

Congregational Clarion

A M E R Y C O N G R E G A T I O N A L U C C

BEING A HEALTHY & VIBRANT CONGREGATION! OUR OCTOBER-NOVEMBER SERMON SERIES



It's been a year since I began here at Congregational UCC. During our time together, we've worshiped indoors, outdoors, on Facebook, and on YouTube while enduring four waves of the Covid-19 pandemic. We've been masked, un-masked, tested, untested, inoculated, and otherwise. Confirmation, Adult Education, and Coffee Time has been on Zoom. All the while, we've kept our community alive and engaged in ministry, but there are yet more "Interim Tasks" that we're called to do to prepare for your next chapter in ministry.

During October and November Sundays, we will explore a wonderful resource that will enable our preparation for your next chapter of ministry. I will draw on the series Five Practices of Fruitful Congregation by Robert Schnase. This study explores best practices for healthy and vibrant congregations. The five practices include:

- Radical Hospitality
- Passionate Worship
- Intentional Faith Development
- Risk-taking mission and service
- Extravagant Generosity

I invite you to faithfully attend worship in-person or via our on-line service, following each Sunday's theme for these five practices. After each worship service, we'll have one question of that Sunday's practice to ponder during our fellowship time. Together, as a community of faith, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we hope to grow as disciples of Jesus' ministry now—and into your next chapter of ministry.

Blessings,
Rev. Garth Schumacher

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**CHURCH
IS NOT
SOMETHING
YOU GO TO,
IT'S
A FAMILY
YOU BELONG TO.**

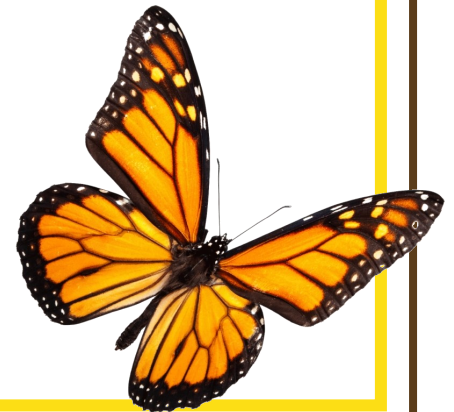




09/01 Bradon Folkert
 09/01 Karri Bowen
 09/02 Gavin Harris
 09/02 Pat Canham
 09/02 Paula Richey
 09/03 Kori Nelson
 09/04 Cooper Harris
 09/05 Patric Hesch

09/06 Thomas Bowen
 09/07 Shania Burstad
 09/08 Tyler Jackson
 09/14 Patrick Langlois
 09/18 Chris Anderson
 09/21 Adam Tulkki
 09/21 Gary Piasecki
 09/21 Garth Schumacher

09/22 Ian Stoeklen
 09/22 Barry Schaefer
 09/23 Evie Porter
 09/23 Andrew Benner
 09/24 Leanne Whitley
 09/25 Adam Morris
 09/25 Joy Silvis
 09/25 Sasha Rondeau
 09/26 Randy Olson
 09/28 Teri Kohlrusch



Golden Age Manor

220 Scholl Street
 Amery, WI 54001
 (715) 268-7107
 Dave Waterman

Riverbend

475 Golfview Lane
 715.268.9949
 Beth Sorensen
 Ruth Schafer

Evergreen Village

611 Harriman Avenue
 (715) 268-6640
 Marian Peterson
 Gussie Fennern

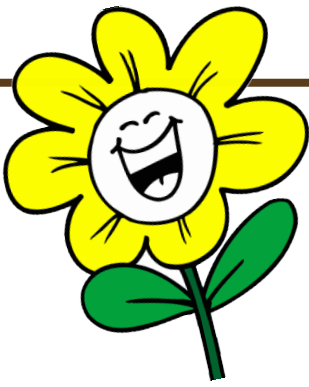
Memory Care

215 Birch St. W
 Amery, WI 54001
 Jeanne Murphy
 Bob Holms



**MEMBERS
 AND
 FRIENDS**





FROM Abby Betzold YOUTH MINISTER



With a new school year we begin to re-new our church life. Take a moment to check out what you can be involved in this fall!

Sunday school kick-off is September 12th, this is for Pre-K through 5th Grade and takes place during our 10am worship service. For grades 6th-12th we will continue to have youth group every Wednesday. On Wednesdays kids can come straight from school to church. They can be dropped off or walk when the weather is nice. We will hopefully also have a bus they can ride, more information will be shared via email and on our Facebook youth page on this. Be sure to like Amery Congregational UCC Youth for updates & reminders!

Any 7th Graders and older are encouraged to consider confirmation! Confirmation will be starting in October and likely be held on Wednesdays, if you/your child is planning to be in confirmation please let Abby or Pastor Garth know as soon as possible.

