



Dear Church Family Members and Friends



As April comes upon us this year, the events of Holy Week immediately stare us in the face. Since even before the gospels were written thousands of years ago, the Holy Week narrative has served as the central piece of Jesus' story as it's come down to us.

It's important to know that Holy Week is not simply one triumphalist Sunday (Palm Sunday) to another (Easter)--much stuff happens in between! From the arrival at Jerusalem of Jesus and the disciples to start the week; on through a Passover celebration of liberation followed by betrayal, arrest, torture, and execution; all the way to a proclamation of Resurrection--Holy Week likely serves as the most extreme roller coaster narrative of any time on the liturgical calendar.

As Jesus' disciples today, these stories remain essential to us. And so, it remains important to remember them together as a community. At First Congregational UCC this year, we are offering several opportunities to do just that:

Palm Sunday worship, April 2, 10 a.m.
(No communion served.)

Maundy Thursday Tenebrae with Holy Communion,
April 6, 7 p.m.

Good Friday "Stations of the Cross," April 7, 3 p.m.

Easter Sunday worship with Holy Communion,
April 9, 10 a.m.

(Easter breakfast to be served beforehand.)

Come, join in the re-telling of the old, old story as we reflect together as a community what it means for our discipleship today. As always, all are welcome, and Christ's Table on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday will be open to all.

--Pastor Chris

Rev. Dr. Chris Ross, Pastor

Contact Information:

Cell: (920) 838-5630

Email: cross@firstcongwtn.org



UCC SUMMER CAMPS – NO ONE SHOULD MISS OUT ON CAMP!

The Larson Camp Fund provides scholarships to help cover the cost for children and youth attending any of the camp sessions offered so no one gets left out.

No one should miss out on camp for financial reasons so please contact Pastor Stephen about additional scholarship support.

We would love to have increased participation of our church youth at camp this year! Children, Teens, grandchildren.... Don't forget Family Camp!

The camp schedules for 2023 at Pilgrim Center and Moon Beach are set. Information can also be obtained on-line at www.ucci.org

Copy your registration to Laurel to make sure your scholarship gets processed from the Larson Fund. Email: lbentz@firstcongwtn.org



Gingerbread Hopes to Expand Program Offerings

There will be a congregational vote April 30 concerning modifications to the church building to accommodate younger children at the Gingerbread Preschool and Childcare Center. This vote will take place at the end of the service.

There has been a Gingerbread Study Team which has hopes of expanding the Gingerbread Preschool and Childcare Center to include children younger than 30 months. Basically, this includes uniting classrooms (taking down walls), adding sinks and exterior doors, and installing a fire wall and door. Changes must be made in the building structure, per state mandates, to include infants, one-year and two-year olds. These changes will not affect the availability nor the use of rooms for Sunday School or other church purposes. Costs will be met through grants, personal donations, and appropriate church funds. It will not be a church capital campaign.

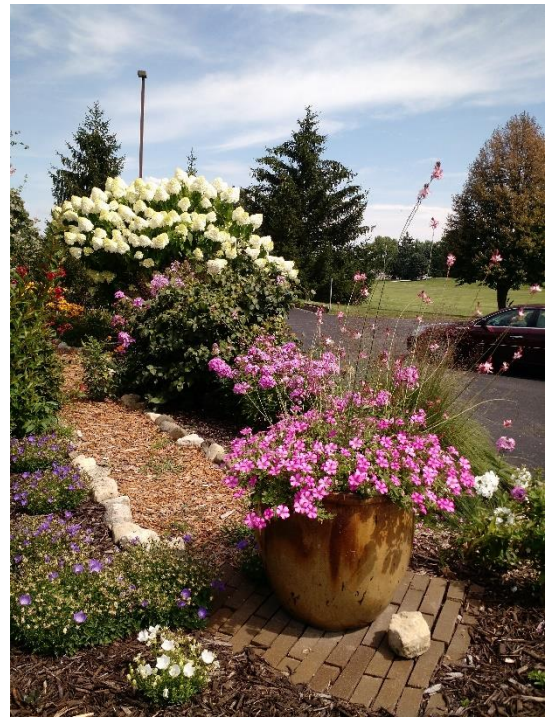
The Gingerbread Study Team will give an informational meeting at the end of the service on April 16. This will give congregants a complete idea of changes and costs. Please attend if you can. A short summary of the project will be given before the vote on April 30.

