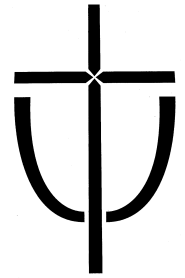


# Still Speaking



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

February 2024

## Spring Forward!

Daylight Saving Time Begins  
Sunday, March 10

## Longtime Organist Ray Thompson to Retire

### The Inside Scoop

*Our next newsletter will be published the week of **March 13**. The deadline for that newsletter is **Friday, March 8**.*

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Some of you are aware that I will be retiring as organist at Union Church on February 11. As a musician, it is easy to communicate with you through the organ pipes, but not as easy using my voice. Therefore, I have decided to share a few words with you in writing.

I have been playing the organ at Union since 2005, and it has been a wonderful place to work. I have always felt welcome and learned that this congregation is filled with amazing people—all of you! Several people have asked me why I decided to retire at this time. The reason is mainly physical, and here is the story:

The feet said to the head, “We have been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy and it is getting more difficult to play the pedals on the organ.” The left foot said to the head, “I have drop foot and it is impossible for me to move from heel to toe.” The fingers said to the head, “We are feeling the effects of arthritis and can no longer move accurately and quickly.” The head said to the body, “It is time to retire.”

Five music directors have served Union during my 18-plus years as organist. Marshall Moss was the first music director I worked with. I learned

*(continued on page 2)*

**Lectionary Readings****February 11****Transfiguration Sunday**

2 Kings 2:1-12

Psalm 50:1-6

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9

**February 14****Ash Wednesday**

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or

Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalm 51:1-17

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

**February 18****First Sunday in Lent**

Genesis 9:8-17

Psalm 25:1-10

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:9-15

**February 25****Second Sunday in Lent**

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalm 22:23-31

1 Romans 4:13-25

Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9

**March 3****Third Sunday in Lent**

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

**March 10****Fourth Sunday in Lent**

Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

**March 17****Fifth Sunday in Lent**

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16

Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

*(continued from page 1)*

much from Marshall, and he will always have a special place in my heart. The list continues with Dr. Michael Rosewall, Dr. Courtney Sherman, Seong-Kyung Graham and Haley Steele. Each had their own unique style and personality, and I consider it a gift to have worked with all of them.

Dr. Charles Mize was the pastor who originally hired me, and my friendship with Chuck continues to this day. He was followed by interim Steve Hartman, and Bridget Flad Daniels. Bridget has been exceptionally good to me and I consider her my counselor, confidant, leader of prayer, and dear friend. Those mentioned are part of Union's history and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to know and work with all of them.

When you are the organist, you are playing when the people come into worship, followed by driving them out with the "never too loud" organ postlude. As I look into the future, I see myself regularly sitting in the pew at Union and I am excited about participating in worship from a totally different perspective. It will be such a treat to visually see what is happening and feel more a part of the "body of Christ."

As life continues, I hope to be able to get to know all of you better. I also have to mention what an honor it has been to play such a magnificent organ every Sunday. It was valued at \$1.3 million years ago, and its value has surely increased. I hope the church continues to care for and cherish this special instrument.

See you in church!

Ray Thompson

**Our Attendance**

<b>December</b>	<b><u>2023</u></b>	<b><u>2022</u></b>
1st Sunday	NA	116
2nd Sunday	158	126
3rd Sunday	104	112
4th Sunday	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day
<b>Totals</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>354</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>131.0</b>	<b>118.0</b>
Dec. 24 early	155	114
Dec. 24 late	167	118

<b>January</b>	<b><u>2024</u></b>	<b><u>2023</u></b>
1st Sunday	89	online
2nd Sunday	76	101
3rd Sunday	100	101
4th Sunday	105	92
5th Sunday		105
<b>Totals</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>399</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>99.8</b>

Note: The weather was a factor in 2nd Sunday 2024 attendance.

**Lent is  
Almost Upon Us!  
Ash Wednesday  
is February 14**

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. We will worship in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. The service offers us the possibility to renew our dedication to the ways of Jesus. We will receive the ashes of repentance and the oil of healing. Join us!

**Priscilla Circle  
Meets February 27**

Priscilla Circle will gather at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 27 in the English Room. Sue Tucker will talk about a European river cruise that she and her husband, Ed, took recently. Join us.

**One Great Hour  
Of Sharing Offering  
is March 10**

One Great Hour of Sharing is a churchwide offering to support the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the UCC. Through this offering, we invest in communities worldwide by providing education and vocational training to girls and boys, supporting microcredit lending and seeing people through to self-sufficiency, empowering families with skills to support themselves and their neighbors, and participating in sustainable solutions that offer dignity to all.



