and Sandy for all of the fixer upper tasks they do for the church building and grounds.
- ♥ Thank you to Kathy Baumgart for cutting the lawn for us.
- ♥ Thank you to Carl Sternhagen for coming almost every Sunday to run our sound, stream and media. Your commitment is awesome!
- ♥ A very special Thank You to Tina Clegg for all the hard work she puts into the Camp Scholarships and sending so many of our kids to camp.
- ♥ Thanks to the entire church for supporting our beautiful camps for respite and outdoor ministry. We are so blessed to have the opportunity to visit these places year-round.

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 WORSHIP ATTENDANCE FOR JULY- 64

GENERAL OPERATING INCOME JANUARY - DECEMBER 2025: \$ 85,307.10

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES JANUARY – DECEMBER 2025: \$90,294.67

NET INCOME: \$ -4,987.57

WORSHIP AT OUR CHURCH, 2025-26

“... to all who received him... he gave power to become children of God.” (John 1:12)

So many of us feel powerless in these present times. Political, economic, and social power seem a thing now reserved for the wealthy, the chosen, the “fabulous” few. More than ever, we are tempted to pull inward, turn away from our high calling, and despair about the future. John’s Gospel brings us a word of power, a word of hope through Jesus Christ, the Word of God. As it says in the first chapter of John, we who follow Christ are given “power to become children of God.”

Much of this upcoming worship year will focus on John’s Gospel as we follow the **Narrative Lectionary**. Fall will bring us a quick overview of critical Old Testament texts, Advent will focus on Isaiah (the prophet of Advent), Luke will provide our Christmas texts, and then, for the bulk of the church year, we will embark on a systematic journey through John’s Gospel. At the end of our worship year, we will be blessed by a focus on Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi.

Our **Adult Study Class** will focus on John’s Gospel with 12 sessions on this longest of the Gospels split between 6 weeks in fall (November 5-19 and December 3-17) and 6 weeks in Lent (February 18 – March 25). Besides using the Narrative Lectionary, there will be several other **special worship opportunities** during our worship year:

- We will have three **Ecumenical Worship Services** on November 26 (Thanksgiving Eve service), February 18 (Ash Wednesday) and April 3 (Good Friday).
- **Stewardship Sunday** will be observed on November 9 with special Stewardship speakers offering brief reflections in worship the three Sundays prior.
- **Christmas Eve** will see our traditional live nativity service at 4 pm and an evening Christmas Eve service at 7 pm.
- We’ll again be celebrating **Heritage Sunday** in early February as we observe the anniversary of our church’s founding.
- We will focus on our various **Church Mission Projects** during the six Sundays in Lent (February 22 – March 29).
- We will be observing **Maundy Thursday** on April 2 and Holy **Humor Sunday** will make its appearance again after Easter.
- Our program year will close, as usual, with **Pentecost Sunday** on May 24.

We hope and pray this next worship year will be a blessing on our congregation and grant us the power and clarity to be God’s children in this world.

NEW ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER

If you would like to send a card, visit or call Milton Staskal, his address is:

Washington Center
500 W. Washington Street Room 207
New London WI 54961

Milt's phone number is 920-982-9234.

UCC CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING AUGUST 11, 2025 FELLOWSHIP HALL MINUTES

1. Call to Order at 6:02pm/Roll Call – Council Members Present: Tina Clegg, Lois Cuff, Sherie Bressler, Dorea Brandt and Dave Thiel. Staff Members Present: Billy Brandt
2. Opening Prayer by Lois Cuff.
3. Approve Meeting Minutes from May 12, 2025 – Motion by Lois Cuff to approve the minutes from May 12, 2025. Motion seconded by Dorea Brandt. Motion carried 5-0.
4. Financial Reports – Discussion regarding current status of operating budget and balance sheet. Motion by Dorea Brandt to approve the Financial Reports as submitted. Motion seconded by Tina Clegg. Motion carried 5-0.
5. Adult Choir – Billy Brandt has submitted his resignation as Adult Choir Director, effective August 31, 2025. The Council thanked him for his years of service and expressed their appreciation that he will continue as the Bell Choir Director. Motion made by Tina Clegg to accept Billy Brandt's resignation as Adult Choir Director. Motion seconded by Sherie Bressler. Motion carried 5-0. Lois Cuff will head up the search for a new Adult Choir Director.
6. Worship Plan For 2025-26 – The Council reviewed the Worship Plan for the next year submitted by Pastor Steve Savides. Lois Cuff will provide Pastor Steve with the Council's feedback.
7. Update on Capital Improvements Plan – Lois Cuff provided a report detailing the most recent activities and numbers related to the Capital Improvement Projects.
8. Update On Project Revive - The Council discussed the possibility of promoting a fund-raising Sunday for Project Revive during 2025-26.
9. Facility & Operations Report – Lois Cuff provided an update on the following projects: the doors on the garbage hut have been removed; the lower bricks on the outside of the church building have been painted by Dean Peterson and a group of volunteers; the front door of the church has been fixed by Dean, Dean also replaced the outdoor faucets; Dean & Chou removed the weeds in the parking lot; Sandy Cuff repaired various toilet seats throughout the building.
10. New Business – Motion by Lois Cuff to authorize spending \$49.99 to purchase this year's digital UCC Stewardship resources. Motion seconded by Sherie Bressler. Motion carried 5-0. Dorea Brandt discussed plans for the Youth Group Nights and Youth Bell Choir for 2025-26. Tina Clegg initiated a discussion about Sunday School. She will reach out to potential families and volunteers see if there is enough interest to run a program for the upcoming year.
11. Adjournment – Motion by Dave Thiel to adjourn. Motion seconded by Lois Cuff. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

