

The Hilltop Chimes

First Congregational United Church of Christ
120 Kuckkan Lane Watertown, WI 53094
Rev. Stephen Welch, Interim Pastor

Contact Information:
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Pastor's email: swelch@firstcongwttn.org

JANUARY 2021



Dear Church Family Members and Friends,

We live in frightening and confusing times, yet it is in times just like this that we are called to draw deep from the well of faith. God's word to us,

over and over again, insistently and unceasingly is **"Be Not Afraid"**. That message appears in the Bible 365 times. One for every day of the year!

As we enter into this New Year, it is important that we hear the messages of Jesus. We do well to listen. Listen carefully. Listen deeply. Listen intently. May it be our story. May it be our life's story! For our world desperately needs **to hear** it again. Our world desperately needs **to see** it again. Our world desperately needs **to live** it again.

Jesus gives his followers a new commandment – not just with words, but also with actions. He takes the role of the servant and washes the feet of his disciples. Jesus then instructs his followers to love one another **in that same way** – as a servant. Jesus lives out his faith in God with courage, love, forgiveness and trust. He did not give up on God, and knew that God had not given up on him.

Much of the terrible and fear-filled pandemic -- with which we all must contend -- is overwhelming because too many of us have given up. Many have given up believing that their communities would provide justice, wholeness, safety or meaning -- they have given up on life -- and they have given up on God. [Or could it be that they believed that God has given up on them?]

However, the message and ministry of Jesus proclaims that God **never** gives up on us. **God refuses to allow Covid 19, Pandemic, illness or death to be the last word.** Jesus is God's message to us all that this world and this life can be redeemed, rather than destroyed.

That is a story that needs to be shared and it needs to be shared by you and me. **It makes all the difference.**

Pastor Stephen
Interim Minister

How to Join Us for Worship

- 1) Through the email link sent out weekly "Welcome to Worship" from lbentz@firstcongwttn.org
- 2) Our church's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-United-Church-of-Christ-118640148151341/>
- 3) Watertown Cable channel 985 broadcasts the Sunday service on Thursdays at 10 am and 5 pm and then again on the following Sunday at 6 pm.
- 4) Our new church website (see 'Media'): <https://firstcongwttn.org/> _Services posted on Saturday night.
- 5) **Communion Sundays** the first Sunday of each month. Bring the bread and cup to your table at home and join in the sacraments.



Versiti Blood Drive – Thursday, January 14th 1-6 p.m.

We will not be serving any food. If you would like to sign up to donate blood, please

contact me or use this link to sign up.

https://donate.wisconsin.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/208758. Many donors are needed at this time. Our goal is to have at least 30 donors at the January drive. Masks are required.

Reminder: Every safety precaution will taken.

- Things will be cleaned throughout the day as well as before and after.
- No meal will be served, and congregating will be discouraged.
- The beds will be placed at least six feet apart and temperatures will be taken for everyone, including the folks working the blood drive.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment.

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

From Your Moderator, Dale Bakke

Congregational Budget Meeting

On December 20th we had our first Congregational Budget Meeting via a virtual meeting. Meeting attendees unanimously supported a motion to allow the meeting to occur via Zoom, a motion to allow all current board and committee members to serve an additional year, and a motion to approve the 2021 financial budget for the General Operating Fund.

After a remarkably successful Stewardship campaign, the 2021 budget forecasts revenues of \$224,624 with expenses projected to total at \$223,051. These are down from the 2020 budget that had projected income at \$248,547 with expenses of \$244,966. The 2021 budget is similar to the expected 2020 actual revenues and expenses.

Information was shared on the gifts the congregation received this past year. A PPP loan was taken out under the CARES act that was eventually rewarded to our Congregation as a grant. Our Love Fund has grown from several extremely generous donations to values we have not experienced in the past two decades. If you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Stephen. We were also informed of an anonymous donation to our congregation from a past member that will require us to study the best use of these funds. This is a remarkable contribution that will nearly triple the value of our investment accounts. We are blessed to have this former member share this consequential gift with us during these chaotic times.

A few other Thank You's of note:

- Thank you to all board and committee members for their continued support and participation during these stressful times. It is much appreciated!
- Thank you to all the volunteers that took care of our property and each other during this past year!
- Thank you to our staff for adapting to the “new” format by climbing the steep learning curve to produce the numerous virtual services.
- Thank you to Pastor Stephen for being willing to come back to Watertown as our interim pastor.

Wishing each and everyone of you a Happy and Healthy New Year!

