

The Hilltop Chimes

January 2023

First Congregational United Church of Christ
120 Kuckkan Lane Watertown, WI 53094
Rev. Dr. Bob Gross, Interim Pastor

Contact Information:
Phone/Fax: 920-261-6213
Pastor's email: bgross@firstcongwtn.org



From the Pastor's Desk

I think it's finally time to share here a brief overview of the gleanings learned during the **Cottage Meetings**. What follows is a listing of each of the questions that I asked and a summary of the most common responses.

1. *Reflecting on your entire experience at First Congregational United Church of Christ, remember a time when you felt the most engaged, alive, and motivated. Who was involved? What did you do? How did it feel? What happened?*

Engagement was particularly high during the ONA discernment and while creating the Covenant statement in addition to theater and music, (musicals, children's choir, and praise band).

2. *What are the most important contributions this congregation has made to your life? Tell me what happened. Who made a difference? How did it affect you?*

The top of the list here centered on loving acceptance and community. People spoke of connecting with God and one another.

3. *Don't be humble; this is important information: What are the most valuable ways you contribute to your church – your personality, your perspectives, your skills, your activities, your character? Give some examples.*

It's no surprise that people spoke of their involvement in various leadership positions and the unique perspectives they were able share.

4. *When have you known the most significant spiritual growth for yourself and the church? When where you growing as a disciple? Think about lessons regarding beliefs or steps of faith. Tell me what happened. What made a difference? Who was most helpful?*

At every Cottage Meeting one occasion was listed as an instigator of significant spiritual growth. It was when Becca and Cami, two married women, had their son Brody baptized by Pastor Steve Savides. Not everyone supported the baptism. Those in leadership at the time, and the years since, noted that the conflict that followed was a time of spiritual growth for them and the congregation. Brody's baptism was a catalyst toward the congregation eventually becoming Open and Affirming to all persons regardless of gender identity or orientation.

5. *What are the essential characteristics or ways of life that make this congregation unique?*

The genuine welcome people experience when they come here. Worship participation is not the end, it is a launchpad into ministry in the world.

6. *Make three hopes for the future of this congregation. Describe what First Congregational would look like as these hopes came true?*

There was consensus around a tangible sense of moving forward, revitalized programs, increased member involvement, and expanded membership to make a greater impact in Watertown and beyond.

How would you respond to these questions?

Let's keep the conversation going.

On the journey,

--Pastor Bob, Interim Minister



Renewal of Baptism Vows

We often make resolutions for the new year.

Sometimes we are even able to follow through on

those promises. What about the vows made at our baptism and affirmed at Confirmation or when we joined the church?

On Sunday, January 8, we will celebrate the baptism of Jesus and offer an opportunity to renew our own vows. Come, worship with us, renew your commitment to God and one another.

Pastor's Bible Study begins the week of January 17th

Ever feel like Jesus has been kidnapped by the Christian Right and discarded by the Secular Left? Saving Jesus Redux is video-based 12-week small group exploration of a credible Jesus for the third millennium.

Join Pastor Bob for this weekly study. He is offering both Zoom and in-person options. Participants will receive a video, a short reading, and questions for reflection and discussion weekly.

The Zoom group will meet Tuesday mornings at 9 am and will last 1 hour.

The in-person option will meet on Thursdays at 10 am and/or at 6:30 pm, depending on interest, and will last approximately 90 minutes.

It will begin the week of January 17 through February 7, then take a break for Lent, (Hint: there will be an engaging study to coincide with our worship during Lent), then resume the week of April 11, through June 8. This study is open to everyone. You don't need to be a biblical scholar, (that's Pastor's job, isn't it? 😊).

SIGN UP: Call the office or sign up on the sheet in the narthex to register your intent to participate.

Bring your open mind, ideas for discussion, listening ears, generous hearts, and sense of humor. We will learn and grow together



From Your Moderator, Dale Bakke

February 12th, 2022 Annual Congregational Meeting

Please save the date after our morning service to participate in the Annual meeting to close out the 2022 year. The interim Council and staff will present reports for your review and approval. We look forward to seeing you there.

