



COMMUNITY
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

September 2020 Newsletter

Come join us for Worship on Sunday mornings at uccmedford.org/media

510 E. Broadway Ave, Medford, WI 54451

To contact Pastor Mary Jo Laabs, call: 715-351-0450 (cell phone); 715-748-3391 (church office)

Church website: www.uccmedford.org

believe417@gmail.com or cuccofmedford@gmail.com

Dear friends,

I know that you miss getting together on Sunday mornings to worship. I know that you miss coffee hours

and in-person meetings. I know that you miss seeing each other. I do, too! But, at our August Church Council meeting, we talked about it again and we continue to agree that this is one way that we can continue to “love one another” best: by being distanced from one another. The WI Council of Churches and the Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ are still recommending that the best way to gather is online. Still, according to the Health Departments, wearing masks and staying distanced from one another is the safest thing to do to avoid spreading and catching the virus. Together, let’s do what we can to help one another stay safe and healthy. Thus, we will continue to keep our church building closed to public gatherings of any kind.

This coming Sunday, September 4th, we will share the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Let’s prepare our home “worship spaces” with a candle, a Bible, some wildflowers, a cross...however will be to you a symbol of this communion experience; and have some bread or crackers, juice, water or wine ready.

Then, join in the Worship Service that can be found on our webpage: uccmedford.org. Click on “media,” or read the service that you have received in the mail.

Then continue the Sunday “ritual” and join in the Sunday “Zoom” coffee hour at 10am. Signing in is easy.

Click the link below, follow the directions and enter the password when prompted...and there, in front of your eyes, will be some of the members and friends of our church family. Let’s chat!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83105711931?pwd=MGM5SDJGZzJyZDZUSUpheTloYmJlUTo9>

Meeting ID: 831 0571 1931 Password: 275883 Or by phone: 1 312 626 6799

Some good news! Our Confirmands, Ben Grube, Toryn Rau, Audrey Ruesch and Zeke Schneiderman, will be confirmed on Sunday, Sept. 13, at 1pm, at an outdoor service...in the church yard by the firepit.

Their families are invited to them as they affirm their faith. All are asked to bring their own lawn chairs, will keep distanced and wear masks! The service will be recorded and posted on our webpage..

Let us continue to pray ...for one another, especially for Charlie, Jerry, Erin, Joyce;

...for the families of Lavern Reichert, Pat Schultz and Leona Brink;

...for the family of Rev L Scott Crandall, Licensed Pastor at Peace UCC in Stevens Point;

...for the family of Marlene Schwartz and for the families of all who have passed into eternal life during the summer months.

...for our friends and family in assisted living and nursing homes.

...for those whose lives have been changed due to fire, flood, hurricane and violence.

...for those whose are running for public office, both those who will be elected and those who will not.

...for the teachers and students returning to the classrooms, both in-person and online and for the children returning to daycare, and for the health and safety of us all!

Gracious God, you know our needs before we are even aware of them. Hear our prayers for others and for us in these still strange and changing days. Help us to never stop believing that you have a plan and that it is filling in all around us. We pray in the name of Jesus who has called us to follow. Amen

Peace be with you and be safe!

Pastor Mary Jo

NEED FOOD? * If you know of anyone who would benefit from a little help with groceries?

Please share this information.

***Indianhead Food Pantry** is observing "precautions:" masks, etc. Tues, Wed- Friday from 9-2.

Food is being distributed by drive-up only. Address: 508 S 8th St (across from Brass Rail)

Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution: Hosted by: River of Hope Church

The next Pop-Up Pantry is Saturday, September 26, 2020 and every 4th Saturday of the month.

Medford High School Parking lot, 1015 W Broadway, Medford, WI 54451

Registration begins at 8:00 AM

Food bundles available 8:00-11:00 AM

Blessing Box outside our back door has non-perishable food open 24/7

Our tomato plant in the flowerpot in front of the church has fresh tomatoes. Help yourself!

ELECTRONIC GIVING ANYONE? Now might be the perfect time to consider changing over to electronic giving. There is no need to leave the house to drop off an envelope, no postage stamp required, no money order costs, and no germs exchanged! Set it up by calling the Church Office: 715-748-3391 or, go to the APP Store on your phone and add: Give Plus+ Put in the 54451 zip code and Community UCC

It's easy to do and easy to change if you want to adjust the amount or frequency or your gift at any time

Let get together "virtually"! Save the dates:

Zoom Faith Formation Time with Children, Sundays at 9:30

Zoom Coffee and Conversation, Sundays at 10

Zoom 5 Practices Mtg, Sept 21 at 6:30

Zoom Confirmation Chat Sept 9 at 6:30

Zoom Church Council Meeting, Sept 10 at 6:30

Zoom Page Turners Mtg, Sept 28 at 6:30 (possibly outside)



Note: There will be links sent by email. Save them!

