


Tower Notes - June 2025

Celebrating 180 years of Community Based Ministry



 **First Congregational United Church of Christ**
An Open & Affirming and Immigrant Welcoming Church
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#Love&JusticeChurch

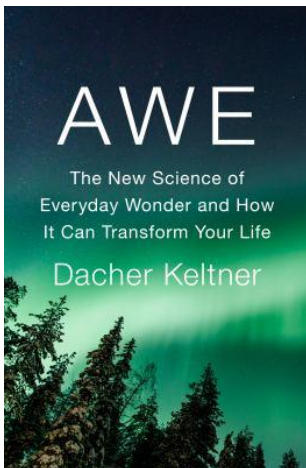
Rev. Dr. Bob Gross



Pastor's Message

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away . . . well at least as far as northern Ohio, where the church I served conducted Vacation Bible School. The curriculum we used invited us to speak about “God Sightings,” moments when we are particularly aware of God’s presence. Each evening began with the same prompt, “Tell me about your God Sightings”

The first couple of evenings we heard expected responses like “the sunset” or hiking by the falls in Cascade Park. By the third night we started hearing more advanced responses like, “my sister and I figured how to share a toy without fighting,” or “I saw my brother take out the trash before he was asked.”



Remembering that experience has prompted me to be more alert to God Sightings, to be more open to awe. Consequently, I have begun reading, “Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life” by Dacher Keltner. In the introduction he refers to Jane Goodall, who believed that chimpanzees feel awe and have a sense of spirituality grounded in a capacity Goodall describes as “being amazed at things outside yourself.” Being amazed at things outside ourselves just might be the medicine we all need these days. Taking time to notice the good all around us and, consequently, spend a little less time focusing on the bad news we keep hearing about.

Will you join me? Will you open yourself to the Divine all around us?
Will you open yourself to awe?

Pastor Bob

June Worship Themes and Scriptures

June 1 – “Freedom to Open,” Holy Communion, Ephesians 1:15-23, Psalm 93, Luke 24:44-53

June 8 – Pentecost, “Freedom to be Filled,” Acts 2:1-21, John 14: 8-17, 25-27

June 15 – Father’s Day, “No Pain, No Gain,” Romans 5: 1-5, John 16: 12-16

June 22 – Summer Solstice, “You Shall Go Out with Joy,” Isaiah 55:10-13, Psalm 92: 1-4, 12-15

June 29 – ONA Sunday, “Take Up the Mantle,” 2 Kings 2: 1-2, 6-14, Galatians 5:1, 13-25

July 6 – Holy Communion, “Surprising Prophets,” 2 Kings 5: 1-14, Psalm 30

Thank you to our May liturgists: Mike Rundle, Nathan Roehl, Sarah Beers, Neil Deupree.

If you would like to be a liturgist, sign up in the Fireside Room on the clipboard.

Thank you to our May Fellowship Hour hosts: Finance Ministry, Membership Ministry.

We would love to have you host Fellowship/Coffee Hour. Sign up on the clipboard in the Fireside Room.



Home Communion - If you would like Pastor Bob to bring Communion to your home, don't hesitate to contact the church and let him know.

From the Search Committee:

Our church profile was posted on the UCC Ministries Opportunity website on Monday, April 21. We have already had candidates apply for the position. The Search Committee has begun interviewing candidates by Zoom. Please pray for God to connect us with an awesome pastor!



Pentecost is a Christian holiday which takes place on the 49th day after Easter Day. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles of Jesus while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

On Pentecost Sunday, it is traditional to wear red. This color symbolizes the Holy Spirit, joy, and the "fire" that descended upon the apostles. In many traditions, both ministers and members of the congregation wear red clothing to celebrate. June 8th is Pentecost Sunday this year.

June *BIRTHDAYS*, Happy Day to All!

2 Lisa Endl	14 Claire Dieckhoff	25 Jan Knutson
2 Mary Virgil	14 Jane Lennox	25 Pam Maxson
2 Monette Wiskia	17 Helen Huffman	26 Tom Clippert
3 Dave Schollmeier	18 Jim Gay	27 Tim Green
4 David McCabe	18 Bonnie Stalker	27 Dave Griffiths
4 Diana Pike	24 Haley Budrow	28 Karissa Greer
5 Helen, Nick, Ken Forbeck		28 Lisa Peterson



June *ANNIVERSARIES*, Congratulations

7 Amy & Tyson Mohr	14 Jim & Karel Cripe
8 Roger & Jan Willeford	14 Brian & Jan Knutson
11 Pastor Bob & Mary Gross	19 Becky & Gregg Kingsbury



If your name ever gets missed from the birthday or anniversary list, please let Becky know.