THANK YOU TO BILLY BRANDT

For the past four years, Billy Brandt has directed our Adult Choir, rehearsing and enhancing our worship service with beautiful choral music. At our August 11th Council Meeting, we accepted Billy's resignation for the Adult Choir position.

Thank you, Billy, for all the hours spent organizing, planning and communicating for the successful outcome.

Thank you, Billy, for all the hours spent in searching for just the right music.

Thank you, Billy, for all the hours spent rehearsing the choir.

Thank you, Billy, for all the hours spent directing the choir during worship.

We appreciate all you have done to rebuild and nurture our Adult Choir. We are so grateful that you will continue to guide and direct our Adult Bell Choir as they continue to enhance our worship service.

WE ARE NOW SEARCHING for someone to continue the great work Billy has done as we prepare for another liturgical season. If you know of anyone interested in directing our Adult Choir, please have them contact Lois Cuff at 920-359-0531.

PROJECT REVIVE FUNDS UPDATE

As of this printing, we have collected \$50,464.78 for our Project Revive facility upgrades. THANK YOU for that incredible effort, but we still have more funds to raise.

We have spent a total of \$149,512.70 so far on our projects and are paying monthly on a building improvement bank loan of \$49,004.16.

Please continue to give to our Project Revive Building Improvement Fund, so we can lower that loan amount as we move forward and enjoy the improvements made.

Lois Cuff and Dave Thiel

PRAISE IN THE PARK

Were you there? Praise in the Park was held on July 27, 2025, in Pfeifer Park East Pavillion in New London. It was a gathering of congregations from First Congregational United Church of Christ, St. John's Episcopal Church, United Methodist Church, and Trinity Lutheran Church. A free will offering and food items were collected to benefit Washington Center Community Cupboard and St. John's Christian Food Pantry. Over 138 people came together to worship and support our community food insecurity. \$992.00 and 302 pounds of food were collected and split equally between the two pantries.

Thank you to all four ministers for your planning and worship messages.

Thank you to the combined Praise Band for the great praise music.

Thank you to the United Methodist Food Truck for feeding us FREE!

Thank you to all who helped set up, move equipment, prepare site, cleanup, prepare and print the bulletins and song books, run the sound equipment, offer Bible based activities, provide the bubbles...

Thank you to all who supported this event!



LADIES! LADIES! LADIES UCC SISTERHOOD

Here is what is up for the rest of the YEAR!! Mark your calendars!

- ♥ On **September 24th** we will be going to the Wild River Pizza Pub, 5645 Mill St. Shiocton. This is a Wednesday, and we will meet at 11:30.
- ♥ On **October 24th** we will be going to Hardtails, 302 W. Main St. Hortonville. This is a Friday, and we will meet at 11:30.
- ♥ On **November 21st** we will be going to the Palace Breakfast, 815 N. Shawano St. New London. This is a Friday, and we will meet at 11:30.
- ♥ On **December 12th** we will be going to Familiar Grounds, 206 N. Pearl St. New London. This is a Friday, and we will meet at 11:30.

As always, I NEED TO KNOW IF YOU ARE COMING BY NOON, THE MONDAY BEFORE. I need to let them know how many to expect! You've heard it before—call, shoot me a text, or throw a rock—contact me! As always, if you need a ride, let someone know—people are always willing to step up and help you!

Whether you are a “first timer” or a regular, come for the food, fun, and fellowship! No meeting, no dues, no being put “on the spot”! Call someone you haven't seen at church in a while, call a friend or neighbor! The more the merrier! And it is a given, if you find you can come at the last minute—There is always room at the table!

See you there!
Blessings,

Sandy Conradt
920-538-4114

WASHINGTON CENTER COMMUNITY CUPBOARD

Open Wednesdays 8 to noon and 4:30 to 6 pm

The pantry continues to be very busy each week. We are always looking for more volunteers if anyone is interested. You can work as much or as little as you would like. See Rita or Mike to volunteer.

The "Praise in the Park" July 27th service at Pfeifer Park was a wonderful day. There were four congregations involved including our UCC First Congregational church. The pastors from each service led the worship service. There was lots of music, camaraderie and food. People brought food items for the two local food pantries and a free will offering was collected. Each pantry received half of the \$992 collected and 302 pounds of food that was donated. I hope this becomes an annual event.