To the NW Association WI Conference Congregations:

Dear Siblings in Christ, We, the WI Conference UCC North West Association Executive Board members are sending to you, the 60 NWA churches, “care” packages. With it, we are sending hopes... that it will brighten your day and provide some extra masks and useful resources; we are sending prayers... for your safety and good health. We are in this together! God is continuing to bless us! ~Mary Jo Laabs, Chr. NWA Div. of Ministry in the Local Church

~Greetings to all the dear church folks in the NW Association of the Wisconsin UCC!

As members and staff of your local congregation, you all are walking through difficult and uncertain times both in your personal lives as well as the life of your church.

Jesus promised to walk with us during difficult times. I, as a member of the NW Association Executive Board, want you to know that your Exec Board makes the same promise. We care about you and want you to know we are here to walk with you during this difficult time and help you as best we can.

(We can offer support for your pastor/church in a variety of ways: conversation, a list of resources available online, even the possibility of financial support.) May you be filled with courage, hope, and strength as you walk into the days ahead. Blessings! ~Rev. Christine Stack, NWA Member at Large

~Dear God, please comfort, shelter, and heal us during this time of trouble. May the brilliance of your love pierce the wall that has shut down familiar routines so that in the bright light of that love, we may pick out new ways to amplify our love for each other. May your love, O God, be so bright that, even on the darkest day, it picks out row upon row of people from the community, NW Association and Wisconsin Conference that care about this church and what happens to everyone in it, not just in word but in deed. That’s what the contents of this box mean. Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

~Rev. Elizabeth Hazel, WI Conference Board of Directors and Chr. NWA Div. of Ministry in the World

~As we continue our CoVid - 19 journey without a road map, I am reminded of the text from Romans 12:4-5: 4 For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

Our continued reality reminds us how important our Body of Christ connections are. We as your NWA Executive Board, want you to know that we are here for you and any services and/or help you may need. We are the church - Covid19 will not change that nor our care for you

- our beloved congregations of the NW. Blessings, ~Teri Hanson - NWA Moderator

~Dear Friends in Christ,

This COVID 19 Care Package comes to each Northwest Association congregation as a sign of our covenant unity in Christ and in the mission of Christ’s church. Each congregation brings gifts to the whole church. Each gift is required for the church to be whole and to reveal the reconciling presence of the Holy One in this world. May this gift to you stand as a symbol of God’s healing presence among us during this perilous time. May this gift support your care each for the other and for the community around you. By God’s grace may you be reminded in some way each day that nothing “in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Anchored in this promise together may we live in hope. Blessings,

~Rev Mark Pirazzini, WI Conference Board of Directors

continued

~A Note from the Division on Church and Ministry

On behalf of the Northwest Association Division on Church and Ministry I give thanks for the faithful work and worship of our churches during this difficult time. I know that our pastors and congregations have found many creative ways to be together while being apart. And, you have worked hard to maintain your outreach ministries when it would have been so easy to pull back.

It has become apparent recently that this prolonged pandemic has caused some of our neighbors to become frustrated and to let down their guard. But we on the DCM encourage all of our churches to continue to employ safe practices as long as necessary to protect our members and to be responsible examples in our communities.

Your Division on Church and Ministry continues to meet and do its work via Zoom. And we do remember all of you in our prayers. If there are other ways in which we can support you, please be in touch.

~United in Christ, Rev. Don Baumann, Chr. of the NWA Div. of Church and Ministry

Blessing for a Face Mask

God of health and wholeness, of neighbor love and kindness,
bless this mask, my slight shield against great ills:
bless the fabric that repels the drops, the ties that go behind my ears,
the wire that fits snug against my nose, the folds that cup my chin.

Make me grateful for my mask even when it makes me hot,
even when I look funny in it, even when I'm dying to take it off.
Bless me also, and everyone who for their own and other's sakes
put on this holy inconvenience every day, our minds made up to love."

