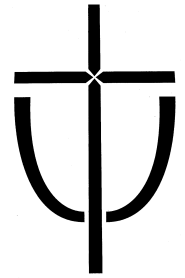


Still Speaking



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

May 2023

Union Church: Helping to Reboot and Recharge

The Inside Scoop

Newsletter Deadline

*Our next newsletter will be published
the week of June 28, 2023.
The deadline for that newsletter is
Friday, June 23, 2023.*

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One of the modern images that I love to use when talking about spirituality and church is the idea of a reboot. We've all needed to reboot a device before: when a computer takes forever to finish a task, an app just won't open on a phone, a tablet says that updates are required.

All of those things—taking forever to finish a task, needing an update, or being in a perpetual state of being closed—are reasons that our spiritual lives need a reboot, too.

As our Building for Faith in Action Capital Campaign has been highlighting some of Union's strengths, we've talked about being a sanctuary, being an incubator for new ways to live the Gospel and share the Good News, serving as a beacon of social justice, and using innovation and technology to help people access the ministry we are doing. In coming weeks, we'll hear of Union as Advocate, as Landmark, and as Prophet. Another of Union's strengths is the way our church serves as a source of energy and inspiration. Put another way: how our church helps members and visitors alike to reboot and recharge.

My understanding of technology is minimal, I'll admit, but as I understand it, there are some pretty common reasons a device may need to reboot.

Sometimes, needing to reboot is about having been running too long. I'm guilty of this, both in regard to devices (leaving my laptop running for days so that I don't have to close down everything that I'm working on simultaneously) and in regard to life (saying 'yes' to too many projects and commitments, constantly trying to fit more into my calendar). Church, and particularly worship, often serves as a simple, meaningful antidote to the modern experience of multitasking and being on the go, go, go.

Another way Union serves as energy and inspiration is when we need an update. A lot of folks imagine that church is stuck in the past, working with an iOS that is generations out of date. Whether through sermons or prayers or music or classes or conversations, one of Union's great strengths is that we are a church that strives to help people stay up to date. Sometimes this updating looks like high quality adult education. Sometimes it looks like helping one another to understand why a particular issue is important. Just this morning, I had a conversation with a member who wanted help formulating language to talk with friends who were critical of their efforts to help immigrants and refugees. After some good discussion, I said, "In my understanding of following Jesus, this

(continued on page 2)

Lectionary Readings

May 28

Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30

Psalms 104:24-34, 35b

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 or

Acts 2:1-21

John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

June 4

Trinity Sunday

Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Matthew 28:16-20

June 11

Second Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 12:1-9 and Psalm 33:1-12 or

Hosea 5:15-6:6 and Psalm 50:7-15

Romans 4:13-25

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

June 18

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 18:1-15, (21:1-7) and

Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 or

Exodus 19:2-8a and Psalm 100

Romans 5:1-8

Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23)

June 25

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 21:8-21 and

Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17 or

Jeremiah 20:7-13 and

Psalm 69:7-10, (11-15), 16-18

Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39

July 2

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 22:1-14 and Psalm 13 or

Jeremiah 28:5-9 and

Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18

Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42

(continued from page 1)

blanket belongs to the person who needs it." That was the update this person needed in order to be able to step back into conversation with their friend. I know you all have this kind of conversation with one another all the time. Union is a great source of the inspiration and energy we consistently need to update our operating systems.

And, just as our devices sometimes need to reboot because an app just won't open, sometimes Union helps us to reboot the things in our lives that are closed, shut tight. The Holy Spirit has given Union an extra portion of the gift of opening—opening our minds and hearts and doors. As far back as our church's founding by interracial members, openness has been a thread that has woven itself through our congregation. Openness was key when Rev. Jeremiah and Eliza Porter harbored formerly enslaved people in the church as they sought freedom in Canada. Openness was the key virtue at work when Union adopted a family that had recently resettled from Afghanistan. And openness has been the standard we have flown since our congregation voted to become Open and Affirming of LGBTQIA+ people in 1998. In hindsight, the movement of the Holy Spirit in all of these openings is evident and clear. All are obviously openings brought about by our community's willingness to listen to the urgings of God. But at the time, many were controversial. One of the roles that Union has consistently played throughout our 187-year history is that of opener. Union opens closed minds, locked doors, that which has been entombed, allowing the freshness of the Holy Spirit to breathe new life where once things weren't working.

