



Our Annual Meeting Sunday, January 25, 2026

The 190th Annual Meeting of
Union Congregational United Church of Christ
will convene immediately following worship on Sunday, January 25.

- Reports will be received, retiring ministry chairs and vice-chairs will be recognized, elections will be held for new leaders of our congregation.
- The 2026 budget will be proposed, discussed and adopted.
- We will vote to renew our membership in JOSHUA for 2026.
- We will vote on adopting the proposed WISE Covenant and whether to become a WISE congregation regarding mental health.

On the Cover

The image on the cover of this year's Annual Report started as a photo taken by administrative assistant Eric Goska during worship on ReUnion Sunday, September 14, 2025. The photo was then altered using the OG Pastel GFX effects available at BeFunky, an online creative platform that offers tools for photo editing, collage making, and graphic design. According to BeFunky, the OG Pastel GFX effects "are a collection of original photo-to-art filters that transform images into art with a timeless, soft, and textured pastel drawing aesthetic."

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UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Green Bay, Wisconsin

190th Annual Meeting
Convening in the sanctuary following the Worship Service
Sunday, January 25, 2026

NOTE: Please review the reports in this booklet *prior* to the Annual Meeting.

| | |
|--|--|
| Call to Order and Approval of Agenda | Heather Collins Moderator |
| Constituting Prayer and Memorial Moments | Bridget Flad Daniels Senior Minister |
| Declaration of Quorum | Gail Hohenstein, Clerk |
| Opening Remarks | Moderator, Senior Minister |
| Approval of Minutes | Moderator |
| Annual Reports: Highlights, Questions | Ministry Chairs |
| Presentation of the WISE Covenant | WISE Team Chair, Christie Reese |
| Presentation of the Proposed 2026 Budget | Sandy Polarek, Treasurer |
| JOSHUA Membership for 2026 | Steve Hartman, JOSHUA Liaison |
| Recognition: Retiring Ministry Chairs and Officers | Moderator |
| Nominating Committee Report | Tim Harder, Nominating Committee Chair |
| Litany for Commissioning: New Members of Common Ministry and Committees | Moderator, Senior Minister, Congregation |
| Other Business | Moderator |
| Benediction | Senior Minister |

— The Clerk's Report —

The minutes of the monthly meetings of the Common Ministry have been recorded and approved. Copies of the minutes have been filed in the Minutes book in the main office and posted on the bulletin board across from the office and on the Church website for public access. The minutes of the 189th Annual Meeting of January 26, 2025 have been reviewed by the Common Ministry and are included in this Annual Report for approval at the 190th Annual Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Hohenstein, Clerk

MINUTES OF THE 189th ANNUAL MEETING January 26, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: The 189th Annual Meeting of Union Congregational United Church of Christ of Green Bay, Wisconsin was called to order by Moderator Tim Harder at 11:14 a.m. Motion to approve the agenda was approved. (Motion by Bill Johnson/Second by Jammie VerGiesen)

CONSTITUTING PRAYER AND MEMORIAL MOMENTS: Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels led the congregation in prayer that included the following members who died this past year:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Charles "Chuck" Krueger | John David Shier | Vern Lanoue |
| Lonald "Lonnie" Allen Johnson | James "Jim" Hardie | Scott Mertens |
| Samuel Nicholas Holland | Kenneth "Ken" R. Divoky | Beverly Jean Hunsberger |

DECLARATION OF QUORUM: According to the Constitution, as amended, a quorum consists of 6% of the active membership of the congregation. As of December 31, 2024, Union Congregational United Church of Christ had 531 active members. Clerk Gail Hohenstein declared that by visual observation the necessary quorum to conduct business (in excess of 32 participants) was present.

OPENING REMARKS: Dr. Harder welcomed all to the 189th Annual Meeting, noting we are just 11 years away from the congregation's 200th anniversary. He also noted it is the 125th anniversary of the Bond of Union, the core spirit that holds us together today. Dr. Michael Lukens was thanked for acting as parliamentarian. Moderator Harder also thanked the many people who care for our church home. He went on to thank Common Ministry and members of the church's ministries for keeping the Christ Spirit dominant in the life of the congregation and in the community. Finally, he thanked Pastor Bridget for the time, effort, and love she brings to Union.

Senior Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels remarked that 2024 marked the retirement of Ray Thompson, our organist for over 18 years, with deep gratitude. We are also deeply indebted to David Hassel who has been serving as our interim organist since Ray's retirement. She reported that the Organist Search Advisory Team is diligently searching for our next seated organist, and hope to have news to report to the congregation soon. She noted a correction to the Stewardship Ministry section of the Annual Report in that the solar installation is an 18kW array (not 14kW as was printed). She also expressed

gratitude that our mission partner, On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic, which utilizes much of our lower level during the week, made a gratitude gift to help offset the costs Union incurs maintaining the building. She gave thanks to Pat Shafer and the OTM board for this, and for all of the work that they do. She additionally expressed thanks to our Vice Moderator Clay Reese, Treasurer Sandy Polarek, and Clerk Gail Hohenstein, for the service and wisdom they offer the congregation. Very often the work of the officers goes unnoticed, as it doesn't fall directly under one of the ministries. They all have been the backbone of the congregation, keeping us upright and firm. And she offered special thanks to Tim Harder, whose term as Moderator is expiring. His integrity, clarity, insight, and humor have been invaluable to her ministry and to the church. As a small token of our thanks, the church has gifted him a Christian Century subscription, so that he has something to do with all of the extra time he'll now have on his hands.

Looking ahead, she noted that next year, Union will celebrate our 190th anniversary, and this is the 125th year that we have organized ourselves around the Bond of Union! With that in mind, Common Ministry is inviting us into a year celebrating and focusing on the Bond of Union. Members should be on the watch for reflections on the Bond and be thinking about what it means to you and our church. Additionally, JOSHUA has a renewed commitment to immigration, and we'll be looking to revive Union's Immigration Advocacy Team. Furthermore, now that Christie Reese is transitioning out of her duties on Outreach Ministry, watch for efforts to ramp up around being a WISE congregation for mental health.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the 188th Annual Meeting were approved as written in the Annual Report. (Motion Denise Olson/Second Jammie VerGiesen)

ANNUAL REPORTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND QUESTIONS:

EDUCATION: Beth Piontek reported that 2024 has been a good year for the Education Ministry, and they are very grateful to everyone who has provided support over the past year. For the current school year, thanks to having a pretty large group of 6th and 7th graders, the youth groups were split into separate 6th-8th and 8th-12th grade groups for the first time since the 2019-2020 school year. The younger group is called Helping Others, Encouraging, and Prayer (H.O.P.E.) and the older group Just Older Youth (J.O.Y.), and efforts are being made so both groups can engage with the rest of the congregation. She gave thanks for all who offer our fantastic Children's Moments and keep the PrayGround going on Sunday mornings. She noted that Pastor Bridget currently has a Confirmation class running for our 8th-10th graders, and that a component called "Stations Rotations" has been added to the Faith Formation classes once a month, which gives all of our kindergarten through 7th grade youth the opportunity to engage with one another and sometimes also with the rest of our church community. She also expressed appreciation for the work of our nursery staff. Beth noted with appreciation that for adults, we continue to offer adult education an average of two Sundays a month, with additional offerings like Seminary Secrets and the upcoming Gottman workshop from Julie Harder, as well as Ed Tucker's new Christian Disciplines group. She added that there are more people to thank than there is time to name, but the Education Ministry is very grateful to all of the volunteers who've made its work possible over the past year, as well as to the congregation as a whole for its ongoing support.

MEMBERSHIP AND INREACH: Denise Olson shared that that the Membership Ministry encourages new members to the congregation in a variety of ways, including introduction classes, and reaching out to potential new members. The Inreach component of the ministry strives to help us be more of a

community with various events and occasions, including the annual Women's Advent event. They are always looking for more folks to join the ministry.

OUTREACH: Jammie VerGiesen expressed that Outreach Ministry is the heartbeat of what it means to live out our faith in action. It is our church's opportunity to extend God's love beyond the sacred walls of this beautiful church and into the communities that need it most. Through outreach, we not only accept the religion of love and service; we meet people where they are, offering support, compassion, and hope to those who feel unseen, unheard, or forgotten. He added that the ministry is not just about charity though; it's about connection. It's showing others that they are valued, that they matter, that God's grace is for everyone. Whether it's through feeding the hungry, visiting the lonely, or simply being a listening ear, every act of service reflects the love of Christ. We make the spirit of Christ dominant in our own lives and in all the human relations we encounter. He expressed a huge debt of gratitude to so many dedicated and hard-working members of this ministry. Without ALL of you, the ministry could not have accomplished so much in 2024. He mentioned no names for the sake of forgetting to recall even just one for their service. He expressed deep gratitude for everything that they do, including the Blessing Box Food Pantry, Souper Cooks, Rummage Sale, Ties to Mexico, Heifer International, the Ecumenical Partnership for Housing, JOSHUA, the On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic, N.E.W. Pride Alive and the LGBTQIA2S+ Game Night, and We All Rise. And he gave thanks to all of the great members of this church family who have supported this ministry and others over the years, who are doing the will of God through their support. He encouraged us to continue to step out in faith, remembering that our small acts can create a ripple effect of positive change. Together, we can continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus, making an impact that goes far beyond what we can imagine, and gave thanks to all for being part of this mission to bring light, hope, and love to the world.

WORSHIP: Zoé James reported that in 2024, the Worship Ministry reflected on the Bond of Union, fostering inclusion and outreach, showing Christ's love and service. Worship services continued to be offered both in-person and online, ensuring that all could participate. The AV team's efforts to improve sound and video equipment allowed broader access to these services, while ushers, both in-person and virtual, provided a welcoming experience. She reflected that preparing and serving communion reflects "giving our all, as we have been given all." Volunteers dedicate their time and care for the congregation, mirroring Jesus' at the Last Supper. Communion is about "making the Christ spirit dominant" by bringing our church family together through shared spiritual nourishment and reinforcing values of compassion, love, and devotion. Outreach initiatives like the "Fill Your Cup" jazz event for caregivers and the Living Gift Market for Heifer International reflect on how Union "strives to do the will of God." Special services, such as those honoring Martin Luther King Jr. and Memorial Sunday, emphasized Union's commitment to both community and remembrance. The church's intent to become a WISE Congregation furthered its focus on inclusivity, particularly in mental health. Music Director Haley Steele's leadership engaged young people through student internships and partnerships with local universities, enhancing the church's community engagement. In line with "The Bond of Union," the Worship Ministry fostered a spirit of love and service, making the Christ spirit central to both worship and outreach, ensuring all feel a sense of belonging.

STEWARSHIP: Jason Ferry shared that it is a pleasure to share the work of the Stewardship Ministry over the past year. They have been busy and committed to the collective vision of our congregation as they continue to care for our church's resources and environment. He expressed that Stewardship is about more than just maintaining buildings; it's about nurturing the spaces that allow us to grow spiritually, connect with each other, and serve our community. In 2024, Stewardship focused on

several key areas, including building and maintenance, capital projects, and sustainability efforts. This year the church brought on Brad Dorin, our new Maintenance Technician, who has been an invaluable part of the team. Additionally, many important projects were accomplished, from upgrading the heating system with energy-efficient compressors, to installing LED lighting and enhancing accessibility throughout the building. Thanks to the success of the Capital Campaign, significant strides were made on the project list. Roofs were replaced on both the west church hall, portico and Mayflower wing. A 18kW (After meeting note: See correction to 18kW in Pastor Bridget's report.) solar array was installed on the Mayflower roof, and the wireless infrastructure was upgraded to both enhance the functionality of our space and to align with the church's commitment to sustainability and reducing our energy footprint. Looking ahead, he shared he is excited for the 2025 projects in the pipeline, which include painting the sanctuary, improving our audio and visual systems and continuing renovations in the lower level and across the facilities. These efforts, alongside ongoing work with the Green Energy Task Force and the Garden Committee, ensure that Union remains a welcoming, safe and sustainable space for years to come. Jason expressed gratitude for the dedication and hard work of everyone who has contributed to the success of the ministry, including committee members Tim Dantoin, Jeff Gibson, Bill Johnson, Tony Baldwin, David Thie, as well as all the staff and volunteers who make this work possible.