This year for Lent, we're once again going to the movies! Gather with your fellow Unionites as we screen and discuss the faith implications of one film every Sunday night of Lent. With the theme of forgiveness running through each evening, the discussions promise to be lively.

We'll ask two participants to sign up to bring a big pot of soup every week. Sign up at Union Central or contact the church office. Plan on 5 p.m. until 7:30 or 8 p.m., depending on the length of the movie.

**February 18 - The Power of Forgiveness (2008)** - A dramatic documentary film by Martin Doblmeier that takes an honest look at the intensity of anger and grief that human nature is heir to. It profiles the most dramatic transgressions imaginable along with stories that feel more familiar and manageable to the viewer. The film explores the role forgiveness holds in various faith traditions and examines how the scientific community is now measuring the physical and mental benefits of letting go of grief and resentment. (Not Rated)

**February 25 - Manchester by the Sea (2016)** - A guilt-ridden loner grapples with being named legal guardian of his 16-year-old nephew. He reluctantly returns to Manchester by the Sea, the fishing village where his working-class family has lived for generations which holds haunting memories. There he is forced to deal with a past that separated him from his wife and the community where he was born and raised. (R)

**March 3 - A Beautiful Day In the Neighborhood (2019)** - Based on the true story of a real-life friendship between Fred Rogers and an award-winning journalist (called Lloyd Vogel in the movie) who is assigned to write a profile of Rogers. Their relationship is transformative as Lloyd overcomes his skepticism and learns about empathy, kindness, and forgiveness from America's most beloved neighbor. (PG)

**March 10 - Ben Is Back (2018)** - A young man unexpectedly returns home to his family's suburban home on Christmas Eve morning. His mother is relieved and welcoming but wary of her son staying clean. Over a turbulent 24 hours, new truths are revealed, and a mother's undying love for her son is tested as she does everything in her power to keep him safe. (R)

**March 17 - The Forgiven (2017)** - A fictionalized drama concerning Archbishop Desmond Tutu's early days as chair of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The story of an imprisoned racist government death-squad assassin seeking clemency and testing Tutu's faith, *The Forgiven* tackles its important political, religious, and social issues. (R)

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## Now For the Fun Part

After three years of clearing and some replacement planting, the former Biblical Garden, located to the north of the parking lot, is ready for its final push as former Stewardship Chair Clay Reese signaled in his annual report. And it's not just planting, which is why I need some help.



Center section before clearing circled

I'd like to repurpose the center section to include a fire pit in order to make the space fun and inviting for congregational use as well as a pollinator and bird life space. As in all Creation Care projects, one of the goals is appreciating and serving our kinship with all of life. To do this we need planners, designers, people gatherers, wildlife lovers, and tool users.



Center section after clearing, also benches, one lighting tower and power source behind bench, red granite

I'd like to gather this planning/working group willing to bat around plans that use some or all of the existing benches, figure out the fire pit equipment/size, accommodate the existing lighting and power source in a greenspace, recommend plants and amenities for insects and birds, evaluate using the current red granite and establish a work plan. We need all sorts of skills and knowledge!

I imagine a short-term work team, starting in February and completing in June or July. Please come together nature lovers, beauty lovers and party people! It will be fun.

Email or text Cathy Putman, 920-435-1540, or [cputman@new.rr.com](mailto:cputman@new.rr.com) to volunteer.

### Ladies Lunch Bunch Meets February 19 & March 18



Join us at 11:30 a.m.  
at the Village Grille

Questions? Contact Sue Zanzig  
at 920-494-4172

## Our Church Family

Each week in our This Week at Union email, we live out our baptismal promises to love, support, and care for one another by sharing some of our joys and concerns. The prayer requests that are new since our last newsletter was printed are:

# Singing Our Identity: Union's Music Ministry's Next Verse

Haley Steele, Music Director

As we join our spirits in celebration of the career achievements of our outgoing organist, Ray Thompson, in coordination with his retirement on February 11, we have begun the necessary work of seeking a successor to serve as our partner for the next movement of our musical tradition. During this time of transition, we will hold space for the opportunity to engage in a blend of activities, such as moderated discussions, repertoire and song surveys, and individual questionnaires designed to make sure our music ministry aligns with the congregation's priorities, perceptions, and practices.

