

The Hilltop Chimes

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Rev. Robert Koepcke, Pastor

120 Kuckkan Lane Watertown, WI 53094
Phone/Fax 920-261-6213

AUGUST 2020

From Your Pastor: *"Be Now Our Vision"*



But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

*'In the last days it will be, God declares, that **I will pour out my Spirit** upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall **prophesy**, and your young men shall see **visions**, and your old men shall dream **dreams**. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'* (Acts 2:14-21)

Now as then, God 'pours out the Spirit' in ways we call 'prophesy, dreams or visions.' These may or not be from God, so the one with the vision must compare notes—is the vision they experience shared by other people? If so, what we have is what I call 'church,' a 'community of experience' with a vision for the future. What's your vision? I find it of interest that Peter quoted Joel—the prophet who according to the commentary found in our church Bibles, 'lived in a time of a great locust plague, which he saw as the beginning of the judgment of God.'

We too are in a plague, not of locusts but a virus that eventually will pass and allow us to gather. Once we do, what then? What questions might we answer informed by our 'visions?' Here are three questions from the Rev. Susan Beaumont, a consultant whose purpose helps churches 'see' where God leads:

- 1) What is our greatest asset now?
- 2) What relationships will we need to build on or strengthen in the months ahead?
- 3) What unique role might our congregation play in local, national, and even global recovery?

I'm in process of sharing my answers to these questions that I hope will encourage our church to do likewise. We have some great assets in addition to our building, notably our staff and the Gingerbread Preschool. We have relationships to build on including the Watertown Community Schools, Community Health Foundation, Community Action Coalition, Jefferson County Social Services and the Rock River Community Clinic. Working with these and others can help us 'see' all the needs with the role we can play.

Each of us and all of us need a role with a vision. If we don't or can't see what God is 'pouring out', we might cease to exist or as prophets say, 'perish.' And that, to say the least, would be a great loss and shame. So like the hymn says,

*Be now my vision, O God of my heart,
Nothing surpasses the love you impart;
You my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, your presence my light! (NCH 451)*

At this I must leave you to follow my vision, one I pray is from God like I pray you'll have too. THANK YOU AGAIN for your love and support. Please support your next pastor as they offer their guidance. I won't interfere, but of course I will pray that your visions, together, will build up this church. May your 'community of experience' have the insight to grow! --Rev. Robert

A Report from the Reopening Committee

We are all anxious to come back to church safely. Key word here is “safely.”

On July 21 (via Zoom), a subcommittee from the Church Council as well as Juanita Edington (staff member and also editor of the weekly Vimeos) and Barb Lottmann (church member with a nursing background) met to discuss: “When will we reopen?”

We have no set date. Our most intelligent guess for the earliest possible date would be the beginning of October.

Our reasons:

- Covid numbers are not improving and it is not prudent to gather yet in person.
- The Vimeo situation and Zoom meetings are working well.
- There is no need to reinvent a format before our interim pastor arrives (late September, early October).

Included in our thinking were these ideas:

- The interim may have procedures implemented at his/her previous assignment that would be logical for our congregation as well.
- Chris Braunschweig will reopen Gingerbread on September 1st with a rigorous plan for avoiding Covid 19 with her staff and students, and we can learn from her protocols.
- In the meantime we will be studying how other churches are returning to a service in the sanctuary.
- We also then will have time to study what materials, cost, and distribution of PPE will be involved (stands for hand sanitizer, plastic shielding in front of the pulpit, etc.).

Thank you for your patience! If you have concerns you would like us to address, please contact Tom Rusch at thomasdrusch@gmail.com or 920-988-5235.



Our Church at 504 Fourth Street when Marian, Anita and Robert became members over 75 years ago.

Praise and Celebration

On July 12, 2020 as we celebrated our church’s 175th birthday we also honored our Diamond Church Members. Their membership with this church spans over 75 years!

Marian (Koerner) Carlson
Confirmed April 12, 1939

Robert Schmutzler
Confirmed April 18, 1943.

Anita Dusowsky
Letter of Transfer April 25, 1943.

