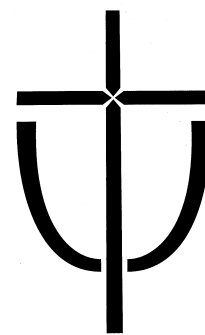


Still Speaking



Indeed, the word of God is living and active...
-Hebrews 4:12

September 2021

The Inside Scoop

Newsletter Deadline

*Our next newsletter
will be published the week of
October 20, 2021.*

*The deadline for that newsletter is
Friday, October 15, 2021.*

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Living Lives of Thanks

Are you a Thank You Note writer?

I remember my very first set of stationery. It was a set of thank you cards that had blue background, dotted lines to write on, and little cartoon animals who looked like they were throwing a party, and there was a sheet of balloon-shaped stickers to put on the envelopes to make them extra festive.

Oh, how I loved practicing my new penmanship skills by writing thank you notes for birthday and Christmas gifts!

Over the years, however, I'm afraid that my Thank You writing has declined. Somehow, sitting down and putting pen to paper to express gratitude is a practice that has declined in my life. I still value Thank You notes, but I often feel guilty about how long it takes for me to get them in the mail because it always feels like there are dozens of more pressing matters on my plate.

And, if my inbox is any indication, I'm not alone.

That's not to say my gratitude has diminished. In fact, it has multiplied exponentially. I suspect I'm not alone in that, either.

Now, you may have heard me preach from time to time that feeling guilty can be healthy if it motivates us to behave differently, so the question becomes how can feeling guilty about writing fewer and fewer Thank You notes motivate changed behavior?

One possible answer comes to me in, of all things, the Led Zeppelin song "Thank You."* The lyrics begin, "If the sun refused to shine, I would still be loving you. When the mountains crumble to the sea, there will still be you and me." The rest of the song lifts up more beautiful declarations of love, but never once says the words "Thank you," even though that's the song's title. The song offers an effusive expression of gratitude without using the words.

I think that faith is often a lot like that.

(continued on page 2)

Lectionary Readings**September 26****18th Sunday after Pentecost**

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22
and Psalm 124
Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29
and Psalm 19:7-14
James 5:13-20
Mark 9:38-50

October 3**19th Sunday after Pentecost**

Job 1:1, 2:1-10 and Psalm 26
Genesis 2:18-24 and Psalm 8
Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12
Mark 10:2-16

October 10**20th Sunday after Pentecost**

Job 23:1-9, 16-17 and Psalm 22:1-15
Amos 5:6-7, 10-15 and Psalm 90:12-17
Hebrews 4:12-16
Mark 10:17-31

October 17**21st Sunday after Pentecost**

Job 38:1-7, (34-41)
and Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c
Isaiah 53:4-12 and Psalm 91:9-16
Hebrews 5:1-10
Mark 10:35-45

October 24**22nd Sunday after Pentecost**

Job 42:1-6, 10-17
and Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22)
Jeremiah 31:7-9 and Psalm 126
Hebrews 7:23-28
Mark 10:46-52

October 31**23rd Sunday after Pentecost**

Ruth 1:1-18 and Psalm 146
Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and Psalm 119:1-8
Hebrews 9:11-14
Mark 12:28-34

(continued from page 1)

How we live our lives, the commitments we make, the values with which we operate, are an expression of gratitude to the Divine. I'd like to encourage you to think of basking in the last warm days of summer, marveling at the changing of the leaves, and holding someone's hand as they die as expressions of gratitude to our maker, to think of voting for policies that promote justice and care for the vulnerable among us are ways that we offer our thanks to God.

What else in your life might you come to understand as expressing gratitude to God? Buying local or from ethical companies? Shifting your diet to more plant-based foods and other efforts to be more ecologically minded? I challenge you this fall to look at your behaviors through the lens of gratitude, and rather than feeling guilty if there is a stack of Thank You notes on your desk waiting to be written, to see how you live your life as an expression of gratitude.

Early in October, you'll be receiving a mailing about Union's annual pledge drive, our yearly request to ask you to commit to financing the work of the church. I'm continually grateful for the generosity that our congregation has expressed, while I also am conscious that the costs continue to rise on things like paying fair wages and benefits and maintaining our building which houses so many vital ministries. As you are looking at your life through eyes of gratitude, one practice that I hope you'll contemplate is how your pledging can be a reflection of thanks.