GIFTS & MEMORIALS: No report given.

2025 BUDGET: Treasurer Sandy Polarek distributed the proposed 2025 budget (see attached) and started her presentation with thanks for all those who have faithfully given to the church this year. Doing so has helped keep the lights on, paid our amazing staff and contributed to the outreach our church continues to do in the community. We were closer to achieving our budgeted operating income because members fulfilled pledges, contributed to the church regularly, responded generously to the extra giving opportunity (approximately \$29,000) and supported the Christmas tree fundraiser. She shared that expenses, including insurance, salaries, and supplies, continue to rise, but we continue to be as lean as we can be, and that Katrina Catteruccia, our Financial Secretary, continues to work hard to monitor expenses to keep our finances in order. Sandy expressed thanks for Katrina's skills, her concern for the people and the mission of the church, and for her ability to explain things in a way that a lay person can understand. Sandy also expressed appreciation for our Sexton, Brad, who is doing his best to keep the building in great shape in a cost-effective way. Sandy noted that the Capital Campaign is well underway, and we should see some cost reductions in energy use through boiler updates and going live with the solar installation. She noted that our facilities expenses were down last year with the mild winter, but this year very well may not be the same, so the budget still has \$30,000 in that category. Administrative expenses are lower (and staff expenses higher) because Katrina is now on staff and no longer a contracted employee. She added that in this third year of the Capital Campaign, many cost-saving updates have been made that will help keep our building and congregation viable, and gave thanks for the continuing generous support for the day-to-day operation of the church, our Inreach, Worship, Education and social justice ministries as well.

After Sandy reviewed the proposed budget (see attached), it was approved as presented (Motion Gloria Kaminecki/Second Jeremy Pelegrin).

JOSHUA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2025: The motion to continue to support JOSHUA with the annual \$1,000 membership fee was approved (Motion Bill Johnson/Second Denise Olson).

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING MINISTRY MEMBERS:

Retiring members of Ministries and Chairs and Vice-Chairs were thanked for their service:

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Dr. Tim Harder | Moderator | Julie Tetzlaff | Personnel |
| Christie Reese | Vice Chair, Outreach | Sandy Polarek | Nominating |
| Bill Johnson | Pastoral Relations | Wendy Woodward | JOSHUA Liaison |
| Heather Collins | Pastoral Relations | | |

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT: Sandy Polarek gave the Nominating Committee report. On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Sandy moved the following nominees be elected for two-year terms:

| | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Heather Collins | Moderator |
| Gail Hohenstein | Clerk |
| Jammie VerGiesen | Chair, Outreach |
| Luc Richards | Vice Chair, Outreach |
| Kathy Baldwin | Co-Chair, Gifts & Memorials |
| Jessica Lundgren | Vice Chair, Membership & Inreach |
| Zoé James | Chair, Worship |
| Betty Bienash | Vice Chair, Worship |
| Tim Harder | Chair, Nominating |

and that the following nominees be elected as set forth below:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Tim Harder | Pastoral Relations, 3 years |
| Kathy Seifert | Pastoral Relations, 4 years |
| Nicole Polarek | Personnel Committee, 3 years |
| Steve Hartman | JOSHUA Liaison, 1 year |
| Barbara McClure-Lukens | Ecumenical Partnership for Housing Delegate, 1 year |
| Ruth Homrichaus and | |
| Mary Ann Hudson | Communications Coordinators, 1 year |

No nominations were made from the floor. The motion was approved (Second Anne Rakow-Weist).

COMMISSIONING NEW MEMBERS OF COMMON MINISTRY AND COMMITTEES: A Litany for Commissioning of the new members was conducted, and the gavel was passed to Moderator Heather Collins who asked for prayers and support as she takes on this new role.

OTHER BUSINESS: None.

BENEDICTION: Gail Carels moved and Jammie VerGiesen seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried. Pastor Flad Daniels gave the benediction and the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail A. Hohenstein, Clerk

— Moderator —

“Because of you, Union changes lives.”

On November 22, that phrase kept running through my mind as I watched over 200 households being served at the Really Free Market. The church was full of people from the Green Bay community coming together. It made my heart sing to see how Union, working with other Green Bay organizations, was able to have an impact on so many lives. And this wasn't an isolated event. You do this over and over again throughout the year.

As you read each ministry's report, you will see what I mean. They will give you an idea of all that we have done this past year. And it's a lot! We are thankful to have teams of dedicated, enthusiastic, and talented members.

We have a beautiful church. And this year, through our Capital Campaign, we were able to provide some much-needed TLC to our building. Our building is well cared for by our dedicated Sexton, Brad Dorin, as well as our tireless Stewardship Ministry team. And our building is well used both for our own activities and by providing space to others. In addition to On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic, we welcome Narcotics Anonymous, AA, Astor Park Neighborhood Association, Suzuki Music Academy, Lifelong Learning, Green Bay Anti-War, and the Italian Club, among others.

I appreciate the church officers who have helped me so much this year. Clay Reese, Gail Hohenstein and Sandy Polarek made it easy for me to transition into the role of moderator. In addition to the church officers, I thank all the members of Common Ministry. I appreciate your support, guidance, and participation throughout the year. The leadership all of you have brought has helped Union to continue to be strong and to grow.

We have an exceptional church staff. Eric Goska's ability to remember (or find) just about any bit of information you'd want is invaluable. He keeps us organized, and keeps our newsletters interesting and our weekly bulletins and emails well done. Katrina Catteruccia does a great job maintaining our financial records. As previously mentioned, Brad Dorin takes good care of our building, even coming in on his days off to make sure everything is okay. Haley Steele continues to provide beautiful, inspirational, diverse music each week. Her leadership of our music program is much appreciated. This year we welcomed the newest member of our music program, organist and pianist Franklin Beyer.

We are so blessed to have Bridget Flad Daniels as our Senior Pastor. She leads Union with passion, dedication and extensive pastoral care. I am continually amazed by her ability to handle all the administrative responsibilities she has along with the generous giving of her time to support each of us. And last, I thank all of you for the many ways you continue to help to change lives through your time, talents and gifts.

As I reflect on my first year as your Moderator, I am humbled and in awe of your contributions to the on-going ministry of Union. I have had the opportunity to see just how much you do, and how much it matters.

I am so proud to be a part of this church and our ministry. I look forward to see how Union will continue to change lives in 2026!

With deep appreciation, joy, and hope,
Heather Collins

— Pastoral Annual Report 2025 —

2025 has been ten thousand years long.

I don't know another way to say it. 2025 pummeled us. It stretched time, frayed nerves, and demanded a level of resilience I've never experienced in my adult life. Each day seemed to arrive carrying a new exhaustion, a new low, a new scandal or cruelty or corruption that asked more of us than we felt we had left to give.

And yet.

- Brand new, precious babies were born this year.
- Young lovers got married.
- Artists created shocking beauty.
- People shared money and resources with their neighbors.
- First-generation graduates walked across a stage.
- Folks beat cancer back, and folks held the hands and hearts of those who didn't.
- Librarians protected books and their readers.
- People made us laugh and laugh and laugh.
- Grandmas holding homemade signs marched peacefully for the rights of their grandbabies.
- Food banks were overflowing—not with excess, but with generosity.

There is still such gorgeous life happening, despite it all.

We have to notice it. We have to celebrate it. Not as a distraction from what is broken, but as one of our best antidotes to despair. Union UCC did exactly that in 2025: we refused to give despair the last word. We kept showing up—to worship, to organize, to grieve, to celebrate, to seek justice, to one another.

And people were hungry for it, both our members and our guests showed up in ways beyond measure.

What follows is not an exhaustive list of everything this church has done, but a snapshot of a community that continues to live its faith out loud.

Investing in Leadership and the Common Good

Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, Union was able to sponsor our JOSHUA Community Organizer, **Amber Edwards**, to participate in **Leadership Green Bay**, a program facilitated by the Greater Green Bay Chamber of Commerce. Leadership Green Bay connects a diverse group of professionals to explore the key issues shaping our community and quality of life. Participants are challenged to lead with purpose, connect passion with community need, and build relationships across difference.

Amber's participation strengthened not only her own leadership capacity, but also Union's connection to broader networks working toward a more just and flourishing Greater Green Bay. Graduates of the program leave with fresh perspective, deeper skills, and a powerful network committed to lasting impact—and we are already seeing the fruits of that investment in our organizing and partnerships.

Faithful Presence in a Time of Fear

Early in the year, at the urging of the Wisconsin Conference UCC and the Wisconsin Council of Churches, I participated in a training conducted by the ACLU regarding immigration law and the legalities surrounding possible ICE raids on churches. In a time when fear is often intentionally stoked, it was essential to be grounded in facts, law, and our theological commitments.

Parson's Purse — 2025

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$1,762.83 |
| Donations | \$17,895.80 |
| Disbursements | \$13,644.90 |
| Ending Balance | \$6,013.73 |

*rent, transportation, medical, food, utilities, insurance

Following the training, I shared this information with church staff, lay leaders, and organizations that regularly use our building. Union UCC will follow the law, which states that we will only grant access to the building to law enforcement if agents present a signed judicial warrant. This clarity matters—not only legally, but pastorally. It allows us to be a place of welcome and refuge without ambiguity, rooted in both our faith.

Advocacy as Pastoral Care

In February, I had the honor of participating in a roundtable **discussion sponsored by Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin**, advocating directly to state legislators for women's reproductive freedom. This was not abstract policy work; it was pastoral care extended into the public square. Reproductive justice is about bodily autonomy, healthcare access, and dignity—and Union's voice belongs in those conversations.

That same month, we celebrated and gave thanks for the year-long service of our interim organist, **David Hassel**, whose artful and faithful musicianship carried us through a season of transition. We also joyfully welcomed our newly seated organist, **Franklin Beyer**, whose gifts are already enriching our worship life and musical community.

Democracy, Participation, and Public Witness

Ahead of the April 1 election, Union partnered with **Fair Wisconsin** and **Third Space** to write Get Out the Vote postcards. It was a meaningful way to affirm that democracy is strengthened by participation and that encouraging our neighbors to vote is an act of civic love.

It was also an honor this year to participate in the **ordination of Rev. Derek Elkins**, now the called pastor to our neighbors at First United Church of Christ on Webster. Ordination moments remind us that the wider church is alive and evolving, and that ministry is always shared—across congregations, across calls, across time.

Becoming a WISE Congregation

Union continued its work toward becoming a **WISE congregation**—Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaging—regarding mental health. This work recognizes that faith communities are best when we are equipped not only to welcome people, but to support them with integrity and care.

Deep thanks to **Christie Reese** and the rest of the WISE team for committing to shepherding the congregation through our next steps. Thanks to their work, we will vote this month at our Annual Meeting on whether to formally become a WISE congregation. This is about doing well by one another, reducing stigma, and ensuring that mental health is treated as a vital part of our shared life.

Interfaith Solidarity and Public Prayer

Much of this summer, I was devoted to organizing an **interfaith prayer service in support of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees** in our community. Held across the street in St. James Park, the service brought together faith leaders and neighbors from a breadth of traditions. Despite a surprise downpour—perhaps the most biblical part of the afternoon—hundreds of people showed up to stand with our immigrant neighbors.

It was a powerful reminder that prayer is not passive. It gathers bodies, names truth, claims public space for compassion, and sends us forth to serve.

Growing Through Connection and Assets

This year also saw significant energy invested in envisioning and planning our **all-church retreat**, which used **Asset-Based Community Development** to help Union identify strengths, passions, and relationships already present among us. This approach asks: *What do we already have, and how might God be inviting us to use it?*

Our facilitator, **Julie Filapek of NeighborWorks**, will return this spring to help us continue this work. Her connection to NeighborWorks also opened the door for Union's participation in **Good Neighbor Week**, which Outreach Ministry supported with a grant from capital campaign funds. A number of church members volunteered for the project, and some have been inspired to continue volunteering well beyond that single week.

One of our newer members, George Ochs, put this asset-based model to work this fall, organizing a series of walks and conversations on the Fox River Trail, intended to encourage fellowship among visitors and members alike.

Mutual Aid in Motion

This fall, in partnership with **NEW Care** and **Mutual Aid Green Bay**, Union hosted the area's **first Really Free Market**. The result was nothing short of extraordinary. Thousands of dollars' worth of goods were donated and freely shared with hundreds of families. The church was, quite literally, overrun—with donations, volunteers, movement, and generosity.

