

First Congregational United Church of Christ - Rhinelander — July 2026

Be careful which boat you buy. Or maybe you're not in the market for a boat but the still face the same conundrum - What are you about to add or subtract to your life that will permanently change things?

For years I have been paralyzed by option overload when it comes to boats. I enjoy water skiing, so maybe I should get a ski boat and use it for the occasional fishing trip. But then, why not get a pontoon boat with enough horsepower to pull a skier and still have room for a large group on a sunset cruise? And yet, a simple fishing boat would probably do the most things reasonably well and be much easier to load, unload, and maintain.

Maybe you've felt that same kind of overload. Perhaps your decision isn't about a silly boat, but more important things like where to live, which job to take, whether to retire, whether to move closer to family, or whether this is the right person to marry. Life presents us with choices that, once made, close off other possibilities. As we often say, "You have to live with it."

And then something surprising happens. You start living with it. You learn the quirks. You discover the limitations. You appreciate the hidden benefits. The unfamiliar becomes familiar. A restriction becomes a framework for life. Over time, what you chose becomes part of who you are.

The writer Daniel Cooperrider, in his book *Speak with the Earth and It Will Teach You*, writes, "*Mountains are edge experiences. They bring us to the vertical edge of this world, and perhaps also to an edge or boundary of the self.*" I think that mountain metaphor applies to much more than hiking. Decisions themselves are edge experiences. So are commitments. So are seasons of transition. Whenever we stand at the edge of a choice, we can see farther than we usually do.

On the edge, we see more. We see farther. We see what really matters. And perhaps most importantly, on the edge we become aware of God's presence. The mountains remind us. The lakes remind us. The big decisions remind us. Even the boat we eventually buy reminds us. Life is not about keeping every option open forever. Life is about learning to trust God's presence wherever we find ourselves. So if you find yourself standing at the edge of a decision this summer, don't be surprised if God offers something more than an answer.



Last summer I did pick up a 1980's Alumicraft Lunker 14...the rest of the story still needs to be written if it will land us some lunkers or turn out to be a junker! But that is the boat I will live with!

Grace and peace, **Pastor Tim**

In Every Season, Turn to God

Are you enjoying a happy time? *Praise God.*

Is life becoming difficult? *Seek God.*

Are you experiencing a quiet moment?
Worship God.

Are you suffering great pain? *Trust God.*

Are you unsure what to do? *Ask God.*

Are you overwhelmed with joy? *Thank God.*



Robert Thoms	07/06
Larry McKitrick	07/11
Archie Wilson	07/11
Susie Grade	07/13
Julie Russell	07/22
Helen Creglow	07/22
Cheryl Gilmeister	07/24
Nancy Wilson	07/27
Lyla Grade	07/28
Jen Laska	07/28
Lisa Johnson	07/30

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landerucc.org

E-mail Us: rhiucc@newnorth.net

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1st Congregational UCC Rhine-



Thank You
Readers
& Greeters

July Lay Readers:

07/05	Beth Studer
07/12	Judy Thoms
07/19	Beth Studer
07/26	Sandy McKitrick

July Greeters:

07/05	Mary Dork & Cherie Gilmeister
07/12	Bob & Judy Thoms
07/19	Des Dahlquist
07/26	Gene & Carla Chropkowski

OPPORTUNITY TO HELP FREDERICK PLACE

For many years our church has been feeding Frederick Place two nights per month. We have 3 pairs of cooks who work together and it's actually pretty easy: the cooking pair gets together over who does what and puts a well balanced meal together (main course, veggie, fruit and 1 gallon of milk) and delivers it to Frederick Place by 5PM on their assigned day. Recently there have been many meal slots open and we are going to increase our number of slots. We can handle that, but thought there might be some like-minded folks who would like to join in this effort. If we could recruit 1-4 more cooks it would be wonderful! This is a terrific way to help our neighbors who need us in a vulnerable time in their lives. If you volunteer we will give you full instructions! If you are a snowbird don't worry! Contact Judy Thoms at: momanddad44@gmail.com



Summer Scale-Back

Please Note: As we scale-back our schedule for the summer, we wanted to share a few updates:

- Weekly announcement inserts will not be included with the bulletin during the summer.
- The church office will be closed on Fridays throughout the month of July.
- The church office may close early on some days during the week.
- There will be no newsletter published in August.