If you are looking for a way to help with the youth we are in need of cooks for Wednesday night meals! We eat around 5:45pm every Wednesday. Please let Abby know if you are willing to make a meal. We also always welcome adult volunteers to come join us anytime from after school until 7pm on Wednesdays. In September we will be once again doing a Fall Festival Parade Unit, there will be more information to come but please save the date for the morning of September 18th and walk with our church in the parade!

We are excited to see our friendly young faces on Sundays and Wednesdays! Please reach out if you have any questions!

Abby Betzold – Youth Director

youth.ameryucc@gmail.com / 715-641-2237

Wednesday September 1st : Youth Group 3:30-7pm

Wednesday September 8th : Youth Group 3:30-7pm

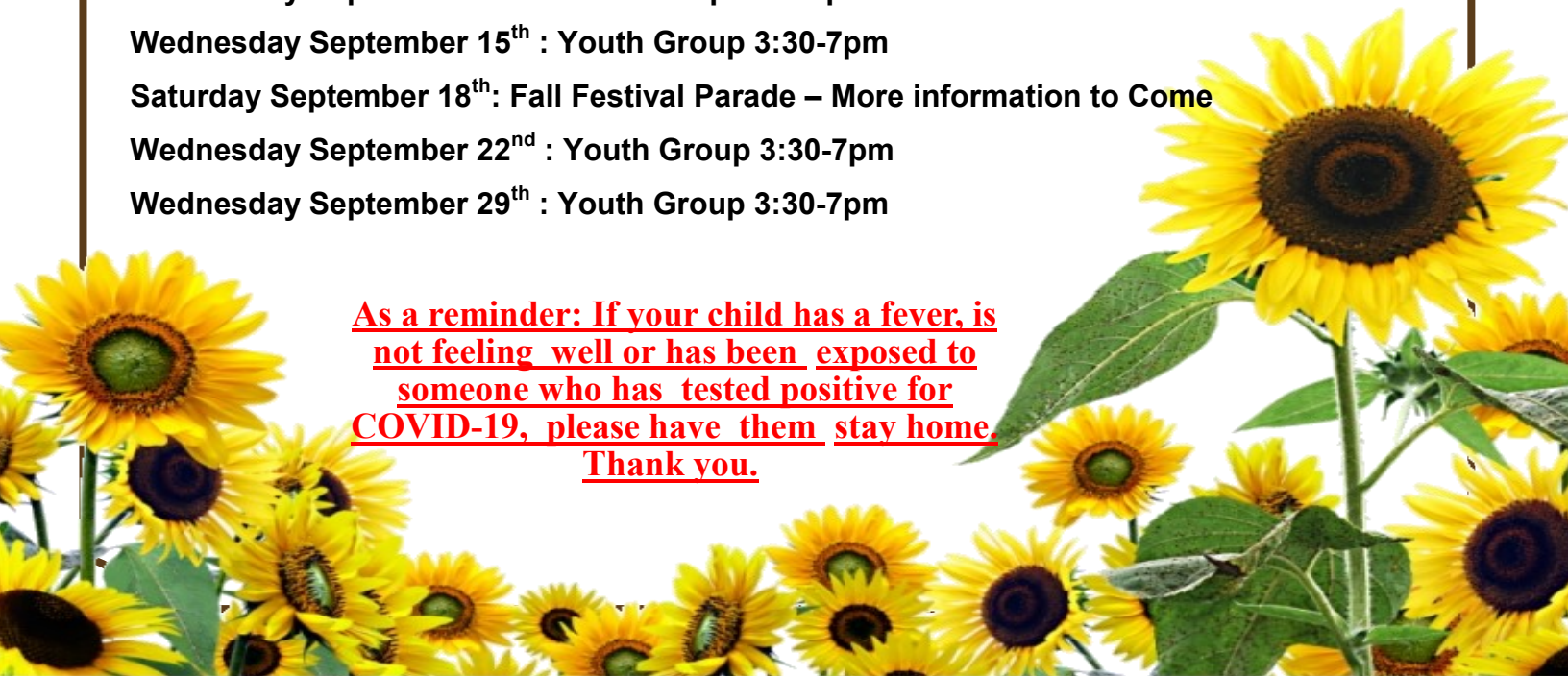
Wednesday September 15th : Youth Group 3:30-7pm

Saturday September 18th: Fall Festival Parade – More information to Come

Wednesday September 22nd : Youth Group 3:30-7pm

Wednesday September 29th : Youth Group 3:30-7pm

As a reminder: If your child has a fever, is not feeling well or has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, please have them stay home. Thank you.



After a lot of service projects this summer our Congo Youth enjoyed a fun day at Valley Fair today. Lots of fun & a few water rides on a hot afternoon in August



Youth Director Contact Information:

Abby Betzold

715.268.7390; ext. 12

715.715.641.2237 (cell)

Youth.ameryucc@gmail.com

End of summer cookout



SO... WHAT'S UP WITH COVID , GOD?