It was living the Gospel in its truest form: neighbors caring for neighbors, without shame or hoops or hierarchy. It was also a reminder that our building is not meant to be a museum—it is meant to be used.

Caring for One Another in Vulnerable Seasons

In September, I shared the news of my husband Scott's cancer diagnosis and took two weeks of family leave to be present with him and our family amidst his surgery. While he remains in treatment, our outlook is promising. The care extended by this congregation during that season—prayers, meals, cards, gift cards, care packages, and grace—was a profound gift.

I lift up special thanks to the **Pastoral Relations Committee** for their steady support and wisdom, and to our extraordinary staff, whose professionalism and care made it possible for me to truly step away. Your love embodied the church at its best.

Gratitude and Transition

Thanks once again to On The Mark Dyslexia Clinic, for the truly life changing work you do every day, as well as for the donation of \$9,000 to help defray building maintenance costs.

In the fall of this year, the two unit owners of the Waitzmann Condominium Association which Union founded to provide mobility accessible housing and stabilize the church's neighborhood approached the church, asking to disband the Association. After much discussion and consultation, Common Ministry voted to empower me to vote "yes" on the church's behalf at the Condominium Association meeting. The Association unanimously voted to disband in December. Common Ministry would like to thank everyone who was part of the Waitzmann Condominium Association over the years for this visionary ministry that achieved its purpose, providing quality, stable housing in our neighborhood.

Finally, deep thanks are due to our outgoing Treasurer, **Sandy Polarek**. Sandy stepped in when we needed and has given countless hours to this role, stewarding Union's finances with integrity, diligence, and care. Her service has been faithful and generous beyond measure, and we are deeply grateful.

2025 has been long. It has been heavy. And it has been holy.

Union United Church of Christ continues to be a place where faith is lived honestly, justice is pursued boldly, and community is practiced imperfectly but persistently. In a world that often feels bent toward despair, this church keeps choosing life.

That it is no small thing that we keep showing up.

Not untouched by the weight of it all, not unscarred, not pretending we are fine—but still standing, still loving, still choosing one another. This year has asked more of us than we expected to give. It has tested our patience, our hope, our trust in institutions and in one another. It has revealed just how fragile so much of what we rely on truly is.

And yet.

Union Congregational United Church of Christ has not responded to this long year by shrinking. We have not retreated into nostalgia or safety or silence. We have leaned into what we know to be true: that despair is not neutral, that hope is a practice, and that love must be embodied to matter. We have invested in leaders, shown up publicly for justice, widened the circle of care, opened our doors, shared our resources, and told the truth—even when it was costly or uncomfortable.

This is what faithfulness looks like in a year like this.

Not perfection.

Not growth for growth's sake.

Not pretending the world is less broken than it is.

Faithfulness looks like continuing to notice the gorgeous life still unfolding among us—and choosing to protect it. It looks like refusing to let exhaustion harden into cynicism. It looks like trusting that small acts of courage, layered over time, can still bend God's world toward justice.

If 2025 has taught us anything, it is that the work ahead will not be short-term or simple. The year ahead will almost certainly ask more of us. But we do not step into it alone. We step into it as a people bound together by covenant, grounded in love, and committed to showing up—again and again—for God, for one another, and for a world that desperately needs communities like this one.

Ten thousand years long, yes.

And still, by grace, striving to do the will of God and to make the Christ Spirit dominant in our lives, and in all human relations.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels
Senior Minister

— Wisconsin Conference UCC 2025 Annual Report —



2025 was a year of transition for the Wisconsin Conference as we dissolved our four associations and shifted to a unified Committee on Ministry and single governance structure. This move followed two years of conversation around the increasing challenges of sustaining the traditional association-Conference structure.

Several other conferences had already made this change, and we knew it was important to acknowledge the end of our associations. But even more important was to ask ourselves, “What do we value and what do we most need to move forward?” Our conversations identified two priorities: We value relationships across the Conference, and we need to make it easy to share resources for ministry.

In 2026, we will launch two new initiatives. The first is a listening tour, Covenant Conversations, intended to learn the passions, successes and struggles of all our 204 congregations. These meetings in local churches will be facilitated by a combination of Committee on Ministry care team members and Conference board and staff members. We want to hear your stories and learn how we can better support one another.

Second, we will launch a digital “resource network” on our website. We see this as an efficient way to connect human and material resources needed for all sorts of ministry initiatives, such as best practices for congregations, ideas for justice and community-based ministries, and affinity groups for church treasurers, historians, pastoral relations teams, and others.

The missions and scholarships of the former associations have been folded into the Conference budget. The concept of dues is shifting in 2026 to reflect the core operating costs of the Wisconsin Conference (\$5 per member annually). These “membership dues” constitute the base commitment of every congregation. Our Church’s Wider Mission, plus special offerings, fund all the missions and ministries of our Conference life, providing every congregation much needed resourcing in the areas of search and call, conflict transformation, strategic planning, ministerial support and authorization, camps and retreat centers, and online theological education through the Damascus Project.

Beyond that, we provide disaster relief funds, global missions, peace and justice advocacy, and support for the national setting of the UCC, Wisconsin Council of Churches, and Council for Health and Human Service Ministries. Additionally, our grant programs for authorized ministers offer continuing education scholarships, educational debt reduction, annual scholarships to Members in Discernment, and ministerial assistance for urgent needs. And we continue to provide more than \$50,000 annually for Catalyst grants to support innovative new ministries in local churches.

This past year marked a significant milestone for the Wisconsin Foundation UCC. Total funds invested now exceed \$20 million. These funds are managed by The Investment Fund for Foundations, or TIFF, which has achieved stellar returns with low fees while focusing on socially responsible investing. We hope your congregation will consider this investment opportunity.

We are blessed to have generous congregations, gifted pastors, committed lay people, an incredible Conference staff and a deeply dedicated board of directors. Together, by God’s grace, we will journey into the future with a bold vision and as a faithful witness to the love of Jesus.

Gratefully submitted,
The Rev. Franz Rigert, Conference Minister

— Education Ministry —

The Education Ministry aims to support and coordinate the planning and administration of Christian education, in keeping with our church's values and purpose, for Union Church's members and friends. The ministry's offerings are meant to serve all people, from the youngest among us through adulthood. We would not be able to do this without the support and assistance of the congregation, and we are grateful to all those who've participated over the past year!

For our youngest congregants, we coordinate the Children's Moments offered during each week's service. We would like to thank Brittany Hendrix Malone, Ed Tucker, Cheryl Myers, Shawn Malone, Emily Lakatos, Megan Gleason, Michael Louis Vinson, and the members of the high school youth group, all of whom offered Children's Moments in 2025, as well as Pastor Bridget who picked up our slack any time we didn't have a volunteer. We'd like to thank Nancy Gibson for her work managing and maintaining the Prayground this year; Nancy Gibson, Kathy Seifert, Marilyn Halgrimson, Melissa Stepp, Kim Gilbert, and Amy Richards for helping to keep it fully stocked and seasonal, and the families who used the Prayground for keeping it neat and orderly every week. Thank you to Jenna Stevens, London Graham, Scott Nixon, and Katelyn Mertens for staffing the nursery each Sunday.

For our grade-school-aged youth, in 4K through 8th grade, the Education Ministry offers Faith Formation classes on Sunday mornings. In an exciting change for the 2025-2026 school year, we have moved from having three classrooms for school-aged youth on Sunday mornings to having four, due to growing cohort sizes. We are so happy to see so many young faces in the building each week! We would especially like to thank Nancy Gibson for her work managing curriculum and scheduling teachers, aides, and substitutes for the Faith Formation classrooms. In addition, we would like to thank both the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school year teachers, aides, and substitutes who have volunteered in our Faith Formation classrooms, including, but not limited to, Betty Bienash, Gail Carels, Nancy Gibson, Tim Harder, Betty Hartman, Amanda Hatton, Karen Hogan, Sandy Polarek, Christie Reese, Amy Richards, Julie Thiel, Kristen Van Stelle, Toni Champeau, Brad Gebben, Jenna Stevens, Steve Jones, Ed Tucker, Jammie VerGiesen, and Clay Reese. A special thank you is offered to Amy Richards who continues to plan and coordinate a monthly offering referred to as "Station Rotations," which allows the Faith Formation participants of all ages to come together to participate in a variety of activities around a spiritual and/or societal theme. This offering gives our youth an additional opportunity to build community with one another – and with other adults – outside of their usual cohorts. Thank you also to the parents, grandparents, extended families, friends, and friends who are like family who have put so much time and effort into making sure that our youth get to church and participate in Faith Formation on Sunday mornings.

Another thank you goes to Cathy Putman, our librarian, who continues to work with Faith Formation teachers to make sure that they have the resources they need, and that the church's library serves them well. We would also like to thank Pastor Bridget and those who've assisted her, including Heather Collins and Beth Lyman Piontek, for the Confirmation class offered during the 2024-2025 school year. We have many people to thank in this group, and that's a direct reflection of how much work goes into facilitating Christian education for our young congregants – we are so grateful for Union's commitment to our youth!

For our middle and high school youth, we would like to thank all those who've been advisors and substitutes to the youth group for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, including Heather

Collins, Tim Harder, Jenna Stevens, Megan Gleason, Jammie VerGiesen, Luc Richards, Ward Bacon, Shawn Malone, Ben Champeau, Denise Olson, and Eric Harkoff. Thanks to the commitment of our advisors, we have been able to continue to offer separate programming for our 6th – 8th grade and 9th – 12th grade youth.

We would also like to thank those who have provided meals for our youth on Wednesday nights, including Luc Richards, Clay Reese, Amy Anderson and Jane Posvic, Brad Gebben, Bob Hileman, Pam Klingert, Emily Mroczynski, and Les VanVonderen and Peggy Welsh. We all know that teenagers come hungry, and the fellowship that you facilitate by providing delicious meals is well appreciated. Thank you to all those who've transported our youth to and from church on Wednesday evenings and made youth group a priority for your families and households. In a world with no shortage of commitments, your ongoing commitment to Union Church and the fellowship of our youth is a blessing!

The Education Ministry is pleased to share that we have trained a group of facilitators, composed of members and friends of Union Church – Christie Reese, Zoé James, Kevin Sheier, Rachel Westenberg, and Beth Lyman Piontek – as Our Whole Lives (OWL) facilitators. OWL is a human growth and development curriculum from the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship that focuses on scientifically accurate, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate material for participants across the lifespan. The Education Ministry plans to begin offering classes for 5th and 6th graders during 2026 and is excited to get this program, which has been under consideration and planning for more than two years, up and running!

We thank Pastor Bridget for her work coordinating the adult education offerings that usually occur on the first and third Sundays of each month, as well as those members and friends of Union Church who've presented content for us. We owe an ongoing thank you to Julie Harder whose Seminary Secrets classes continue to be a hallmark of Union's adult education offerings, as well as to Ed Tucker for offering a Christian Disciplines study group after church on the fourth Sunday of each month and to George Ochs for offering a series on Affirmations for Spiritual Growth this fall!

Last, thank you to the members of the Education Ministry, including Heather Collins, Nancy Gibson, Amanda Hatton, and Amy Richards. Your commitment has been invaluable to me, and to Union Church!

As always, the Education Ministry welcomes new volunteers, new ideas, and new voices, anywhere you think you might fit. If you'd like to join us in any capacity, please contact Beth Lyman Piontek at (920) 217-3564 or beth.e.lyman@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Lyman Piontek, Education Ministry vice-chair

Faith Formation Leaders — 2025-2026 School Year

Christian Education at Union Church could not be achieved without the help of our Education Ministry members and many volunteers. Thank you!

