

WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 5, 2023

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902



DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM

Romans 4: 1-5, 13-17

One of the most popular songs at church camps and Vacation Bible Schools is called "Father Abraham." The lyrics go, "Father Abraham, had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you, so let's all praise the Lord." Because the song also includes a whole host of silly actions and dances, you'd be forgiven for not noticing the depth of the theological point being made by the lyrics.

Yet claiming Abraham as your ancestor is most definitely making a theological point about God and about yourself.

In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul argues that Abraham was saved not through works, through his adherence to the law, but rather through his faith- his trust in God. In quoting Genesis, 15: 6, Paul points out that it was before he was circumcised- a work of adherence to the law- that Abraham was justified by God, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." The decisive moment in his life, the moment when God chose, blessed, and justified Abraham came not through any work that he had done, rather it came simply through his faith- his trusting in God's promise. Abraham did nothing to merit this justification, he merely received it as a free gift.

Paul then goes on to claim that the descendants of Abraham are not only those who follow the laws of Moses, but also any one with faith- anyone who trusts in God's promise as Abraham did. So, the question before us is whether WE are children of Abraham. Do we believe that there is nothing we can do to earn the love of God? Do we believe that God freely chooses to love us even when we fall short? Do we believe that we are reconciled to God simply by trusting in God's grace and love for us? Do we believe these things not just in general, but do we believe them about ourselves specifically? If we do, then according to Paul, we are descendants of Abraham through faith- we are forgiven, we are justified, and we are loved. The promise made to Abraham, the promise that he would be a blessing to many nations, is fulfilled through our lives of faith in Jesus Christ. May we each pray for the faith to claim Abraham as our ancestor- the faith to trust in God's grace, love, and guidance. Amen.

Pastor Andrew Greenhaw

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Sun	3/5	10:15 AM	Sunday School
		11:00 AM	Adult Education - "The 7 Last Words from the Cross"
Tue	3/7	2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
Wed	3/8	9:45 AM	Nurture Ministry Team
		5:30 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	3/9	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir
Sat	3/11	10-Noon	Ice Skating at Rec Center

On Sunday, Communion will be served by passing of the plate. If you prefer prepackaged Communion elements, they are available in the Narthex or from an usher.

The Care Fund is collected on the first Sunday of the month and is used for emergency relief for our members. Please consider making a contribution so that we may continue to respond to the emergency needs of our members during difficult times.

Adult Education Lenten Series following worship – The 7 Last Words from the Cross” by Fleming Rutledge. 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’ll review one of her reflections to shed new light on how we think of the cross as we approach Good Friday and Easter.



We Are Going Skating! EVERYONE is invited to come skate or just spend some time in fellowship together on **Saturday, March 11 from 10 - Noon at the Rec Center** (21 Elton Hills Drive NW). 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.

Spring Forward! Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 12. Turn your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on March 11.

Adult Education next Sunday, March 12:

- **“Conversations on Race and Faith” following worship.** Hosted by the Justice and Peace Ministry Team, topics for March 12 and 19 (may be interchangeable) will be the Makoce Ikikcupi organization working toward land recovery and reparative justice with their homeland; and the first in a series from Spark House “Dialogues on Race” that include readings, video, and discussion.
- **Confirmation Refresher 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.

Book Group meets on the 3rd Thursday at 11 AM at church, plus offers a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. The book selection for **March 16** is “The Spirit Catches You” by Anne Fadiman and is available in the church office.

New Member Class - We are hoping to welcome new members into the life of The Congregational Church on Easter Sunday, April 9. All friends and visitors are invited 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@congorocho.org.

Thank You - Turkey and Syria Earthquake Appeal: The emergency relief offering to aid those suffering after the disastrous earthquake in Turkey and Syria totaled \$2,310. Our International partners of UCC via Global H.O.P.E continue to assess the needs of survivors, and are providing food, blankets, medicine, clothing, and shelter. Your continued prayers and generous giving DO make a difference. THANK YOU!