Perhaps most often, though, the way that Union inspires and energizes is more like that of a power cord than a hard reboot. Time and again, I hear from people who say that plugging in at Union helps them to recharge for the week, helps them to get the energy they need to step back into the world.

As our Building for Faith in Action Capital Campaign invites us to call to mind Union's many strengths, I lift up our church's ability to inspire and energize. God has done good and powerful work in and through our congregation, and I look forward to being a part of how the Holy Spirit energizes us next!

Attendance for April and Holy Week

April	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
1st Sunday	150	46
2nd Sunday (Easter in 2023)	246	82
3rd Sunday (Easter in 2022)	94	135
4th Sunday	120	52
5th Sunday	95	—
Totals	705	315
Average	141.0	78.8

Holy Week	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Palm Sunday	150	82
Maundy Thursday	40	19
Good Friday	48	45
Easter 8 a.m.	47	—
Easter 10 a.m.	199	135
Totals	484	281

Picnic in the Church Hall

Fried chicken with fixin's,
pies, refreshments and games!

Union's Picnic is June 11

Join us at the picnic to celebrate
Commitment Sunday and try your hand
at these fun family games:

- Chicken in a Basket
- Drop the Clothespin
- Egg Carry
- Connect Four
- Giant Checkers
- Ring Toss
- Tic Tac Toe
- And, of course, Bubbles!

Thank you to those who donated games.

—Deb Rose



Ties to Mexico

Watch your church communications
this month as Outreach Ministry and
the Immigration Advocacy Team launch
a new collaboration with
Black Mountain UCC
in Scottsdale, Arizona
to make blankets for people in
need at the border.



Join Us for a Walking Tour of Union Church on June 4

Please join us for a tour of Union's physical structure on Sunday, June 4,
starting at 11:30 a.m. We will meet in the Narthex (inside the front doors)
of the Sanctuary and travel all three floors of our church building as well as
making a few stops outdoors.

Our tour should take about one half hour as we visit key points in our
building's structure, history and future installations. We will not have time
to go into depth regarding our church's symbolism, but we will highlight the
important elements of our architecture. We will also see the locations of
needed renovations, maintenance and improvement projects which are
part of our Building for Faith in Action Capital Campaign.

When: Sunday, June 4 at 11:30 a.m. (the tour lasts about 30 minutes)

Where: Meet in the Narthex (inside the front doors) of the Sanctuary

What to Bring: Comfortable walking shoes

Your Opportunity to Work with Union's Funniest and Most Charming!

Are you interested in giving just a few minutes of your time every few
weeks to hang out with some of the funniest, most charming, and all-
around best people in our congregation? If so, consider signing up to help
facilitate Children's Moments during church on Sunday mornings! If you're
interested, please reach out to Beth Lyman Piontek, Education Ministry Vice
Chair, at 920-217-3564 or beth.e.lyman@gmail.com.

Our Church Family

One of the gifts of being a church family is the support we offer one
another. This month, we pray:

-

Juneteenth Celebration is June 17

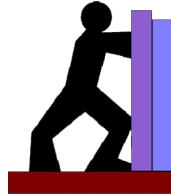
Outreach Ministry invites you to extend our partnership with We All Rise African American Resource Center by supporting the City of Green Bay Juneteenth Celebration. The event is being held Saturday, June 17 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.) at Joannes Park. We All Rise has asked we partner in the following ways:

- Talk about and attend the event with friends and family.
- Help staff Union's table to share Sparkle Blessings (like we do for PRIDE), and raise awareness that Union's doors are open to all.
- Sign up to pick up trash and clean up at the conclusion of the event.

As a ministry team we are also asking that you pray for God's protection and peace at the event, as we celebrate the end of legalized slavery in the U.S.A.

We need your help! Please indicate on the sign up form, when you are available to assist. You can choose multiple shifts. Please sign up to volunteer (before June 1) on the sign-up sheet at Coffee Hour.

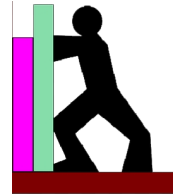
If you have questions, contact
Wendy Woodward at
wwoodward@hotmail.com
or text/phone (847) 814-5168.