Sunday Faith Formation Leaders

4K – 1st, 2nd—3rd, and 4th – 5th Grades

Teachers: **Karen Hogan, Nancy Gibson, Christie Reese, Amy Richards, Kristen Van Stelle, Brad Gebben, Toni Champeau**

Assistants: **Amanda Hatton, Julie Thiel, Jenna Stevens, Steve Jones**

Substitute: **Sandy Polarek**

6th — 8th Grade:

Teachers: **Jammie VerGiesen, Clay Reese, Heather Collins, Shawn Malone**

Assistants: **Betty Bienash, Betty Hartman, Gail Carels, Ed Tucker**

H.O.P.E. and J.O.Y.: **Megan Gleason, Jammie VerGiesen, Heather Collins, Luc Richards, Ward Bacon, Denise Olson, Eric Harkoff, Shawn Malone, Ben Champeau, Beth Lyman Piontek**

Librarian: **Cathy Putman**

Adult Education: **Julie Harder, Ed Tucker, Michael Lukens, George Ochs**

Nursery: **Jenna Stevens, London Graham, Scott Nixon, Katelyn Mertens**

The Peg Jaeger Church Library

In 2025 the church library added 80 books to the collection, the largest number in recent years. We moved a few older books, mostly children's, into a historical collection joining our reserves of Women's Fellowship church cookbooks, and books by former pastors and their wives.

The aim is to hold about 1,800 books with only classic titles related to theology and the denomination older than twenty years. We track the collection through our free online cataloging web application called LibraryThing. Union's catalog can be accessed on any computer at <https://www.librarything.com/catalog/UnionCongUCC>.

This year with three elementary church school classes about a quarter of the picture book collection is in use as a weekly supplement to the lesson. Current children's publishing is replete with diverse stories of social justice and a variety of approaches to creation and creation care.

Proceeds of the Used Book Sale in May were split with Outreach as we have done before. Donations of books and money were mostly used to increase the fiction section with substantial additions to our Louise Penny's Inspector Gamache and William Kent Krueger's Cork O'Connor series.

While I realize that ebooks and podcasts are increasingly popular ways to access narrative and information content, if you wish detach yourself from screens and pause to reflect, there's nothing better than a paper book. Check out the library – no fines, no due dates. Just sign the card in the back with your name, the month and year of borrowing. No passwords, no verification. We roll on trust.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Putman, Librarian

— Membership Ministry —

Mission

The mission of the Membership and Inreach Ministry is to welcome new members into our church and to make current members and visitors feel welcome and connected. We do this by greeting before worship and facilitating the integration of new members into our church family. We give jars of cookie mix as a welcome gift to church visitors. We organize opportunities for socialization, fellowship, and care for members of Union Church. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this ministry.

Membership Ministry Meetings

We are always looking for more people to help with our ministry. Membership Ministry meets at 5:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month.

New Members

In 2025, our church welcomed new members in March and November.

Social

Church Picnic: Potluck lunch for the Church Picnic held in the courtyard in June.

Reunion Sunday: Our Reunion Sunday potluck continued the tradition of Scott Daniels providing smoked pulled pork and members bringing sides and desserts to share.

Annual Meeting Potluck: Yearly after the Annual Meeting.

Fellowship

Retreat: An annual event that takes place at Moon Beach camp near Eagle River, Wisconsin.

Wednesday Night Suppers: Every other week during the school year for our youth programs.

Women's Advent Event: An annual event for the women of the church to experience a moment of quiet and reflection before the busy holiday season.

Groups

Men's Fellowship Breakfasts: This group, convened by Ed Tucker, meets on the first Wednesday of the month for food and fellowship at Denny's on Oneida.

Ladies Lunch Bunch: This group meets for food and fellowship and is convened by Sue Zanzig.

Care

Memorial Reception Ministry: Provided receptions before or after funerals held at Union Church. This ministry is convened by Heather Collins.

Baby Afghans and Prayer Shawl Ministry: Members knitted or crocheted shawls that were given to persons who were ill, during crisis, or who had suffered a loss. Members knitted or crocheted afghans as a gift to babies/young children at Baptism.

Card Ministry: Provides an opportunity for everyone to join in sending cards to our shut-ins and church family with special concerns each month on Communion Sunday. This ministry is convened by Glen Verstegen.

Cooks Who Care Ministry: Provides meals for our church family members during times when a prepared meal is helpful. Sojourner Circle re-energized this ministry this year and now provides freezer meals for anyone to take and share.

First Friends Ministry: First Friends match a new member's household with a current member's household to welcome them to our church family and encourage them to participate in activities.

We invite anyone that would like to join our dedicated group.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise Olson, chair
Jessica Lundgren and Libby Sievert, co-chairs

Women's Fellowship

Over 80 women gathered for reflection and community in the church hall on Monday, December 1, for the Women's Advent Reflection: "Motherhood and Christmas." The designated organization for table donations was On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic whose new director, Emily D'Angelo, gave us an update on all the exciting things happening with the clinic.

Our thanks to our readers, Kathy Baldwin, Barbara McClure-Lukens, Sue Tucker, and Heather Blue Collins, and to our Ladies Ensemble, violinist Taylor Giorgio, and pianist Elaine Moss. A big shout out to Union's outstanding music director, Haley Steele, for the wonderful music and help with this event. Thanks to Pastor Bridget for the opening prayer. Thanks to the gentlemen who provided behind-the-scenes support, especially David Thie. Thank you to everyone who hosted a table or attended. You made the event a success.

Denise Olson and Cheryl Myers

Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship meets at 7 a.m. on the first Wednesday of the month for breakfast at Denny's on South Oneida in Ashwaubenon. This breakfast is open to all at Union Church who identify as male. The meeting is free flowing, which allows those attending to depart whenever needed due to work or other commitments.

At breakfast, we share our joys, our concerns, our recent travels and occasionally even discuss our feelings about politics. If you have never joined us for breakfast, please try it once this year.

Ed Tucker

Priscilla Circle

Priscilla Circle is open to all the women of the church. We usually meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month, excluding December and the summer months. We may not meet in January or February depending on the weather. Our meetings are announced in "Still Speaking."

The circle meets for dessert at 1 p.m. followed by a short business meeting, devotions, and a program. We hear the joys and concerns of church members and review activities in the church. Our programs this year included:

- Elena from ADRC who spoke to us about the work that they do and contacts that they make.
- Pastor Bridget who reviewed a program she had presented at the church retreat the previous fall.
- Jeff Larson who told us about his hobby of paddle boarding and the work of Green Bay Sail and Paddle that teaches young people those skills.
- One program focused on ourselves; we called it "Getting to know You." Each of us spoke about our families and activities that keep us busy.
- Eric Goska talked about the history of the NFL draft including aspects that involved the Green Bay Packers.
- One of our favorites each year is when we share books we have read recently. Sandy Polarek often highlights books for adults and books for children or young people.
- Jeff Gibson reported on the activities he does with JOSHUA, a group of people representing many churches in the city. For example, they often talk with prisoners who are incarcerated in the area.
- Nicole Polarek and Emily D'Angelo reviewed the work of On the Mark Dyslexia Clinic which resides on the lower level of our church.
- Our final program of the year featured Sue Tucker who showed pictures and talked about a cruise that she and her husband, Ed, had taken recently to Australia and New Zealand.

We thank Nancy Gibson for calling members monthly and keeping us in touch with members' concerns. We are grateful for the dedication of Sue Whittemore as she seeks out and secures interesting speakers and programs for the circle. Thanks, too, to our hostesses who provide snacks and beverages and to those who offer devotions from time to time.

New members are always welcome. Join us in the English Room on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Helen Krueger

— Outreach Ministry —

Outreach Vision: Offer opportunities and equip church members to participate in community and service volunteer work and to engage in current moral and ethical issues.

Outreach 2025 Focus: Continually ask what we are doing to support racial and social justice in our community.

Outreach Communication Project

Union Church has a long history of living our faith by serving our neighbors near and far. Late in 2024 we completed Phase One of a Communication Project which included kiosks, bulletin boards, and updates to the website. This past year Phase Two of the project was initiated to establish a schedule to feature various Outreach Ministries throughout the year. Thanks to Mary Hemminger and Deb Rose for your continued dedication and hard work to create and maintain this communication center!

Blessing Box

Over the past year, our Blessing Box has continued to be a meaningful source of support for members of our community experiencing food insecurity or financial hardship. This ministry offers immediate assistance during moments of crisis, helping bridge the gap for those waiting for other resources, managing unexpected expenses, or experiencing temporary hardship. The Blessing Box preserves dignity and promotes basic health and well-being.

The Union UCC Church community generously supports the Blessing Box through monthly food drives and monetary donations. In October 2025, Outreach Ministry voted to increase our Blessing Box community assistance. This was accomplished by increasing items shared to 600 per week and increasing restock frequency to five times per week. Food drive donations are supplemented with purchased items, funded by monetary donations. Our 2025 purchasing expenditure was \$4,256.

Our 2025 summertime Produce Pantry and Band Concert food drives also provided items to share, as did Blessing Box participation in the 2025 Christmas Giving Tree Program.

Blessing Box team members Marty Berry, Mary Boeselager, Claudia Doelger and Clare Ryan restock the Blessing Box year-round, and we also appreciate Joni Delwiche's restock assistance. Mary Hemminger manages inventory to make sure we have items on hand to meet restock goals, and coordinates team communication. Larry Kabat, Cathy Valk, Isabelle Wauters, Jon Boldt and Clare Ryan assist with our summertime evening food drives, and Achim Seifert keeps our outdoor pantry in good repair.

The Blessing Box remains a visible reminder that small acts of kindness can have lasting impact. We are grateful for the continued support that makes this ministry possible and look forward to serving our neighbors in the year ahead.

Souper Cooks

This year, our Souper Cooks program continued to be a vital outreach ministry, providing home-cooked meals and monthly service at the NEW Community Shelter. Through this program, our church is able to offer nourishment, hospitality, and a welcoming presence to neighbors experiencing housing insecurity.

Funding from our annual rummage sale, along with the generous financial support from our congregation, makes this ministry possible. These gifts are transformed into meals that bring comfort, consistency, and care to those we serve. We continue to serve every time we prepare a meal. \$2,618 was donated (including funds from the rummage sale) in 2025 and \$1,602 was spent with a year-end balance of \$3,244. Marty Barry continues to lead this effort. Because of increased diners at NEW Community Shelter, the amount of food we prepare has increased.

Beyond meeting a physical need, Souper Cooks strengthens community connections and offers a tangible expression of Christ's love in action. Volunteers, donors, and cooks all play an important role in ensuring this ministry continues to serve faithfully each month.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Union UCC congregation for your continued generosity, time, service, and prayers. Your support allows Souper Cooks to remain a meaningful and impactful presence in our wider community.

Ecumenical Partnership for Housing (EPH)

Our church is proud to be a founding member of EPH (Ecumenical Partnership for Housing) and to remain actively involved in its ongoing work within our community. Through EPH, faith communities come together to support safe, stable, and affordable housing for individuals and families in need.

This ministry reflects our long-standing commitment to collaboration, compassion, and justice. By working alongside partner congregations and community organizations, EPH addresses housing insecurity in meaningful and sustainable ways. Barbara McClure-Lukens is Union's liaison with EPH. Barbara, thank you for your time, dedication, and service as our liaison with EPH. Your efforts make meaningful impacts and we are grateful for the care and commitment you have shown in this role.

Through Jubilee House in Union's backyard, EPH houses one family at a time and turns over 1-2 times per year, depending on the family situation. EPH assists families with housing, employment, goal setting (such as a parent completing school) and financial management skills. There remains \$1,036 in the Jubilee House repair fund.

2025 Outreach Summary

NON-BUDGETED OUTREACH

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| One Great Hour of Sharing | \$ 1,341.93 |
| Neighbors in Need | \$ 1,584.00 |
| Christmas Fund | \$ 2,158.00 |
| Strengthen the Church | \$ 1,840.00 |
| Heifer International | \$ 7,475.00 |
| Parson's Purse | \$ 13,644.90 |
| EPH | \$ 10,510.37 |
| Blessing Box | \$ 4,254.96 |
| Souper Cooks | \$ 1,602.53 |
| <u>Gifts & Memorials Outreach Grants</u> | <u>\$ 15,600.00</u> |
| Total Non-Budgeted | \$ 60,011.69 |

We extend our sincere gratitude to the congregation for your continued prayers, volunteer efforts, and financial support. Your faithfulness has helped ensure that this vital ministry continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of our neighbors and in the strength of our wider community.