Just when we thought we were through with this pandemic, it comes back with a more virulent variant... Delta. I don't know about you, but I'm fed up with being fed up with this thing! So, what really is up with Covid-19, God?? Is this a test or a lesson? If so, how do we pass and what are we supposed to learn? What does the Bible say about plagues? There are nearly 70 references in the Hebrew Bible. In Hebrew, the most common term is maggephah. It can mean slaughter, a disease, a strong blow or a death blow. Another Hebrew term is debher, which more explicitly means a disease, and in the Hebrew Scriptures this is normally associated with divine anger. Sometimes this is translated as pestilence. There are several Greek words in the New Testament that refer to plagues, the most common being plage, which means a blow, a wound or a disease. Another term is panoukla, which means a disease or illness. These words are often tied to the wrath of God, which inflicts the plagues. A common biblical Greek term for wrath that is unleashed as plagues on the earth is orgis, which can mean fury or a harsh punishment administered by a law court. Another term used is thumos, which means an outburst of anger that has serious consequences.

No matter where we turn in the bible, a plague carries connotations of God's wrath upon the world. Many times, the punishment comes because the people have been unjust and unfair to one another, thus creating want and hunger in the poor.

Perhaps we can consider how our world has been unjust and unfair to others in our country and world. What ways might we find to treat others who are less fortunate, fairly? What would Jesus do?

What about nature? The more humans push nature out of the far corners of the world, the more frequently we'll run into pathogens that can kill us. And, the more humans create greenhouse gases, the hotter the world climate becomes pushing people out of desert lands and closer together, thus making diseases more transmissible. Are we doing all we can to

mitigate climate change so our children might enjoy the beauty of the world? I wonder. When a little Swedish girl, Greta Thunberg can stand outside the Swedish Embassy and start a world movement crying for ecological justice for the children, how might we respond? I'll be honest. I don't want to believe that God would promote this plague upon us. But, if we believe that the Bible is the literal word of God, will that make a difference in how we respond to this crisis? Would Jesus turn over a table or two in the temple on these issues? Finally, whether we believe God did or didn't cause this plague, perhaps we'd do well to listen to the facts on the ground and science... and act accordingly.
Rev. Garth Schumacher, Interim Minister

Garth and Norma Rae Going on Vacation!

Garth will be out of the office beginning on August 13 and back in the office on August 28. During that time, Emergency Pastoral Care will be handled by Rev. Kathy Pennington of East Immanuel Lutheran Church: Office- 715-268-2143; Cell: 715-554-4658. Meanwhile, Norma Rae and Garth will be celebrating their 20th Wedding Anniversary, beginning with a tour through the amazing Van Gogh Exhibit in Minneapolis and ending... who knows where??!!



MISSION TRIP RE-CAP & ENCOURAGEMENT

Many Hearts Serving Together

Our Mission Trip 2021 was a huge success!

We went to La Crosse, WI to work on two different job sites as a team of twelve, or in one team member's words we were the "dirty dozen". The one job site was indeed a lot of demolition work in preparation for a renovation. The home was over one hundred years old and we took it down to the studs. Four roll-off

dumpsters, a lot of sweat, and some black clothes from dirt, we made a huge impact. We worked together as a team to put this affiliate over a month ahead on this job site. Our second job site was a new-build home that we worked on two of the days. We did odds and ends on this home from working on the second layer of a retaining wall in the front (a LOT of shoveling involved), to sheeting the roof, shingles on the garage roof, and even putting up soffit. We were able to meet the future home-owner and her two young boys on the Wednesday night of our trip. They are so excited to be into their home by the end of the year.



As a team we have always accomplished a lot on these job sites but it is because we are doing it with hearts of service for this cause. We work together before the trip and on the trip and become one big family. We ask others

for help when needed, and share our knowledge when we can. No matter what the work is or how hard it gets we want to see the job get done. We hope that others will follow our lead and take a chance to help with their own abilities, it doesn't need to be going on a mission trip. Maybe you could serve on a committee, like missions & social concerns that focuses on helping locally

within our church and community. You could take minutes at the council meetings and share them in the newsletter for others to be well-informed about the life of our church. Whatever your gift may be, you may be surprised the places you can use it. Ask any team member or church leader for more ideas! Many hearts of service can make our world a wonderful place to live with one another. We've enjoyed our trip and hope you've enjoyed hearing about it.

Until next year,

Your 2021 Amery Congo Mission Team

Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering

In 2021, Neighbors in Need "Unfailing Love" offering is focused on supporting organizations and projects that are serving homeless and immigrant neighbors or communities. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to provide funding grants to UCC churches and organizations leading justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects in their communities

The offering envelopes will be in the pews on Sunday, Oct. 3.