Thank you for your understanding, and we wish you a wonderful summer!

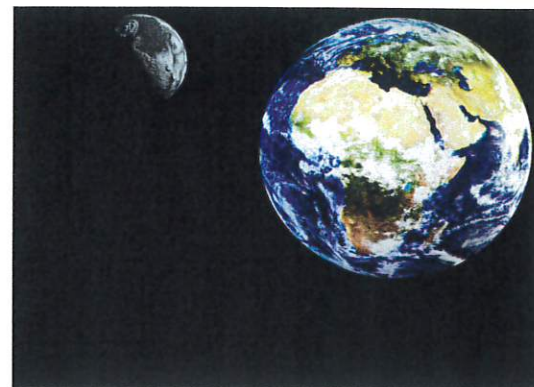


BUCK LAKE WORSHIP SERVICE & PICNIC

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, August 9**. We will hold worship at the Almon Park shelter on Buck Lake. Following worship there will be a potluck picnic (meat dish will be provided). Buck Lake is a lovely spot for walks, and water activities that you can share with church folks after lunch. The shelter has picnic tables, but you are welcome to bring a lawn chair and sunhat if you want to be outside the shelter. There are potluck sign up sheets in the narthex and fellowship hall. See you there!

CREATION CARE CORNER

This month we present another cost of our country's addiction to fossil fuel:



The Department of Transportation has not been enforcing their hazardous-materials (HAZMAT) rules for hauling oil and gas waste. This puts both communities and truck drivers in danger. The hazardous waste results from fracking, which has increased the US output of oil in recent years. Water containing undisclosed chemicals is forced down through wells into shale rock deposits containing oil, causing fissures in the rock and releasing oil. The unfortunate part of this is that it produces several barrels of wastewater for every barrel of oil. This wastewater is hauled to “disposal sites”, and contains chemically-contaminated water, and can also contain drilling fluids, sludge, sands, brine, lead-210, benzene, and radioactive materials (radium-226, radium-228) which were locked in the underground rock formations.

Exposure to these substances is linked to bone and other cancers, blood disorders, liver damage, kidney disease, neurological damage, acute myeloid leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, and reproductive defects. Hydrogen sulfide gas exposure from the industry has killed workers and people living in the vicinity of oil and gas production. Other impacts linked to oil and gas waste include respiratory, skin, and eye irritation and organ damage.

The oil and gas companies are required to test their waste for hazardous materials before loading it onto trucks, but drivers and operators report that they often do not. In some cases, a single truck load can contain more than 2,000 times the Department of Transportation's legal cargo limit for radioactive materials. Drivers are routinely sent out without the necessary training, certification, insurance, and protective equipment required, and are underpaid for the risks they are taking. Some don't even know they are hauling toxic or radioactive substances.

An organization called Truckers Movement for Justice (TMJ) represents about 15,000 owner-operators and company drivers from Mexico and the U.S. who are demanding that the DOT enforce its rules to improve their working conditions. The organization's leader said, “You bring (oil and gas waste) home. You're going home in work clothes. You're sitting in your car to drive home. Your wife might use that for the weekend to go shopping. What do you think – that stuff just disappears?” “(Drivers) don't even know what the h--l they're trucking.”



TMJ's attorney says, “The oil and gas industry enjoys so many legal loopholes that deprive workers and communities of information about the toxic exposures they experience from oil and gas waste.”

