



The Voice Newsletter

Of First Congregational Church

A Pilgrim Church for a Pilgrim People

June 2020

Volume 44, Issue 6

PASTOR'S PASSAGE

Greetings to you dear friends as we begin to enjoy the sounds and fragrances of summer. My French lilac bush is blooming more beautifully than I can ever remember and the fragrance wafts into my front door and brightens my day. As I think about various moments that bring enjoyment, I realize how much my early life influenced my preferences even today.

As a college student I remember reviewing the learning process of small children. In the first six years, we learn the "goods and bads, rights and wrongs, appropriates and in appropriates, helpful and hurtful, etc." Having these things modeled for us by parents and peers, we then move into interacting with others in school and social situations, and we hope that those early examples will guide us to make choices not only pleasing to ourselves, but to God and others.

The past months have been challenging to say the least, as our routines have been turned upside down by a pandemic. Decisions had to be made about gathering for worship, celebrating events and even burying our loved ones. But after a while, with an enormous amount of scientific information about the ways we might protect ourselves and others, and the kinds of treatments that were being researched, we began to absorb it all.

But we also have become impatient. We yearn for the time when we can "go back to normal" realizing that "normal" may never be the same again. As I have met with Gene and the Church leaders and especially Doug Condon, we realized that we could find new ways of keeping in touch with one another through worship and prayer and even hear our beautiful organ with Max at the helm. And so we have adapted for a while longer.

The past weeks have brought an unusual amount of soul searching for your Pastors and leaders as we attempt to follow the mandates of the scientists and government officials, and yet also follow our conscience, knowing that 100,000 people have died from this easily transmitted disease. We have prayed, we have planned, we put together a strategy that would enable us to perhaps come together to worship, and maintain "social distancing" by wearing masks, using bulletins with scripture and music contained and greeting only with smiles and voices, and massive sanitation efforts.

But as your Pastor who made a vow to love you and protect you, not just spiritually but in every way possible, I am struggling. And with my awaiting surgery and not being

able to be with you as much as I would like, I feel doubly troubled. My doctors are doing everything they can to get me scheduled for the hip surgery and finally be done, but it is frustrating not to be able to be at the Church more.

We will gather for worship the first time in months on Sunday, June 7 and will take every precaution known to us. But if you are vulnerable to any autoimmune disease or have any fear, please continue to share in worship through the web site or Facebook. We will be constantly in touch with you. Please know that you are loved and whether we are together in body or only in spirit, WE ARE THE CHURCH!

My Love and Blessings,
JOY



MINISTER'S MESSAGE

We are nearing a point when the church will be able to “reopen” for services. A comprehensive reopening plan for the church has been developed and it will allow us to reopen safely. You will receive the complete reopening document but I would like to share a few things with you.

- The planned opening date is Sunday, June 7th.
- Although the church is reopening, it is an individual decision which each person must make. If you have a health issue or other factor, you are encouraged to stay home until you feel comfortable in returning.
- Services will be live-streamed, so those who are not able to attend services, can watch it on-line.
- Every effort will be made to keep the building sanitized. Hand sanitizer and wipes will be available throughout the building.
- Worshippers will be asked to wear a mask. If a person enters without a mask, the usher will give the person one supplied by the church.
- Social distancing will be used, so that no worshiper is within six feet of another.
- Coffee hour has been eliminated until further notice.
- Ministers will not greet after services.
- We will not offer communion until August at the earliest.
- Offering will be dropped in a basket as plates will not be passed.
- Hymnals and Bibles will be removed from the racks. Hymn lyrics will be printed in the bulletin.

As you look at the above, you can see that every effort is being made to provide a safe environment for worship. As time passes, treatment/vaccines will become available and we can start the process of returning to normalcy. For now though, we will stay the course.

It would be great to see you with your mask on at services on June 7th at 10:00!

Blessings,
Gene



Prayer for the Church

Loving and Eternal God, you have abundantly blessed us with the power to reach out and make a difference in the world. We ask that you bless our ministry through our Church and increase our love for one another and our community. Help us honor our history and seek your will as we march into our future in Jesus' name. Amen.



Donna's Deliberations

Dear Church Family,

In the last newsletter, I talked about interviewing folks so we all could get to know them better. I am thrilled to have my first ~~victim~~, I mean, participant. Thank you, Max for answering my questions.

Max grew up in the country outside Hickory, North Carolina, then a little smaller than Beloit, but now much larger. His father was a Lutheran pastor, of mostly country parishes. His mother was a teacher at St. Stephen's High School. About the time Max was born, his father, having no musical training, had begun collecting 78 rpm records of classical music. At age 2, Max loved certain sides of these records that were his favorite music pieces. Thus, began his interest in classical music with much encouragement and support from his parents.