Thank You - Good Samaritan Offering: Last Sunday we collected \$1,240 for our Good Samaritan offering! A check has been sent to our neighbor Richard I.’s landlord to cover February and March rent in their entirety. Your generosity will allow Richard to avoid eviction and homelessness as he recovers from his foot surgery and prepares to return to work. Richard was overwhelmed with gratitude when I gave him the news and wants to express his thankfulness to the congregation in person soon. When a neighbor was in need and asked for assistance, The Congregational Church UCC listened, had compassion for him, and helped him in his time of need. Thank you all for your generosity and let’s continue praying for Richard’s recovery and return to stability.

MONTHLY OFFERING REPORT		<u>2022 Actual</u>	<u>2023 Actual</u>	<u>2023 Budget</u>
February	Estimate of Giving	\$12,305	\$18,516	\$21,463
	Non-Estim. Giving	\$1,310	\$2,045	\$2,667
	TOTAL	\$13,615	\$20,561	\$24,130
Y-T-D	TOTAL	\$64,519	\$62,532	\$48,260



MARCH IS MINNESOTA FOODSHARE MONTH



As announced in Spring Church Life, it's time for our annual participation in the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign. Our congregation collects funds for Channel One Regional Food Bank and Food Shelf, and MN FoodShare raises money for a FoodFund to distribute to food shelves statewide. **The more money that Channel One receives, the larger the share of the FoodFund it will receive.**

Channel One is distributing more food than ever before in the 14 counties it serves. Food shelf visits are up 33% from last year and will likely increase when the government Emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (E-SNAP) payments end in March. More food has to be purchased because donated food has decreased: by 50% from USDA; by 60% from manufacturers and retailers. Inflation is causing purchased food to be more expensive than ever.

In spite of these challenges, Channel One continues and modifies its programs and services. Read about all the Channel One programs at <https://www.helpingfeedpeople.org/programs/>.

Donations are crucial right now to help Channel One continue its ministry. As Basil of Caesarea, a 4th 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!



Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ

**ALL INVITED TO MN CONFERENCE COVENANT DAY
HERE on Saturday, March 18 from 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM**

- Workshops and Resources
- Inspiring Worship
- Panel: "When Jesus Leaves the Building: Being Church in the Community"
- Food and Fellowship with our UCC neighbors and Conference staff

Clergy, Lay Leadership and Church Members Encouraged to Attend
Registration is required. * Event fee of \$15/person.

See workshop options and register here:

<https://www.uccmn.org/2023/02/28/conferences-third-covenant-day-is-march-18/>

** Our church will cover the fee for our members - contact the church and Sarah will register for you*

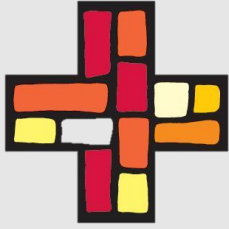


Altar Flowers – You can still provide and bring flowers for the altar to highlight a special occasion or "just because." If you order through Flowers by Jerry, they can be delivered to the church on Saturday. Contact the church office with your bulletin dedication and inquire about liturgical colors if desired.

Following Sunday worship, you may choose to keep the flowers or deliver them to someone special.

Job Opening: A Nursery Assistant is needed to work with our Nursery Lead 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!





WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 12, 2023

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Sun	3/12	10:15 AM	Sunday School
		11:15 AM	Planning Meeting – Pridefest & Juneteenth
		11:15 AM	Youth Bell Choir
		5:00 PM	Confirmation Refresher
Tue	3/14	2:00 PM	Bible Study – Zoom
		7:00 PM	Stewardship & Benevolence Ministry Team
Wed	3/15	5:30 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	3/16	11:00 AM	Book Group
		12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir
Sat	3/18	9:30 AM	MN Conference UCC Covenant Day

EARLY BULLETIN DEADLINE – Sarah Struwe will be on vacation March 20-24.

Bulletin content and announcements **for Sunday, March 26 are due Thursday, March 16.**

Sunday Adult Education follows worship in the Parlor/Library and is also available over Zoom (same link for all 3 dates). Hope you can join us!

- **March 12** - Planning meeting for Pridefest, May 20 and Juneteenth, June 19. All are welcome to attend on Sunday and on the event days.
- **March 19** - James Rock will join us to share about the Makoce Ikikcupi organization working toward land recovery and reparative justice to reestablish their spiritual and physical connection with their homeland.
- **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.”