-Sandy McKitrick

Executive Council Meeting

Draft Minutes approved 6-25-26

Thursday, May 28, 2026 | 3:30–5 pm

- 1) Call to Order – Cecily,
Attending: Gale Willcox, Pat Juday, Tommy Wartman, Cecily Dawson, Tim Grade, Mary Moxon, Nick Church, Carla Chropkowski, Sue Bartels
- 2) Opening Prayer – Pastor Tim
- 3) Agenda Additions/Changes – add approval of 5/17/26 minutes.
- 4) Approval of Minutes from 4/23/26 and 5/17/26, both accepted as offered.
- 5) Pastor's Report (10 min) Trial of hand-held fans as cooling options for warm summer worship. Some learning of the little devices. Speak to the Earth book activity starting 5/31 after church. Wendy will have limited July hours. Some changes to what is printed will be trialed to lighten her load. We'll see what the response is; perhaps less printing is required. Rev. Missy Miller will lead worship during Grade's traveling on 6/7 and 6/14.
- 6) Board Reports (12 min – clarification questions only, see reports included in emailed packet)
 - a) Spiritual Life – Sue. Status Quo. Difficulty recruiting volunteers for coffee hour. July 5, patriotic hymns will be included in worship.
 - b) Building & Grounds – Gale. COMPLETED: Nick Church is installed as Chair, FloLogic automatic flow device installed. Oneida Roof & Chimney hired for sanctuary roof repair using higher grade shingles. Quote for exterior lighting received, but on hold pending WPS negotiation for additional streetlight. Howard Disposal contracted for trash removal. Lawn tractor returned to summer quarters at church. Remote door release in office is now working. Column showing annual budget figures has been added to Treasurer's Report. Drinking fountain repaired, Spring landscape clean-up beginning. PENDING: Signing of WPS easement request. Disposition of shedding carpet in Rm 105. Clean up of Rm 125. Information on security cameras. Decision about loose tiles in narthex and fellowship hall. Repair of light in organ loft. Quote from Eckert Wrecking for asbestos removal. Clarification of building use policy. Inspection of purple air quality monitor and code-appropriate power supply. Determination of why sanctuary temps remain at 72.
 - c) Trustees – Pat. Nick presented on Google Shared Drive and a flowchart of how the accounts work currently and with proposed modifications. Will discuss Mission Statement and Schwabb in June.
 - d) Outreach – Carla. Listening Post held on 5/24. Fewer coming to those events, but active discussion. People want to continue those events. Coordinate after church events with Tim so Listening Post can be held without conflict of other planned activities. Pride Fest on 6/6 with four people volunteering. Also a shade canopy secured.
 - e) Treasurer – Nick. In the process of reworking accounting system, would like to present in June.
- 7) Old Business (time permitting)
 - a) WPS easement update- Not signed yet. Our cost for building rewiring if service is run underground (ICT Electric) \$150,000. We can sign the easement and figure out our end while WPS begins the work for the entire neighborhood. Sue moved to sign easement, including underground bore. Nick seconded. Carried. Nick will contact Bill Barr and arrange for appropriate signatures.
 - b) Sound system – Not addressed
 - c) Room 125 cleanout - Done
 - d) Constitution change planning – Not addressed

- e) Church records/Google Workspace – Nick. More to come as this tool is employed.
- f) Financial Secretary transition - Wendy is making deposits and recording giving. Mary D and Tom W are still securing offerings after counting on Sunday. There was discussion about possible solutions that would allow for appropriate accounting, protecting those who handle money and maintaining a limited number with access to the safe. Tim suggested Trustees managing all money things, including handling offerings from Sunday morning. Trustees has been asked to bring a plan for handling Sunday offerings to the next meeting.
- g) Flooring in Fellowship Hall, next steps. Not addressed
- h) B&G Chair replacement – Nick Church, installed as chair.
- i) Howard Disposal contract - Done