By Rev. Mary Luti, UCC [from Emerge: Blessings & Rituals for Unsheltering](http://fromemerge.org), thepilgrimpress.com



~Recommended by Rev. Rob MacDougall, WI Conference Associate Minister for the NW Association

Gracious Peace-Maker, thank you for the life you have given me. I desire to be filled with your serenity. Clothe me in your calm presence. Be the stronghold of my heart. Help me to accept the irreversible and to change what is possible. May your peace grow ever stronger in me.

~Susan Vornholt, NWA Vice-Moderator

Philippians 4:6 has guided me through many worrisome journeys. The verse recognizes human anxiety, divine providence, and the power of thankfulness. As we continue to journey this troubled world, I pray in gratitude for the amazing love of our God that we will soon know God's calming peace and healing of our world. I keep our NWA congregations close in prayer - especially during this difficult year.

- Carrie Fisher, NWA Treasurer

We have been taught to look with new eyes, to hear with new ears the message of Christ so that we may share it, by living it. Thank you for leading the way, even when you yourself feel lost. You are not alone, may you feel sustained and encouraged by the Holy Spirit and the prayers of the Northwest Executive Committee.

~Patti Steevens, Member at Large

Merciful God of grace and surprise, may your spirit of love that gathers us together be upon the pastors and leaders of all our congregations in the Northwest Association to keep them in community and maintain their relationships in this time of separation. Give all leaders of your churches an extra measure of your spirit of faithfulness to open our hearts to be willing to see and accept the new ways of being your church that your Holy Spirit is offering to us in this time. Even as we lament what has been lost let us be receptive to the newness you call us to. Amen.

~Rev. David Huber, NWA Secretary

A Prayer: During this pandemic time--may you find hope and encouragement from the words of Scriptures
may you find nourishment and strength through your prayer and devotional life,
may you find time for rest and sabbath to sustain your own spirit and refill your well.

Blessings upon you and all that you do to give words of hope to the people of your community.

In the name of God made known to us through Creator, Christ, and Eternal Spirit.

~Rev. Lisa Bodenheimer, Member at Large

Just a smile and a
and carry our blessings



hug to let you know that we love you and we
with you



care about you. Stay well, stay safe,

~Ann Larrabee, WI Conference Board of Directors

Northwest Word August 2020

This year more than ever....Neighbors in Need

This year more than ever....Neighbors in Need

In 2020, more than ever, your contributions to the Neighbors in Need offering are needed. Our country is experiencing unprecedented needs in this time of the Covid-19 crisis. "I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me - you did it to me." Matthew 25:40 (The Message). The theme of the 2020 campaign is: "All Children have the right to simply be children".

The Neighbors in Need Offering supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. On average, this vital offering annually collects around one million dollars. At present, nearly 100% of monies raised is used to fund mission programs and projects.



One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). CAIM is the voice for American Indian people in the UCC with 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These churches, as well as more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations, are supported to strengthen their participation in the life of the church.

Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. In 2019, there were four grant recipients in the Wisconsin Conference. They included; the Finley Foundation, Inc for construction ASAP Pre-Apprenticeship Program, Lake Edge UCC for Invest in People, Union Congregational Church UCC for On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic, and the Alliance for Justice organization.

The Alliance for Justice is a newly formed corporation conceived by the Ho-Chunk UCC congregation in Black River Falls. The purpose of this organization is to respond to the need for education and action regarding the continuing impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery on the health and well being of indigenous people, African Americans, Asian, Latino and all others who have been negatively affected by this Doctrine.

Due to the prolonged impact of Covid-19 and the fact that many of our churches and conferences are experiencing increased economic challenges, there are some differences with NIN grants this year. The Covid-19 relief microgrants program has been established to provide financial assistance to local church ministries in crisis by repurposing and redirecting established grant funding for one year. Funds are intended to be used only for issues directly related to the impact of the coronavirus.

Applications for a NIN grant can be completed online at <https://www.ucc.org/nin> apply.

Neighbors in Need helps make a Just World For All possible. The suggested date to receive the offering is October 4, 2020. The Northwest Association's Division of the Mission of the Church in the World, encourages you to give generously.

Prepared by Sue McBride



WISCONSIN COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES
COURAGE. JUSTICE. HOLY IMAGINATION.