Max's father was a major influence on his two younger siblings becoming very musical - brother Kenneth as a trombonist for a time in the Memphis Symphony, and sister Johann as a pianist. Their rich lives cover other fields too.

Growing up in the Lutheran Church, Max sang in the choirs, learned the hymns and liturgy, and became interested in organ playing, which He majored in at Oberlin College, the Conservatory of Music, in Oberlin, Ohio. Next, he earned his Master and Doctorate degrees in Music at the University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music. In 1963, Max came to Beloit College to join the faculty of the Department of Music.

At age 25, he was teaching and past the draft age for military service but became a participant in demonstrations against the Vietnam War. Later he married Dr. Beth J. Yount, a physician for years with the Monroe Clinic and now with the Beloit Health System. They had two sons: Wade in Vermont with wife Margaret and doted dog and cat; and Noah in Osaka, Japan, with wife Tomomi (native of Osaka) and two lovely daughters, Emma, age 5, and Mae, age 3 (both can babble copiously in both Japanese

and English). Max and Beth are divorced now but remain very good friends and still perform concerts together at our Church.

For many years, Max was a member and played the organ at St. Paul Lutheran Church here in Beloit. But he says, "I was lured, hard-sell, to come to First Congregational Church to play the marvelous new organ." He still has a warm place in his heart for the folks at St. Paul Lutheran Church who have the same religious upbringing as he did. He also misses the dignity of the worship service in the Lutheran Church. However, he benefits from First Congregational because of the freedom of thought possible in our church without having to profess beliefs in a list of dogmas that are contrary to his convictions. He has made good friends at First Congregational Church and enjoys serving the community here.

Following Max's retirement with emeritus status from Beloit College, he has enjoyed the ability to remain active with the college and its students by fostering a choir of mostly Beloit College students. Also, as a professional musician and an active performer, he feels most fortunate to have this church and the profound support to offer public music performances. He hopes that this cultural activity, *Musica Maximus*, will continue way into the future.

At age 82, Max knows there will be changes in the future probably with the music program when a younger musician joins the staff. He's also aware of the lack of a choir that includes our church members. However, the students that make up the choir are fun and of good service when they are here. As a professional musician, Max can produce or bring in serviceable music, but he doesn't have a feeling that we are building for future growth. With the present Covid-19 epidemic, this question of how to proceed will become even more concerning. He indicates that "Some of the change to be suggested may make this old buzzard uncomfortable, but that's OK, somebody has to come and move things forward."

One hope he has is a short-term project to produce a good performance of Handel's *Messiah* at the church. But once he was ready to move forward with those plans, the pandemic changed everything. He still has the desire, even though it has been delayed.

Finally, Max hopes to see more of his grandchildren; to hire somebody to rake all the leaves in his yard; to keep the doctors from prescribing too many medicines; to keep walking, and for fingers to keep playing music for a while longer. He wishes to thank all of you for your friendship and support. Yes, Dr. Max Yount, we likewise are grateful for your service, talent and love you demonstrate to this congregation every week through your music.

For the month of April, the Council did not meet in person, but a compilation of the member's reports was maintained and discussed by email and phone as needed. In

May, we chose to meet with masks on, in the gathering space where we could spread out for social distancing. We discussed opening the church only for Sunday morning services for now. A detailed safety outline based on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, local guidelines, and other recommendations were discussed and approved to guide the church on reopening. From this it was approved to open for church service starting June 7 and to send church safety guidelines to all members. It also can be read on the church's website. A reminder, EVERYONE must wear masks coming into the church! One will be provided if you don't have a mask. This is one way to love our members/neighbors.

Due to the pandemic, Doug Condon, our IT and Sound person has video recorded sermons up through the month of May for our Facebook, Website and YouTube channel. With opening the church and to maintain the safety of our members, there is the absolute need for streaming services. Buying the rest of the necessary equipment was approved. Doug is hoping to do the streaming for a couple of Sundays. Streaming means, for those concerned with meeting at church for service, instead may watch the service live when it is happening. We do need a couple of folks to learn the system and commit to doing this. Please see Gene for the information regarding this.

As many of you know, this church burnt to the ground over 20 years ago. When it was rebuilt for some reason there was no fire alarm monitoring system put into place. The Council felt this was a priority to take care of before there was another successful lightning strike. Boyd's bid of \$7,500 to install it is the same bid given to the church 20 plus years ago. The Council approved this bid with gratefulness to Boyd's for such a generous offer.