OFFERING ENVELOPES or EFT

Envelopes for 2021 have arrived. If you have used the mailable envelopes in 2020, we have a box at church for you. New to using these envelopes? Call/email Laurel to get a box at Office: 920-261-6213 or lbentz@firstcongwtn.org

Besides Envelopes: included in this newsletter is an EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) form. We work with VANCO to provide a safe way to send contributions electronically. The church already has close to \$7,000 funds coming from members this way. Direct questions to Laurel.



Pen Pal Club

We are continuing with our pen pal club. This will be a fun way to keep in touch with each other and get to know somebody better! Cards, letters and personal artwork can be mailed to each other. There is no "requirement" to join this club. No limited age or number of things you can send.

If you are interested in joining, please let me know and I will "assign" you a pal!

Melissa Mattke Coordinator

262-719-1383

mmattke@firstcongwttn.org

iosc.mom@hotmail.com

Saturday Morning Chats:

A few people used to gather in the church parking lot on Saturday mornings just to chat. The weather is making that not much fun 😊. So, let's change it to a Zoom chat time.

Here is the link if you would like to join. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments or if you need some help with Zoom! Every week on Sat at 10am Melissa Mattke is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZUvcumsrD4vH9AFpnxt79Q1COCA7DDukecy/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGprD4qHtaQtRyDRpwcAl_4c-jzpiVYgvp8ug_rGzQEozKnFc1hE-VbNM3b

Link to Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81250425554?pwd=LzFOVlhFL3J3dzRmL1ZRauU1US1dnZz09>

Topic: Saturday Meet Up

Meeting ID: 812 5042 5554

Passcode: 266273



Juanita Edington

c.920-988-2416/h.206-6111

jaemusiclover@gmail.com

We continue to seek your offering of musical gifts for our online worship. 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 begin. Technology shouldn't stand in the way of you sharing your musical gifts.

I hope that you enjoyed the musical talents and technological creativity that members and friends shared for the Advent Recital. I'd like to thank these performers: Evan and Max Chowanec; Bill and Juanita Edington; Jesse and Saedra Fremont; Zach Jones; Susie Krueger, Erin Lynch; Emily, James, Jennie and Jim Ortega; Tom Rusch; and Eliza Zabel

A big thank you goes to those who provided musical offerings during the month of December-Rachel Bain, Ben Grace, Evan and Max Chowanec, Bill Edington, Jesse Fremont, Susie Krueger, Emily, James, Emily, Jennie and Jim Ortega, Kellen Schwager, and Eliza Zabel.

Juanita Edington

c.920-988-2416/h.206-6111

jaemusiclover@gmail.com

Our Bible Study continues....

Our group continues to meet on ZOOM at 9am on Tuesdays. We have wonderful conversations. We are working our way through the Book of Luke. 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

:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/232183369?pwd=NOpmNDhq3poTXFtdG1rT0xYazNqdz09>

From the
Coordinator of
Children and
Youth Ministries



Melissa Mattke
Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries
mmattke@firstcongwtnn.org 920-261-6213
josc.mom@hotmail.com 262-719-1383

Sunday School:

We have been continuing our ZOOM Sunday School at 10:30am on Sunday. The group is working our way through the Books of the Bible. Each week we learn different “highlights” in each Book. We always end with a scavenger hunt...that is the favorite activity with these kiddos. They are now loving sending me on hunts! Feel free to join us anytime!

Join Zoom Meeting

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

H2O Youth Group:

We meet on Sundays at 11:30am and on Wednesdays at 6pm. We have been doing a lot of discussing about their feelings with the Covid-19 situation and school. They have also helped me with some of the assignments I have for my classes. We also play games 😊.

We have started thinking of ways that we can help serve our community during these trying times. We all miss eating together and playing games in person, however we are all being patient for when the time comes for us to do that safely. Feel free to join us!

Join Zoom Meeting

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

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED VIRTUAL MEDITATION?

The Thursday evening meditation group that meets at 6:30 is questioning if others may be interested in joining if we were to offer these sessions virtually via Zoom or phone?

Typical sessions last for 30 minutes and are a great way to refocus and relax. We are not currently set up to offer the virtual sessions, but we can easily accommodate any requests.

Please contact Laurel Bentz via email or phone at lbentz@firstcongwtnn.org or 920-261-6213 and we will follow up with you.

Serve in Worship Virtually



Liturgists: Liturgists read the scripture and other responsive readings during a worship service. We have been very successful with recording via Zoom for worship and are looking for volunteers for January.