Update on Churches, Singing, and COVID-19

The Center for Congregational Song [provided an update](#) this week on scientific studies related to singing and COVID-19. They refer to a study out of the University of Munich and another from the University of Colorado. Having viewed webinars by these scientists, and reviewed the preliminary results of the study, we concur heartily with these conclusions:

“As of today, we continue to err on the side of caution, not because we are fearful but because we are faithful. We believe that the health and lives of congregations across the U.S. are more important than any single act of music-making. God calls us to love and care for our neighbors. There will be a time we can sing together in our churches again, but the two studies referenced above do not provide scientific evidence that it is safe for a congregation to do so right now. They should give us hope, but they should not give us permission.”

– Brian Hehn, Director, Center for Congregational Song



Council meeting minutes

OPENING Joyce P. called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. and Pastor Mary Jo read a prayer of guidance.

PRESENT Mike G.-P., Jerry G.-P., Mark J., Scott K., Pam O., Anna G., Paula J., Gloria C., Joyce C.

ABSENT Randi H.

CONSENT AGENDA

SECRETARY'S REPORT The minutes from the July 2020 meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for preview per the Consent Agenda method. Pam O. made a motion to accept the minutes. Gloria C. seconded the motion. Motion passed without discussion.

TREASURER'S REPORT The July 2020 Treasurer's Reports were emailed prior to the meeting for preview per the Consent Agenda method. Joyce P. inquired about our member giving. Mike G.-P. replied that that giving is obviously down and that the General Fund balance is approximately \$37,200. Jerry G.-P. made motion to accept the report. Mark J. seconded the motion. Motion passed without discussion.

PASTOR'S REPORT The July 2020 Pastor Reports were distributed to the Council Members for review. Jerry G.-P. made a motion to accept the July report. Pam O. seconded the motion. Motion passed without discussion.

GROUP AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Mark J. reported that the window has been installed in the church office.

Mark J. reported that the local retailers do not handle industrial dishwashers.

Scott K. reported that the basement of the church was too humid without AC so he picked up and installed a dehumidifier.

Pastor M.J. reported that she solved a water problem in the parsonage garage by digging a trench between the cement and the garage door.

Jerry G.-P. called three electricians the installation of hot water for two bathrooms but has had no response.

FIVE PRACTICES

Next meeting Monday, August 17 at 6:30 pm via Zoom.

Pam O. reported that the Five Practices team purchased a camcorder to record the weekly worship service.

(continued)

CHRISTIAN ED

Pastor M.J. reported that the Virtual Faith Formation/Sunday School is being well attended.

Pastor M.J. reported that there is a Christian Ed Zoom meeting on Wednesday, August 19 to discuss Confirmation plans and continuing online Sunday School.

CANDLELIGHT GUILD

Candlelight Guild paid John P. for mowing.

OLD BUSINESS

Pastor Mary Jo has spoken with the Wisconsin Council of Churches and Wisconsin UCC Conference has recommended to stay closed since the number of cases in the state and the county are still rising. The Council decided to stay closed at this time and monitor the situation from month to month.

Pastor Mary Jo's annual contact has been renewed.

Pastor Mary Jo is working with Tamara C.-D. to update our Safe Church Policy and will ask her to have something prepared for our September meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Joyce P. is donating \$100 for stamps for the mailing of the Worship Service print copies.

Jerry G.-P. and Gloria C. caught up on the church audit and reported that all was good.