From the Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries

Sunday School:

We will be starting our Sunday School meetings again on January 9th. I am excited to meet up with all of you again!

H2O Youth Group:

We will continue to keep youth group a week-by-week meeting event, depending on everyone's schedules.

Melissa Mattke

Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries

mmattke@firstcongwtnn.org 920-261-6213

josc.mom@hotmail.com 262-719-1383

Gingerbread Preschool & Childcare

Growth is continuing to happen at Gingerbread.

We had our Holiday program and filled the sanctuary with our family and friends. Santa surprised the kiddos in Fellowship Hall after the program! If you would like to come and read a book to the children or lead an art project or other activity, we would love to have you. Please let Melissa know!

Gingerbread Phone: 920-261-9727

Email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com

Website: www.gingerbreadchildcare.com

January Loose Coin



The Gosling Nest is a place for students in need to get free food, personal essentials, and new and gently used clothing, shoes, and coats. Today, Hillary is joined

by Jana Strobel, a WHS Educator, to grow the Gosling Nest in order to service the needs of our student body. We need help from our community. Moreover, we need your help.

The mission of The Gosling Nest is to model compassion through providing food, clothing, and other basic necessities to Watertown High School students to promote educational success.

School is an important resource center for our students because more than 42% of our students receive free or reduced lunch. With the support of food, clothing, and other basic necessities, we will help foster improved health and wellness, fewer disciplinary issues, and increased academic performance. We distribute supplies discreetly in an accessible and safe environment. The Gosling Nest is a safe and supportive place to help students through their time of need which in term helps the student be more successful in school and in the future.

We may not be the largest food and personal essentials pantry in Watertown, but we have huge hearts and students that are beyond grateful for the support they are receiving. If you are willing to help donate food, clothing, personal essentials or make a monetary donations to help the Gosling Nest, please contact us.

With your support, these WHS students are able to refocus their energy on learning rather than on their basic needs. Therefore, they are able to improve their academics, change their future and improve the future of Watertown as a whole.

Visit them on the website:

<https://www.watertown.k12.wi.us/o/whs/page/the-gosling-nest>

Partnering for Mission and Giving
Exciting Opportunity to Help Your
Community!!

The Watertown Food Pantry, located in Immanuel Lutheran Church and **The Bread Basket Pantry**, located in the YMCA building in Watertown. These two amazing local resources are working together to serve the people of Watertown to provide fresh food for individuals and families.

THE WATERTOWN FOOD PANTRY HOURS ARE:

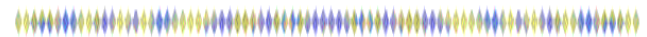
Mondays 10 a.m.- 12 p.m., Tuesdays 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., Wednesdays 12 p.m. - 2 p.m., Thursdays 1 p.m.-- 3 p.m. and Fridays 10 a.m. -12 p.m.

THE BREAD BASKET HOURS ARE:

Mondays 12:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Fridays 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Coats and winter clothing are especially needed. The Bread Basket also does mobile food pantries to Marquart Manor and other areas of town where people have a hard time with transportation.



WE SEEK YOUR PARTICIPATION AND DONATION!! There are several ways to assist with this food insecurity mission.

- There is a shopping cart in the narthex with a list of items we will be collecting monthly. You are welcome to bring any food at any time but we will also have a targeted list of foods we want to focus on each month. All collected items will be split between the two pantries.
- “You can donate monetarily by placing a check or cash donation in the offering plate using the **“Food Pantry + Bread Basket”** in the memo . “Make checks payable to “1st Cong UCC Watertown. ” Any money collected will be use directly to serve the people who come to the food pantries. Again, the money will be split between the two pantries.

Thank you for your help!!

Jennifer Bakke and Jennifer Rhodes

Note: If you wish to contribute more than “coins in the plate”, you can use a “Loose Coin Envelope” from the Narthex table and enclose the cash or check (made out to 1st. Cong UCC Wttn



Our church participates in the **Community Shared Mission** project “Weekend Food to Go and Grow”. A number of children in need in the Watertown School system receive a duffel bag full of nutritious food items for their family for the weekend. Please consider dropping off the following items at church on Sunday.