Your Church Library

Astrophysics in the Church Library

by Cathy Putman



In a small anecdotal poll I took this past month, I asked a number of people what they learned about the universe in school. While most had exposure to the solar system and maybe recognized the term “big bang,” few really knew about the evolution of matter. If that’s you and you’re saying “Gee, I should read about that,” check out Astrophysics for Young People in a Hurry in the church library. It’s a less complex version of Neil deGrasse Tyson’s book for adults and contains probably as much as you want to know. Or if sciency talk isn’t your thing, we have an almost poetic narrative by an astrophysicist, Brian Swimme, called Journey of the Universe.

Why the discussion of astrophysics in a church library article? I think a comparison of picture books telling origin stories is helpful.

In the children’s section, we have two Biblical creation stories steeped in Black culture and tradition. First, He Made the Sun, a verse adaptation of a spiritual, starts with the sun and moon but moves quickly to the creation of a variety of animals. Simple and lively, it’s perfect for 2s and 3s. The Creation by James Weldon Johnson (author of the hymn “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing”) is a vision of an approachable, powerful God who creates the world and humans, because He is lonely. A sense of order and life force dominates the retelling.

Both the Adam and Eve story and the seven days story of creation are elegantly retold in Virginia Hamilton’s In the Beginning. This compilation gathers 25 stories, classifying them as mythologies. She explains, “These myths from around the world were created by people who sensed the wonder and glory of the universe. Lonely as they were, by themselves, early people looked inside themselves and expressed a longing to discover, to explain who they were, why they were, and from what and where they came.”

Our cosmological creation story differs from Hamilton’s description in one way. We have looked outside ourselves to satisfy our wonderment. A trio of picture books expresses our current understanding of the empirical creation story: Older than the Stars, The Stuff of Stars, and The Big Bang Book. They talk about the early moments of the universe with a unified message for readers: we are stardust; we are one with the universe. It’s a story of from where and what we came. And in the evolutionary process, there’s a materialist why also.

The Biblical creation narratives are fraught for many progressive and science-minded Christians. By failing to incorporate our recent coming to understand the cosmos, the church misses an opportunity for wonder and for a deep recognition that all things – air, water, earth and energy – and all forms of life are bound together in the Book of Nature. And that’s a perspective that is more and more needed as our planet teeters on the edge of profound change.

Books mentioned here are in the basket under the window in the church library.

Union Church Welcomed Eight New Members on May 7



Steve and Betty Hartman

Steve and Betty have been actively engaged in the ministry of Union Church for years. They share many interests in servant ministries within and beyond the framework of formal religious ministries. Betty has dedicated herself to others in roles of parenthood, public education, teaching, counseling and administration. Steve has served in pastoral ministries for over 40 years.

Steve and Betty have served in churches in Beloit, Green Bay and Neenah, and in Gibbon (NE) and Penfield (NY). They have three married children and are blessed with four beautiful grandchildren, several grand-puppies, and kittens.

Libby Sievert

Libby is excited to be joining Union Church. She has been attending since 2018 with Jessica Lundgren, who is now her wife.

Libby and Jessica have a one-year-old son, Toby. About a year ago, Libby resigned from her full-time job to become a full-time mom. Jessica and Libby are very much into working out; both teach at a local gym. They are also into traveling and are looking forward to the camping season.

Libby and Jessica love how involved Union Church is within the community, and they look forward to doing their part to help out.



(L-R): Libby, Jessica, and Toby



Melissa and Michael Stepp

Melissa was born and raised in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania. She was raised as a UCC member in Selinsgrove.

Melissa is a labeling coordinator at Nature's Way. In her spare time, she loves to garden and spend time with her dog, Gus.

Michael is originally from Sunbury, Pennsylvania. He is a financial accountant and enjoys hiking, camping, kayaking, mountain biking, sports and family life.

Melissa and Michael have six adult children, two sons-in-law, and two grandchildren. The couple is excited to join Union Church. They desire a church family that actively accepts all members of humanity.

(continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5)



(L-R): Barry, John, and Marilyn

Marilyn Halgrimson

Marilyn has retired from a variety of jobs, the last one being a medical transcriptionist. She lives in Green Bay with her husband, Barry. The Halgrimsons moved here in 2020 to be near their daughter, Emily Lakatos, and her family.

Marilyn’s interests include hiking, visiting parks, gardening, and playing with her grandson, John. The Halgrimsons spent years in a UCC church in Hinckley, Illinois, so Union feels like home. Marilyn is looking forward to becoming an active participant in the church.