Recordings are done Thursday mornings at 11 a.m. via Zoom from your home computer or you can come to the office and record on our laptop.

Liturgists are not yet recording in the sanctuary. If you are interested in being a liturgist for the virtual services, please contact Laurel at lbentz@firstcongwtnn.org.

Acolytes: The purpose of candle lighting has been to “bring the light of the Holy spirit” into a worship space. To virtually light candles for our worship setting acolytes are recorded lighting candles from home. Juanita gives guidance on how to do this and assists in making it possible and meaningful.

Although it’s been children who serve as acolytes, people of all ages are invited. If you are interested in being an acolyte for the virtual services, please contact Juanita. We love to have this as part of our service!

ELECTRONIC GIVING (EFT): giving electronically is an option we have offered for a number of years with great success. You decide how much you want to have sent and when you want it sent through our secure Vanco program. Changes can be made easily within a day or two by contacting Laurel. Records are kept secure and confidential.

If you are interested in using this convenient method for giving to the church, use this form and give to Laurel in the church office. You can direct all questions to Laurel Bentz in the church office (261-6213 M-Th) or via email (lbentz@firstcongwttn.org)


ELECTRONIC GIVING AUTHORIZATION FORM

**First Congregational UCC
120 Kuckkan Lane, Watertown, WI 53094**

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	ENVELOPE/DONOR #	DATE
Effective date of authorization: ____/____/____ Type of authorization: <input type="checkbox"/> New authorization <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation amount <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation date <input type="checkbox"/> Change banking information <input type="checkbox"/> Discontinue electronic donation		
Last Name		First Name
Address		
City		State Zip
Email Address		
Date of first donation: ____/____/____	Frequency of donation: (please check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 1 st <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 15 th <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-Weekly (every other week) <input type="checkbox"/> One Time	Amount of first donation: \$ _____
CHECKING / SAVINGS	Please debit my donation from my (check one): Savings Account (contact your financial institution for Routing #) Checking Account (attach a voided check below)	Routing Number: _____ <i>Valid Routing # must start with 0, 1, 2, or 3</i> Account Number: _____
	I authorize the above organization to process debit entries to my account. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization.	
Authorized Signature: _____		Date: _____

If using a checking account, please attach a voided check at the bottom of this page.

January 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 NEW YEAR'S DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	2 10 a.m. – Morning Chat Group ZOOM
3 Holy Communion 10am - Worship posted 10:30am – ZOOM Sunday School - 11:30am - ZOOM Youth Group 6pm - Worship Broadcast	4	5 9am - ZOOM Bible Study 11 AM - STAFF MEETS	6 4pm - Prayer Requests Due 6 P.M. - ZOOM Youth Group 	7 10am - Worship Broadcast 5pm - Worship Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group /Youth Room Masks required.	8 OFFICE CLOSED	9 10 a.m. – Morning Chat Group ZOOM
10 10am - Worship posted 10:30am – ZOOM Sunday School - 11:30am - ZOOM Youth Group 6pm - Worship Broadcast	11	12 9am - ZOOM Bible Study	13 4pm - Prayer Requests Due 6 P.M. - ZOOM Youth Group	14 10am - Worship Broadcast BLOOD DRIVE 1-6:00 P.M. 5pm - Worship Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group /Youth Room Masks required.	15 OFFICE CLOSED	16 10 a.m. – Morning Chat Group ZOOM
17 10am - Worship posted 10:30am – ZOOM Sunday School - 11:30am - ZOOM Youth Group 6pm - Worship Broadcast	20	21 9am - ZOOM Bible Study 6:30, Council ZOOM	22 4pm - Prayer Requests Due 6 P.M. - ZOOM Youth Group	23 10am - Worship Broadcast 5pm - Worship Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group /Youth Room Masks required.	24 OFFICE CLOSED	23 10 a.m. – Morning Chat Group ZOOM
24 10am - Worship posted 10:30am – ZOOM Sunday School - 11:30am - ZOOM Youth Group 6pm - Worship Broadcast	25	26 9am - ZOOM Bible Study	27 54pm - Prayer Requests Due 6 P.M. - ZOOM Youth Group	28 10am - Worship Broadcast 5pm - Worship Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group /Youth Room Masks required.	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30 10 a.m. – Morning Chat Group ZOOM
31 10am - Worship posted 10:30am – ZOOM Sunday School - 11:30am - ZOOM Youth Group 6pm - Worship Broadcast						

