

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Neillsville, Wisconsin
Church 715-743-2147
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger
Pastor's Office 715-743-2117
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JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER

Jesus called for the children and said to the disciples, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Luke 18:16-17

Dear Friends,

Thank you all for your prayers and concern for me and my family as we mourn the passing of my beautiful grandmother. My desk has been overflowing with sympathy cards. Tucked in the pile after worship last Sunday was a sweet crayon drawing from a precious child of the church. She clearly had listened to the sermon and heard my grief, my longing for peace. She created this lovely piece of art just for me, with the words, "Peace be with you." This simple gesture touched me in ways that are hard to explain. As I drove home, a song came on the radio: "I Saw God Today." My eyes filled with tears, for I truly did see God in that crayon drawing and the sincere love of a child.

Many times we hesitate to reach out to others while we search for something profound to say, something meaningful and significant, something important. The truth is that the small, simple actions done in the moment may be the most meaningful of all. This dear little one heard my sadness and in that very moment created a greater treasure than the most priceless masterpiece. She didn't hesitate or wonder if she had the right words; she simply offered a piece of her heart and the best message of all: Peace be with you!

We often wonder how much our children hear and understand during Sunday worship. We see them entertaining themselves with fidget toys or coloring pages, and we assume they are just biding their time until the service is over. But these dear ones are most certainly listening! They hear our praises; they listen to our laments. They feel the movement of the hymns. They follow the rituals and experience the emotions. They are not silent observers; they are participants. Our children are watching and listening. We owe them more than just a token participation in a few brief minutes of a children's sermon - we owe them our full acceptance and inclusion in the life of the church. The children are not just the future of the church; they are the church right now! Do the children understand all that is happening in church? Maybe not - but they absolutely get what matters. We need to remember and remind them that they matter as well.

By the time you read this letter, we will have held our first intergenerational VBS. My hope and prayer is that it is just the beginning of more intergenerational activities, engaging all ages together in all the worship and ministry of this church family. Let us encourage and embrace the energy and enthusiasm of *all* our church members, all ages, from toddlers to teens to retirees. *Every* member of our church family matters, every person of every age who steps foot in our building, who listens on the radio, who joins us on the internet, who participates in our mission projects, who prays with us and for us. No matter how often you have heard it, these words always ring true: whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. ***You are beloved, and you belong.***

Peace be with you, *Pastor Julie*



Continuing the following in our thoughts and prayers.

Janet Harrington	Gayle Schermitzler
Lisa Schermitzler	Fran Ormond
Duane Marty	Mike & Sherrie Holub

Please let us know if others not listed (with their permission) would like prayer requests.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT Titus 3:14

Our people must spend their time doing good; in order to provide for real needs; they should not live useless lives.

**JUNE 15, 2025
FARM TO TABLE GIVEAWAY
10:15 - 10:30 A.M.**

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST - NEILLSVILLE
515 WEST 2ND STREET
SERVICES @ 9:30 A.M.

DONATIONS FROM
GRASSLAND DAIRY PRODUCTS
NASONVILLE DAIRY
LYNN DAIRY
BADGER STATE FRUIT
SMITH BROS. MEATS



ALL ARE WELCOME



Aluminum cans were recycled by Mickey Marty & John Shaw over the last months totaling \$94.45

Thanks



Sundays, May 4, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Jim & Rosie Repinski in honor of our confirmands, “May today always be remembered, the grace of God has given you the Holy Spirit to guide you this day forward”.

Sunday, May 11, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Janice Miller in loving memory of mom, Anita Miller and honoring all mothers & women on this Mother’s Day.

Sunday, May 18, the radio broadcast was sponsored anonymously by “a faithful listener”.

Sunday, May 25, the radio broadcast was sponsored by JoAnn Wren “In Honor of All Veterans, past and present”.

**2025 Radio Broadcast
Sponsors Needed**

Would you like to sponsor a radio broadcast?

You may choose to dedicate or honor someone for a particular service date.

The cost remains the same - \$75

Please contact Janice in the office or phone 715-743-2147 to reserve a date.

**Facts and Figures of May 2025
Attendance for In-Person Worship**

May 4	online 6	Sunday 96
May 11	online 4	Sunday 52
May 18	online 7	Sunday 55
May 25	online 2	Sunday 56



- 3- Barb Miller
Karen Northup
- 12- Corinne Armitage
- 14- Julie Woods
- 17- Doris Bakker
Lars Woods
- 18- David Fields
- 20- Barb Petkovsek
- 23- Carolyn Lewis
- 25- Ellie Golembiewski
Margaret Rakestraw
- 27- Debbie Perkl
Claire Ziegler
- 29- Margorie Felser
Linda Stalsberg
Colton Williams
- 30- Phil Follen

JULY 1-9

We are adding the first days of JULY birthdays and anniversaries so as not to miss any if the newsletter comes out late.