Finally, the Council will be working on a strategic plan with 1-year, 5-year, and overall goals for the church's future ministry. We will be enlisting your suggestions and participation throughout the planning process. Till then, be safe and I hope to see you with mask on for June 7 Church Service.

Your sister in Christ,
Donna
donnadoc@hotmail.com



MUSICA MAXIMA

Greetings, Good Folks,
I look forward to seeing you as we slowly open our doors again to gathering. There will be lots of questions and learning as we go, but I hope to celebrate with all of us, and I hope we stay healthy.

One compelling announcement is that the MUSICA MAXIMA concert that had been planned for June 14 has been cancelled. We felt that there was too much risk in our groups getting together to practice. I am in the process of reaching out to performers whose concerts were cancelled: Hannah Tobias, flute, with Lannette Calhoun, piano; the duo, Iva Ugrcic, flute, and Satoko Hayami, piano; and the Beloit Duo, consisting of native sons, Zachary Peterson and Matt Pickart, violinists.

However, some events are on the books, with a minimum of uncertainty. Sunday, August 2, 3 pm, we welcome the Turtle Creek Chamber orchestra for a concert, conducted by Professor Ian Nie

Sunday, October 11, 3 pm, a concert by visiting artists, Morgan Balfour, soprano, and Trevor Stephenson, fortepiano. Ms Balfour is the recent winner of the Handel Aria Competition in Madison, and Trevor Stephenson is the celebrated director of MADISON BACH MUSICIANS.

Sunday, November 1, 3 pm, a concert with Emily Sobacki, violin, and myself, and Tom Stein at the organ

Sunday, November 22, 3 pm, a concert by the Velder Woodwind Quintet

Sunday, January 17, 2021, a concert by Kay Schultz, trumpet, Elaine Uffenbeck, organ, and William Uffenbeck, Euphonium

Sunday, February 7, a concert by winners of the Nie Scholarships in music performance.

We, of course, will be discussing the anticipated Cantata. There is talk of Doug Condon and some of his colleagues from the First Regiment Band sharing their music this summer in church and in the park. We will spread the word, and we look forward to enjoying our time together.

With warm greetings, Max

JUNE MISSION

Who We Are and What We Do!

Caritas Community Resource Center

Caritas has been providing food and clothing to our neighbors in need for more than forty years.

Caritas is committed to supporting the health of our guests by prioritizing the distribution of recommended USDA's *MyPlate* foods and nutrients. [Learn More...](#)



Our Services

Food Pantry

Diaper Bank

Community Garden

Birthday Bags

Get Involved

Caritas is always looking for volunteers as well as people and organizations willing to host food drives, donate food and give financial gifts. Please contact us if you are interested in getting involved in any way. To learn more visit [Ways to Give...](#)

Contact Caritas

Caritas Community Resource Center

2840 Prairie Ave.

Beloit, WI 53511

(608) 362-4403

info@caritasbeloit.org

Hours:

Pantry

- **Monday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
- **Tuesday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
- **Wednesday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
- **Thursday** 10 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Diaper Bank

- **Monday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
- **Tuesday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
- **Wednesday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
- **Thursday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Donation Dropoffs

- **Monday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
- **Tuesday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
- **Wednesday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
- **Thursday** 10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
- **Friday** 10 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Please arrive 30 minutes prior to schedule closing times.



Birthdays

June 11 Jeff Perrigo

June 16 Kay Marinelli

June 17 Helen Bifano

June 20 Pat Raymer

Anniversaries

June 13 Rev. Kendell and Kay Nordstrom

June 27 Rev. Gene and Connie Van Galder



Rev. Joy's New Email: Joyannbrev@gmail.com

Matt Wick

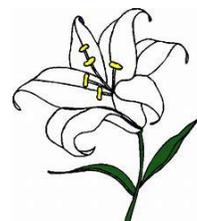
Katie Landon

Connor Gitchel

A purple rectangular banner with white text and a graduation cap icon. The text reads "Congratulations CLASS OF 2020".

Congratulations
CLASS OF 2020

I returned the Easter lily checks because we didn't order Easter lilies this year. It wouldn't have been right to keep the money for something that we didn't do. If you wish the money donated for another church need, please return it and say how you want it designated. Robin



First Congregational Church

801 Bushnell Street, Beloit, WI 53511

608-362-4821 Pastor: 517-899-6784

Office hours: 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

Worship Service – Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

Email: info@firstcon.org Website www.firstcon.org

400 YEARS OF
AMERICAN
CONGREGATIONALISM
Faith
SINCE 1620