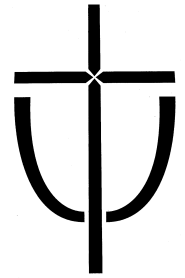


# Still Speaking



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

August 2024

*"...if you try, sometimes, you just might find, you get what you need."*

—Mick Jagger

## The Inside Scoop

### Newsletter Deadline

*Our next newsletter will be published the week of **Sept. 18**. The deadline for that newsletter is **Friday, Sept. 13**.*

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On August 11, the scripture reading and the topic for the sermon were from the letter to the Ephesians 4:25–5:2. At the beginning of the sermon, Pastor Bridget asked the congregation “why are we here?,” meaning worshipping together at or with Union Church. She suggested that the answers might be the interlocking reasons of offering thanks and praise, learning, and for inspiration.

Now, those are great reasons (obviously, as Bridget starts preparing each service weeks or months in advance, she’d put no small amount of thought and prayer into them). But, if I’m being honest with myself – because I am the person I’d most like to be able to deceive here – none of those were amongst the reasons that my daughter, Audrey, and I made our way to church that morning. In fact, we were at church for a handful of strictly pragmatic, and definitely not spiritual, reasons.

In my defense, I’d caught a cold that left me with an unpleasant lingering cough the same week that I had a very significant project due, and I was still feeling worn out and tired. In addition, I’d dragged Audrey all over Green Bay running errands the day before, and she hadn’t gotten the play or quality time that she’d wanted from her weekend. Then, I’d created extra work for my husband, Brett, and nearly made us miss dinner with his parents on Saturday night because I’d critically clogged a drain while being careless in disposing of leftovers that had been in the fridge for too long. All-in-all, I was not feeling like a particularly good parent or partner, or like my best self.

Despite the fact that he could have justifiably been pretty irritated with me, Brett was up early with Audrey on Sunday morning, letting me get some extra rest to try to kick my cough. As I lay in bed, knowing I needed to get up and be a functional person, I worked my way through a mental list of the pros and cons of going to church that morning.

### Cons:

- The friends we normally sit with, who seem to be inexplicably charmed by Audrey’s antics, weren’t going to there, which would mean that I’d need to actively parent my own child and, given how the week prior went, I was clearly not doing great work there.

*(continued on page 2)*

## Lectionary Readings

### August 25

#### 14th Sunday after Pentecost

1 Kings 8:(1, 6, 10-11), 22-30, 41-43 and  
Psalm 84 or Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18 and  
Psalm 34:15-22; Ephesians 6:10-20  
John 6:56-69

### September 1

#### 15th Sunday after Pentecost

Song of Solomon 2:8-13 and  
Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9 or  
Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9 and Psalm 15  
James 1:17-27; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

### September 8

#### 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23 and  
Psalm 125 or Isaiah 35:4-7a and  
Psalm 146  
James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17  
Mark 7:24-37

### September 15

#### 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Proverbs 1:20-33 and Psalm 19 or  
Isaiah 50:4-9a and Psalm 116:1-9 or  
Wisdom of Solomon 7:26-8:1  
James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38

### September 22

#### 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Proverbs 31:10-31 and Psalm 1 or  
Wisdom of Solomon 1:16-2:1, 12-22 or  
Jeremiah 11:18-20 and Psalm 54  
James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a; Mark 9:30-37

### September 29

#### 19th Sunday after Pentecost

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

### October 6

#### 20th Sunday after Pentecost

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

*(continued from page 1)*

- The house was a disaster, and could really have used my time and attention (not that I was planning to act on that).
- Maybe Audrey wouldn't have noticed that we weren't doing any of the things we usually do or that she wanted to do if I let her have unlimited TV time, which would have given me a chance to nap more.
- I did not really want to take a shower or put on hard pants.

#### Pros:

- Audrey said she wanted to go to the bagel shop on Webster Avenue – if I took her to church, we could get bagels on the way there, and that would be one less meal I'd have to figure out.
- I had a couple of jokes about birds (don't ask) that I wanted to try out, and my target audience was pretty much just middle schoolers at church.
- I wanted to talk with one of the ushers.
- Last week didn't go so well, but if we went to church like normal again, I could teach Audrey some sort of hopefully valuable lesson about resilience. Or grace. Or something. I wasn't sure, but it seemed important.
- I hadn't really talked to or interacted with my church friends that week. I'd probably see someone I enjoyed being with if we went.

Eventually, I resolved that we would stick to our plan and go to church. Once there, I was glad we'd come – the social situation did not disappoint, Audrey enjoyed the playground, and the cantor and musicians were excellent. Not bad at all.