Denyce Derleth, who is our representative, is the contact person

Blood Drive – Cancelled

The blood drive scheduled for January 12th has been canceled due to a staff shortage at Versiti. They are experiencing ongoing staff shortages and have had to cancel several drives. Our next drive is scheduled for May 25th, 2023. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Serve in Worship

Liturgists: Liturgists read from a script the scripture and other responsive readings during a worship service. You will receive the script on Wednesday, arrive Sunday at 9:40 for sound check. A Printed script will be waiting for you at the podium.

If you are interested in being a liturgist for the services, please contact Laurel at lbentz@firstcongwtn.org.

Tech Opportunities

Have you been a videographer for church in the past? Would you be willing to run the camera during the service? The responsibilities are easier than in the past as you merely need to run the camera and keep an ear out for microphone adjustments. Currently, no uploading, editing, or converting to a DVD time is needed as that is being done with some enhancements

Print information such as hymn lyrics, bulletin outline, scripture readings, music information, and responses are added before uploading to Vimeo. I do this at my home and then get the link out to the cable station and church office, and finally create a DVD that is shared with Marquardt Health Center before coming back to be filed in the church archives.

Thank you to Dale Bakke, Bill Edington, and Melissa Mattke who recorded during December.

Please contact me if you are interested and when you are available. Training on the new camera is available. Thanks.

Juanita Edington
c.920-988-2416

jaemusiclover@gmail.com

Acolytes: The purpose of candle lighting has been to “bring the light of the Holy spirit” into a worship space. Although it’s been children who serve as acolytes, people of all ages are invited. If you are interested in being an acolyte for services, please contact Laurel in the church office.



Thank you to Boy Scout Troop 11 for their donation of the beautiful Christmas wreaths at the front entrance to the church.

Thank you to those that worked to support church staff behind the scenes in December: Decorating the tree and the sanctuary; cleaning and tidying the church; setting up for Communion. Those who provided for coffee fellowship; those who served as ushers and Liturgists. The money counters who took careful care of the offerings

Sunday, January 15th

Chili - Mac N Cheese

Cook-Off

On **Sunday, January 15th** after the 10 a.m. Worship Service, our “unofficial” Cook-off team will present the Great Chili and Mac N Cheese Cook Off! These are the comfort foods everyone can find something they will enjoy.

You are invited to bring your favorite Chili or Mac N Cheese dishes to the event that day. We need everyone to bring their tastebuds and vote for their favorites.

We are just weeks past the winter solstice, the longest night, so a hot bowl of Chili and some homemade Mac N Cheese is sure to satisfy!

There are fun things planned for that Sunday so please plan to attend with your family.

Watch for Sign up sheets:

- * We need corn bread and desserts
- * Sign up if you plan to attend.
- * Sign up if you are bringing a Chili or Mac N Cheese.

Contact Tracy Livermore, Barb Lottmann or Laurel in the church office.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Urgent:

Servers are needed on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. (Prior to worship servers get the coffee started and place the snacks out.)

****SIGN UP during coffee hour today or AT THE NARTHEX TABLE.**

****SIGN UP ONLINE:** Use the link below to review the available slots and to sign up
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4AA5A92DA1FFC70-fellowship>

“I CAN HELP” – gifts of your time....

Helping with Coffee Hour is just one of the opportunities for fellowship offered through “I Can Help”

Today, Watch for the forms on each of the tables during coffee hour.

For those who have already turned yours in, watch for emails/mail about the schedule lists of when you are set to pitch in. Thank you .

As always, the office is a good place to reach out to with any questions or ideas.

Laurel W Bentz lbentz@firstcongwtn.org

Office Hours: M-TH 10 – 4 p.m

OFFERING ENVELOPES or EFT

Envelopes for 2023 If you have used the mailable envelopes in 2021, we have a box at church for you. Wish to get envelopes? Call/email Laurel to get a box at Office: 920-261-6213 or lbentz@firstcongwtn.org

EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) We work with VANCO to provide a safe way to send contributions electronically. If you wish to sign up, included in this newsletter is an EFT form. The church already has close to \$6,000 funds coming from members this way. Direct questions to Laurel.