Looking forward to hearing about ways that gratitude weaves its way throughout your life.

Oh, and I am actually looking for a Thank You note writer, too. If putting pen to paper is one of your gifts, and you'd be willing to write cards on behalf of the church from time to time, let me know.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Bridget

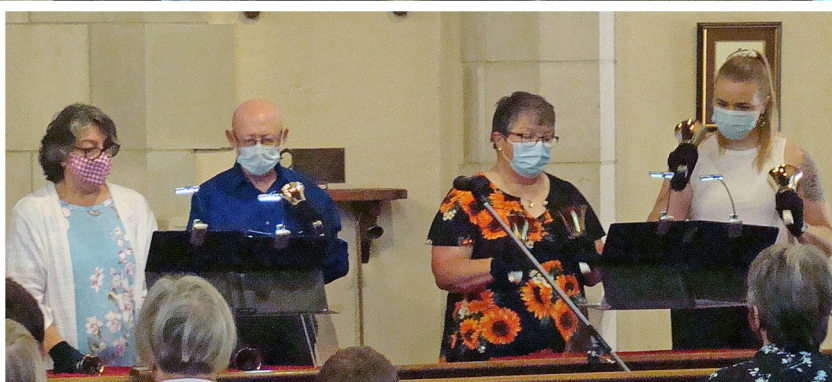
* I know referencing Zeppelin is risky, keying my example to resonate with a certain demographic while probably inducing others to turn up their noses or roll their eyes. For those of you in either of these camps, perhaps you can substitute Zeppelin with Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" or Pharrell's "Happy" instead.

**Our pledge campaign this fall
will help us explore how Union helps us to**

Love Our Neighbors . . . No Exceptions

Watch the church communications for details.

ReUnion Sunday 2021



Memorial Services

Betty Brown — A memorial service for Union member Betty Brown will be held at Union Church on Saturday, October 9 at 2 p.m. with a reception in the courtyard to follow.

Helen (Punky) Griggs — That same day, a memorial service for legacy Union member Helen (Punky) Griggs will be held at Hope United Church of Christ in Sturgeon Bay. A visitation will take place from 1 to 3 p.m., with a service at 3 p.m. Masks required.

Rummage Sale Has Been Postponed

The rummage sale will be postponed until the spring. Please call or text Christie Reese (920-273-5349) if you have items already collected, that you would like to donate. Thank you.

Groups On Hold

Given the rise in COVID numbers and lagging vaccination rates, the Men's Breakfast Group, the Ladies Lunch Bunch and Priscilla Circle remain on hold until further notice.

Neighbors in Need

The United Church of Christ offers grants to organizations nationwide engaged in justice work. Our church will support this effort with a special offering on Sunday, October 3. Any gift, no matter the amount, shows we share a hope for a world free of poverty and prejudice.

Adult Education, Sunday, October 10 Figuring Out Your Giving Strategy

Ever feel like too many organizations ask for support? Wonder about the spiritual reasons for your giving? Looking to better connect your heart's passions to your giving? We'll zoom at 9 a.m. on Sunday, October 10 with Wisconsin Conference Generosity Minister Rev. Andrew Warner to reflect on ways to develop a strategy for your giving. We'll not only consider the place of church in our giving, but look at how to balance and make sense of all the opportunities we have to support organizations doing good work.

Our Church Family



A total of 41 people attended the Dick Lathrop Memorial All-Church Retreat held at Moon Beach from September 10-12. (photo courtesy of Phil Hauck)

Seminary Secrets* Miniseries on Israel's Wisdom Literature

Leader: Julie Harder: jblackharder@new.rr.com or 920-465-0752.

Every culture has its "conventional wisdom"—the "truths" that "everybody knows." Ancient Israel, in which Christianity has its roots, was no exception. Their conventional wisdom is most crystallized in the Book of Proverbs, which is primarily a list of pithy advice, such as "Rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." And "Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman without good sense." Proverbs also fosters the claim that good things, including riches and honor, come to the wise and to the righteous.