*(continued on page 5)*

## Our Church Family

As Beth notes in our front page article, a hugely compelling component of being part of a church is belonging to a community. As we sing in the hymn, "Will You Let Me Be Your Servant?" our church family helps one another to "walk the miles and bear the load." With this in our hearts, we join together in praying:

- With

## Union Church Faith Formation 2024-25

Faith Formation kicks off with an open house on September 15. Children, parents and teachers will get to know one another in their classrooms, with K5-2nd and 3rd-5th graders in the Mayflower I and II classrooms on the lower level of the church, and 6th and 7th in the Fellowship Room on the second level. Confirmation will begin later in the fall.

The curriculum we will use this year will be "Shine," a dynamic Faith Formation curriculum that engages Christian communities and families in their life together through Bible Stories, spiritual practices, peacemaking, service, and more. New this year will be a monthly rotation workshop in which we will provide interactive activities geared toward multiple learning styles and age levels.

**Faith Formation Open House is Sunday, September 15 at 9:00 a.m.**

**Youth Group Begins Wednesday, September 18 at 5:45 p.m.**

Wednesday night programs begin September 18 with dinner at 5:45 p.m. followed by Youth Group for 6th through 12th graders. Youth will engage in mission, projects, learning, relationship building, and all-around fun.

We again have a tremendous slate of teachers, leaders, aides, cooks, and bottle washers lined up, but we need more. As with everything at church, our child and youth formation ministries don't work without the ongoing efforts of our members and friends. It is critical to the success of these ministries that both parents and other church members pitch in to help. These programs simply cannot exist without you. Contact Beth Lyman Piontek at 920-217-3564 or [beth.e.lyman@gmail.com](mailto:beth.e.lyman@gmail.com) to learn more about what roles are needed.

Registration materials will be mailed home to all households in our database with school-age children. Additional copies will be available in the classrooms the first day of Faith Formation or by contacting the church office.

### Wednesday Youth Programs

Our Youth Groups will meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month this year starting on September 18. A typical Wednesday evening will be:

5:45 to 6:15 p.m. **Dinner**  
6:15 to 7:30 p.m. **Youth Group**

## ReUnion Sunday is September 15

**8:45 a.m. Nursery Opens**

**9:00 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal**

Tuesday rehearsals begin September 10

**9:00 a.m. Faith Formation Open House**

Mayflower I and II and Fellowship Room

**9:00 a.m. Adult Faith Formation in Bagby Chapel**

Amber Paluch of the Greater GB Community Foundation

**10:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary with Holy Communion**

**Potluck** in the church hall following Worship

**Blessing Box  
Food Drive**  
(see back page)

## Heifer Help Needed!

Heifer Sunday and the Live Market (October 6) is a favorite event at Union. We need your help. We are looking for one person to assist with the coordination of the event. We are also looking for volunteers to host animal tables at the Live Market.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Heather Collins [hblue@gmail.com](mailto:hblue@gmail.com) or 920-639-8821.

## Priscilla Circle News

Priscilla Circle will reconvene Tuesday, September 24, at 1:00 p.m. in the English Room. We plan to meet on the fourth Tuesday of October and November as well.

Priscilla Circle is a group of women who meet for a program and socializing. We share beverages and treats and a short devotional. New members are always welcome and encouraged to attend.

Questions? Please contact Helen Krueger at [chkrueger@new.rr.com](mailto:chkrueger@new.rr.com).

## PRIDE Alive is September 21

Union is excited to again have a booth at NEW PRIDE Alive at the Brown County Fairgrounds on September 21. We will have treats, information about Union, a gallery of LGBTQIA+ family photos, and will offer glitter blessings!

Volunteers are needed to staff the booth, to talk about why you love our church, and to offer glitter blessings (we'll have instructions and glitter!). Sign up at Union Central or contact the church office to take a two-hour shift or two on Saturday (noon to 6).

## Love Life East Annual Diaper Drive

Union's Outreach Ministry's annual diaper drive for Love Life East will take place from August 25 to September 15. Love Life is an ecumenical volunteer organization to help low-income families approved by the WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children). They provide diapers, formula, gently used clothing and books for children ages 0 to 3. Approved families may go to Central Church on Schoen Street once a month to receive the diapers and other items. The number of diapers depends on the age of the child and is not intended as a full supply. Each newborn receives a layette with clothing and other items for basic care.

In the last fiscal year, ending June 30, Love Life provided 2,517 families with 2,964 packages of diapers, added 226 new families, reinstated 25 families, provided 883 cans of formula and 102 layettes.