Drop the Knife

By Julie Smith



It's always great to start a tough topic with humor. Humor really is the best medicine. So when discussing anger management, I enjoyed this cartoon with Helda and her troubles...good thing she is in a support group.

Sometimes anger and frustration can do nothing more than inflict pain upon yourself and not the intended target and/or source of your anger. I was thinking about this topic lately and this brought to my mind a blog I wrote several years ago about the frustration of being Ignored. The blog specifically addressed the frustration of not hearing back from editors about the publishing of articles I had submitted and being "ignored". In the article I had drawn a parallel from the movie *Fatal Attraction*. In the film, Michael Douglas has a happy life with a successful career and a lovely wife until things get complicated when he has a steamy affair with Glenn Close. Douglas wants the fling to be just a fling and tries to sever the relationship, but Close will hear nothing of that. She wants him all to herself and begins stalking him and his family with the intention of getting what she wants. It's an unsettling movie that really reflects

the darker side of obsessive behaviors and the creepier side of "love gone wrong".

An image in that movie keeps coming back to me when I obsess a little too much about communications with people. In the movie, Glenn Close is getting deeper and deeper into her obsession and doing nastier things than just calling and hanging up. The specific scene that comes to mind is Close approaching Douglas with a knife in hand. Her argument with him comes to a boiling point and she declares: "I'm NOT going to be ignored!", while at the same time psychotically digging the knife repeatedly into her own leg while walking towards him. Yikes, I know....pretty gruesome, but it does get your attention and it got his attention.

Now I would not take a knife to my leg in frustration from being ignored, but sometimes my frustration from not hearing back from people or getting a response that is not what I expected....well...it makes me go a little bit crazy.

Yet this inward turning anger and resentment has applied to other aspects of my life besides just being frustrated with editors and my writing life. With some of the stresses I have experienced in my life lately: most notably helping my Mom to transition to an assisted living apartment, my frustration that has turned inward only seems to hurt myself. Holding on to anger or frustration, as opposed to honest discussions does not really help any situation, except it only hurts yourself. Just like the insightful Buddhist quote here, such anger usually doesn't accomplish what we anticipate it will.

Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone; in the end you are the one who gets burned.



(Continued on page 8)

(Drop the Knife Continued from page 7)

Also like the Fatal Attraction example, in frustration and bitter resentment I am only hurting myself so I am learning to Drop the Knife. I am learning that. Also sometimes it is good to be ignored...you can find peace. Some personalities, myself included, crave attention and of course I prefer good attention; positive reinforcement. But when the attention is negative...well..that kind of attention is not so widely welcomed. There is a certain level of life experiences that have brought me to the understanding that to be ignored is sometimes a GOOD thing. It can bring you a certain sense of peace and frankly exempt you from some of life's unpleasant circumstances.

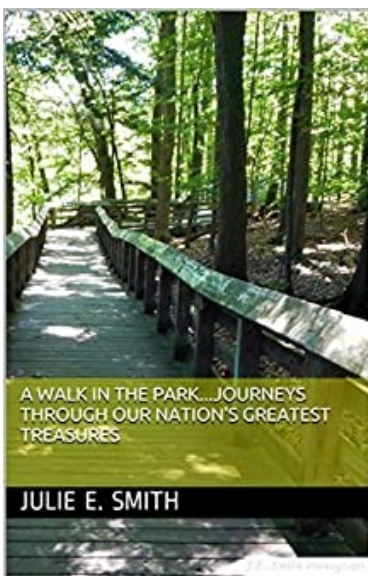
When I am stressed, feeling resentment or anger, I do pray for clarity and peace. I collected a few of my "anger management" verses from the Bible in helping me in this endeavor. Here are a few of my favorites:

James 1:19-21 Know this, my beloved brothers: Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Proverbs 14:29 He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalts folly.

Proverbs 29:11 Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end.

This last one is my favorite. There is no denying that we get angry and have resentment, we are only human. Yet working to not give "full vent" to our rage and striving for calm almost always brings a better solution. So I am working on many things in my life to "Drop the Knife" and in doing so, finding a better sense of CALM.



If you enjoy reading Julie's articles as much as I do, you might want to check out her book, *A Walk in the Park...Journeys Through Our Nation's Greatest Treasures*. This book tells of her adventures with her family and includes beautiful pictures (Have I mentioned that Julie is an accomplished photographer as well as a writer?) Julie did not write this book to be a complete guide of the entire system, but to provide highlights of many of our Parks and places that are operated by the National Park Service. I purchased Julie's book through Amazon and enjoyed it so much that I gave a copy to my Grandson, a free spirit who plans to someday travel around the country, camping and sightseeing.

The book is available in paperback and Kindle. However, if you buy the Kindle edition, you miss the incredible colored pictures.

Check out Julie's blog at julietta1982.blogspot.