(L-R): Emily, John, and Steve

Emily and Steve Lakatos

Emily and Steve moved to Green Bay from NW Indiana in 2020. Their son, John Lewis (named for the late Civil Rights leader), was born shortly after. They are expecting a little girl in July.

Both Emily and Steve have family roots in the Lutheran church, but Emily grew up in the UCC. They both value the openness and diversity of Union Church.

Steve is the director of the Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary and they live inside the park. Emily has been a full-time parent since their move to Green Bay, forgoing her career as the managing editor of a magazine in the precision machining industry. Steve has a deep love of fishing and Emily is an avid hiker. Both love birdwatching, gardening, Door County, and the outdoors in general. They are thrilled to have found their church home in Green Bay.

Who’s Graduating?



We would like to recognize our 2023 graduates in our June newsletter. Please let the church office know (437-9266 or office@unionucc.com) if you will be a 2023 graduate (high school, college) and what type of degree (associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate, etc.) you have earned. We would like to say congratulations and give others a chance to do the same!

Imago Dei Ecumenical PRIDE Worship and Picnic

Mark your calendar for our 3d annual Imago Dei Picnic, an annual, ecumenical event with a mission to celebrate the dignity of LGBTQ+ people. This event is open to all – those curious and learning, those who are allies, and those who are the LGBTQIA+ community.

June 4 at Green Isle Park in Allouez from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.
12:00 p.m. Ecumenical Liturgy
1:00 p.m. Free Cookout & Picnic Lunch

Bring your friends and family (and a comfy chair if you like)! RSVP by emailing imagodeigb@gmail.com, or by using the paper form at Union Central. Union has again been tasked with bringing 6 to 8 side dishes for the event. Sign up at Union Central if you’d like to help in that way.

Union Church Calendar

May 28, 2023—July 23, 2023

May 28 Sunday

Invitation-to-Prayer Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary or stream it online followed by Coffee Hour in the church hall

May 29 Monday — Memorial Day

Church Office is Closed

June 4 Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion in the sanctuary or stream it online followed by Coffee Hour in the church hall

11:30 a.m. Walking tour of the Union building

12:00 p.m. Imago Dei Ecumenical PRIDE Worship & Picnic at Green Isle Park

June 6 Tuesday

2:30 p.m. Education Ministry
4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry
5:30 p.m. Worship Ministry

June 7 Wednesday

7:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast Group at Denny's on Oneida

June 8 Thursday

4:00 p.m. Adult Education Committee
5:00 p.m. Membership and Inreach Ministry
6:00 p.m. Common Ministry

June 11 Sunday

Commitment Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary or stream it online
11:30 a.m. Church Picnic in the church hall

June 12 Monday

11:30 a.m. Generosity Team

June 13 Tuesday

5:45 p.m. Stewardship Ministry

June 17 Saturday

11:00 a.m. Juneteenth Celebration at Joannes Park (until 5 p.m.)

June 18 Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary or stream it online followed by Coffee Hour in the church hall

June 19 Monday

11:30 a.m. Ladies Lunch Bunch at the Village Grille

June 25 Sunday

Strengthen the Church Offering

10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary or stream it online followed by Coffee Hour in the church hall
11:00 a.m. Garden Work Day

July 2 Sunday

10:00 a.m. Jazz worship with Holy Communion in the sanctuary or stream it online followed by Coffee Hour in the church hall

July 4 Tuesday—Independence Day

Church Office is Closed



July 9 Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary or stream it online followed by Coffee Hour in the church hall

July 16 Sunday

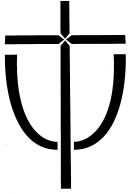
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary or stream it online followed by Coffee Hour in the church hall

July 17 Monday

11:30 a.m. Ladies Lunch Bunch at the Village Grille

July 23 Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary or stream it online followed by Coffee Hour in the church hall
11:00 a.m. Garden Work Day



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

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GREEN BAY, WI



Garden Work Days Planned in June and July

It's spring. The Union Gardens are singing for help! We are digging a new perennial garden in the courtyard where most people enter church. We can't wait for all to be greeted by a blanket of year-round color in the coming months.

There's also trimming and mulching and cleaning to be done, so we've planned for these work dates this summer after church. Please mark your calendars for **June 25 and July 23**. Thanks!

—Kathy Seifert

Union Congregational United Church of Christ

716 S. Madison Street
Green Bay, WI 54301
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(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>