We hope you will want to contribute to this worthwhile and needed service. You may leave diapers in the coat room and they will be delivered to Central Church. Thank you from all the little bottoms.

For questions, call Jean Smithback at 920-930-8271.

## Seminary Secrets Book Study

This fall, Seminary Secrets will be reading the book, How to Read the Bible: History, Prophecy, Literature — Why Modern Readers Need to Know the Difference and What It Means for Faith Today, by Steven K. McKenzie.

I discovered this book when I was writing my master of theology thesis, and it has been one that I've gone back to time and again for solid biblical scholarship explained in a very readable manner. The author, a professor of Hebrew Bible, explains how to interpret biblical books such as Jonah, the "history" of Israel, the Prophets, Wisdom lit, Revelation, etc. He discusses the importance of identifying genre (for example, Jonah is not history—it's a satirical short story) and how ancient writers used their creativity in writing their "history," in order to convey their theologies and their ethnic identities.

**Dates:** Wednesdays, starting September 18 and continuing into the fall. The number of sessions will be determined by how quickly we work through the book, along with the interest of the group.

**Time:** 6:15 to 7:30 p.m.

**Technological Options:** I video record each session so if you need to miss some, there is the opportunity to catch up. In addition, the sessions are offered in a hybrid mode, so you can Zoom in if you can't make it in person.

If you would like to sign up or if you just have questions about this series, please email Julie Harder at [jblackharder@gmail.com](mailto:jblackharder@gmail.com).

(continued from page 2)

But then, the sermon.

Not only was I immediately reminded that my reasons for coming to church were pretty self-centered, but, worse, there was the *Lectio Divina* exercise, which made me think something along the lines of “Good grief! Participation? I do not need this,” as I resolved to mentally vacate the premises. Even so, I was drawn in, and some part of me was still listening to Pastor Bridget read the scripture one more time, enough to recognize and share that the portion of the reading that most spoke to me was from chapter 5, verse 1, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children,” as I watched Audrey and the others (children and adults) in the prayground.



*Everybody paired up, and nobody limited to their own households.*

Did I come to church to offer thanks and praise, to learn, or to be inspired? No. I wish I could say that my aspirations were of that caliber, but they were not. Did I end up doing those things, despite my best efforts to resist? Yes, I did. I do

not have enough words to be able to express how thankful I am for the community we have in this church, especially in our youth, and what that community provides to my family. I learned about the concept of *Lectio Divina*, which is apparently both pretty simple and pretty effective. As for inspiration – I don’t imagine that this is what Bridget was getting at when she prepared her sermon, but I was sufficiently inspired that I managed to write this message without needing to be reminded or given a hard deadline, which isn’t like me.

My point in all of this, as we head into a new school year and with it a new year of Faith Formation and Youth Group, is that I, as the current chair of Union’s Education Ministry, a youth group advisor, and a parent, know and understand the reasons that it can be hard to get our families to church on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings. And, if you don’t make it happen, there will be no judgment from me. But, if you can make it happen, I urge you to try to do so. I do not and will not care if the main reason your kids make it to Faith Formation is that you get 45 minutes to sit in your car and read in quiet each week, nor do I care if you can’t convince your kids to wear anything other than joggers and hoodies, and sometimes they act like terrors. More often than I care to admit, I can’t claim that I’m at church to give thanks and praise, to learn, or to be inspired. But I’ve been lucky enough to find that, if I can get us there, those things often end up happening anyway. I hope the same will be true for you and your families this year.

In thankful praise to God and our Union family,  
Beth Lyman Piontek  
Education Ministry Chair

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## **Biblical Garden Work Day**

With some grants and A LOT of time, the Biblical Garden on the north side of the church parking lot is being transformed!

Now, we could use your help, specifically moving some dirt, some stones, and eradicating jumping worms! We’ll be gathering to work on this project at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 25. Bring work gloves, your favorite spade or flat end shovel. A wheelbarrow or two will be helpful. Contact Cathy Putman with questions.

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## Sunday Morning Adult Faith Formation is Back!

Gather in Bagby Chapel at 9 a.m. for these informative and inspiring conversations:

### September 15 — What Green Bay Needs

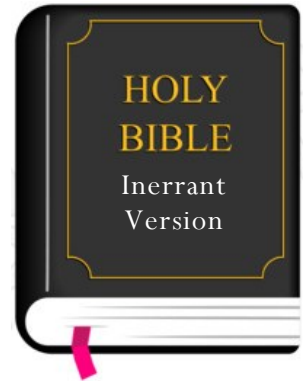
The Greater Green Bay Community Foundation used data collected by national and local organizations and community input to determine the most critical community needs: child care, mental health, affordable housing, diversity and equity, and financial stability. The Community Foundation is sharing their insights, built from an extensive network of community partners and nonprofits, the expertise of our grantmaking team, and community data, in order to amplify the community's needs and engage everyone in collaborative solutions that move our community forward. Senior Vice President of Community Impact Amber Paluch will share more and outline the additional escalating needs as well as work that is happening to address these areas.