“For the Lord is good with a steadfast love
that lives and endures forever;
for God is faithful to all generations!”

--from Psalm 100

Book of Life

✠ **Passing:** On Saturday, August 1, 2020 **Anita Dusowsky** peacefully passed away surrounded by family. She was a 75 year “Diamond” member of our church family having joined in the spring of 1943. There is no memorial service planned at present.



From the Coordinator of
Children and Youth
Ministries

Melissa Mattke 262-719-1383.
josc.mom@hotmail.com
mmattke@firstcongwtnn.org

Sunday School

We have been continuing our ZOOM Sunday School at 10:30am on Sunday. The group has been working our way through snacks. We talked about popcorn and how a small seed can make something bigger and useful and yummy! God can do big things with something small.

We also talked about pretzels and how Jesus wants us to be the salt and light in the world. We sure do get hungry during our meetings. We always end with a scavenger hunt...that is the favorite activity with these kiddos. Feel free to join us



anytime!

Here is the Zoom link:

Sundays at 10:30 am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/183320649?pwd=UnFLMU9TenU2b0t3b2RVUEhyV1J6UT09>

Youth Group

We have been continuing with our ZOOM meetings every Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. Sometimes we just chat and play games, and other times we discuss the lesson we are working through. We will be starting a new lesson in June called: "Surf's Up".

We will be learning to chill with the Beatitudes, Dude. Every lesson will walk us through the Beatitudes. I am looking forward to some fun summer activities, online, to teach us!

Feel free to join us anytime...here is the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/671375141?pwd=RWswNldOWVR4MVg4QkpXbjNXL1NVQT09>



Virtual Vacation Bible School in August "GOD'S GLOBAL KIDS" August 10-22nd

I am very excited to announce this summer's VBS.

The program is called God's Global Kids. We will meet a diverse group of people from around the world and celebrate their uniqueness as we focus on themes such as "caring for the environment", "human rights", and "identity/self-awareness". I have designed it to be a VBS for everyone! There will be activities, snacks, videos and songs.

Did I mention this is entirely virtual? It will be simple to use and a "work at your own pace" project. The program runs Monday, August 10th through Saturday, August 22nd. Families can do the projects/snacks/videos posted on YouTube.

In addition we will meet via ZOOM on August 11, 13, 16, 18 and 20 at 6:30pm to gather as a group. This is not required, but we will dig deeper into what you learned working on your own. We will do a little "wrap up" service for the entire congregation to see on August 23rd. Please contact me with any questions. Click here to sign up.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E45A572BA3F58-vbsfor>

LISTEN UP! JOIN OUR

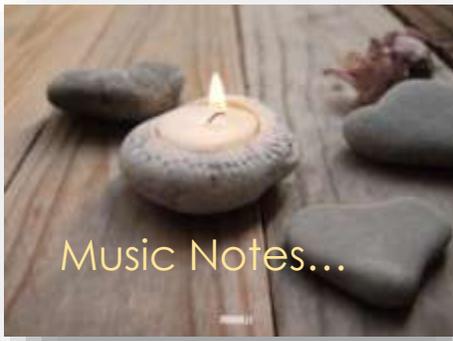
BIBLE STUDY

From Melissa: Our group continues to meet on ZOOM at 9am on Tuesdays. We have wonderful conversations. We have 2 lessons left in the Book of John, then we will continue on to the Book of Ecclesiastes. Join our ZOOM meeting, or sign up to receive the emails for the lessons and you can work through it on your own. Join the meeting here:

Here is the link to the ZOOM meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/232183369?pwd=N0pmNDhqdz09>





Juanita Edington
c.920-988-2416/h.206-6111
jaemusiclover@gmail.com

Please let me know if you are willing to provide a Musical Offering as we continue our worship on-line.

You can record from a smart phone or computer, which are the easiest ways, but there are several other options. Let me know if you want to sing or play, but don't know how to get the video to me. Technology shouldn't stand in the way of you sharing your musical gifts.

Thank you goes to those who provided musical offerings during the month of July-Bill Edington (in June, but missed in last month's report), Susie Krueger, Jennie Ortega, and myself.