Laurel W Bentz lbentz@firstcongwtn.org

Office Hours: M-TH 10 – 4 p.m



Juanita Edington

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

jaemusiclover@gmail.com

We continue a mask affirming policy. You are welcome regardless of your masking choice and **please** feel free to sing.

SENIOR CHOIR HAS RECONVENED!!!

If you like to sing and wish to help rebuild our choir, we are meeting weekly at 9 a.m. on Sundays including January 1, 2023. You are welcome to join us at any time, and drop-ins are welcome. Now that we have been singing so regularly, we will plan to sing an anthem most Sundays.

I want to thank Jennie Ortega who was our soloist, the Senior Choir, and Tom Rusch who all worked diligently to prepare all of the extra service music for the "Angels Among Us" worship series during the month of December. We welcomed guest singers to the choir on Christmas Eve- James Ortega, Emily Ortega, and Sarah Gross.

I would also like to mention that the Hilltop Brass (this year: Bill Edington, Kevin Koehnke, Theresa Jannke Oestreicher, and Jennie Ortega) spent an hour at Pick and Save for the Salvation Army and they have been asked if they would be able to donate some additional time next year, since the donations in the red kettle are always generous when they play.

Juanita Edington

jaemusiclover@gmail.com

c.920-988-2416 (feel free to text)



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18TH - Our Twentieth

Annual Advent Recital was held on December 18th at 1:00 p.m. and was a resounding success. The freewill offering brought in \$3813 which was pre-directed to the Shannon Arrenz fund (the family who suffered the loss of three children and their home due to fire, in Watertown, just prior to Christmas.)

I would like to thank the volunteers for the potluck: all who brought food, especially Robin Kangas, who prepared the pork, and our kitchen helpers, Dale & Jennifer Bakke, Robin Kangas, Tracy Livermore, Barb Lottman, Brian Cowan, and Jennifer Rhodes. A great meal between service and the recital was had by all.

I would like to also thank our musicians, for without the volunteering of their time and talent, this recital would not have happened. Those performing were: Kristin Chowanec, Tyler Chowanec, Kris Curran, Vicki Daniels, Bill Edington, Juanita Edington, Carol Erickson, Saedra Fremont, Charly Ladwig, Erin Lynch, Maggie Markus, James Ortega, Jennie Ortega, Jim Ortega, Zachary Oster, Tom Rusch, Hannah Seaborn, Briar Wegner, Pamela Whitcomb, Cooper Wood, and Eliza Zabel.

If you missed the recital, the video is available on the church's website and Facebook page.

Juanita Edington

jaemusiclover@gmail.com

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

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BOOK OF LIFE

January Birthdays



01/01 Bradley Niay
 01/04 Dan Edwards
 01/08 Lee Buescher
 01/08 Tracy Livermore
 01/16 Desirae Dunn
 01/20 CJ Zabel
 01/21 Frances Milburn
 01/23 Jeannine Mallach
 01/25 Charlotte Ladwig
 01/28 Donna Ninmann
 01/31 Kay Fuchs

Christmas Poinsettia Memorial and Dedications

The Christmas Eve Poinsettias were provided by:

- * in Loving memory of Susie Krueger
- * Lee Buescher, in memory of Janice and Nicholas Buescher
- * Bill & Juanita Edington, in honor of our children and grandchildren.
- * In honor of Doris & Russ Ehnert, given by their children & grandchildren
- * Vivian Howard family, in memory of my parents, brother and husband.
- * Gayle and Carol, in memory of Donna Jaye
- * Diane Koch, in memory of Dean Koch
- * Barb Lottmann, in memory of my mom and dad; in memory of Steve.
- * Fran Milburn, in memory of Richard Milburn.
- * Jennie Ortega, in honor of Erin, Kelsey, Emily, Marissa, Bella, Lily and Sophie.
- * June Schroeder, in memory of Fred Schroeder
- * Cindy Stockhus, memory of David Stockhus and Robert Rishel