We've created an Organist Search Advisory Team—Jeff Gibson, Tim Harder, Zoe Harkoff, Jade Hatton, Tracey Klickman, and Emily Lakatos, as well as Pastor Bridget and me—with the intent of representing a breadth of connectivity with our worship and music ministry as well as a diversity of perspectives. Collectively, the team will help to facilitate our attempts to capture the congregation's hopes and dreams for our music ministry and then work with those ideas as we interview professional candidates for the staff position.

Our next step is to hold two opportunities for both singing and conversation, which we're calling Singing Our Identity Sessions. The intent of these sessions, to be held on Sunday, March 10 after worship and Tuesday, March 12 at 7:30 p.m., is to invite the congregation into an experience that will nourish our musical palates, give Pastor Bridget a brief opportunity to educate us on some of the function and theology of congregational music, as well as provide a time for the congregation to articulate our priorities for our music ministry. Additionally, a written survey will also be forthcoming. We hope that you will mark the dates for these sessions in your calendar and join us in our exploration of all the ways we are congregationally and individually shaped through our experience as we seek to not only maintain but even invigorate the vitality of Union's music ministry.

When we participate in congregational music-making, we practice an art form that has a rich, long,

and vibrant history within faith communities worldwide. Our music-making, in acts of worship both public and private, can shape our identity and invite us to powerful and even transformational experiences. At its finest form and function, our music reflects, informs, and articulates elements of our shared beliefs while simultaneously creating tension as it augments the differences among each of our personal experiences. None of us experience a single act of musical worship identically to our neighbor—no matter how long we have been worshipping together or how closely our beliefs correlate. Congregational music can indelibly reinforce our collective and individual identity while sometimes unifying and other times challenging our community across boundaries of circumstance, privilege, geography, class, race, or denominational difference. It's so important.

Consider some of your favorite hymns. In what ways do they resonate with you? Perhaps you are fond of the words and lyrics and their poetic metaphors and cadence—perhaps just the opposite! Perhaps they are tied inextricably to a time and place (physical or spiritual) in your life. Perhaps some of your favorites are void of that nostalgia and are meaningful in the freshness with which you experience them. None of us can answer these questions uniformly, but we have universally experienced some kind of musical transformation that enables us to answer them.

Our congregational music experience is inevitably built of paradoxical moments that are both social and personal, both extraordinary and mundane, and this experience is intrinsic in how we embody our beliefs and motivate our actions as a result. Ethnographer Glenn Hinson calls this the *Circle of Faith*, in which “*experience grants knowledge, knowledge informs belief, [and] belief invites further experience.*” Because of the distinct, transformational power of music to reflect, inform, and articulate our congregational and individual experience, it is important to create space for mindful engagement with this art form, and entering a time of transition presents us with an opportunity to do just that.

## Blessing Box News on Reverse Side

# Blessing Box Food Drive

## March 3, 2024

### Current Needs

- Instant Oatmeal Packets
- Instant Potato or Rice Mixes
- Paper Towel
- Pouch Tuna or Chicken
- Ramen Noodle Packs
- Toilet Paper

Please place donations on the cart at the front of the Sanctuary on Sunday, March 3 or on the blue table inside the Mayflower entrance at any time.

To make a monetary donation, please send a check with "Blessing Box" on the memo line, or donate via the church website at [www.unionucc.com/giving](http://www.unionucc.com/giving).

**Thank you!**



**Singing Our Identity on Reverse Side**

## The F Word: Stories of Forgiveness

Union has a reputation of being cutting edge, but is focusing on the F Word for Lent going a little too far, even for us?

Not if the “F Word” is forgiveness.

This year for the season of Lent, Pastor Bridget will be working with the materials and resources from the Forgiveness Project, an nonprofit organization founded in the U.K. in 2004 by journalist Marina Cantacuzino to help people examine and overcome their own unresolved grievances.

### From their website:

“Forgiveness cuts public opinion down the middle. It is a concept that inspires and affronts in equal measure. To some, it is weak and offensive, while to others it is a form of self-defiance, the only way to live with the past without being held captive by it. The stories represented in the F Word exhibit show the highly personal, diverse and complex nature of forgiveness.

The testimonies we collect bear witness to the resilience of the human spirit and act as a powerful antidote to narratives of hate and dehumanization, presenting alternatives to cycles of conflict, violence, crime and injustice.

At the heart of The Forgiveness Project is an understanding that restorative narratives have the power to transform lives; not only supporting people to deal with issues in their own lives, but also building a climate of resilience, hope and empathy.”