COVID and lack of childcare workers has decreased the opportunities in the Watertown area for parents and guardians to find a welcoming institution to care for their young children. With the proposed modifications, Gingerbread will be able to provide this service.

Our church has been affiliated with Gingerbread since its founding, when six of our members created Gingerbread as a new mission project within the church. This is its 57th year! The preschool and child care center has maintained a very good reputation in serving the community.

Again, please pay attention for opportunities to learn the details of the project before the April 30 vote.

Tom Rusch, Church Moderator



LOOSE COIN OFFERING FOR April The Church Flower Beds

Strolling the grounds of the church you will see a number of **dedicated flower beds**. One is the Gaston Memorial Garden at the front entrance to the building. Another is just north of that, the entrance to the Memorial Gardens. From there the walkway skirts the "Crane" bed and proceeds to the Susan McNaughton Memorial Fountain and then to the Gazebo and prairie. West of the Narthex is the Ruth Christensen Memorial Patio.

In May and June, close to 100 plants are put in along with new soil, fertilizer and mulch. This year stonework needs repair/replacement as well. All this brings to life these beautiful garden plots.

If you are a gardener, your time will be well spent helping with this project. If you love flowers, your time will be well spent sitting there, lost in thought, enjoying their beauty.

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



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 to rehearse prior to worship. The choir's role is to lead hymns and enhance the message of the day with a choral anthem. You are welcome to join us at any time, and drop-ins are welcome. If you are high school age or older, you are welcome!

Now that we have been rehearsing regularly, we plan to sing an anthem most Sundays and will sing on Maundy Thursday (6:30 rehearsal) as well.

I want to thank Tom Rusch for his faithful accompaniment of hymns and weekly selections of keyboard music.

Juanita Edington
c.920-988-2416 (feel free to text)
jaemusiclover@gmail.com

From the Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries



Melissa Mattke
Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries
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Sunday School:

We are continuing to meet in person on Sunday mornings after Family Time. We have been doing art projects, hearing stories and just having fun getting to know each other! Please let me know if you have any questions!

H2O Youth Group:

We are starting our Tuesday evening meeting on April 11th 6pm-7:30pm. We play games, hang out and of course...EAT!! If you are interested in providing a meal for us, please let me know.



Tech Opportunities

Can we expand our tech crew? Have you been a videographer for church in the past or would you be willing to run the camera during the service? Your responsibilities are to run the camera focusing on the "action at the moment" (the liturgist, acolyte, minister, choir, or instrumentalist) and make microphone adjustments as needed.

Uploading, editing, and converting to DVD 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, but 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 March.

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

Juanita Edington
c.920-988-2416
jaemusiclover@gmail.com

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



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 duffle 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.

New Member Sunday April 23rd

For all who are interested in becoming members of our congregation. Please contact Pastor Chris with any questions. (cell: 920-838-5630 or the office: 920-261-6213)

Easter Breakfast April 9th–

The confirmation class will provide breakfast Easter morning starting at 8:30 a.m. Please sign the reservation list in the Narthex or call the church office with your name and how many will attend with you.

Gingerbread:

Things are continuing to blossom at Gingerbread. Summer and Fall enrollment is increasing as we hope to provide valuable center for childcare in our community.

We continue to plan for future growth of Gingerbread rooms and plans are continuing to be discussed. As stated on page 2 of this newsletter, these plans will be shared in detail with the congregation soon. If you are interested in learning more about this, or would like to volunteer by reading a book to the children or leading an activity, please let me know! We love meeting new friends!!