Confirmation Refresher Sunday Night - For this month’s confirmation refresher, we will gather from **5:00-6:30 PM in the Narthex and Library** to discuss “**The Church and the UCC.**” After sharing a meal of soup, bread, and salad, we will learn about how we in the United Church of Christ understand the Church as a theological reality—as the Body of Christ. We will review the preamble to the UCC Constitution to see how our denomination views itself within the history of Christianity and in light of the theological claim that the church is one. Finally, we will review and discuss UCC history and that of our predecessor denominations. As always, we will conclude our time together by sharing in communion.

Book Group meets on the 3rd Thursday at 11 AM at church, plus offers a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. The book selection for **March 16** is “The Spirit Catches You” by Anne Fadiman and is available in the church office.

New Member Class - We are hoping to welcome new members into the life of The Congregational Church on Easter Sunday, April 9. All friends and visitors are invited 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.

Next Sunday, March 19, we will be collecting the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering, one of four annual special mission offerings conducted by the United Church of Christ. Your gift to OGHS provides immediate aid and long-term support to people experiencing hunger, thirst, disaster, or crisis around the world.



MARCH IS MINNESOTA FOODSHARE MONTH



We are still accepting donations to Channel One for Minnesota FoodShare's March Campaign. Channel One serves more than 45,000 people with food insecurity in 14 counties. It is dealing with many challenges: increased demand, less food supply from government and manufacturer sources, and rising food prices. Donations are crucial to help continue Channel One's ministry. Read about all the Channel One programs at <https://www.helpingfeedpeople.org/programs/>.

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!



Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ

**ALL INVITED TO MN CONFERENCE COVENANT DAY
HERE on Saturday, March 18 from 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM**

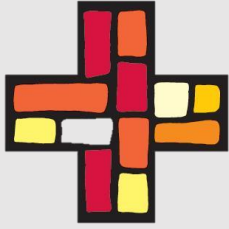
- Workshops and Resources
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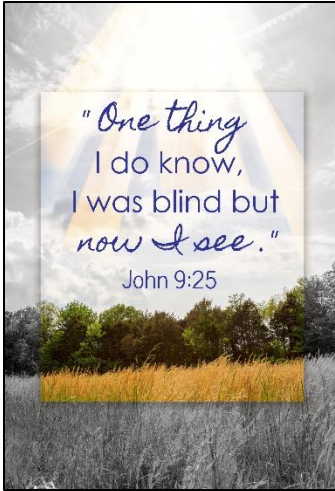
WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 19, 2023

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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“THE ONE THING I KNOW”

John 9: 1-41

The 9th Chapter of John's Gospel is a work of art. It tells this magnificently ironic story where a man born blind is able to see; yet the religious authorities remain blind to the identity of Jesus who healed him. These religious authorities have already decided that Jesus cannot be the Messiah. This certainty prevents them from witnessing the miraculous power of God and giving thanks for its manifestation in Jesus. They wind up in the odd position of being opposed to a person restoring sight for the blind!

When the religious authorities question the formerly blind man about Jesus, he is unsure about the specific title appropriate for him. What he is not unsure about is that Jesus healed him. He says, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” This formerly blind man will not let anyone else's opinions on Jesus' identity prevent him from proclaiming his experience of being healed by Him.

There are many ways that we at The Congregational Church UCC understand Jesus Christ, and a multiplicity of titles we use for Him: Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, Lord, Brother, Friend, Teacher. Some of these titles may ring true for you and others may not at this point in your life. More important than any of these titles however, is the experience of being healed, helped, delivered, or saved by Jesus Christ. Those of us who have known the saving power of God's love in our lives should follow the example of the formerly blind man and cling to the truth of our experience. One thing we know, though we were blind, now we see. Trusting in God's saving help is the beginning of our journey in faith- a journey that will continually deepen our appreciation of God's work in Jesus Christ- helping us to claim him as the Son of God, the Son of Man, our Teacher, Lord, and Friend.

Pastor Andrew Greenhaw

During worship on Sunday, Communion will be served by intinction. If you prefer prepackaged Communion elements, they are available in the Narthex or from an usher.