Financial Updates GENERAL FUND November 30, 2022

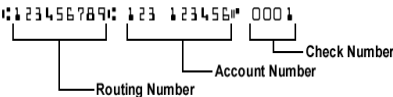
2022	BUDGETED CONTRIBUTIONS	ACTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	BUDGETED TOTAL INCOME	ACTUAL TOTAL INCOME	BUDGETED EXPENSES	ACTUAL EXPENSES	MONTH GAIN OR LOSS	YEAR GAIN OR LOSS
January	\$18,513	\$14,830	\$19,426	\$16,656	\$19,343	\$23,602	-\$6,946	
February	\$18,513	\$15,152	\$19,426	\$15,993	\$19,343	\$15,857	\$136	
March	\$18,513	\$17,858	\$19,426	\$18,784	\$19,343	\$17,565	\$1,219	
April	\$18,513	\$16,715	\$19,426	\$17,541	\$19,343	\$19,043	-\$1,502	
May	\$18,513	\$16,772	\$19,426	\$17,786	\$19,343	\$16,742	\$1,044	
June	\$18,513	\$17,848	\$19,426	\$19,700	\$19,343	\$25,873	-\$6,173	
July	\$18,513	\$19,410	\$19,426	\$19,688	\$19,343	\$23,595	-\$3,907	
August	\$18,513	\$15,846	\$19,426	\$15,933	\$19,343	\$20,130	-\$4,197	
September	\$18,513	\$16,783	\$19,426	\$16,834	\$19,343	\$20,896	-\$4,062	
October	\$18,513	\$18,632	\$19,426	\$18,720	\$19,343	\$29,667	-\$10,947	
November	\$18,513	\$20,499	\$19,426	\$20,564	\$19,343	\$15,626	\$4,938	-\$30,397

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@firstcongwtn.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: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> New authorization <input type="checkbox"/> Change banking information </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation amount <input type="checkbox"/> Discontinue electronic donation </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation date </div> </div>					
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: _____ <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">  </div>		
	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 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
REMINDER: We are on Facebook and have a website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-United-Church-of-Christ-118640148151341/ Our church website (see 'Media' for services): https://firstcongwtn.org/ 						
1 Communion Sunday <i>NEW YEARS DAY</i> 10:00 - IN PERSON WORSHIP Coffee Fellowship SCRIPS SALE 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	2	3 9am - ZOOM Bible Study	4 6-7:30 p.m. Confirmation Experience	5 EPIPHANY 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 4pm – Prayer Requests Due 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast	6 OFFICE CLOSED	7
8 10:00 - IN PERSON WORSHIP 11:15 a.m. - Youth Group 6:00 – Cable TV Broadcast	9 1 :00 p.m. Staff meets	10 9am – ZOOM Bible Study	11 4:00, Gingerbread Board meets 6-7:30 p.m. Confirmation Experience	12 4pm - Prayer Requests Due 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast 1-6 P.M.: BLOOD DRIVE	13 OFFICE CLOSED	14
15 10:00 - IN PERSON WORSHIP Renewal of Baptism Chili vs MacN Cheese cook off 11:15 a.m. - Youth Group 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	16 SCRIPS orders due	17 9am - ZOOM Bible Study	18 6-7:30 p.m. Confirmation Experience	19 4pm - Prayer Requests Due 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	20 OFFICE CLOSED	21
22 10:00 - IN PERSON WORSHIP 11:15 a.m. - Youth Group 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	23 6:30 pm, Interim COUNCIL	24 9am - ZOOM Bible Study	25 6-7:30 p.m. Confirmation Experience Newsletter Deadline	26 4pm - Prayer Requests Due 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28
29 10:00 - IN PERSON WORSHIP 11:15 a.m. Youth Group 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	30	31	LOOKING AHEAD: The Congregational Annual Meeting will be held Sunday February 12 th at 11 a.m.			