Gingerbread Phone: 920-261-9727

Email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com

Website: www.gingerbreadchildcare.com

BOOK OF LIFE



04/01 Jessica Behlke
 04/02 Kevin Driessen
 04/02 Zander Koellen
 04/03 Don Christensen
 04/08 Tyler Stockhus
 04/08 Bobby Ladwig
 04/09 Kylie Kulick
 04/10 Jordan Winkelman
 04/14 Amy Gillingham
 04/14 Rick Scheunemann
 04/15 Erin Loeffler
 04/24 Erin Edington Lynch
 04/24 Josiah Piotrowski
 04/25 Jason Loeffler
 04/27 Clarence Zabel II
 04/27 Jordan Stiemke
 04/30 Cordell Niay

†-**Passing:**—Dale Bakke's father, Bob Bakke passed away peacefully on Tuesday, March 14, 2023 in the presence of his wife and sons. Bob's life will be celebrated Saturday April 1, 2023 at First Presbyterian Church-Waunakee. The funeral service will be at 11 a.m. preceded by a visitation starting at 9:30 a.m.



How to Join Us for Worship

- 1) Through the email link sent out weekly "Welcome to Worship" from lbentz@firstcongwtn.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://firstcongwtn.org/> Services posted on Monday



Financial Updates

GENERAL FUND As of February 28 , 2023

2023	BUDGETED CONTRIBUTIONS	ACTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	BUDGETED TOTAL INCOME	ACTUAL TOTAL INCOME	BUDGETED EXPENSES	ACTUAL EXPENSES	MONTH GAIN OR LOSS	YEAR GAIN OR LOSS
January	\$17,328	\$12,984	\$18,548	\$13,052	\$22,275	\$20,505	-\$7,453	-\$7,453
February	\$17,328	\$24,828	\$18,548	\$25,079	\$22,275	\$18,074	\$7,005	-\$448

April 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 Palm Sunday 9 a.m. – Sr. Choir rehearse 10:00 - WORSHIP Coffee Fellowship ; SCRIPS 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	3 1 p.m. Staff meets	4	5	6 Maundy Thursday 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 4pm – Prayer Requests Due 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast 7 p.m. Tenebrae Service - Communion	7 Good Friday 3:00 Worship Service in our sanctuary	1 <hr/> 8
9 Easter Sunday Holy Communion Come forward - intinction 8:30 – Easter Breakfast 9 a.m. – Sr. Choir rehearse 10:00 - WORSHIP 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	10	11 9am - ZOOM Pastor's Bible Study 6-7:30 Youth Group	12 6-7:30 p.m. Confirmation Experience	13 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 10:30- Pastor's Study Group 4pm – Prayer Requests Due 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast 6:30 -Meditation Youth Rm	14 OFFICE CLOSED	15
16 9 a.m. – Sr. Choir rehearse 10:00 - WORSHIP GB renovations - Informational session. Coffee Fellowship ; SCRIPS 6:00 – Cable TV Broadcast	17	18 FINAL 9am - ZOOM Pastor's Bible Study 6-7:30 Youth Group	19 6-7:30 p.m. Confirmation Experience	20 10am – Cable TV Broadcast FINAL 10:30 Pastor's Study Group 4pm – Prayer Requests Due 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 Meditation Youth Rm	21 OFFICE CLOSED	22 EARTH DAY
23 New Members Join 9 a.m. – Sr. Choir rehearse 10:00 – WORSHIP New Member Reception. 6:00 – Cable TV Broadcast	24 6:30, Council meets	25 6-7:30 Youth Group 7:00 Gingerbread Bd	26 6-7:30 p.m. Confirmation Experience	27 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 4pm – Prayer Requests Due 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 Meditation Youth Rm	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29 8:30-1:30, SE Assoc Annual Meeting

30

9 a.m. – Sr. Choir rehearse

10:00 - WORSHIP

11a.m. Special
Congregational Meeting

6:00 – Cable TV Broadcast

Special Loose Coin Offering

In April is designated for Church Flower Beds