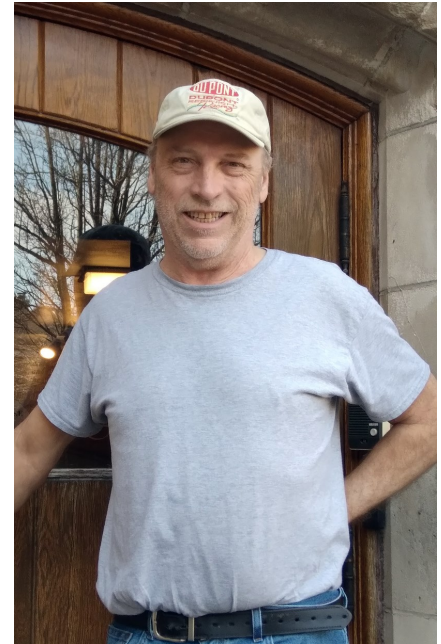
Along with Pastor Bridget’s weekly sermons, Union will be co-hosting the F Word Exhibition **Sunday, February 25 through March 10** along with JOSHUA. The exhibition consists of a series of 18 banners with portraits and first person narratives/stories of people who have been profoundly impacted by the practice of forgiveness. After March 10, the exhibit will move to St. Norbert College campus for a few weeks.

We are excited that Louisa Hext, the U.S. curator of the F Word: Stories of Forgiveness Exhibition who has been active with the Forgiveness Project for over 13 years, will join us for the opening of the exhibit after worship on February 25 and will offer a Lunch and Learn at noon that day in the church hall. What’s more, we’re in conversation to line up a reading from the Forgiveness Project founder herself, Marina Cantacuzino in April when she is in the United States to promote her latest book, “Forgiveness: An Exploration.”

Union members and friends are encouraged to visit the F Word Exhibition whenever the church is open: **8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (M-F) and 9 a.m. to noon on Sundays, February 25 through March 10.**

Sign up at Union Central for the Lunch and Learn with Louisa Hext on February 25 or RSVP to the church office.

The exhibition and the Lunch and Learn are free and open to the public through a generous grant from Union’s Gifts and Memorials Ministry.



## Welcome Brad!

It is with joy that we welcome a new sexton (a fancy church word for custodian/maintenance technician), Brad Dorin.

Brad lives near the church with his wife and black lab, and enjoys the outdoors and playing with his grandchildren.

In Brad, I think you will find someone who will take deep pride in maintaining our church building as well as someone who is gracious and has a gift for hospitality. When you meet him, please help him to know how grateful we are that he has joined our church staff, and help him to start out on the right foot by pitching in however you can.



## Sunday Morning Adult Education

### February/March 2024

Gather in Bagby Chapel at 9 a.m. (first and third Sundays of the month) for these informative and inspiring conversations:

**February 18 — Ward Bacon** will discuss his recent mission work, including working to provide apartments and utilities for Ukrainian refugees in Poland and delivering generators, heaters, and medical supplies to residents of Ukraine. In 2023, Union's Gifts and Memorials Ministry granted \$6,000 for Bacon to provide generators to Ukrainians. He will also discuss the work the Bacon Family Foundation is doing in Namibia, building schools and providing water to villages.

**March 3 — The Rev. Kari Parker**, the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, will be with us to share her work of learning and teaching about land acknowledgments. Land acknowledgments aren't just about the land. They are about relationship. Admitting to hard truths, seeing neighbors in their fullness, and naming commitments with an intent to follow through – this is work that takes time beyond the writing of a statement. Land acknowledgment conversations are conscious acts toward repair of what is broken between us. They invite people from dominant cultures to actively discomfort ourselves, to listen, to slow down, and to let go of our preferred solutions.

**March 17 — Dr. Julie Harder** will lead us as we explore the question, "Did Jesus die to pay for my sins?" The most widespread understanding of the crucifixion is that Jesus sacrificed himself in order to redeem us from our sins. So it may surprise you to learn that the New Testament authors actually disagreed on the significance of the crucifixion. Paul comes close to the "paid for our sins" theology, but Matthew is vague, Mark is vaguer, and Luke clearly rejects the idea that Jesus's death changed reality. If you've been uncomfortable with the idea that a loving God would require his son to be tortured and killed in order to forgive, then come and discover some biblically-based alternatives.



We are excited to share that On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic, the Brain Center of Green Bay, We All Rise African American Resource Center, and many other organizations Union has partnered with over the years have been selected to participate in Give BIG Green Bay 2024! This annual event is coordinated by the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation and the Green Bay Packers. This year, 50 local nonprofit organizations were selected to

participate in this 24-hour online giving event. It gives them an opportunity to raise awareness and funds for their mission while giving the public the chance to learn about local nonprofits, all on one online platform.