8) New Business

a) **PRIORITY ITEM – Sanctuary Roof Project**

- i) B&G sought quote from Oneida Chimney & Roof. The warranty on Fellowship/Education wing roof requires using same contractor for the sanctuary. Insurance coverage for high-grade shingles is better than for the longer-life metal. The sooner we decide the better, in order to order lock in pricing for materials. The estimate is \$51,000. Ex Council will request congregational authorization for up to \$60,000, given the vagaries of a petroleum based product.
 - (a) How do we want to pay for it? Pat moved, Tom seconded use of Schwab investment funds. Discussion: There was notice of a Congregational meeting in the 5/24 bulletin. Mary will ask Wendy to email a second notice to the congregation on Friday 5/29, with additional details emailed to the congregation next week. Nick volunteered to prepare that informational email. Ex. Council recommends the shingle color *Barkwood*. Motion carried.
- b) Interior design project and logo.- RhinelanderUnited.org/.church/.com have all been secured to be protected against others trying to use our identity. Which of three logos should we use? Do any local churches have logos similar? There was much discussion, and a logo has a significant impact. Motion to accept the creation window option by Sue, Pat seconded. Carried, one abstention.
 - (1) Interior design. How to decide and move forward. Cost? Design is paid for. We can do work, or contract, or use White Arrow (who developed the design). We can we do a room at a time, providing information as we go.
- c) New contract for Tim as solo pastor – Carla wrote the current contract. She can give that contract to Cecily and Mary for updating.
 - i) Any loose ends to address as Susie leaves her position? None noted
 - ii) Formal acknowledgement with the congregation of the end of her service with us? SLB is making plans.

9) Adjourn

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 25, 2026 | 3:30 pm

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
28	10:00am –11:00am In-Person and Facebook Worship, plus Kids Club and Youth Group 11:00am –12:00pm 'Townhall Listening Post' after Worship (Lounge) 11:00am –12:00pm Fellowship Time/Coffee Hour (dependent on volunteer availability)	29		30		1	3:30pm –4:30pm Choir Practice	2		3		4	
5	10:00am –11:00am Choir is Singing 10:00am –11:00am Communion during worship service 10:00am –11:00am In-Person and Facebook Worship, plus Kids Club and Youth Group 10:00am –11:00am Patriotic Hymns 11:00am –12:00pm Fellowship Time/Coffee Hour (dependent on volunteer availability)	6		7		8	9:30am –10:30am Building and Grounds	9	1:00pm –3:00pm P.E.O. DR (Dean Theater) Carla Chropkowski Northern Arts Council (Conference Room) 4:00pm –5:15pm Northern Arts Council (Conference Room) 5:00pm –7:00pm NATH Board Meeting (Fellowship Hall)	10	Church Office will be Closed Today	11	
12	10:00am –11:00am In-Person and Facebook Worship, plus Kids Club and Youth Group 11:00am –12:00pm Fellowship Time/Coffee Hour (dependent on volunteer availability)	13	GFL Containers are scheduled to be removed	14	10:00am –11:00am Spiritual Life 10:00am –11:00am Worship Service for Friendly Village at Friendly Village	15		16	Wendy on vacation (Mary Moxon will be in the office) 1:00pm –3:00pm Non- Fishin' Book Club (Lounge)	17	Church Office will be Closed Today 4:00pm –5:00pm Meals That Matter - Ice Cream Social (Hosts: Pat Juday & Mary Moxen)	18	
19	10:00am –11:00am In-Person and Facebook Worship, plus Kids Club and Youth Group 11:00am –12:00pm Fellowship Time/Coffee Hour (dependent on volunteer availability) 5:00pm –6:00pm Meals That Matter - Mac N' Cheese Bar (Host: Olivia Jopek, bring a topping to share)	20		21		22		23	1:00pm –2:30pm Book Bags Book Club (Lounge) 3:30pm –4:30pm Executive Council	24	Church Office will be Closed Today No Deadline for Newsletter Articles Due to No August Newsletter	25	
26	10:00am –11:00am In-Person and Facebook Worship, plus Kids Club and Youth Group 11:00am –12:00pm 'Townhall Listening Post' after Worship (Lounge) 11:00am –12:00pm Fellowship Time/Coffee Hour (dependent on volunteer availability)	27		28	Wendy on vacation (Mary Moxon will be in the office)	29	Wendy on vacation (Mary Moxon will be in the office)	30	Wendy on vacation (Mary Moxon will be in the office) 9:00am –4:00pm Meals That Matter - River Source Trip (9:00 am departure from church) Drive up to the source of the WI River, Eat Lunch, and Make it Matter!	31	Church Office will be Closed Today	1	