JOSHUA (Justice Organization Sharing Hope & United for Action)

Our church's continued participation in JOSHUA in Brown County is an important expression of our commitment to justice, equity, and faithful advocacy. Through JOSHUA, congregations work together across faith traditions to address systemic issues affecting our community, particularly those related to housing stability, fair treatment, and human dignity. Steve Hartman represented Union UCC on the JOSHUA board in 2025, and Pastor Bridget continues to serve as the chair of the JOSHUA Spiritual Leaders.

By supporting JOSHUA, our church helps amplify the voices of those who are often unheard and contributes to long-term, sustainable change rather than short-term solutions alone. This partnership allows us to engage in education, relationship-building, and collective action that seeks to create a more just and compassionate community for all.

Continued support of JOSHUA reflects our belief that faith calls us not only to acts of charity, but also to the work of justice. Through this shared effort, our church remains actively engaged in shaping a community where all people are treated with fairness, respect, and dignity.

NeighborWorks

Union UCC partnered with John Kershek on this endeavor with NeighborWorks. This organization offers grants for first-time home buyers to help with home renovations and repairs. Several volunteers from Union worked with NeighborWorks on their Good Neighbor Week home repairs and several others worked with John to manage repairs, etc. for another member of Union UCC. We look forward to continuing this partnership into the future.

In-Kind Giving

The following amounts were collected for the offerings promoted by the national United Church of Christ throughout the year:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| One Great Hour of Sharing | \$1,341 |
| Strengthen the Church | \$1,840 |
| Neighbors In Need..... | \$1,584 |
| Christmas Fund..... | \$2,158 |

Annual Rummage Sale

The annual Rummage Sale is held at Union UCC Church in May, in conjunction with the Astor Neighborhood rummage sale. Rummage sale proceeds provide the funds for the NEW Community Shelter "Souper Cooks" ministry. This year \$2,618 was raised from the sale. The Rummage Sale is a volunteer opportunity with a compact timeframe of only a few weeks. Please consider joining the team for 2026.

Heifer International

Our church continues to support Heifer International, an organization dedicated to ending hunger and poverty by empowering families and communities around the world. Through the gift of livestock,

training, and sustainable agricultural practices, Heifer International helps families build self-reliance, improve nutrition, and create lasting economic stability.

This ministry aligns with our faith's call to share God's abundance and care for our global neighbors. The robust financial support offered by our congregation this year has made a meaningful impact, helping extend hope, dignity, and opportunity to families in need.

This year our living gift market for Heifer Sunday raised a total of \$7,475; another Ark was donated by the church for 2025. There was a financial donation match that increased our support of this program this year as well.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the congregation for your extraordinary generosity. Your commitment ensures that this life-changing work continues, transforming lives and strengthening communities for generations to come. We offer our sincere gratitude to Heather Collins and Wendy Woodward for their leadership and countless hours organizing this year's event, and to the congregation for your extraordinary generosity. Your commitment has made a meaningful and lasting impact.

Additional Activities

The Love Life Diaper Drive had good participation in 2025. We sponsored five organizations through our Christmas Giving Tree: Dr. Rosa Minoka-Hill School, On The Mark Dyslexia Clinic, The Blessing Box, The Brain Center and We All Rise, for our Christmas Giving Tree Program.

I remain grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a wonderful team of dedicated and hard-working individuals. As is our tradition at Union UCC, the congregation was generous with their time, talent and treasure with all these important Outreach activities. The Outreach Ministry is very thankful for all of you and we look forward to continuing to bring Christ into our community.

Respectfully submitted,
Jammie VerGiesen, chair, and Lucas Richards, vice-chair Outreach Ministry

JOSHUA — Justice Organization Sharing Hope United for Action

This past year, 2025, has been a busy and creative time for the work of the JOSHUA governing board and the work of four major task forces. Significant progress was reported and celebrated at the 21st year annual meeting on November 14 at the Village Grille. A round-robin format provided reporting and dialogue in the work of each task force including: Transformational Justice, Fair and Safe Housing, Environmental Justice, and Immigration and Migration Advocacy. These efforts have been supported and enhanced by the Spiritual Leaders Caucus which is co-chaired by Michael Westenberg and Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.

JOSHUA aligns with the state-wide WISDOM organization and cooperates with similar, sister, organizations throughout Wisconsin. The Community Organizer, Amber Edwards, and Coordinator, Caitlin Haynes, work closely with the board of directors to implement and coordinate efforts in each of the task force areas. A recent addition includes Susanne Crowell, an AmeriCorp volunteer. Susanne is completing a year of service with JOSHUA in her Justice Advocate position, partnering with the Wisconsin Association of Free & Charitable Clinics and received recent financial support of grants from Resurrection Parish and St. Matthew's Church.

Community engagement and outreach include the monthly Prayer Vigil outside the walls of the Green Bay Correctional Institute on the 23rd of each month at noon. Staff and officers are remembered in prayer as well as incarcerated persons in GBCI who are remembered by name and their families.

A bipartisan initiative promoting the closure of the GBCI (with no new prison construction) seems to be gaining support. Following recent budget hearings in Madison with testimony from WISDOM, Citizen Action, Wisconsin Public Education Network and others, the Department of Corrections began implementing "The Friends and Family Form" quarterly so loved ones and advocates of those incarcerated can communicate their concerns.

Immigration efforts brought community partners and spiritual leaders together for events to build solidarity. Initiatives included "know your rights support for undocumented and immigrant communities" and an Interfaith Prayer service celebrating "A Bridge Is Stronger Than a Wall" at St. James Park in August. Tom Denk was recognized for his testimony at the Joint Finance Hearing in April requesting funding for the Earned Release Program and Treatment Alternatives and Diversion. The Tarlton Theatre was acknowledged as a Community Connection Partnership of the Year for airing "Americans with No Address" in March.

Statements and guiding principles for each task force initiative can be found online at joshua4justice.org or by contacting Steve Hartman at 920-246-7539.

Ecumenical Partnership for Housing (EPH)

The Ecumenical Partnership for Housing (EPH) mission statement is *Putting faith into action for families facing homelessness*. Founded by Union Church in 1989 with the establishment of Jubilee House on Union property, EPH has grown to a 22-church coalition.

EPH goes beyond providing shelter, it offers continuing solutions and case management support leading to self-sufficiency. Families move from homelessness into safe, stable homes through the transitional and supportive housing programs.

Highlights in 2025 include:

- EPH now has 40 units available for families experiencing homelessness.
- EPH helped one family transition from homelessness to home ownership when they purchased the home they were living in from EPH.
- Each night, approximately 100 children fall asleep in an EPH home. Five children living in EPH homes graduated from high school this year and two have been accepted into college programs.
- As of mid-year, housing and case management were provided to 44 families and 114 children. Families served are supported in becoming debt-free, earning promotions at work, increasing their level of education, and taking steps necessary for long-term stability.
- The family living in Jubilee house moved on in a positive direction. Volunteers then readied the house for a new family, under the direction of Carolyn O'Brien, Interior Coordinator for the House, and Jeff Carels, Exterior Coordinator.

Union Church's contributions to EPH of financial gifts and the hands-on work of generous volunteers embodies how we live out our call to change lives in our community. Thank you for your continuing support.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara McClure-Lukens
Board Member, Ecumenical Partnership for Housing

— Worship Ministry —

Worship Ministry's role is to provide "support, coordination, and vision-keeping in the planning and administration of worship, rites, sacraments and music" (Constitution and Bylaws of Union Church).

The Worship Ministry team in 2025 included Zoé James (Chair and Communion Coordinator, January-February), Betty Bienash (Vice Chair, January-February, Chair, March-December, coordinator for Communion Servers and Sanctuary Angels), Lou Norsetter (Vice Chair and Communion Coordinator, March-December), Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels (Senior Minister), Haley Steele (Music Director), Frank Beyer (organist), Heather Collins (Moderator), Eric Harkoff (AV coordinator, January-April), Daniel Hatton (AV coordinator June-December), Tim Dantoin (coordinator of ushers), and Gail Hohenstein (coordinator of readers).

Worship services at Union Church were available both through streaming services via Facebook Live and YouTube and in-person in the church sanctuary.

The worship services at Union are only possible because of the support and efforts of so many people within our church family. While we may miss naming some people who have contributed to our worship services, the Worship Ministry team would like to express gratitude to as many as we possibly can.

Streaming our services to those who wish to access them when not able to participate in-person would not be possible without our AV team. The AV team included Eric Harkoff (AV Coordinator January-April), Daniel Hatton (AV Coordinator June-December), Jeff Gibson, Paco Espinoza, Zeke Fietsch-Huber, Zoé James, Carter Reese, Christian Reese, Clay Reese, Sam Stranz, Michael Stepp, and Paco Espinosa. The team worked diligently throughout the year, continuing with much needed enhancements to soundboard and microphones.

We appreciate the work of the ushers who have been coordinated by Tim Dantoin. The team has added greeters at the back portico covered entrance. The ushers were Joyce Anderson, Tony Baldwin, Jon Boldt, Jeff Carels, Tim Dantoin, Gail Hohenstein, Bill Johnson, Tom Martin, Barbara McClure-Lukens, Deb Rose, Larry Rose, Tom Schlies, Achim Seifert, Bruce Shafer, Jim Smithback, Julie Thiel, Marty Thiel and Glen Verstegen.

Virtual ushers continue to welcome people who participate in the services through the online streaming services, as well as answer questions, forward bulletins, and provide technical assistance as needed. Thank you to Gail Hohenstein for her assistance in this role.

Betty Bienash, Noah Harkoff, Zoé James, and Lou Norsetter have organized the preparation of Communion. Communion was served through a combination of passing the elements through the pews and offering pre-sealed Communion packets at the entrances to the sanctuary. The Communion packets are also available to those who have participated in the Visitation Ministry. We appreciate all who have volunteered to serve Communion, including Kathy Baldwin, Betty Bienash (coordinator of Communion servers), Gail Carels, Jeff Carels, Heather Collins, Betty Hartman, Steve Hartman, Gail Hohenstein, Barbara McClure-Lukens, Christian Reese, Carter Reese, Ed Tucker, Sue Tucker, and David Thie.

Betty Bienash coordinates the Sanctuary Angels, a group that has assumed the weekly duties to keep our sanctuary tidy and arrange the envelopes and cards in the pews. Kathy Baldwin, Betty Bienash, Betty Hartman, Gail Hohenstein, Judy Keneklis, and Carol Tilkens assisted with these duties.

Gail Hohenstein organized the readers for our church services, including special services, and we have appreciated being able to listen to the many readers who read the scripture during services throughout the year.

We appreciate the efforts of all who work to enhance the beauty of the sanctuary throughout the year: Kathy Baldwin for arranging the flowers for Easter, Kathleen Caylor for installing our magnificent PRIDE rainbow over the altar in June, Ben VerGiesen for decorating the sanctuary for Christmas, Kathy Seifert for the altar enhancements, wreaths, and so much more at Christmas and beyond, and for the many members who assisted in erecting the Christmas tree and the stable for the Christmas pageant.

Music, of course, is an integral part of the worship services at Union. Under the guidance of Haley Steele, Music Director, David Hassel, interim organist, Frank Beyer, who joined the church staff as organist in February, and Linda Cook, Director of the Bell Choir. We appreciate the wonderful music offered by the Chancel Choir, the Bell Choir, the cantors and the soloists throughout the year. We were also thrilled that student interns from UWGB and St. Norbert continued to be part of our music program as they strengthen our existing programming efforts. Interns Megan Jodar, Zeke Fietsch-Huber, Caleb Hale, Ella Hamilton and Caitlyn Kolter worked alongside Haley and be part of our worship services.

Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels continues to provide meaningful, creative services throughout the church year. The Martin Luther King service included an offering earmarked for We All Rise which acknowledged the legacy of the Spirituals.

The season of Lent, which reflected the theme of "Finding Margins/Finding Spiritual Space," included an Ash Wednesday service, a Palm Sunday service, a Maundy Thursday service in the church hall with an agape meal of soup and bread and Communion, and a Good Friday Tenebrae Service of Shadows. We concluded Lent on Easter Sunday with two services, an 8 a.m. service in the chapel including Communion and a 10 a.m. service in the sanctuary featuring a brass quintet.

Three worship services featured jazz music: Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday (January 19), Pentecost (June 8) and the first Sunday of Advent (November 30). A special thank you to Sam Stranz whose oversight and musicianship allowed us to worship through jazz music during these services.