Our food from government programs has dwindled significantly. That means we have to buy more food and get more in donations. Next time you are shopping, pick up one or two items for the pantry. If we all did this, it would make a considerable difference. Things we always can use are:

Hamburger helper, cold and hot cereal, canned pasta, tuna and ketchup.

Thank you for your continued support.

Rita, Mike and Michelle



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

Secretary/Financial Secretary: Kathy Phillips (newlondonucc@gmail.com)

Secretary's Office Hours:

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

Bookkeeper: Bill Flease (billflease@uccnl.onmicrosoft.com)

Custodian: Amy Hord

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

Facebook manager: Mary Schulz – mryschulz@yahoo.com

Christian Education:

Youth Group Coordinator: Dorea Brandt

Camp Scholarships: Tina Clegg

Music Coordinators:

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

Organist/Choir Director: Lu Ann Rupnow – luann.rupnow@gmail.com

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

Check out our website: firstconougouccnl.com



www.facebook.com/UCCNL



Leadership Teams:

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Stephen Savides: 920-982-3731 – Pastor@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: Lois Cuff: 920-359-0531 – cufflois@gmail.com

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

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

Media Shout: Gary Henke, Wendy Dallman, Rod Bressler, Lois Cuff

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

Pastoral Support: Pastor Kevin Dembinski

SEPTEMBER 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.-Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall



Communion will be on September 7th



August 2025						
					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

September 2025

October 2025						
			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	

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Labor Day Office Closed 4:30 p.m.- Overeaters Anon.	2 8:00 a.m.- Contemplative Prayer on Zoom	3	4	5	6 10:00 a.m.- AA in Fellowship Hall
7 <i>Communion</i> 8:00 a.m.- Adult Bible Study 9:00 a.m.- Praise Service 10:00 a.m.- Fellowship	8 4:30 p.m.- Overeaters Anon. 6:00 p.m. – Council Meeting	9	10 6:30 p.m.- Spirit Bells	11 6:30 p.m.- Choir	12	13 10:00 a.m.- AA in Fellowship Hall
14 8:00 a.m.- Adult Bible Study 9:00 a.m.- Traditional Service 10:00 a.m.- Fellowship	15 4:30 p.m.- Overeaters Anon.	16	17 6:30 p.m.- Spirit Bells	18 6:30 p.m.- Choir	19	20 10:00 a.m.- AA in Fellowship Hall
21 8:00 a.m.- Adult Bible Study 9:00 a.m.- Praise Service 10:00 a.m.- Fellowship	22 4:30 p.m.- Overeaters Anon	23	24 11:30 a.m. – UCC Sisterhood at Wolf River Pizza Pub, Shiocton 6:30 p.m.- Spirit Bells	25 6:30 p.m.- Choir	26	27 10:00 a.m.- AA in Fellowship Hall
28 8:00 a.m.- Adult Bible Study 9:00 a.m.- Traditional Service 10:00 a.m.- Fellowship	29 4:30 p.m.- Overeaters Anon	30				

September Worship Volunteers

Please sign up to fill the open dates.	September 7, 2025 Praise Service	September 14, 2025 Traditional Service	September 21, 2025 Praise Service	September 28, 2025 Traditional Service
	Lay Reader	9:00 a.m.- Dave Thiel	9:00 a.m.- Karen Henke	9:00 a.m. – Pat Toney
	Media Shout	9:00 a.m.- Rod Bressler	9:00 a.m.- Gary Henke	9:00 a.m.- Wendy Dallman
	Fellowship	10:00 a.m.- Sherie Bressler/ Julie Manthe	10:00 a.m.- Rita & Dave Thiel/ Lois & Sandy Cuff	10:00 a.m.- Sherie Bressler/ Julie Manthe
				10:00 a.m.- Bobbye Allen & Tina Clegg

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2-Billie Jean Allen, Ararie Krueger
 4- Cayden Bozich
 7-Kay Boelter
 10-Abigail Kent
 11- Lisa Watzlawick
 13-Linda Heimbruch
 15-Maddie Schmidt, Maverick Masephol
 16-Randy Miller, Justin Buschke
 17- Scott Bierman IV

20-Debbie Fabisiak
 21-Nash Lehnherr, Anderson Lehnherr
 23-Brooklyn Treague
 24-Mary Schulz
 25-Karie Thorpe, Leah Porath
 26-Brooke Techlin
 27-Debi Williams, Susan Moore
 29-April Treague, Liz Doehling, Samuel Krueger
 30-Sacia Williams

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



SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

1-Ron & Kris Drath
 3-Wally & Mickey Schmidt
 4-Kyle & Jen Lubinski
 10-Nicholas & Jayce Welhouse
 12-Larry & Karen Laedtke
 14-LaWayne & Nancy Zirbel
 14-Donn & Lisa Howard
 17-Kevin & Courtney Gross
 18-Don & Karyl Hebel
 20-Joe & Kay Boelter
 22-Mike & Kathy Foster
 25- Jim & Mavis Knaack
 26-Kevin & Peggy Taylor
 29-Bill & Deb Calabria