



# CHURCH LIFE

## 2023 SPRING EDITION

THE  
CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

SUNDAY WORSHIP 10:00 AM  
SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:15 AM



**Daylight Savings** begins March 12. Turn your clocks **ahead** one hour before bed on March 11!

### OUT OF THE OFFICE:

Sarah Struwe on vacation  
**March 20-24**

Pastors Shannon and Andrew  
on vacation **April 10-17**

**New Member Sunday, April 9**  
See Adult Ed page for class info

**Children & Youth Sunday, May 14**  
Special Guest: Rev. Kevin Brown,  
Assoc. Conference Minister

**Pentecost Sunday, May 28**

## MINNESOTA CONFERENCE UCC HOSTS "COVENANT DAY" HERE SATURDAY, MARCH 18 from 9 AM – 3 PM



One of the Conference's priorities is "deepening connections": helping people re-connect and strengthening relationships within our Conference community. They have offered these various regional events as an opportunity for lay members and clergy to gather for a day, worship together, get some relevant resources, and be reminded that none of us are alone in this ministry. We all need each other, and we all have something to offer each other.

**Who is invited?** All congregations in the southeast Minnesota area are invited, lay leaders as well as clergy. There's something for everyone!

**What will people experience?** This is a day to swap stories, share challenges, celebrate joys, and benefit from the wisdom and experience that all of us bring to the Conference "table." The hope is that participants will walk away strengthened and encouraged, spiritually fed, with some gratitude in their hearts for the community we share in the Conference. People will also walk away with a new way of thinking about something, a new idea to try, or a new friend who is willing to talk some more about a question they have in common or to plan something they're excited to make happen together. Mark your calendars and plan to attend this special day!

## HOLY WEEK SERVICES



**Palm Sunday, April 2 at 10:00 AM** – Celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem by waving palms and praising God.

**Maunder Thursday, April 6 at 6:00 PM** - In an intimate service we will remember Jesus' last meal with his disciples with ritual foot washing and Holy Communion.



**Good Friday, April 7 at 6:00 PM** - We will commemorate the crucifixion of Christ at our Tenebrae service featuring a reading of the Passion narrative and the extinguishing of candles in steadily increasing darkness.



**Easter Sunday, April 9** – Our Easter celebration begins with a **Sunrise Service at 6:30 AM in the Memorial Garden**. Join us for a celebration of the resurrection in the midst of God's creation and stick around for donuts and coffee. The culmination of our Lenten Season and Holy Week is our **Easter Sunday Service at 10 AM!** We'll celebrate the Risen Christ with beautiful music, the preached Word, and welcome new members. A **special Easter Offering** will be collected for Elder Network and Jeremiah Program – see inside for more information.

**NOTE:** NO Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast or Easter Egg Hunt this year due to events falling over Spring Break.



## VACATION SUBS NEEDED for Youth Group & Sunday School

We are blessed with a vibrant youth group and children's Sunday School and we need volunteers to lead them when the pastors are on vacation this spring.

Volunteers are needed to Lead **Youth Group on April 12** and **Sunday School on April 16**. A lesson plan and all supplies will be provided. If you can help out, contact [pastorshannon@congoroch.org](mailto:pastorshannon@congoroch.org).

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

following Children's Time with Pastor Andrew or Shannon for Kindergarten-5th Grade in Room 21

## YOUTH GROUP

Wednesdays from 6:30 – 8 PM  
6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade in Chapel

PLUS, these special events:

Friday, March 3 – LOCK IN!  
Saturday, March 11 – Ice Skating

Schedule/Flyer on church website's Children & Youth page



## ALL CHURCH ICE SKATING – Saturday, March 11

We are going skating! On **Saturday, March 11 from 10 - Noon at the Rec Center** (21 Elton Hills Drive NW), **EVERYONE** is invited to come skate or just spend some time in fellowship together. Please **bring friends** and children of all ages are welcome. Skate rentals and rink costs have been paid by the church. You are invited to bring snacks or drinks to share. When you enter the main entrance check in at the front desk and they will point you to the proper rink.



## FAMILY PROMISE MEAL & FUN NIGHT HERE- Friday, April 21



We will be hosting the family(ies) from Family Promise on **Friday evening, April 21 here at the church from 4 to 8 PM**. Church families and individuals are invited to assist in hosting for the evening which will include serving and sharing a meal and other fun activities. If you are interested in participating in this event, please let Sarah in the office know. A planning meeting will be scheduled TBD.

## PRIDEFEST and JUNETEENTH 2023

We will again have a booth at this year's Pridefest on **Saturday, May 20, at Soldier's Field Park** plus we are also planning on a booth at the Juneteenth event. All who are interested please let Sarah know in the office. A planning meeting will be scheduled TBD.