Our annual church picnic and worship service was held in June in our church courtyard. A special thank you to Pastor Bridget and all those who made this service possible.

In October, Heifer Sunday welcomed animals into our sanctuary during Children's Moments, followed by a Living Gift Market in the courtyard, which raised funds for Heifer International. Wendy Woodward organized the Living Gift Market, supported by Jammie VerGiesen, who once again coordinated our animal guests.

Memorial Sunday was an especially meaningful service, during which we celebrated the lives of those who were connected to Union and who passed away during 2025. We invited the congregation to bring mementos of their loved ones to create an altar of remembrance, or ofrenda, for the service.

The December Advent services were organized around the theme of "Wonder." The Christmas Pageant welcomed children and adults to Union once again. The pageant was directed by Heather Collins and Christie Reese, musicians were Cael Richards (drums) and Franklin Beyer (organ and piano), house lights were managed by Tim Dantoin, and the costumes and fitters were Gail Carels, Betty Hartman, Amanda Hatton, Bev Lathrop and Sandy Polarek.

The Christmas Eve services began with a Family Service at 3:00 p.m. and concluded with the traditional Christmas Eve Service at 8 p.m., preceded by beautiful musical offerings coordinated by Haley Steele.

Worship Ministry continues to support Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels in creating meaningful worship services. The services would not be possible without the support and involvement of our extended Union congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Bienash, Worship Ministry chair

— Stewardship Ministry —

*Union's purpose is to strive to do the will of God,
and to make the Christ spirit dominant in our lives and in all human relations.*

*Our church celebrates God's love by...
Creating a safe harbor for all,
Serving each at their point of need, and
Promoting personal and societal transformation*

Stewardship Ministry is responsible for providing support, coordination, and vision keeping in the planning and administration of stewardship of our church resources in the areas of Operating Income, Building and Maintenance, and Capital Campaign.

Building and Maintenance

The Union building and grounds continued to be a key area of focus in 2025 for Stewardship Ministry. We ensured that Union's facilities meet all member needs and provide a safe and functional space not only for worship but all ministries and outreach activities. Some highlights for our ministry in 2025 include:

- Continuing to upgrade facility lighting to LED
- Purchasing floor scrubber / polisher
- Replacing hot water heating units and adding circulating pump and storage tank.
- Repairing grand piano's action and replace sound board
- Tree removal behind Jubilee House

Capital Campaign Projects

The Capital Campaign was an overwhelming success. Campaign funding allowed Stewardship Ministry to execute numerous renovation and sustainability projects in 2025 including the following:

- Sanctuary and church hall painting
- Organist office renovations
- Sanctuary door refinishing
- Lower-level restroom renovations
- Thermostat replacement throughout building
- Valve replacement in sanctuary heating system
- Audio and Visual System repairs including new mics and sound mixing-board
- Sanctuary ADA door openers (courtyard entry, lower level inner entry, lower level bathroom)
- Back-up compressor for the heating system

In accordance with the Capital Campaign strategy, the following projects are in the planning phase for 2026:

- Parking lot repair and resurfacing
- Fire escape painting

- Mayflower classroom floor upgrade
- Mayflower classroom space partitioning

Accounting

Katrina Catteruccia continues to maintain and streamline bookkeeping as our financial secretary. Budgeting and financial reports are in the capable hands of our Treasurer, Sandy Polarek. In 2025 we initiated plans for conducting a financial audit, updating our bookkeeping manual and a building insurance review. All of these will be undertaken and completed in 2026.

Green Energy Task Force

Stewardship continued its efforts in pursuit of energy efficiency and sustainability. The 18.1KW solar array installed in 2024 paid dividends in 2025 by trimming our annual electric bill. We upgraded all building thermostats with new units to improve temperature control, installed energy efficient hot water heaters, with a variable speed circulating pump, and continued upgrading lights to LED. We continue to look for and invite suggestions for new and innovative opportunities that will make Union more environmentally sound.

Garden Committee

Cathy Putman, along with many church volunteers, continues to transform and create a thriving and sustainable space in the Biblical Garden. Cathy and the team have worked to gather grants from Wild One's and the Wisconsin Conference Creation Care to restore bird habits to the property, control invasive species, and promote the planting of native plants and shrubs.

Kathy Seifert and a wonderful flock of additional volunteers continued to transform and maintain the rest of our gardens and landscaping. The Stewardship Ministry extends our appreciation to Kathy for her many years of inspiration, coordination, and effort as she steps aside from a leadership role.

Membership

Stewardship Ministry members this year included Sandy Polarek (Treasurer), Jason Ferry (chair), Tim Dantoin (co-chair), Tony Baldwin, Bill Johnson, Jeff Gibson, and David Thie. Thank you to all the volunteers that have worked diligently to make each of the building & ground and Capital Campaign projects such a success in 2025. Thanks also to Pastor Bridget, Tim Harder & Heather Collins, and the church office staff for their support, participation, and assistance with the Stewardship Ministry activities over the past year. Finally....we extend our great appreciation to Sexton Brad Dorin for his insights, experience, diligence, dedication, patience and good humor in keeping things running smoothly.

Stewardship Ministry looks forward to another incredible year full of revitalizing projects at Union Congregational.

Respectfully,
 Jason Ferry, chair
 Tim Dantoin, co-Chair

— Memorial Garden —

The Memorial Garden was established in 2001 to provide a peaceful and attractive location for crypts to inter the cremated remains of Union Church members and friends. The Garden also provides a site for memorial plaques to honor and remember Church members and friends.

The Garden is located outside the southwest corner of the church building and can be entered from the sidewalk on the south side of the church building or from the parking lot behind the church. The Garden has terraced landscaping with in-ground crypts in the upper level. There are single crypts for individuals and companion crypts for couples. Wall plaques are attached to the south wall of the church overlooking the Garden, and are available as individuals or doubles.

Crypts and plaques can be purchased at the time of death or before death to reduce final arrangement decisions for the surviving family. Purchasing a crypt is ideal for an individual or a couple who do not have a family burial plot in a cemetery or have not purchased space in a mausoleum.

The Garden has an endowment fund that is invested in the United Church Foundation. A portion of the proceeds from each sale of crypts or wall plaques is invested in the Foundation. Earnings from the Foundation can be used for the maintenance of the Garden. The Memorial Garden Fund at UCF has an end-of-2025 balance of \$105,342 and we have \$6,730 in our local checking. We also have two spare double crypts and three spare single crypts on site.

Pastor Bridget has established an annual tradition on Memorial Day weekend. At the conclusion of the Sunday church service in the sanctuary, the congregation is invited to convene in the Memorial Garden for the final hymn. For church members who have never seen the Memorial Garden, this is an opportunity to do so. The Garden Committee invites and encourages church members to visit the Garden at any time, and to consider purchasing a crypt or wall plaque for themselves or for a family member.

The Memorial Garden Committee again extends a thank you to the Riopelle and Meng families for providing funding for the summer landscaping and maintenance in the Garden. These two families do this in memory of Katie Small and Dr. and Mrs. Hitch, whose ashes are interred in the Garden. They are the parents of Ginny Riopelle and Inky Meng. The maintenance has been performed by Katie's long-time gardener, Robert Johnson. It is with sorrow that we note Robert's passing last fall.

The year 2025 has been the continuation of the post-Phil Hauck-era of the Memorial Garden Committee membership. At the January 2024 Annual Meeting, David Thie was elected to serve as Chairperson of the Committee. He served as chair in 2024 and 2025 and is expected to continue in 2026. Also continuing to serve are Committee members Jeff Zahn, Larry Rose, and Pastor Bridget.

For the Memorial Garden Committee,
David Thie, chair

— Nominating Committee — (revised as of Jan. 20, 2026)

The Nominating Committee presents the following nominees* for officers of the church, chairperson and vice-chair of the church ministries, and elected members of committees. Each has responded to the call to serve in leadership positions of our church's lay ministry. If elected, these nominees begin their service upon the conclusion of the Annual Meeting, January 25, 2026. Thank you to all who have served as our church's elected leaders and to those who continue to serve with their time and talents to ensure the ongoing ministry of Union Church. Traditionally, Common Ministry delegates to the congregation the election of the delegates to Ecumenical Partnership for Housing (EPH) and JOSHUA , the Communications Coordinators and the chair of the Memorial Garden Committee.

*** indicates a person nominated for election**

Officers

Moderator Heather Collins (1st term, 1 year remains)
Vice-Moderator *Clay Reese (2nd term, 2 years remain)

Clerk Gail Hohenstein (8th term, 1 year remains)
Treasurer *Larry Rose (1st term, 2 years remain)

Ministries and Committees

Education

Chair *Beth Lyman Piontek (2nd term, 2 years remain)
Vice-Chair *Amy Richards (2nd term, 2 years remain)

Gifts and Memorials

Co-Chair Kathy Baldwin (2nd term, 1 year remains)
Co-Chair *Mike Stepp (2nd term, 2 years remain)

Membership

Chair *Jessica Lundgren (1st term, 2 years remain)
Vice-Chair *Denise Olson (1st term, 2 years remain)

Pastoral Relations Committee (4-year term)

Kris Vespa (1 year remains)
Tim Harder (2 years remain)
Kathy Seifert (3 years remain)
*Todd Kane (4 years remain)

Outreach

Chair Jammie VerGiesen (2nd term, 1 year remains)
Vice-Chair Luc Richards (1st term, 1 year remains)

Stewardship

Chair *Jason Ferry (2nd term, 2 years remain)
Vice-Chair *Tim Dantoin (2nd term, 2 years remain)

Worship

Chair *Betty Bienash (1st term, 2 years remain)
Vice-Chair *Lou Norsetter (1st term, 2 years remain)

Personnel Committee (3-year term, no term limits)

*Cheryl Myers (3 years)
Nicole Polarek (2 years)
Ryan Rieth (1 year)

Delegate, Ecumenical Partnership for Housing: *Barbara McClure-Lukens

Delegate, JOSHUA: *Steve Hartman

Communications Coordinators: *Ruth Homrighaus and *Mary Ann Hudson

Memorial Garden Committee Chair: *David Thie

Appointed Position

Nominating Committee Chair: Tim Harder (immediate past Moderator)

Respectively submitted by the Nominating Committee,
Tim Harder (chair)

— WISE Team Annual Report 2025 —

Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged

In 2021, the Wisconsin Conference UCC began encouraging congregations to work toward becoming WISE—Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged—around mental health. This invitation recognizes that mental health is not a side issue in the life of faith, but central to how we love God and one another.

Union began this journey in earnest in the spring of 2024, and in the fall of that year WISE was the theme of our all-church retreat. That retreat opened honest conversations, named shared longings, and made clear that many in our congregation are already deeply impacted—personally or through loved ones—by the realities of mental and emotional well-being. Following the retreat, congregants were invited to form a WISE Team to explore what becoming a WISE-designated congregation might look like at Union.

Throughout 2025, members of the WISE Team met regularly to study the WISE process, review best practices from other congregations, and discern how Union might faithfully respond to the needs within our own community. In the summer of 2025, the team conducted a congregational survey to listen more intentionally to you—our church family. The survey sought to learn:

- What kinds of mental health support or resources would be most helpful to you or your loved ones?
- What mental health barriers might prevent full participation in our congregation's life?
- How can our worship, language, ministries, and spaces be more inclusive and supportive around mental health?
- What kinds of education or conversations would help reduce stigma and increase understanding?

Your responses affirmed both the deep care already present at Union and the opportunity to be more intentional, more informed, and more courageous in how we show up for one another.

One of the core requirements of the UCC's WISE designation is the adoption of a congregational WISE Covenant. With the survey responses and other churches' covenants as models, the WISE Team drafted a proposed covenant grounded in our theology, our values, and our lived experience as a community. This covenant was reviewed by Common Ministry, and an Adult Education session was held to share the WISE process, receive feedback, and discuss the proposed covenant together.

At this year's Annual Meeting, the WISE Team will recommend that Union vote to adopt the proposed WISE Covenant, formally committing ourselves to ongoing learning, self-examination, welcome, and engagement around mental and emotional health.

Becoming a WISE congregation is not a box to be checked, but a continuing commitment to embody the love of Christ in ways that are real and relevant. As Psalm 34 reminds us, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted." Our calling, as a community of faith, is to be close too—creating a church where all people can bring their whole selves, knowing they are beloved of God.