July 1-9

Birthdays

- 1- Tyler Williams
- 2- Pam Stitt
- 9- Sophie Heck
Sandy Schmidt
JoAnn Voss

Anniversaries

NONE

*Happy Birthday to all who have a June birthday!
Did we miss your birthday or have the wrong date?
Let us know if we did.*



- 3- M.E. & Jim Sjolin
- 11- Kathy & Larry Marshall
- 13- Michelle & Joey Kranz
- 15- Sherrie & Mike Holub, Sr.
- 17- JoAnn & Wayne Voss
- 21- Sue & John Vornholt

The Circle of Friends is looking for more "friends". No special talents are required, we can do on the job training. We meet on the first and third Mondays of the month at 9 AM in the fellowship hall to work on making cards. On the second Thursday at 1:30 PM we gather for our monthly meeting.



the families and friends of

- † **Lois Kren**, age 95, passed away on April 18, 2025 at Riverside Assisted Living in Neillsville . She was a long-time member of our church. Her son, Tim (Tammy) Kren survives her along with niece & nephews, **Emile (Dan) Miller, Joel (Marla) Raine and Jeff Raine.**

- † Howard Sigurdson, 99 of Albert Lea, MN died on May 4, 2025. He is the father of **Craig (Wendy) Sigurdson**; grandfather to **Kelley Mathis, Erik Sigurdson.**

- † **Mikey Holub**, age 61 of Neillsville died on May 6, 2025. He was a member of UCC, he is survived by parents, **Michael Sr. & Sherrie Holub**, and sister, **Michelle Holub.**

- † Jim Raine, of Neillsville passed away on May 8, 2025. He was a brother to **Emile (Dan) Miller, Joel (Marla) Raine, and Jeff Raine.**

- † Joyce Steinbach, age 85, of Granton passed away on May 12, 2025. Her son, **Tim Steinbach** survives her.

- † Marie Pagel, 97, of Monticello died on May 19, 2025. She is survived by her daughter, Joyce Hummel, and granddaughter, **Julie (Earnie) Ruegsegger.**

Sending our love, thoughts, and prayers to you and your family & friends during this time of sorrow.

Thank you, dear church family, for your kindness, prayers and support over these past few weeks. The flowers you sent to Grandma's Celebration of Life were stunning, and a visible reminder throughout the day that you were with us every step of the way. We are so grateful for each and every one of you!

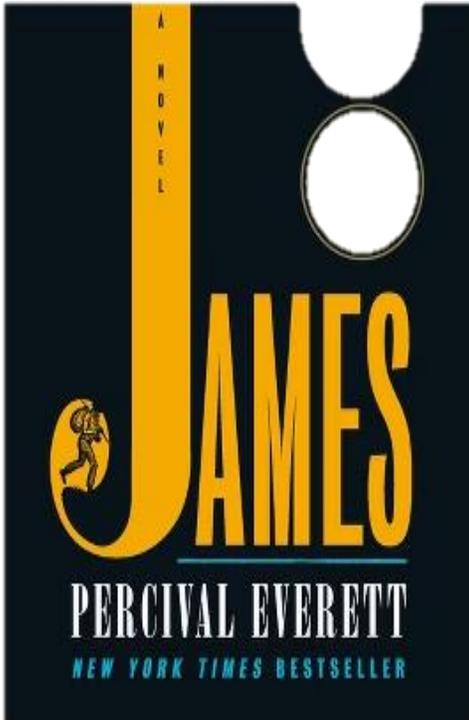


Pastor Julie & Earnie Ruegsegger and Family of Marie Pagel



Thanks to our mulch crew, who helped refresh our landscape. Pictured - Byrl Buddenhagen, Dave Harnisch, Bob Petkovsek, Mike Perkl. Paul Vine, who was behind the camera also helped.

REMINDER - our new permanent worship time has changed to 9:30 AM year-round.



Calling all book lovers: Let's start a book club! There is nothing as rewarding as reading a good book and then discussing it with others who have gone on the same ride. There is something extra-special about reading and discussing a secular bestseller through a faith lens. My suggestion for our first book is **James** by Percival Everett, this year's Pulitzer Prize winner. I recently picked up a copy and am having a hard time putting it down. The book is available at the library, or it can be purchased from any major retailer (hardcover, large print, audio or ebook). Anyone interested? Let's gather in the church lounge at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 26 for our inaugural meeting. We will share our thoughts about the book and then plan the future of our "club." If you can't attend but are interested in being a part of the group, please call Pastor Julie at 608-558-2397 or email NUCCpastor@gmail.com. Time, days, and location are all up for discussion!