**Greater Green Bay  
Community Foundation**  
*good grows here™*

### September 22 — Is the Bible Inerrant?

Some Christian churches teach that the Bible is “inerrant”—that it is historically factual without any errors whatsoever. However, a careful study of the Bible quickly reveals plenty of historical and scientific inaccuracies, not to mention myriad internal contradictions. This can pose a problem for those Christians who don’t wish to close their eyes to these realities, yet still wish to attribute authority to the Bible. Fortunately, there is another option: to honor the Bible as Christianity’s Foundational Identity Document and Primary Conversation Partner. Join Julie Harder as she explains this approach and its implications.



### October 6 — Heifer Living Gift Market

In lieu of Adult Education this Sunday, we encourage everyone to volunteer with our annual Heifer International Living Gift Market. Watch your church communications for details.

- *Note: our intent is to have Adult Faith Formation at least on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month, and sometimes even more.*



**Blessing Box Produce Pantry**

**Garden Produce Welcome!**

Summer harvest season is here! If you have produce available, we'll gladly share it through the Blessing Box Produce Pantry.

Please place produce outdoors on the produce stand, located next to the Blessing Box. *Thank You!*

## Attendance

June	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	July	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
1st Sunday	80	73	1st Sunday	80	87
2nd Sunday	92	99	2nd Sunday	67	74
3rd Sunday	57	72	3rd Sunday	84	91
4th Sunday	102	95	4th Sunday	79	73
5th Sunday	107	—	5th Sunday	—	79
<b>Totals</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>404</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>87.6</b>	<b>84.8</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>80.8</b>



# Union Church Calendar

## August 25, 2024—October 2, 2024

### August 25 Sunday

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

11:30 a.m. Faith Formation Teachers and Aides Meeting

12:30 p.m. Biblical Garden Work Day

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### September 1 Sunday

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

### September 2 Monday

Labor Day—Church Office Closed

### September 3 Tuesday

4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry

5:30 p.m. Worship Ministry

### September 4 Wednesday

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

### September 6-8 Friday-Sunday

All-Church Retreat at Moon Beach

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### September 8 Sunday

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

### September 10 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study

4:00 p.m. Education Ministry

5:00 p.m. Stewardship Ministry

5:30 p.m. Bell Choir

6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

### September 11 Wednesday

10:00 a.m. Ties to Mexico

### September 12 Thursday

5:00 p.m. Membership Ministry

6:00 p.m. Common Ministry

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### ReUnion Sunday September 15

8:45 a.m. Nursery Opens

9:00 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearses

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation Open House

9:00 a.m. Adult Education: What Green Bay Needs

10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary with Holy Communion or stream it online

### Potluck Luncheon in the church hall (following worship)

Blessing Box Food Drive

### September 16 Monday

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

### September 17 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study

5:30 p.m. Bell Choir

6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

### September 18 Wednesday

5:45 p.m. Dinner

6:15 p.m. Youth Group

6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

### September 21 Saturday

12:00 p.m. PRIDE Alive at Brown County Fairgrounds

### September 22 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation

9:00 a.m. Adult Education: Is the Bible Inerrant?

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

### September 24 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study

1:00 p.m. Priscilla Circle

6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

### September 25 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

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### September 29 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

### October 1 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study

4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry

5:30 p.m. Worship Ministry

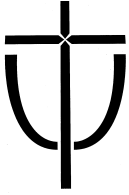
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

### October 2 Wednesday

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

6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets





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## Blessing Box Food Drive Sunday, September 15

**Thank you for your continuing support  
of the Blessing Box ministry!**

**Current needs include:**

- Canned Chili or Pasta Meals
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Soup
- Canned Tuna or Chicken
- Granola Bars
- Instant Pasta or Rice Meals
- Pouch Tuna

Donations can be placed on the cart at the front of the Sanctuary on Sunday, September 15 or on the blue table inside the Mayflower entrance at any time.

**Monetary donations are also welcome, and we'll do the shopping!** To make a monetary donation, 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).



### Union Congregational United Church of Christ

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(920) 437-9266

**Rev. 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>