But some ancient Israelite authors, looking at the real world and noticing that bad things happen to good people and that suffering and death come to all, penned alternative, "counter-wisdom" works, such as Ecclesiastes and Job.

Starting Wednesday October 6, Seminary Secrets will begin a three-week study of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. (We studied Job just two years ago, so will skip that book this time, unless there's an outpouring of demand for it!)

VENUE: Zoom. Given the continuing surge in Delta variant Covid cases, including break-through infections in vaccinated people, we will continue with classes via video-conferencing, for now. Grr!

DATES: Wednesdays October 6, 13, and 20.

TIME: 6:15 to 7:30 p.m.

TO SIGN UP: Please contact Julie at jblackharder@gmail.com. I'll send you the readings and a link to the Zoom session.

* If you aren't familiar with Seminary Secrets, here's a short explanation: Julie Harder has been leading these classes at Union on Wednesday nights since 2013 (not counting the break for the pandemic last year!) Julie holds a master's degree in theology/biblical studies and has taught religious studies at St. Norbert College. The focus of Seminary Secrets is on learning to interpret the Bible using the standard tools that biblical scholars employ. Typically, students complete some readings prior to each class. If you want to know more about Julie's journey and why she calls her classes "Seminary Secrets," she'd be happy to send you a longer explanation!

Blessing Box News

Outreach Ministry is very grateful for your generous response to the last Stock the Box Drive. Your support is key, and it's never the wrong time to donate items or funds. Put "Blessing Box" on the memo line of checks made payable to Union Church or drop off items any time you're at church.

Our next Stock the Box drive is Saturday, October 9 from 9 a.m. to noon. We are currently very low on paper towels. The Blessing Box donation cart is located near the office. Thank you!

Let's Build an Ark on November 7!

Union Church has a long and generous history of supporting Heifer International. This year will be no different!

Heifer Sunday is November 7, and on this auspicious day our congregation will be visited by several animals from the community, much to the delight of so many for whom meeting a goat or alpaca might be an unusual happenstance.

As we near Heifer Sunday, our congregation will have opportunities to learn about the empowering, sustainable, and economic development activities and programs that Heifer supports around the globe. From improving access to fresh water to raising bees for honey and pollination to ending hunger, Heifer International and their partners work within communities to tackle complex topics such as sanitation, poverty, and malnutrition.

How can you help? Everyone at Union is welcome to assist in our efforts to once again build an ark. An "ark" is \$5,000 in donations collected through Union to benefit Heifer's work. Take-home banks will soon be available for everyone to drop spare change in, and Heifer Sunday co-chairs Heather Collins and Sherry Warren will be sharing more stories of Heifer's successes in our classrooms and sanctuaries. Volunteers will be needed on November 7 to staff the tables, share in serving treats that celebrate the animals and products that are the focus of Heifer's international work, and enjoy a beautiful day in the courtyard with animals.

If you are interested in helping, contact Heather or Sherry.



Reviving Your Spiritual Life with the Psalms

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in a short book published after his death, calls the Psalms the prayer book of the Bible and regards them as a foreshadowing of Jesus's words. Other interpreters have linked a complete reading of Psalms to a spiritual journey. In times of trouble, traditional Jewish communities recite the psalms — often the entire book — as a prayerful response.

Robert Alter, an Old Testament translator, traces the origins of the Psalms to poetic traditions in Egypt, Mesopotamia and particularly to Syro-Canaanite imagery which reverberates in the sometimes warlike demeanor of God and the presence of a great sea monster. But Alter emphasizes that the emotions — laments, thanksgiving and praise — were distinctively adapted for Israelite worshipers in the period of 500 years after the Babylonian exile.

Church of England priest and poet, Malcolm Guite, found himself reflecting deeply on the Psalms which blazed to life for him during his isolation during the pandemic's first iteration in Great Britain. David's Crown, the resulting series of poetic reflections, were influenced by early Christian use of the Psalms and, like Bonhoeffer, are deeply tied to Jesus the Christ. Like John Donne before him, Guite weaves together a corona or crown by repeating the last line of one song to the first line of the next, creating a modern, vibrant reading of the texts.