PULITZER PRIZE WINNER • #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER • A brilliant, action-packed reimagining of Mark Twain's **Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**, both harrowing and darkly humorous, told from the enslaved Jim's point of view.

When Jim overhears that he is about to be sold to a man in New Orleans, separated from his wife and daughter forever, he runs away until he can formulate a plan. Meanwhile, Huck has faked his own death to escape his violent father. As all readers of American literature know, thus begins the dangerous and transcendent journey by raft down the Mississippi River toward the elusive and unreliable promise of the Free States and beyond.

Brimming with the electrifying humor and lacerating observations that have made Everett a literary icon, this brilliant and tender novel radically illuminates Jim's agency, intelligence, and compassion as never before. James is destined to be a major publishing event and a cornerstone of twenty-first century American literature.

VBS 2025 was a success. We had a group of 28 attending our Sunday Vacation Bible School.

We made personal pan pizzas, with bear paw cookies, painted Northern Lights, mountains, listened to great stories of Jesus, walked through a maze and ended with Jesus guiding us to the stained-glass window.



Aging in Grace

Reflections on ministry to older adults

Biblical and Spiritual Perspectives on Aging

By Jan Aerie
Gerontologist and family Counselor

Your age is measured by your dreams not by the years.
— Amit Ray.

The aging process is talked about a lot. Yet it seems that little is said about the biblical and spiritual aspects of aging. By examining and exploring Bible passages that have something to say about aging and older adults, we will discover a deeper knowledge and understanding of the process of growing old.

Growing old touches every aspect of life.

The Older Adult Ministry Group would like to make you aware of a 12-part study guide by Jan Aerie. This study series will guide you in exploring some general topics related to aging and some specific issues relating to older adults. Below is a sample of part of one session in this guide. (Access to this guide is listed in the references below.)

LIFE: GOD'S GRACIOUS GIFT

2. GROWING INTO THE FULLNESS OF AGE

Psalm 90

There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age. —Sophia Loren

A Life of Purpose

The Bible recognizes aging as a phase of living that rounds out the circle of life. Even though life can be burdensome for the old, it can also be burdensome for the young. Still today, having survived to old age is truly a gift from God. Most people want to live a long life and yet hate to think of getting old. Is old age merely a burden to be survived? What is it you hope to avoid in growing old? Are you afraid of nearing the end of life? Will you "give up the gift" of life upon facing mortality? How do you think of your own mortality?

Moses' prayer (Psalm 90) offers some insight. Moses approaches mortality from the viewpoint of God's eternity. The focal point of the psalm, particularly in verses 2-6, is God's eternity set against the transient nature of human life. People return to dust; a person's life is but a small span of time known in those days as a watch in the night (verse 4). A person's life is like grass, which fades and withers at the end of the day. How insignificant the reader of these verses is made to feel! What understanding did the poet wish to instill by repeatedly stating such a pessimistic view of the fragility of life?

Growing old is tangible evidence of the finitude of life and its limitations. In the very facing of our mortality, our will to control our own lives may be weakened. The writer of Psalm 90 saw this phenomenon as a great moral issue. Look again at verses 7-12. If people wish to live forever, to reject their finitude, then it appears that God will consume them in anger. In these verses God seems to be an infinite enemy. God's judgment seems harsh and unfair. Isn't it by their very nature that people strive to live forever? But when faced with death, the hope of immortality dims and, for some, causes life to seem profoundly disappointing. This profound disappointment may be one image you have of older adults. Exerting one's will to control longevity is futile.

The poet does not end with the pessimistic commentary on life found in verses 7-10. The utter despair of not being able to control one's life then enables a person to surrender to the possibility of God's offer of everlasting purpose in life. Once hope in our own strength is dismissed, we can find faith in God. Positive life in God uncovers the knowledge of the true gift (verse 12). Paul Tournier's classic book "Learn to Grow Old," describes this surrender as an experience that leads believers to an encounter with God that is felt in an intensely personal

way. He asserts that only through this experience can the anxiety felt at the approach of death be accepted peacefully. There are “intellectual believers” who may accept creed and gospel with their minds but have not experienced this surrender. Without surrender faith may only build walls around the anxiety. Tournier’s explanation raises a question: Do believers accept old age more readily than nonbelievers? Reflect on this and explore your thoughts with others.

Transformation means moving from a life filled with fear and waiting to a life filled with present meaning, active purpose, and daily striving for deep joy.

Read aloud verses 13-17. This section is a powerful affirmation of God’s grace in forgiveness. God does not promise to “settle accounts,” to balance gladness with pain. God does promise the grace to heal wounds and transcend guilt.