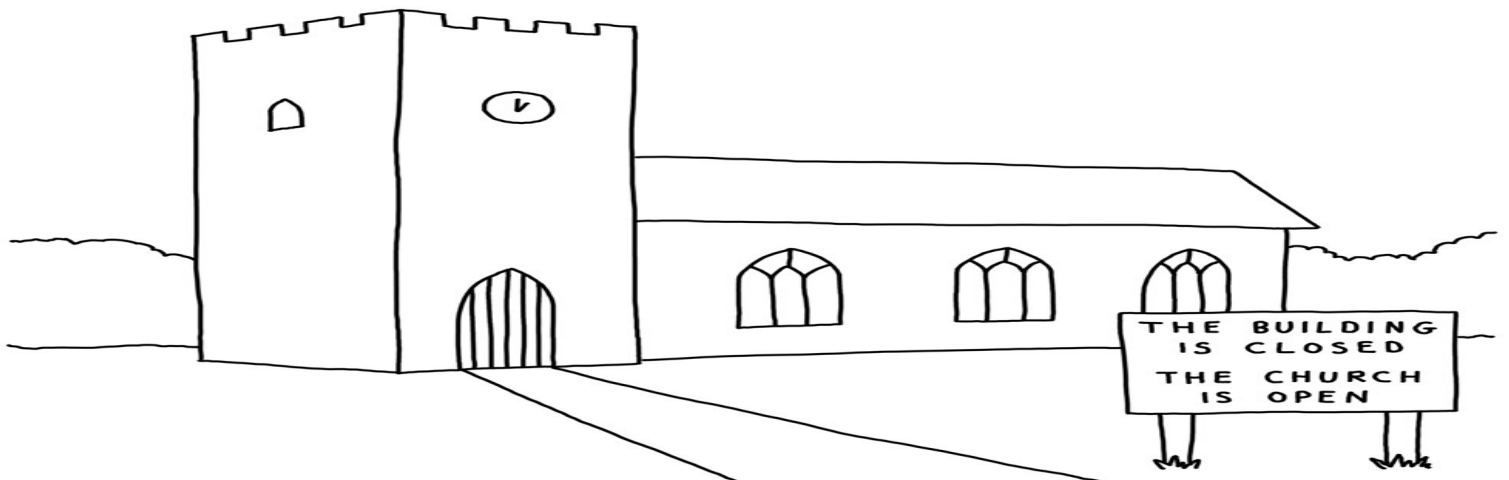
Pastor MJ has completed Boundary Training.

Council discussed an outdoor Confirmation ceremony and agreed that we should have one during the month of August while the weather is still nice.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 5 pm via Zoom.

CLOSED SESSION After reciting the Lord's Prayer, the Council members went directly into Adjournment with no Closed Session.

ADJOURNMENT Mark J. made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Scott K. seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.



CartoonChurch.com

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YOUR CHURCH GIVING APP

With GivePlus, you can quickly and easily give to your church using your smartphone. Enjoy the convenience of making credit or debit card donations as a guest user, or create an account to set up recurring donations and view your giving history. Either way, GivePlus offers a safe, secure way to make one-time or recurring contributions to your church. GivePlus is free to use and available for download at the App Store. If you have questions or would like to learn more, search our FAQs and check out our user guides below

FAQS



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Go to the Apple
or Google Play and



Store

search "give plus church":click above to download

Neighbors in Need

(NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities.

Please give me a call (Mike) at 715-223-9403 to make arrangements for pick-up from 9-1 on Mondays and Thursdays during this challenging time.

Shopping?

Why not use SCRIP?



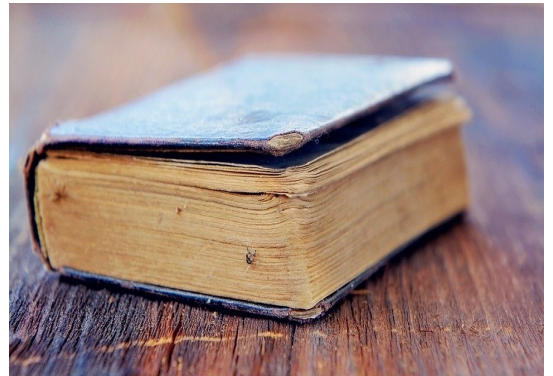
SCRIP cards make nice gifts.

Our Church gets a percentage of the cost of each SCRIP card purchased.

Call the Church office, 715-748-3391 to order SCRIP. Arby's, Maurice's, Foreman's, Old Navy, Kohl's, Buffalo Wild Wings, Barnes and Noble, BP, Walgreens, Aldi's, Famous Footwear, Best Buy, Burger King, Bed, Bath and Beyond, ULTA, Target, TJ Maxx, Taco Bell, KWIK TRIP, Subway, Hardees, Ace Hardware, Applebee's and more.

PAGE TURNERS

Our September book will be determined at a later date please stay tuned.
Thank you.



Dear friends, OUR Mission Statement:

As an open-minded and inclusive community of faith, Community United Church of Christ, Medford, WI, welcomes everyone as Jesus would.

MISSION STATEMENT

We are the church – an open and affirming community in which diversity is celebrated as an asset and fully embraced into our life, leadership, ministry, community, worship, rites, sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings without qualification or discrimination because of ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, or sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. It is our mission to serve, to pray, to love, and to hold true to these words:

“No matter who you are and where you are on your life's journey, you are welcome here.”

LET US PRAY...