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Sun	3/19	10:15 AM	Sunday School
		11:15 AM	Adult Education – James Rock from Makoce Ikikcupi
		11:15 AM	Youth Bell Choir
		5:00 PM	New Member Class
Tue	3/21	2:00 PM	Bible Study – Zoom
		6:30 PM	Cabinet – Hybrid. Please review packet before meeting.
Wed	3/22	5:30 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group at Smith/Greenhaw home
Thu	3/23	6:30 PM	Chancel Choir

Out of the Office: Sarah Struwe will be on vacation March 20-24.

A special offering for One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) will be collected today, 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."



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!

Sunday Adult Education follows worship in the Parlor/Library and is also available over Zoom:

- **March 19** - James Rock will join us to share about the Makoce Ikikcupi organization working toward land recovery and reparative justice to reestablish their spiritual and physical connection with their homeland.
- **March 26** - Warren Read, author of "The Lyncher in Me" will join us to speak about the June 1920 Duluth mob of 10,000 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."

New Member Class - We are hoping to welcome new members into the life of The Congregational Church on Easter Sunday, April 9. All friends and visitors are invited 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.

Book Group meets on the 3rd Thursday at 11 AM at church, plus offers a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. The book selection for **April 20** is "The Library Book" by Susan Orlean and is available in the church office.



Palm Sunday

April 2 at 10:00 AM - Celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem by waving palms and praising God.



Maundy 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

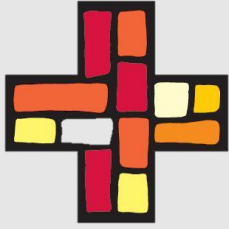
April 7 at 6:00 PM - We will commemorate the crucifixion of Christ at our Tenebrae service featuring a reading of the Passion narrative and the extinguishing of candles in steadily increasing darkness.



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.



WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 26, 2023

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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Ezekiel 37 - A Prayer from the Valley of Dry Bones by Sarah Myers

We remember that Yahweh led the Hebrews out of the desert, guiding them through the presence of a cloud, feeding them on manna, bringing them to a land and a legacy promised long ago. Whether in an ocean, lake, river, stream or cloud, every drop of moisture is a treasure and just so are we, God's children. It is in the desert that we understand this most clearly and directly. It is on the plain of dry bones that we learn this lesson most fully and well.

The hand of the Lord came upon me . . .

Although we may not feel it, the Lord is with us always.

And led me out in the spirit of the Lord . . .

Although we may not see it, God is always guiding us.

And set me in the center of the plain . . .

Although we may not sense it, the Spirit is always consoling us.

Which was now filled with bones . . .

Although we may not trust it, the desert is where we find solace.

How dry they were!

Although we may not accept it, there is life where we see only death.

The Lord asks: "Can these bones come to life?"

Although we may not believe it, serenity comes through suffering.

I answer: "You alone know that".

Although we may not be certain of it, God brings good out of harm.

Thus says the Lord God to these bones: See! I will bring spirit into you, that you may come to life.

Although we may not want to admit it, we must not run away from the desert, for it is the desert that we understand the miracle of dry bones rising to new life. It is in the desert that we are surprised with new gifts. It is in the desert that we experience the awesome power and love of God. Come, let us go out to the desert so that we might meet the Lord. Amen.

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Sun	3/26	10:15 AM	Sunday School
		11:15 AM	Adult Education - Warren Read, author of "The Lyncher in Me"
		5:00 PM	New Member Class
Tue	3/28	2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
		2:00 PM	Christian Education Ministry Team - Zoom
Wed	3/29	5:30 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	3/30	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		2:00 PM	Worship Ministry Team - Zoom
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir

Sunday Adult Education - Following today's worship, join us in the Parlor/Library and **welcome Warren Read, author of "The Lyncher in Me,"** as he speaks 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."





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Sunday Volunteers Needed - We are always in need of greeters, ushers, lay readers, and coffee hour hosts to help with our Sunday morning services. There are three ways to sign up: at church on the Narthex bulletin board, contact Sarah in the church office, or use the Sign-Up Genius link on the church website (Home page - find link under Volunteer/raised hands graphic, or News & Events page - find link under Sign Up Quick Links).