## LANDLINE DROP, EMAIL or ADDRESS CHANGE?



If you have dropped your landline and/or prefer to be reached on your cell, let us know! If you have changed email providers or moved, let us know! You can update your contact information by emailing the office at [church@congoroch.org](mailto:church@congoroch.org) **OR** use the welcome card in chair pockets and place it in the offering plate. This is included in our private church directory so that our pastors and members can easily contact you. Thank you!

## JOB OPENING: NURSERY ASSISTANT

**A Nursery Assistant** is needed to work with our Nursery Lead, Colleen Hofer (pictured), to care for children six months through elementary school age on Sunday mornings from 9 AM - Noon. Possibility of additional hours on evenings and weekends. Starts at \$20 an hour. Applicants should be at least 18 and have childcare experience. Please share with family and friends who may be interested!



# ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

We have an exciting and meaningful program of adult education planned for the spring. Our weekly Bible study via Zoom will continue as will the Book Group. **Our Sunday after-worship events are described in more detail below.** Even if you've not participated in the past, we hope you'll see something here that intrigues and inspires you to join one or more of the offerings.

## "THE 7 LAST WORDS FROM THE CROSS" by Fleming Rutledge

On **February 26 and March 5**, we will be reading and discussing a collection of reflections on Jesus' last words from the cross by Fleming Rutledge, who has been a parish priest of the Episcopal Church in New York for two decades and has a reputation as an excellent preacher. She is the author of several books and regularly preaches and teaches around the United States. We will review one of her reflections on Jesus' last words to shed new light on how we think of the cross as we approach Good Friday and Easter. Each of her reflections ends with the words of famous hymns which we will use as a prompt for our closing prayer each week.

## "CONVERSATIONS ON RACE AND FAITH" from the JUSTICE & PEACE MINISTRY TEAM

**March 12 - Dr. Waziyatawin** will join us to share about the **Makoce Iki cupi** organization working toward land recovery and reparative justice to reestablish their spiritual and physical connection with their homeland. (date may be interchanged with the 19<sup>th</sup>)

**March 19** - First in a series from Spark House **Dialogues On: Race**. Join us for this provocative and reflective series about our faith and race through readings, videos, and discussion. (date may be interchanged with the 12<sup>th</sup>)

**March 26 - Warren Read**, author of "**The Lyncher in Me**" about the June 1920 Duluth mob of 10,000, inflamed with rumors, who lynched three black men. The mob included his great-grandfather and his book explores the perspective of all involved and his discovery about his family's past. Come hear about a dark piece of Minnesota history and its injustices. We will also hear Warren's perspective about the subtitle of his book "A Search for Redemption in the Face of History."

## WE EXPECT TO OFFER A NEW VIDEO AND DISCUSSION SERIES

entitled: "**How Did We Get?**" by **Dr. Sarah Ruble**, Professor of Religion Gustavus Adolphus College. It will include 15-20 minute video sessions followed by group discussion on the topics of:

- How did we get the doctrine of the Trinity?
- How did we get the doctrine that Jesus was fully human and fully God?
- How did we get a church separate from Judaism?
- How did we get the doctrine of original sin?
- How did we get the doctrine of justification by faith?
- How did we get "liberal" and "conservative" Christianity?

You may recall, Dr. Ruble was the creator of the excellent video series *Race and Christianity in the United States* used in late 2021 through mid-2022. The exact timing of the new series is still to be determined as this is a program commissioned by our congregation and is currently being created, but we're looking at **April 2023**. Dr. Ruble will also join us in person later in 2023.

## Confirmation Refresher

**select Sundays at 5:00 PM**

A meal and informal discussion to provide an opportunity for members of any age to "refresh" their knowledge and understanding of many of the Christian basics that we teach to our confirmands.

**March 12** - The Church & The UCC

**April 23** - Baptism and Communion

**May 7** - Eschatology: The End Time

## Bible Study Zoom

**Tuesdays at 2:00 PM**

(no meeting April 11)

## Book Group

**3rd Thursday at 11:00 AM  
Church Parlor/Library & Zoom**

**March 16** – "The Spirit Catches You" by Anne Fadiman

**April 20** – "The Library Book" by Susan Orlean

**May 18** – "The Saturday Evening Girls" by Jane Healey



On Easter Sunday, April 9, we are hoping to welcome new members into the life of The Congregational Church. We are inviting all friends and visitors to learn more about The Congregational Church UCC, the UCC as a denomination, and how we approach church, theology, and the Bible during three **New Member Classes**. These classes will be offered **Sunday evenings on March 19, 26 and April 2 from 5-6 PM**. If you are interested in joining or know someone who might be, please contact Rev. Andrew Greenhaw at [pastorandrew@congoroch.org](mailto:pastorandrew@congoroch.org).