Attitudes About Growing Old

How does the possibility of God’s transformation of our lives offer a new outlook toward growing old? Can you look forward to being old?

In order to closely examine your feelings about old age, take a sheet of paper and a pen and write a letter to yourself at the age of 80 (or 90). In this letter tell yourself about the attributes you believe you will have at that age, how you will feel and function, and what you will do on an average day. Tell about your health at age 80 (90), your level of mobility, and the presence or absence of family and friends. After you have written the letter, sign your name and put it in an envelope. Plan to keep the letter in a safe place to reread on your 80th (or 90th) birthday. What feelings or thoughts did you have while writing the letter? Which parts were easy? Which were hard to write? Did you find yourself forming new images or roles for growing old? Do you feel your letter reflects a true 80- (90-) year-old?

When we consider aspects of life at any chronological age, many factors are involved. We can speak of our physical, intellectual and emotional age, in addition to our chronological age. We each are many different ages and the older we are the wider the spread between our various ages can become.

It would be difficult to determine how old we are in all these ways, but we should keep in mind five basic types of age: chronological age (number of years); biological age (degree of growth or decline of the body); social age (responsibility assumed, e.g. marriage, parenting, working, caregiving, friendships, etc.); psychological age (mental, emotional, interpersonal abilities); self-age (how old the individual feels). Your chronological age is defined by the calendar but the age you feel cannot be challenged or debated by others.

Do you look forward to old age as a continuation and integration of all that has been and is now in your life? Can you look at old age as an affirmation of God’s infinite, joyous gift for you to receive?

Resources:

1. For the above study go to: <https://wcucc.org>, then go to “Love in Action,” then go to Older Adult Ministry, and finally go to the Study Guides: Perspectives on Aging Bible Study.
2. McFadden, Susan and John, “Aging Together: Dementia, Friendship and Flourishing Communities,” Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2011 (in paperback in 2014).
3. <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/equipping-leaders/older-adults>

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

June 1, 2025 – July 27, 2025

	Deacon/ host	Greeter(s)	Usher(s)	Power Point
Sunday, June 1, 2025	Karlene Wallace	Linda Stalsberg Carla Marty	Ken Shoemaker Bob Petkovsek	Emile Miller
Sunday, June 8, 2025	Janice Miller	Carole Romens Jenny Erickson	Cris Hediger Kevin Erickson Phil & Donita Follen	Bonnie Weyer
Sunday, June 15, 2025 Father's Day	JoAnn Wren	Doris Bakker Ellie Golembiewski	Emile Miller Marla Raine	Reese Ziegler
Sunday, June 22, 2025	Wayne Voss	Steve & Leslie Buchholz	Paul Vine Kelley Burch	Barb Petkovsek
Sunday, June 29, 2025	Byrl Buddenhagen	Larry & Kathy Marshall	Don Quicker Jerry Quicker	Paul Vine
Sunday, July 6, 2025	Barb Shoemaker	Corinne Armitage Neil Armitage	Russ Karl Paul Schmidt	Emile Miller
Sunday, July 13, 2025 Heritage Days	Sally Sadowska	Paul Vine Kelley Burch	Hap Eddy Roger Carl	Bonnie Weyer Janice Miller
Sunday, July 20, 2025	Karlene Wallace	Howie & Kathy Maths	Ben Mathis Travis Vine	Reese Ziegler
Sunday, July 27, 2025	Janice Miller	Wendy Sigurdson & grandkids	Nancy Rodman Kirk Rodman	Janice Miller
Please call the church office if you are unable to be here, or make arrangements with another church member. 715-743-2147				



2025 United Church of Christ

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <u>Seventh Sunday of Easter</u> 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 – 2:30 VBS 7 PM NA	2 9 AM Card Making 5:30 PM Trustees Mt	3 Each Tuesday - 1 PM Marge Goetsch Bible Study – church lounge / bring bible	4	5 Noon- T& C Quilters	6	7
8 <u>Pentecost Communion</u> 9:30 AM Worship 7 PM NA	9 6 PM PEO	10 1 PM Bible Study	11 1 PM Stewardship Mt 7 PM NA	12 1:30 PM Circle of Friends Meeting	13	14
15 <u>Trinity Sunday</u> 9:30 Worship Father's Day 7 PM NA	16 9 AM Card Making 9- AM T& C Quilters	17 1 PM Bible Study	18 7 PM NA	19	20	21
22 <u>Second Sunday after Pentecost</u> 9:30 Worship 7 PM NA	23 9 AM Adhoc Outreach Meeting	24 1 PM Bible Study	25 7 PM NA	26	27	28
29 <u>Sixth Sunday of Easter</u> 9:30 AM Worship 7 PM NA	30 1 PM Bible Study 6 PM – HCE meeting					