The WISE Team, composed of Christie Reese (convenor), Emily Mroczynski, Pat Shafer, Tina Bechtel, Toni Champeau, Jenna Stevens, Tim Dantoin, Betty Hartman, Heather Collins, and Pastor Bridget, is grateful for the congregation's trust, participation, and openness, and looks forward to continuing this important work together in the years ahead.

Proposed Union Congregational UCC, Green Bay WISE Covenant:

We, the people of Union Congregational United Church of Christ, Green Bay, WI, are energized and made more fully alive when we hear, learn and journey more deeply with each other. In living out our faith, and through God's healing spirit, we care about the whole person: body, mind, and soul.

Furthermore, we believe that mental health should be regarded the same as physical health. As such, mental health, just as physical health, conditions exist on a continuum ranging from mild and transitory to acute, chronic, and potentially life-altering and or threatening.

We believe that all people are beloved of God, including people who live with mental health conditions and their families.

We Aspire:

- To educate ourselves and offer educational opportunities for our congregation to learn more about mental health conditions and how we can become a more aware and welcoming congregation.
- To examine our own attitudes and preconceived notions about people living with mental health conditions and to be intentional about changes we can make, within ourselves, our community, and in society, to be affirming.
- To actively welcome people with mental health conditions and their loved ones into the life of our community and to provide a safe place where people can be who they are and talk freely about their lives.
- To reach out to those with mental health conditions the same way we reach out to those of us living with physical conditions.
- To welcome and encourage outside organizations supportive of mental health to use our church facilities to provide education, reduce stigma, and offer support to our congregation, including the UCC Mental Health Network and local WISE congregations.

By this covenant, we formalize our commitment to becoming a welcoming, inclusive, supportive, and engaged (WISE) church that is supportive of people living with and impacted by mental/brain/emotional health conditions.

Membership Statistical Report for 2025

ACTIVE MEMBERS ADMITTED (22):

By Reception (19):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Angie Corwin —April 6 | 11. Norton, Beth – April 6 |
| 2. Eric Corwin —April 6 | 12. Norton, Jeff – April 6 |
| 3. Jane E. Davis —April 6 | 13. Ochs, George – April 6 |
| 4. Michelle Gauger —April 6 | 14. Ochs, Sandy – April 6 |
| 5. Jackie Gelhar —April 6 | 15. Bryant, Al —November 16 |
| 6. Klingert, Pam —April 6 | 16. Dorff, Barbara —November 16 |
| 7. Marshall, Collin —April 6 | 17. Dorff, Ed —November 16 |
| 8. Morgan, Gloria —April 6 | 18. Siudzinski, Joe —November 16 |
| 9. Mroczynski, Emily —April 6 | 19. Siudzinski, Judy —November 16 |
| 10. Mroczynski, Paul —April 6 | |

By Confirmation (3):

1. **Xavier Clark Hatton** – May 18
2. **Christian Burdette Reese** – May 18
3. **Gabriel James VerGiesen** – May 18

ACTIVE MEMBERS REMOVED (184):

By Death (6):

1. **Brian Robert Bodager** – 69 – died February 15; memorial service at Pilgrim Church UCC in Grafton, WI on June 14.
2. **Richard Otis Garber** – 83 – died April 2; celebration of life service at Union Church on April 12. Revs. Bridget Flad Daniels and Dr. Charles Mize officiating.
3. **Atamunoabalari “Thompson” Ibibo** – 70 – died May 20; visitation was held May 30 at Newcomer Cremations, Funerals & Receptions in Green Bay.
4. **Ruth Lindner Ketcham** – 98 – died July 27; funeral service at Cotter Funeral Home on August 11.
5. **John “Jack” Trees Whittemore** – 92 – died August 20; memorial service at Union Church on September 2. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
6. **Barbara Mae Strom** – 93 – died August 24; celebration of life at Union Church on October 18. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.

By Member Request (2):

1. **Zoé James**
2. **Mark Smith**

By Placing on the Inactive Roll (176)—November 13:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Arndt, Jay | 40. Davis, Sophia | 79. Jones, Joyce |
| 2. Bacon, Ethan | 41. Day, Emily | 80. Kampen, Kathi |
| 3. Baeten, Sarah | 42. Deadman, Foster | 81. King, Brandon |
| 4. Baierl, Dan | 43. DeGrave, Kaley | 82. Kitchen, Becky |
| 5. Bailey, Angela | 44. Dewey, Sally | 83. Klarkowski, Shona |
| 6. Bailey, Matthew | 45. Dickey, Brittany | 84. Kleis, Susan |
| 7. Baretta, Frank | 46. Dickey, Todd | 85. Kunesh, Crystal |
| 8. Baretta, Madeline | 47. Etterer, Stephanie | 86. Lamers, Holly |
| 9. Barker, Daniel | 48. Exworthy, Paul | 87. Larsen, Bill |
| 10. Barnes, Stephanie | 49. Exworthy, Sue | 88. Larsen, Pat |
| 11. Bartholomew, Barbara | 50. Felton, David | 89. Lasee, Jamie |
| 12. Bartholomew, Robert | 51. Felton, Erin | 90. Lasee, Jon |
| 13. Belschner, Greg | 52. Felton, J.T. | 91. LeDuc, Jack |
| 14. Bessette, Tim | 53. Felton, Sarah | 92. Leiden, Jacob |
| 15. Bierman, Chris | 54. Fitzpatrick, David | 93. Leiden, Katelyn |
| 16. Bierman, Karen | 55. Fitzpatrick, Douglas | 94. Leiden, Nathaniel |
| 17. Bierman, Megan | 56. Fitzpatrick, Jan | 95. Leiterman, Katie |
| 18. Bierman, Richard | 57. Foellmi, Beth | 96. Lenz, Nick |
| 19. Bishop, Mary Kay | 58. Foellmi, Randy | 97. Leuthoudon, Emily |
| 20. Bishop, Rusty | 59. Frederick, Rick | 98. Marcantonio, Domenic |
| 21. Bitter, Anna | 60. Georgel, Rick | 99. Marquardt, Madeline |
| 22. Bitter, Philip | 61. Golden, Matthew | 100. Mauk, Amy |
| 23. Blaney, Liz | 62. Golden, Sarah | 101. Mauk, Stephanie |
| 24. Blom, David | 63. Goska, Charlotte | 102. McKay, Bruce |
| 25. Blom, Tessa | 64. Goska, Paul | 103. McNicoll, Abby |
| 26. Bloss, Michael | 65. Grzelak, Christine | 104. McNicoll, John |
| 27. Bodager, Brandon | 66. Grzelak, Rob | 105. Meurett, Jessica |
| 28. Bodager, Jonathon | 67. Haines, Kristie | 106. Meurett, Nik |
| 29. Bonde, Miranda | 68. Heyrman, Andy | 107. Moore, Wayne |
| 30. Calaway, Kimberly | 69. Hoffman, Andrew | 108. Mosby, Bob |
| 31. Chappell, Jo Jo | 70. Holstead, Jenell | 109. Mueller, Stephen |
| 32. Collins, Robert | 71. Holstead, Mike | 110. Mueller, William |
| 33. Connour, Cale | 72. Hyde, Ryan | 111. Neuman, Aidan |
| 34. Connour, Connie | 73. Hyde, Wendy | 112. Neuman, Audra |
| 35. Connour, Randy | 74. Jaeger-Jayne, Dorothy | 113. Neuman, Shawn |
| 36. Crowley, Karlyn | 75. Janusak, Kelly | 114. O'Connell, Amber |
| 37. Danen, Deb | 76. Johnson, Dan | 115. Ostrowski, Laker |
| 38. Danen, Madison | 77. Johnson, Jerry | 116. Pahl, Jon |
| 39. Danen, Megan | 78. Johnson, Michelle | 117. Phillips, Pam |

| | | | | | |
|------|------------------------------|------|--------------------------|------|---------------------------|
| 118. | Ramer, Charity | 138. | Theiss, Jessica | 158. | Weinhold, Mark |
| 119. | Reichelsdorfer, Dan | 139. | Theiss, Matt | 159. | Weisse, Daniel |
| 120. | Reynolds, John | 140. | Tolan, Janet | 160. | Weisshappel, Lucas |
| 121. | Reynolds, Lauren | 141. | Trasti, Holly | 161. | Wilmet, Dante |
| 122. | Rusch-Maier, Nicholas | 142. | Tryon, Barrett | 162. | Wilmet, Darnell |
| 123. | Sanford, Marcus | 143. | Uitenbroek, Laura | 163. | Wilmet, Derek |
| 124. | Schuette, Chris | 144. | Uitenbroek, Tyler | 164. | Wilmet, Diedra |
| 125. | Schuette, Stefanie | 145. | Van Beek, Linda | 165. | Wilmet, Doreen |
| 126. | Schultz, Chris | 146. | Van Erem, Jean | 166. | Wiltse, Jon |
| 127. | Skrupky, Annie | 147. | Van Handel, Ryan | 167. | Wirch, John |
| 128. | Smith, Paul | 148. | Van Roy, Carla | 168. | Wirch, Karen |
| 129. | Spoentgen, Dan | 149. | Wachter, Erika | 169. | Wood, Dan |
| 130. | Spoentgen, Jacki | 150. | Wagner, John | 170. | Worth, Courtney |
| 131. | Stimart, Nancy | 151. | Wagner, Lauren | 171. | Wouters, Carol |
| 132. | Stueck, Kaia | 152. | Wallace, Mark | 172. | Zacarias, Lina |
| 133. | Stueck, Logan | 153. | Warren, Sherry | 173. | Zacarias, Tori |
| 134. | Stueck, Shawna | 154. | Waterman, Andy | 174. | Ziemendorf, Anna |
| 135. | Stuntz, Cath | 155. | Waterman, Drew | 175. | Ziemendorf, Elise |
| 136. | Sykes, Jennie | 156. | Waterman, Kiefer | 176. | Ziemendorf, Mary |
| 137. | Taylor, Joey | 157. | Weiler, Carlyn | | |

| MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Active Membership: December 31, 2024: | 531 |
| Members added to Active Roll: | |
| By reception..... | 19 |
| By confirmation | 3 |
| By reactivation..... | 0 |
| TOTAL ADDED..... | 22 |
| Members removed from Active Roll: | |
| By death..... | 6 |
| By transfer..... | 0 |
| By member request | 2 |
| By placing on Inactive Roll | 176 |
| TOTAL REMOVED..... | 184 |
| Active Membership: December 31, 2025: | 369 |

BAPTISMS: Infants and Children

1. **Felix Alexander Dorff** – born October 9, 2017 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized January 19 at Union Church by Rev. Steve Hartman.
Parents: Nathaniel Edward Dorff and Lindsay Rose Dorff (Mikulsky)
2. **Lorenzo Milo Galati** – born August 15, 2024 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized March 16 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Sarah Marie Galati and Luigi Galati
3. **Calvin George Day** – born September 12, 2024 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized March 30 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Gina Marie Day and Aaron Earnest Day
4. **Callum Vincent Lemke** – born January 30, 2025 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized August 31 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Maren Campbell Lemke and Corey Blue Lemke
5. **Campbell Hall Lemke** – born February 12, 2023 in Green Bay, WI.
Baptized August 31 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Maren Campbell Lemke and Corey Blue Lemke
6. **Alice Elizabeth Lundgren** – born August 7, 2025 in Neenah, WI.
Baptized October 26 at Union Church by Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels.
Parents: Jessica Lundgren and Libby Sievert

MARRIAGES

1. **Julia Kaellen Delvaux and Cody William Josephs** at Union Church on July 18.
Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
2. **Kaylee Madison Curry and Adrian Lee Caylor** at Union Church on August 28.
Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.
3. **Avonelle Rose Weist and Jesse James Coppens** at the Green Bay Botanical Gardens
on October 10. Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels officiating.