For those with health concerns: friends and family; those anticipating medical testing; those at home recovering from surgery; for those who are suffering with the flu; those traveling; those serving our country here and abroad; leaders of our communities; our President, Medford faith communities, those who lives have been affected by fires, flood and hurricanes; those who have been separated from us by distance or difference of opinion; those who are grieving the loss of loved ones; the hungry and the homeless, that caring people will help them.



Prayer

For frontline health care workers, we thank you for their vocational call to serve us.

We also pray:

- God, keep them safe and healthy. Keep their families safe and healthy.
- God, help them to be knowledgeable about the diagnosis and treatment of this disease, as well as the changing protocols.
- God, help them to stay clear-minded in the midst of the surrounding panic.
- God, deliver them from anxiety for their own loved ones (aging parents, children, spouses, roommates).
- God, give them compassion for every patient in their care.
- God, provide for them financially, especially if they fall ill and are unable to work.
- God, help Christians in health care to exhibit extraordinary peace, so that many would ask about the reason for their hope. Give them opportunities to proclaim the gospel.

God, we trust that you are good and do good. Teach us to be your faithful people in this time of global crisis. Help us to follow in the footsteps of our faithful shepherd, Jesus, who laid down his life for the sake of love. Glorify his name as you equip us with everything needed for doing your will. Amen

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

If any questions should ever arise, please feel free to contact any of our Church Council members.

President- Randi Hirt (2021)

Vice President- Joyce Peterson (2021)

Recording Secretary- Pam Ouimette (2023)

Financial Sec.- Jerry Goen-Penney (2023)

Treasurer- Scott Knoff (2022)

Gloria Christensen (2022)

Mark Jensen (2022)

Anna Grube (2021)

Paula Johnson (2023)



DIGITAL NEWSLETTER:

You can receive this newsletter by email. If you would like to try the digital option, send an email to: cuccofmedford@gmail.com and ask to be added to the email newsletter list

AUGUST FINANCES:

As of 9-31-2020

Income \$ 4,593.00

Expenses \$ 4,981.94

Community United Church of Christ
510 E. Broadway Avenue
Medford, Wisconsin 54451



Open and Affirming

“No matter who you are or
where you are on your life’s
journey, you are welcome
here.”



**Due to the Covid-19 pandemic
please be sure to check your
options in the calendar for
Worship and Sunday school
etc. Also you can listen to
Pastor’s sermons by clicking
below or by going to
uccmedford.org**

September 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<i>1 psalm 105</i>	<i>2 Jeremiah</i> 15:15-21	<i>3 Psalm</i> 26:1-8	<i>4 Ezekiel</i> 12:1-14	<i>5 Psalm 149</i>
<i>6 Matthew</i> 18:15-20 Communion Zooms : Time w/ children, 9:30 Coffee: 10	<i>7 Mike 9-1</i> <i>Ezekiel</i> 33: 7-11	<i>8 Psalm</i> 119:33-40	<i>9 Romans</i> 13:8-14 Confirmation chat at 630 via Zoom	<i>10 Romans</i> 14:1-12 Council meeting 630 via Zoom	<i>11 Romans</i> 14:13-23	<i>12 .</i> <i>Romans</i> 15:1-6
<i>13</i> <i>Matthew</i> 18:21-35 Zooms : Time w/ children, 9:30 Coffee: 10 Confirmation 1:00	<i>14 Mike 9-1</i> <i>Exodus</i> 14:19-31	<i>15</i> <i>Psalm 114</i>	<i>16 Exodus</i> 15:1b-11, 20-21	<i>17 Romans</i> 15:7-13	<i>18 Genesis</i> 50:15-21	<i>19 Psalm</i> 103:1-13
<i>20</i> <i>Matthew 20:1-16</i> Zooms : Time w/ children, 9:30 Coffee: 10	<i>21 Mike 9-1</i> <i>Exodus</i> 16:2-15 Five practices 630 via zoom	<i>22 Psalm</i> 105:1-6, 37-45	<i>23 Jonah</i> 3:10-4:11	<i>24 Psalm</i> 45:1-8	<i>25</i> <i>Philippians</i> 1:21-30	<i>26</i> <i>Matthew</i> 21:23-32
<i>27 Psalm 114</i> Zooms : Time w/children, 9:30 Coffee: 10	<i>28 Mike 9-1</i> <i>Romans 15:14-21</i> Page turners 630 possibly outside	<i>29</i> <i>Exodus</i> 17:1-7	<i>30</i> <i>Philippians</i> 2:1-13			