We no longer collect for Grocery Bag Sundays each month, but ECHO is always in need of food and non-perishables, which you can drop off during their business hours, or at church. Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

ECHO June Needs:

Breakfast bars	Diapers (sz 4-6)	Toothbrushes	Spaghettios
Shampoo	Peanut butter & jelly	Feminine products	Tuna Helper
Paper bags	Spaghetti & sauce	Deodorant	Toilet paper
Hamburger Helper	Diced tomatoes	Canned Tuna	Laundry soap

*Life is an echo...
what you send out,
you get back!*



ECHO Fundraisers in June:

Dine Out To End Hunger Monday June 2nd

Dine out or order take out to support ECHO! Each restaurant will be donating 10% of their sales to ECHO. Participating restaurants include:

Basics Coffee & Deli/Bodacious Brew/Charlie's Place/Milton Avenue Culver's/West Court Street Dairy Queen (10 am-2 pm)/Drafthouse/GR's Sandwich Shop/H&S Japanese Express/Hacienda Real Mexican/Knute's Bar and Grill/Little Sister Crepe Shop/Looking Glass/Luke's Deli/Mac's Pizza Shop/My Apartment Pub/Sandee's Thai Fusion

June 28th DASH WITH A SPLASH

1-Mile Family Fun Run-Walk at new Palmer Park Pool. Check ECHO's website for details later.



Our Parish Care members provide a confidential PRAYER CHAIN. You are invited to send your prayer requests to them any Sunday by using a yellow slip found in the pews or by calling the church office.

CONSISTORY MEETING May 19th

Appreciations were given to Pastor Bob for finding positive ways to address sensitive topics, to Robyn, Jan Knutson, David Murray and the choir for their musical performances, to those who helped with the rummage sale and spring clean-up, and to the Education Ministry for stepping up in Debi's absence.

A presentation was given by Becky Huber of Rock County Human Services regarding using the church as an overnight warming site during extreme weather. We would only be providing the space. All other needs would be provided. Consistory voted to become a site for the 2025-26 year using the Fellowship Hall and adjacent bathrooms.

Nancy Stabb received a Church Audit Guide created by the ELCA. She asked to find a couple of people to look it over and pare it down to what fits our needs as we look to have an audit done. The Memorial Committee met and is moving forward to making memorial fund spending more transparent, including creating ways to make sure family members see the funds spent as they wish. A big thank you to Willa Bagley for the years that she has spent on that committee as she steps down. Karen Atkins has joined the committee. Outreach is looking at being active in the Rock the Pride event on August 16th. They have also applied for a grant to do more at the garden where they provided a picnic table last year.

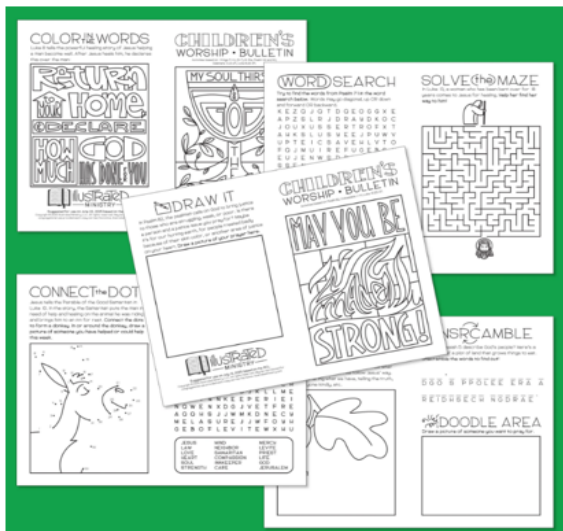
Nancy Stabb presented a new brochure for Planned Giving to the church. The Endowment Committee is being asked to find ways to share it with the congregation. Pastor Bob and President Darla Dernovsek are looking to glean from the YMCA's 35 and Beyond project procedures that our congregation might use to look forward. Nine jars are in the sanctuary for the youth fundraiser. Membership is planning four potlucks this year. The next one will be in July.

Submitted by Jean Schollmeier



Thought for the month: Show respect to people even when they don't deserve it. Respect is a reflection of your character, not theirs.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH NEWS



SUMMER KID'S BULLETINS

New bulletin each week!

Easy to win prizes:

Do the bulletin during church

Put your name on it

Put it in the box.