"By Gracious Faith" was sung during the July 26th service. The hymn tune: BONHOEFFER, was written by Herbert G. Hobbs and harmonized by Jan Helmut Wubenna both in 1976. The text is based on the poem, "New Year 1945," written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian, professor, and leader of the German Opposition, while imprisoned by the Gestapo in Berlin. Four months later, Bonhoeffer was executed by special order of Himmler.

New Century Hymnal, 25th anniversary!

Currently, our primary source of hymns is the New Century Hymnal, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary! There was an enlightening article about the journey of developing the hymnal and some of the things that have evolved over the 25 years of its existence. I have the [link*](#) to the article below, but I want to highlight a couple of points.

The developers of the hymnal consciously worked to be inclusive regarding gender, race, and to lessen the emphasis on militaristic/monarchal language.

"Through historical research, **New Century** was even able to eliminate masculine language that wasn't in original texts but that had been added over time. One example, Rev. Thomas Dipko said, is the hymn "Of the Parent's Heart Begotten," which correctly translates the ancient Latin. All other modern hymnals use "Father's" instead of 'Parent's.'"

The hymnal was very controversial in the early years, and 25 years later complaints are still received (although far less controversial, and fewer in number than in the beginning). Interestingly, several other denominations have gone on similar journeys to change words to be more inclusive in this span of time.

The **New Century Hymnal** is not perfect, so we have supplements such as the Sing! Prayer, and Praise. The UCC continues to encourage contemporary writers of hymns and praise music in their mission of keeping the music of the church speaking to all people and we find some of those writers in the Convergence Music Project with writers such as Christopher Grundy, Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, and Wisconsin's own Bryan Sirchio.

*https://www.ucc.org/news_as_hymnal_turns_25_and_national_youth_event_nears_words_are_still_a_matter_of_justice_07212020?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+UnitedChurchOfChrist+%28United+Church+of+Christ+News%29

Finally, here is the link to the Eric Whitacre Virtual Choir piece, *Sing Gently*, that premiered July 19th. This is the virtual choir with 17,562 singers that I have mentioned before, and that I was a part of. The string quartet version accompanies the display of the names of the participants and is quite lovely as well. <https://youtu.be/InULYfJHK10>

From Mission/Outreach Board:
STAMP OUT HUNGER FOOD DRIVE



The nation's largest food drive re-emerges with a whole new look. During this time of Covid19 you might be wondering what will be happening in the future for the Food Pantry. Originally the annual Postal Food Drive normally held the second

Saturday in May was postponed to either August or September. With no immediate end in sight for this pandemic, the National Association of Letter Carriers has developed a new plan to address the problem of hunger.

All the nation's food pantries, as well as ours here in Watertown continue to be willing to work with the [National Association of Letter Carriers \(NALC\)](#). The result is a "virtual" food drive created to fit the current circumstances facing us all. A website has been created for this express purpose.

It's simple to do.

- ** Log onto nalc.org/food
- ** Scroll down and select "Wisconsin" from the drop-down box
- ** Scroll down and select "Watertown Food Pantry"
- ** You will be taken directly to the Watertown Food Pantry website where you can make your on-line donation.

Every dollar raised will go directly to our food pantry so we can purchase food for the hungry. By selecting the Watertown Food Pantry as the recipient of your donation, you are assured that all food purchased will be for our food pantry to help residents in the City of Watertown and surrounding rural area residing in the Watertown School District.

This isn't the normal food drive; but these aren't normal times. The one good thing rising from this approach is that rather than a one-day event, donations will continue as needed.

Thank you, Dawn at
dawn@watertownfoodpantry.org

*S.O.S. (Support Our Students)

DRIVE-THRU FREE SCHOOL SUPPLIES
Tuesday, August 18th



Our Mission/Outreach is participating with the Shared Community Mission's school supply distribution event (SOS).

However, this year we are asking for monetary donations instead of collecting items. OUR DEADLINE IS THURSDAY, AUGUST 13TH. Make checks payable to 1st Cong. UCC and in the memo write "S.O.S." Deadline is

.....
"The SOS Free School Store will look different this year as we try to keep everyone safe and healthy Children will not shop for school supplies.