Give BIG Green Bay has raised \$10 million over the past six years. A total of \$500,000 in matching funds is available for donations made through the Give BIG Green Bay website during the event. In addition to the online giving opportunity, checks can also be made out to the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation with the nonprofit the funds should be donated to listed in the memo.

Give BIG Green Bay 2024 will take place from noon Wednesday, February 21 until noon Thursday, February 22. Donations made by check must be received by 10 a.m. on Thursday, February 22 to qualify for matching dollars. Please visit [www.givebiggreenbay.org](http://www.givebiggreenbay.org) for a full list of participating organizations.



# Union Church Calendar

February 11, 2024—March 19, 2024

## February 11 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation  
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary  
or stream it online  
followed by Coffee Hour  
in the church hall

## February 13 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study  
5:00 p.m. Stewardship Ministry  
5:30 p.m. Bell Choir  
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

## February 14 Ash Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Worship in the sanctuary

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## February 18 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation  
9:00 a.m. Adult Ed: Ward Bacon  
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary  
or stream it online  
followed by Coffee Hour  
in the church hall  
11:30 a.m. Gifts & Memorials Ministry  
5:00 p.m. Lenten Sunday Movie:  
"Power of Forgiveness"

## February 19 Monday

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

## February 20 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study  
5:30 p.m. Bell Choir  
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

## February 21 Wednesday

5:45 p.m. Dinner  
6:15 p.m. Youth Group  
6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

## February 25 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation  
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary  
or stream it online  
12:00 p.m. Lunch and Learn with  
Louisa Hext—F Word  
5:00 p.m. Lenten Sunday Movie:  
"Manchester by the Sea"

## February 27 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study  
1:00 p.m. Priscilla Circle  
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

## February 28 Wednesday

6:00 p.m. LGBTQIA2S+ and Allies  
Games Night

-----

## March 3 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation  
9:00 a.m. Adult Ed: Rev. Kari Parker  
10:00 a.m. Worship  
with Holy Communion  
in the sanctuary or  
stream it online  
5:00 p.m. Lenten Sunday Movie:  
"A Beautiful Day in the  
Neighborhood"

Stock the Box Drive

## March 5 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study  
5:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry  
6:30 p.m. Worship Ministry  
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

## March 6 Wednesday

5:45 p.m. Dinner  
6:15 p.m. Youth Group

## March 10 Sunday

### One Great Hour of Sharing

Daylight Saving Time Begins  
9:00 a.m. Faith Formation  
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary  
or stream it online  
11:30 a.m. Singing Our Identity  
5:00 p.m. Lenten Sunday Movie:  
"Ben is Back"

## March 12 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study  
5:00 p.m. Stewardship Ministry  
5:30 p.m. Bell Choir  
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir  
7:30 p.m. Singing Our Identity

## March 14 Thursday

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

-----

## March 17 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation  
9:00 a.m. Adult Ed: Julie Harder  
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary  
or stream it online  
followed by Coffee Hour  
in the church hall  
5:00 p.m. Lenten Sunday Movie:  
"The Forgiven"

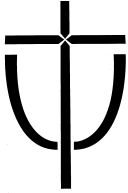
## March 18 Monday

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

## March 19 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study  
5:30 p.m. Bell Choir  
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

February 25 through March 10: The F Word: Stories of Forgiveness



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United Church of Christ  
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## Games Night is February 28

Games night is back! Dust off your favorite board game, or if you do not have one to bring, perhaps you can bring a snack to share at the LGBTQIA2S+ and allies Games Night on Wednesday, February 28 at 6 p.m.

Union's Outreach Ministry and the Pride Center of Northeastern Wisconsin are joining together for a night of fun! Bring a friend, your family, significant other, or bring yourself and meet new friends! Kid-friendly games and crafting will be available too.

We will see you on Wednesday, February 28, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the church hall. Questions? Call Stacie Christian at 920-639-8421.

## Interested in Learning More About Union Church?

Interested in learning more about Union Church and discerning whether this is the right church home for you? Our Membership and Inreach Ministry will be hosting two classes to help people get to know Union, our community, and each other on Thursday, April 25 at 5:30 p.m. and on Wednesday, May 1 at 6:00 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, May 19.

Please contact the church office at [office@unionucc.com](mailto:office@unionucc.com) or 920-437-9266, to register.

### Union Congregational United Church of Christ

716 S. Madison Street  
Green Bay, WI 54301  
e-mail: [office@unionucc.com](mailto: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>