Do you love Messy Summer Sunday? Be sure to be at church on the last Sunday in July! It will be BIG, it will be MESSY! (7-27-25)



Don't forget that camp time is coming up! Contact Debi if you are interested in info or would like a scholarship. Check out the schedule on line here:
<https://ucci.org/summer-schedule/>



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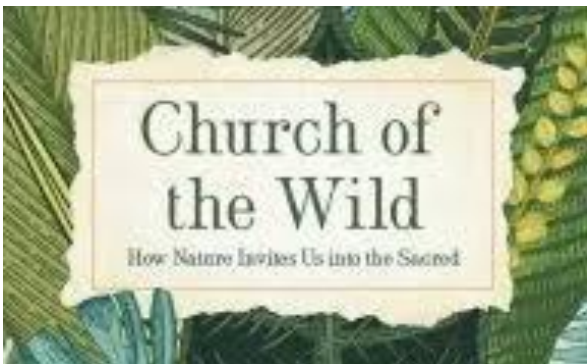


54 S. JACKSON STREET, JANESVILLE, WI 53548
JANESVILLEUCC.ORG

From Outreach Ministry

Monthly Mission for June is YELLOW BRICK ROAD

Yellow Brick Road's focus is on creating community spaces through events and meetups, educating the broader community about LGBTQ+ realities, and advocating for issues that impact LGBTQ+ lives. They side with Love and accept people for who they are, no matter how they identify. Envelopes will be in the pews. Tracy Buck, vice president of Yellow Brick Road will speak on Sunday, June 1.



The next Church of the Wild will be held on Saturday, June 21st at 10:00 am. We will meet at Carver Roehl Park.

As always, bring a chair. Part of the service will be a 25 minute solo saunter, an alone time where you listen to what the Sacred has to tell you. If you choose to sit instead of saunter, you may want to bring a notebook for journaling or drawing.

Please let Barbara Bendlin know if you have any questions 608-530-7510.

Free Community Dinner



Community Meal is an outreach that our church has participated in for over 15 years. We serve a healthy, balanced free meal to those in our community who need or desire a freshly prepared meal. It is served the first Saturday of each month. We began serving it as an indoor sit-down meal but has transformed into a to-go style meal. We currently serve over 100 meals each month.

The next Community Meal will be on Saturday, June 7th at 4:00 pm. A to-go meal of BBQ sandwiches, chips, fresh fruit, veggies, and cookies will be served.

Guests can drive up or walk up to the back parking lot door and meals will be delivered to them.

Want to volunteer for Community Meal? You can donate desserts, food prep and assist serving meals on the day of the meal. Desserts can be dropped off during office hours or a pick-up can be arranged. Volunteer by contacting Nancy Stabb, Jeanine Fry or Bonnie Stalker, directly, email bonniebrewer17@hotmail.com, or sign up in the Fireside Room on the clipboard.

SEEKERS BOOK CLUB NEWS

Seekers book discussion group meets on Thursdays from 4:00-5:30 pm in the Atrium of the church. Starting June 19, they will begin reading "Original Blessing: Putting Sin in Its Rightful Place" by Danielle Shroyer.

You are invited to attend the discussion even if you haven't read the book.

For further information, contact Barbara Bendlin at Barbara.bendlin@gmail.com



As of April 30, 2025

Expenses. (Personnel,Building,Administration,Program)	\$109,294.56
Income (Donations and Rent)	\$ 93,516.78
From Reserves invested at WFUCC	\$ 20,000.00
Expenses exceeded Income by	\$ 4222.22

Submitted by Nancy Stabb Treasurer



On Sunday, May 25th, we honored our Music Scholars and gave them their scholarship checks. A reception was held upstairs in the Spiritual Arts Center.

Five of the Music Scholars will be graduating from high school this month. They are Jacob Schmaling, Lucy Natale, Bonnie Sanchez, Sonia Tomasiewicz and Alexa Jensen.

We are so thankful for their music talents over the last few years and we wish them well in their next journey.



First Congregational Church
54 South Jackson Street
Janesville, WI 53548



*This page was
attached to the
Tower Notes that
that were mailed.*

First Congregational United Church of Christ

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday mornings 9:00 - 1:00 or by appointment.

Ministers
Interim Pastor
Christian Ed. Director
Music Director
Pianist/Organist
AV Technician
Secretary
Bookkeeper
Nursery Coordinator
Custodian

All Members of First Congregational UCC
Rev. Dr. Bob Gross
Debi Cox
Robyn Doege-Brennan
Paul Finger
Kaydence Troia
Becky Kingsbury
Denise Caldwell
Gwen Charlet
Matthew Charlet

Church Leadership & Volunteers

President
Treasurer
Finance Chair
Gardeners
Lawn Mowers:

Darla Dernovsek
Nancy Stabb
Mike Rundle
Nancy Stabb, Barbara Bendlin, Jeanine Fry, Tani Abendroth,
Mike Rundle, Sybil Streeter, Doug Newton, Martin Huckstep, Warren Myers,
Tim Green