- Free School supplies will be prepackaged for your children based on the **REGISTRATION form you fill out.**
- **Every family MUST pre-register this year.**
- **Registration forms will be available Monday August 3-Friday August 14th, 2020.**

Registration Forms are available at the following locations:

Christ United Methodist Church and Summer Sandwiches in the Park drive thru Tuesday 11:30-12:30

Ebenezer Moravian Church and Watertown Moravian Church and Summer Sandwiches in the Park on Friday at Watertown Moravian at 11:30-12:30, (Loaves and Fishes supper on Mondays)

Good Shepherd Lutheran and Summer Sandwiches in Park Wednesdays at 11:30-12:30

Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church (Bread and Roses on Thursdays and Food Pantry)

First Congregational-UCC, River City Church, River Valley Alliance

St. Bernard and St. Henry Catholic Churches
St. Paul's Episcopal (and Mary's Room)

Words of Thanks

From one of our graduates...

“Dear Church Family, thank you so much for the congratulations and the gift card. The gift card will be put to good use! Thank you for all your support throughout the years. --Derek Rowedder”

From a Love Fund recipient...

“I want to tell you how thankful I am that you helped my family in this time of need. I am beyond grateful for all you have done. No words could thank you enough. God Bless You, L. and family”

Prayer Concerns

- Audrey Lamp, Fred Schroeder, Irene Neitzel, Marian Carlson, and Pauline Wittenwyler, living at home or in health centers
- Adam Markus' family, whose grandmother Rosemary died on July 31
- Adam Markus' friend Kevin, recently diagnosed with an inoperable tumor
- The family of Anita Dusowsky, who died on August 1
- Barb Lottmann, receiving therapy; Barb's daughter Heather
- Bill Edington's brother Darin, dealing with health concerns
- Bobbie Smith, former church member, dealing with cancer
- Kathy Lamp (daughter-in-law of Audrey), for healing
- Kelly, recovering from the coronavirus
- Lola Mundt's fiancé Zachary, for healing and good health
- Nancy Renz and her daughter, Jessica Greene
- Norm Hurtubise's sister Vietta, for healing and good health
- Schools, colleges and universities as they prepare for the coming year
- Susie Krueger, for healing and good health

(please call or email with your joys and concerns)

Church office (920-261-6213) or
lbentz@firstcongwttn.org



LOVE FUND “ Please remember that our *Love Fund* provides grants to those needing help with food, clothing, health care, rent and utilities.

For assistance, please call the church office

How to Contact Us:

Office Phone/Fax:
920-261-6213

Interim Office email:

lbentz@firstcongwttn.org

BLOOD DRIVE BLOOD CENTER OF WISCONSIN



We had another successful blood drive on July 30th. The look of the drive was different again this month, however the donors were just as generous. Thank you to all that donated and saved lives

Our next drive will be held on October 1st. Feel free to sign up now for an appointment, or contact me to sign you up.

mmattke@firstcongwttn.org or
josc.mom@hotmail.com or 262-719-1383

YOU CAN ORDER **SCRIPS CARDS**

Call/Email church your order and Jennifer Rhodes will deliver them to your house.

Make checks payable to
“First Cong. Ucc - Watertown”

How to Contact Us:

Office Phone/Fax: 920-261-6213
Office email: lbentz@firstcongwttn.org

Book of Life

August Birthdays



08/01	Pamela Blaszak	08/16	Kim Ryan
08/05	Diane Scheunemann	08/16	Nicholas Milburn
08/05	Cooper Wood	08/16	Derek Rowedder
08/06	Brian Cowan	08/17	Robert Schmutzler
08/08	Deanna Koch	08/20	Doris Ehnert
08/09	William Edington	08/21	Shawna Hyde
08/10	Robert Harms	08/22	Rick Scheunemann
08/11	Aron Chowanec	08/22	Sherie Sheeks
08/14	Lauren Behlke	08/22	Eliza Zabel
08/15	Lynda Eicher	08/24	Norman Hurtubise
08/15	Eric Ninmann	08/24	Jim Ortega
08/15	Amanda Ketchum	08/30	Nicholas Maas
08/15	Elcie Milburn		