Ron DeLeon, an Oblate of St. Benedict and a spiritual direction, wrote Praying with the Body: Bringing the Psalms to Life. Recognizing that Western Christians — the frozen chosen — have the least amount of bodily practice in their spiritual lives, this is a handbook — like a workshop between two covers — that guides us to a full-body experience with the Psalms. The prayer movements are simple and do-able and are accompanied by reflections, meditation and in-the-world applications for a robust selection of the Psalms.

If you have found your spiritual life faltering, the Psalms are a powerful way back. The books mentioned here can be found in the basket under the window in the church library.

—Cathy Putman

Shining A Light on Truth and Justice

Come Celebrate JOSHUA's 17th Year at Our Annual Banquet

On Monday, October 25, we will host a banquet to celebrate and raise funds for JOSHUA. The evening will consist of a silent auction, raffles, a cake walk, a cash bar, dinner and more. We are pleased to announce that Walter Lanier, the chair of the Religious Leaders Caucus from MICAH (Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope), will be our keynote speaker. He will speak about racism and its effects throughout the nation.

You can find more information on our website (www.joshua4justice.org)
or on social media @joshua4justice.

Email us at joshua4justice@gmail.com with any questions.

Monday, October 25 (doors open at 5:30 p.m.)
Riverside Ballroom, 1560 Main Street, Green Bay

Union Church Calendar

September 26, 2021—October 31, 2021

September 26 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

September 28 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study (Zoom)

September 29 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. PF & YCA

September 30 Thursday

3:30 p.m. Pastoral Relations
Committee (Zoom)

October 3 Sunday

World Communion Sunday Neighbors in Need

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy
Communion in the
sanctuary

October 5 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study (Zoom)
4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry
(Zoom)
5:30 p.m. Worship Ministry (Zoom)
6:30 p.m. Education Ministry
(Zoom)

October 6 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. PF & YCA
6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets (Zoom)

October 7 Thursday

6:00 p.m. New Members Class
(Zoom)

October 9 Saturday

9:00 a.m. Stock the Box Drive
2:00 p.m. Memorial Service for
Betty Brown (at Union)
3:00 p.m. Memorial Service for
Helen Griggs (Hope UCC
in Sturgeon Bay)

October 10 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Adult Education:
"Figuring Out Your
Giving Strategy" (Zoom)
9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

October 12 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study (Zoom)
5:00 p.m. Stewardship Ministry
(Zoom)
6:30 p.m. Adult GSA (English Room)

October 13 Wednesday

5:30 p.m. New Members Class
(Zoom)
6:15 p.m. PF & YCA
6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets (Zoom)

October 14 Thursday

5:00 p.m. Membership and Inreach
Ministry (Zoom)
6:00 p.m. Common Ministry (Zoom)

October 17 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

October 19 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study (Zoom)
5:30 p.m. Bell Choir

October 20 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. PF & YCA
6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets (Zoom)

October 24 Sunday

New Member Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

October 26 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study (Zoom)
6:30 p.m. Bell Choir

October 27 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. PF & YCA

Our Attendance

August	* <u>2021</u>	<u>2019</u>
1st Sunday	110	93
2nd Sunday	54	112
3rd Sunday	80	100
4th Sunday	50	94
5th Sunday	57	
Totals	351	399
Average	70.2	99.8

* Attendance figures for 2021 do not include numbers for those who streamed our worship services online.



Union Congregational
United Church of Christ
716 S. Madison Street
Green Bay, WI 54301

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Interested in Learning More About Union Church?

Interested in learning more about Union Congregational UCC and discerning whether this is the right church home for you? Our Membership and Inreach Ministry will be hosting two Zoom sessions to help people get to know Union, our community, and each other on Thursday, October 7 at 6 p.m. and on Wednesday, October 13 at 5:30 p.m. It's helpful to participate in both sessions.

After those two sessions, people who would like to join the church will be received into membership during worship on Sunday, October 24.

Please contact the church office at office@unionucc.com or 920-437-9266, to register and receive the Zoom link.

Union Congregational United Church of Christ

716 S. Madison Street
Green Bay, WI 54301
e-mail: office@unionucc.com
(920) 437-9266

Bridget M. Flad Daniels

Senior Minister

Tim Harder, M.D.

Moderator

Church Office Hours

Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

For more information about us,
visit our web page
at <http://www.unionucc.com>