## SPECIAL OFFERINGS



**MARCH IS MINNESOTA FOODSHARE MONTH** - The Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign raises money to help 300 food shelves statewide. 100% of donations received by FoodShare go into the FoodFund, which is then distributed to the food shelves, including Channel One Regional Food Bank and Food Shelf. The participating food shelves also collect money during the campaign, and the share of the FoodFund that any food shelf receives is apportioned based partly on the money it collects. **The more money that Channel One receives, the larger the share of the FoodFund it will receive.**

Channel One must purchase more food than ever before because demand is higher (food shelf visits are up 33%) and donated food is down (by 50% from USDA and by 60% from manufacturers and retailers). Inflation is causing purchased food to be more expensive than ever.



Donations are crucial right now to help Channel One continue its ministry. As Basil of Caesarea, a 4<sup>th</sup> century theologian, said: "If you want storehouses, you have them in the stomachs of the poor. Lay up for yourself treasure in heaven." Please prayerfully consider giving to this organization that is doing such vital work. Please put **"Channel One"** in the memo/note line of your check (payable to church) or PayPal donation and have your donations **received at church by Monday, March 27**. Thank you!



**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING (OGHS)** will be collected on **Sunday, March 19**. For over 70 years, the **OGHS** has been helping Christians bring God's hope and healing to hurting people both in the U.S. and around the world. Since the closing years of World War II, OGHS has raised funds to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences, and bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by natural disaster. In Galatians 6:9, the Apostle Paul encourages us to generously help others and

writes, *"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."* Please give generously as you are able!

If God has touched your heart to share, please write OGHS on the memo line of your check or PayPal donation (giving link on the <https://www.congoroch.org> website) or use the OGHS envelope from the sanctuary chair pockets. Your gifts **DO** make a difference!

**OUR SPECIAL EASTER OFFERING** on **Sunday, April 9** will support two local charities this year: the Elder Network and the Jeremiah Program. Donations we will be shared between these programs:

- **Elder Network** serves individuals impacted by the limiting effects of aging through transportation programs, education programs, visitors and companions, and senior advocates.
- **Jeremiah Program** is a national organization with a mission to disrupt the cycle of poverty for single mothers and their children, two generations at a time. It supports single moms attending college with 1:1 coaching, childcare, housing and more. The Rochester-Southeast MN campus opened their doors to 40 single mothers and their children in July 2020. The campus includes an onsite child development center with capacity to serve up to 68 children.



These programs will benefit a diverse group of people representing a cross section of the residents of our community in need of assistance. Please consider these needs and contribute generously by mailing a check to the church OR via the "Online Giving" icon on the church website. Remember to specify "Easter" in the memo/notes line.

**THANK YOU** – It is with a grateful heart that we would like to express our thanks to the congregation for contributing to our RBA food drive for our students ("Backpacks for Beacon"). This has had such a positive impact on our students' lives. They are so appreciative and are genuinely moved by all the food choices. Thank you for helping those who truly need it.



Sincerely, Julie Halferty & the Rochester Beacon Academy Staff

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL SERVICE!



**Cindy Sawyer** stepped down this past winter from her work coordinating our flower ministry at The Congregational Church after more than 30 YEARS of serving in that capacity. Each week Cindy coordinated getting flowers for the altar and sending them on to members' homes. She also coordinated the poinsettias at Christmas, the Easter Lilies, and our Pecan sales. We could not be more grateful for Cindy's devoted ministry and for the light and beauty that she brought to so many in our congregation. Thank you, Cindy!

**Steve Gusa** stepped down from his role as Financial Secretary after faithfully and excellently serving the congregation for 12 years in that role. We are so grateful for the time and talent that he shared with the church doing this vital ministry. Thank you, Steve!



**Pat Espeset** stepped down from her role as Chair of the Worship Ministry Team after serving in that capacity from 2020 through 2022. Prior to serving on the Worship Ministry Team however, Pat served for five years on the Stewardship and Benevolence team and prior to that, four years with the Nurture Ministry Team. We are incredibly grateful for the gifts of Pat's leadership and the many ways she continues to serve the congregation. Thank you, Pat!



**THANK YOU TO OUR MODERATORS!** A big thank you to **Catharine Bliss** who served as our moderator in 2021 and as past moderator in 2022. Catherine did a fantastic job keeping our momentum going through COVID, fostering a positive and collaborative atmosphere in our Cabinet meetings, and welcoming and working with our new Co-Pastors. Thank you, Catharine!



**Ross Reichard** served as our moderator in 2022 and will be serving as our past moderator in 2023. Ross provided excellent, steady leadership that was extremely helpful as we emerged from the pandemic, made changes to worship and programming, and handled the tenant transition from RASA to Beacon. Thank you, Ross!



**Tammy Williams** was officially elected as our 2023 Moderator at our Annual Congregational Meeting. Tammy has served as moderator in the past, she chaired our Christian Education Team for several years, and participated in the Vitality Team. She brings great experience, talent, and enthusiasm to the moderator position and we're looking forward to a great year. Thank you, Tammy!



*- Omitted from online version to protect privacy -*