September Birthdays



09/01	Colette Swenson	09/22	Daryll Boettcher
09/02	Karla Bakke	09/23	Josie Mack
09/04	Carol Yager	09/23	Tyler Chowanec
09/05	Kristin Chowanec	09/24	Constance Swenson
09/06	Lori Schwager	09/25	Reed Larson
09/09	Norm Uglow	09/25	Carlee Winkelman
09/09	Jim Wescott	09/26	Dave Ninmann
09/15	Lola Mundt	09/27	Helen Eicher
09/17	Nick Uglow	09/27	Alexia Asher
09/17	Jesse Day	09/28	Collin Ketchum
09/18	Keegan Behlke	09/29	Audrey Lamp
09/19	Kendra Ninmann	09/30	Jennifer Rhodes
09/20	Dale Bakke	09/30	Brody Wood
09/20	Owen Behlke		



How to Join Us for Worship:

- 1) Our weekly "Welcome to Worship" email.
- 2) Our church's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-United-Church-of-Christ-118640148151341/>
- 3) Watertown Cable channel 985 broadcasts on Thursdays at 10 am and 5 pm; Sunday at 6 pm.
- 4) Our new church website (see 'Media'): <https://firstcongwttn.org/>
Services posted on Saturday night.

Financial Report from the Trustees

2020	BUDGETED CONTRIBUTIONS	ACTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	BUDGETED TOTAL INCOME	ACTUAL TOTAL INCOME	BUDGETED EXPENSES	ACTUAL EXPENSES	MONTH GAIN OR LOSS	YEAR GAIN OR LOSS
January	\$19,821	\$15,066	\$20,712	\$16,081	\$20,414	\$20,318	-\$4,237	-\$4,237
February	\$19,821	\$13,698	\$20,712	\$14,752	\$20,414	\$29,503	-\$14,751	-\$18,988
March	\$19,821	\$14,735	\$20,712	\$15,880	\$20,414	\$11,578	\$4,302	-\$14,686
April	\$19,821	\$15,257	\$20,712	\$15,309	\$20,414	\$12,607	\$2,702	-\$11,984
May	\$19,821	\$15,508	\$20,712	\$15,596	\$20,414	\$18,372	-\$2,776	-\$14,760
June	\$19,821	\$14,002	\$20,712	\$14,055	\$20,414	\$24,054	-\$9,999	-\$24,759

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Watertown, WI

July 30, 2020

Dear Church members and friends,

We are in the middle of crazy times. I am proud to be a member of the Church Council as we determine what we can do (and can't do) during the pandemic. Staff members have reinvented themselves to continue worship and fellowship and, at the same time, keep us safe. *At this point we can only guess what the future will hold.*

You can imagine our financial status needs to be addressed. And even though we cannot pass the offering basket every Sunday, many have continued to contribute as they had pledged.

The church council has voted to continue to pay staff members for their work during this time. We have taken out a PPP (Payment Protection Program) loan from the government to help pay these salaries. It is unknown what percentage of the loan will have to be repaid.

Looking at the Treasurer's Report from the end of June, our current deficit is almost \$25,000.

During the summer we are usually behind in income for the budget and tend to make up for it at the end of the year. To put things in perspective, we are now about \$14,000 further behind last year's income at the end of June 2019.

So, in general, the news is definitely not good but not terrible. Ultimately, this letter is a plea that you:

- Please continue to make your weekly/monthly offering if you are doing so.
- Please consider how you can better financially support the church at this time.

As the numbers of Covid 19 cases and openings and closings and masks or no masks keep changing, please honor your pledge and help keep our financial situation at the Church stable. This is something we can control.

With thanks,

Tom Rusch - Stewardship Chair



Moderator
Dale Bakke

Stewardship Board
Tom Rusch
Rob Rowedder
Jennifer Rhodes