Membership and Attendance Data for the Last 20 Years

| Year | Membership | Avg. Attendance | Easter | Christmas Eve |
|--------------------|------------|------------------|--------|---------------|
| 2025 ^{CM} | 369 | 111 | 214 | 318 |
| 2024 | 531 | 101 | 185 | 293 |
| 2023 | 533 | 105 | 246 | 322 |
| 2022 | 529 | ³ 76 | 135 | 232 |
| 2021 | 529 | ² 61 | | 186 |
| 2020 | 534 | ¹ 131 | | |
| 2019 | 545 | 121 | 277 | 303 |
| 2018 | 528 | 128 | 260 | 357 |
| 2017 | 530 | 136 | 291 | 410 |
| 2016 | 525 | 135 | 238 | 361 |
| 2015 ^{CM} | 521 | 138 | 305 | 372 |
| 2014 | 555 | 139 | 316 | 387 |
| 2013 ^{CM} | 550 | 149 | 318 | 346 |
| 2012 | 567 | 183 | 329 | 397 |
| 2011 | 539 | 184 | 329 | 359 |
| 2010 ^{CM} | 528 | 204 | 402 | 357 |
| 2009 ^{CM} | 580 | 207 | 367 | 310 |
| 2008 | 592 | 212 | 330 | 342 |
| 2007 | 581 | 208 | 452 | 310 |
| 2006 | 559 | 220 | 348 | 360 |

^{CM} membership rolls reviewed by Common Ministry

- 1 attendance average based on the 10 in-person Sunday worship services held in the sanctuary from January 5 through March 8. No in-person worship took place in the sanctuary after March 8, 2020 through the end of the year.
- 2 attendance average based on the 28 in-person Sunday worship services held in the sanctuary from June 13 through the end of 2021. The attendance figure listed does not reflect numbers for those who streamed our worship services online.
- 3 does not include attendance for the seven weeks (Jan. 9 through Feb. 20) during which members were encouraged to stream our worship service rather than attend in person.

Financials

for

2025

Union Congregational United Church of Christ Balance Sheet
December 31, 2025

Assets

| | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| <i>General Cash in Bank</i> | Total Cash in Banks | \$488,925.34 |
| <i>Designated Cash in Banks</i> | Total Other Cash in Banks | \$9,555.40 |
| <i>Gifts & Endowments Investments</i> | Total Gifts & Endowments Investments | \$1,251,480.18 |
| <i>Memorial Garden Investment</i> | Total Memorial Garden Investment | \$105,342.64 |
| <i>Real Estate Investments</i> | Total Real Estate Investments | \$84,464.66 |
| | Total Assets | <u>\$1,939,768.22</u> |
| <i>Liabilities</i> | | |
| <i>Deferred Revenue</i> | Total Deferred Revenue | \$30,554.00 |
| | Total Liabilities | <u>\$25,970.92</u> |
| <i>Fund Balances</i> | | |
| <i>General Operating Fund</i> | Total General Operating Fund | \$76,484.68 |
| <i>General Fund - Designated</i> | Total General Fund - Designated | \$358,806.86 |
| <i>Inreach Ministry</i> | Total Inreach Ministry | \$1,734.70 |
| <i>Outreach Ministries</i> | | |
| <i>Outreach A</i> | Total Outreach A | \$18,461.96 |
| <i>Outreach B</i> | Total Outreach B | \$888.03 |
| | Total Outreach Ministries | \$19,349.99 |
| <i>Memorial Garden</i> | Total Memorial Garden | \$6,730.44 |
| <i>Parson's Purse Fund</i> | Total Parson's Purse Fund | \$4,969.35 |
| <i>DWCOA Funds</i> | Total DWCOA Funds | \$4,433.80 |
| | Total Fund Balances | <u>\$1,913,797.30</u> |
| | Total Liabilities and Fund Balances | <u>\$1,939,768.22</u> |

Year 2025 Treasurer's Report

2025 Budget

2025 Actual

| <i>Incomes</i> | | | |
|---|----------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>General Operating Fund</i> | | | |
| Pledges | ✓ | 370,000 | 382,608 |
| Prior Year Pledge Inc. | ✓ | 1,500 | 2,390 |
| Non-Pledges | ✓ | 45,000 | 56,361 |
| Loose Offerings | ✓ | 6,000 | 6,606 |
| One-Time Gifts | ✓ | 1,000 | 3,213 |
| Bank Interest Inc. | ✓ | 300 | 7,685 |
| Total General Operating Fund | ✓ | \$423,800 | \$458,865 |
| <i>Stewardship Ministry</i> | | | |
| General - Fundrasier Inc. | ✓ | 3,000 | 7,824 |
| Total Stewardship Ministry | ✓ | \$3,000 | \$7,824 |
| <i>General - Non Operating Fund</i> | | | |
| Room Rentals | ✓ | 15,000 | 13,064 |
| Total General - Non Operating Fund | ✓ | \$15,000 | \$13,064 |
| Total Incomes | ✓ | \$441,800 | \$479,754 |
| <i>Expenses</i> | | | |
| <i>General Operating Fund</i> | | | |
| <i>Administrative</i> | | | |
| Total Administrative | ✓ | \$52,900 | \$50,045 |
| <i>Facilities</i> | | | |
| Total Facilities | ✓ | \$40,600 | \$51,195 |
| <i>Senior Pastor Expenses</i> | | | |
| Total Senior Pastor Expenses | ✓ | \$154,027 | \$154,243 |
| <i>Lay Staff Expenses</i> | | | |
| Total Lay Staff Expenses | ✓ | \$198,566 | \$196,443 |
| Total General Operating Fund | ✓ | \$446,093 | \$451,928 |
| <i>Worship Ministry</i> | | | |
| Total Worship Ministry | ✓ | \$8,600 | \$7,466 |
| <i>Stewardship Ministry</i> | | | |
| Total Stewardship Ministry | ✓ | \$900 | \$5,232 |
| <i>Inreach Ministry</i> | | | |
| Total Inreach Ministry | ✓ | \$2,575 | \$1,858 |
| <i>Education Ministry</i> | | | |
| Total Education Ministry | ✓ | \$6,725 | \$8,249 |
| <i>Outreach Ministries</i> | | | |
| <i>Outreach B</i> | | | |
| Total Outreach B | ✓ | \$15,600 | \$15,398 |
| Total Outreach Ministries | ✓ | \$15,600 | \$15,398 |
| Total Expenses | ✓ | \$480,493 | \$490,132 |
| Difference | ✓ | (\$38,693) | (\$10,377) |

A proposed 2026 budget will be presented at the Annual Meeting.

Building for Faith in Action Capital Campaign Finances

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Balance as of 1/1/2026 | \$228,201.57 |
| Contributions and Grants Received | \$160,591.71 |
| Expenditures | \$160,373.51 |
| Balance as of 12/31/2025 | \$219,419.77 |

Thank you to all who contributed \$584,784.82 to the campaign to date.

Gifts and Memorials Ministry

Union Congregational United Church of Christ has a long, rich history of giving in meaningful ways to support and advance efforts in the Green Bay community. Our committee is committed to building on this foundation of work and to taking great care of the gifts given.

The Gifts and Memorials Ministry was established by amendment to the church bylaws in January 2007, although this work was done many decades prior. The Ministry has two sub-parts: the Distribution Recommendation and Review Committee and the Asset Management Committee.

As background, the following is the G&M purpose:

The Gifts and Memorials Ministry “exists to promote and steward charitable contributions for non-operating budget purposes, with particular emphasis on projects initiated and supported by Church members that advance the local community, sustain the Church’s physical resources, or support or encourage other initiatives that further the Church’s mission. The Ministry is intended to complement, but not replace or compete with the Church’s annual, planned, or special giving.”

Michael Stepp continued as chair of Asset Management. We are grateful for the continued and valued commitment of Kathy Baldwin, Gail Carels, Paco Espinoza, Dan Pagel, Nicole Polarek, Mike Stepp, Sue Whittemore, Larry Rose and Kristi Zahn.

In 2025, after due diligence using the guiding principles for distribution, the Ministry recommended the following disbursements (34,687.60 in total) that Common Ministry approved.

- \$10,000 for the Wisconsin Conference Leadership Forward Initiatives
- \$3,000 to Green Bay Sail and Paddle for their Adventures in Sailing Summer Program
- \$15,000 to Worship Ministry and Outreach Ministry to kick-start the Justice and the Arts Initiative
- \$4,087.60 to Education Ministry for training and curriculum for OWL education program
- \$2,000 to EPH for their Eviction Prevention Program
- \$600 to the Brain Center for books for the Anne Lulloff Little Lending Library

The Ministry takes great care of the gifts given to our church to support vital work in our community and the world. With the help of our members, it is our pleasure to take a leadership role in service to our community while honoring the legacy of our members.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Baldwin
Co-Chair of Gifts and Memorials Ministry

Total Gifts & Memorials Fund Activity
2025

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Beginning Balance 1/01/2025: | 1,114,281 |
| Total Income and Additions: | 3,090 |
| Grants: | (40,069) |
| Investment Gain/Loss: | 174,178 |
| Ending Balance 12/31/2025: | 1,251,480 |

Income and Additions to Gifts and Memorials Funds :

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Memorial gifts | \$ 3,090 |
| | <u>\$ 3,090</u> |

Expenses and Distributions from Gifts and Memorials and Other Endowment Funds:

Gifts and Memorials Ministry Inreach/Program Grants:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Justice & Arts Initiative | \$ 15,000 |
| Our Whole Lives (OWL) | \$ 4,088 |
| | <u>\$ 19,088</u> |

Gifts and Memorials Outreach Grants:

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Green Bay Sail & Paddle Adventures In Sailing | \$ 3,000 |
| WI Conference UCC Leadership Forwarded Initiatives | \$ 10,000 |
| Ecumenical Partnership for Housing (EPH) | \$ 2,000 |
| Brain Center of Green Bay | \$ 600 |
| | <u>\$ 15,600</u> |

Killoran Scholarship Fund:*

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Scholarships | \$ 3,500 |
| | <u>\$ 3,500</u> |

Bagby Theological Fund:*

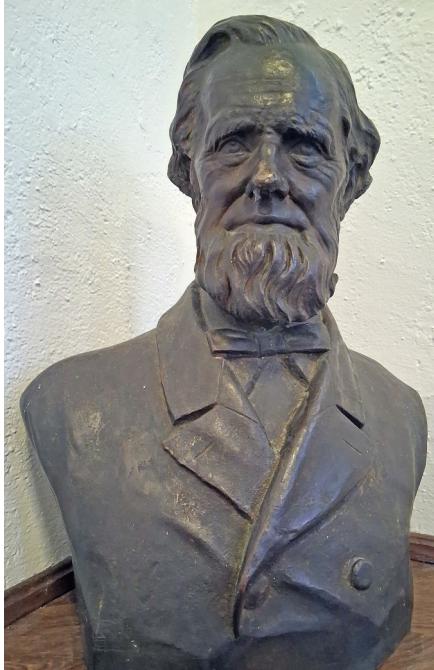
| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Moon Beach Retreat Facilitator & Expenses | \$ 1,881 |
| | <u>\$ 1,881</u> |

Total Expenses and Distributions

\$ 40,069

*The Killoran Scholarship Fund and Bagby Theological Fund are administered separately from Gifts and Memorials Ministry.

190 Years of Faithfulness—and Counting



The Rev. Jeremiah Porter



UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

This church was organized on September 21, 1835 as First Presbyterian Church and held its first worship service on January 10, 1836 in the surgeon's quarters of Fort Howard Hospital.

During the Civil War era, the church was, at one point, on the "Underground Railroad", which assisted escaped slaves in gaining their freedom.

On May 9, 1899, the church became Union Congregational Church.

The church has a long history of ecumenical union and fellowship: first, in the Bond of Union between the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in 1840; later in 1851, as a charter member of the Winnebago Association and the Wisconsin Conference of Congregational Churches. In 1964, in keeping with its historic relationship with the majority of Congregational Churches, Union Church became a member of the United Church of Christ.

We invite all to share in our worship and the joy of discipleship in a community of faith.

Erected in tribute to Dr. Charles L. Bagby,
Minister 1959-1981

On January 11, Union Church celebrated a remarkable milestone: 190 years of gathering, worshipping, questioning, serving, and loving. That is no small thing. In a world where so much is fleeting, 190 years of community is a testament to God's persistent presence—and to generations of people who trusted that showing up together matters.

We marked this anniversary in worship on January 11, 2026 with the Rev. Franz Rigert, Conference Minister of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, preaching. After worship, we gathered for a light luncheon in the church hall as we officially kicked off our year-long anniversary celebration.