

The Hilltop Chimes

JUNE 2023

First Congregational United Church of Christ
120 Kuckkan Lane Watertown, WI 53094

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ross, Pastor
Office Phone/Fax: 920-261-6213

From the Pastor's Desk



With the beginning of June, we move into those warm summer months that too often lull us into believing not much is happening at church these days...

But it's not really true.
Yes, Easter and Pentecost

have come and gone, but there is still a lot happening at First Congregational UCC this summer. Of course, we'll be continuing Sunday worship every week at our same time (10 a.m.). As usual, the Wisconsin Conference will hold its Annual Meeting on the second weekend of June (9-11). Our Interim Church Council will continue to meet, and we'll even be working with Immanuel Lutheran on a once-a-month VBS-like evening program throughout the summer.

In short, church life goes on in these summer months. That's no less true "behind the scenes." Bills will still come in. Payroll expenses will still need to be covered. And we as a congregation will still have a budget to meet.

So, don't take a vacation from church (at least, not for the whole summer). Let's not let our stewardship commitments to the congregation lag during these months. Instead, let's remember that our discipleship is year-round, that church keeps serving year-round, and that God's mission and calling to us lasts year-round.

See you Sunday!

--Pastor Chris

Summer Adult Book Study

This past spring, adult education participants finished studying a curriculum called *Saving Jesus*, which intended to place the teachings, actions, and life of Jesus of Nazareth in its historical context on its own terms, before centuries of church doctrine developed *about* Jesus and the Christian faith. Between the two sessions each week, the regular attendance numbers went into the double digits.

Neither the New Testament nor the early church's understandings stopped with Jesus, as we well know. To really understand the faith of first-century Christians, another figure has loomed large: the apostle Paul.

Like Jesus, many of Paul's teachings have been taken out of context and misused by the Christian church throughout the centuries, and like Jesus, Paul also remains worthy of re-examination with an eye to his own historical context. And so, it only makes sense after the "*Saving Jesus*" program that we should now also "save Paul."

This summer, we will be continuing this adult Christian educational thrust with a book study on The First Paul by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. We will meet once a week, in person. However, we want to hear from you about when! Please let Pastor Chris know if you're interested in this study, and which weekday and time (Monday-Thursday) works best. And then, stay tuned to hear when we schedule the first session—we'll be announcing in the bulletin and online!

Rev. Dr. Chris Ross, Pastor

Contact Information:

Cell: (920) 838-5630

Email: cross@firstcongwtn.org

Summer Office Hours;

The Office will continue normal business hours of M-TH 10-noon and 1-4

Services: Council has set Summer worship time at 10 a.m



NCC Passes Resolution on Gun Violence, Mass Shootings, Commits to Do More

In response to the incessant gun violence and mass shootings rocking our nation, the Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC), at its annual Spring Meeting, passed a hard-hitting resolution on the issue, committing to increase its efforts to end the devastation and calling on its member congregations to do the same.

"As faith leaders in America, it is incumbent on us to address the escalating plague of gun violence in our nation," starts the resolution. "Since the beginning of 2023 alone, mass shootings from coast to coast have resulted in the devastating loss of hundreds of lives. Appallingly, it feels as if no one and nowhere is safe – not our schools, colleges and universities, medical facilities, grocery stores, movie theaters, social halls, financial institutions, shopping malls, homes, churches, or other houses of worship...It is necessary and reasonable to act quickly and decisively because we do not have to live like this," states the resolution.

Further, the resolution calls for congregations to use all their available resources to end the scourge of gun violence, to work across political lines and with faith and secular partners to find solutions to end gun violence and mass shootings, and to create safe spaces for those

inundated with violence and provide care for victims/survivors.

The resolution also calls for NCC member communions and congregations to "be attentive and offer a public witness and care to those in our communities who are susceptible to being perpetrators of gun violence, showing them grace and mercy, and attempting to put them in contact with resources that may help them choose a different path."

In addition, the resolution calls on the President and Congress to quickly introduce and pass legislation that would end "the massacres from weapons of war in our communities," and to hold public officials accountable for the lackluster and negligent legislative responses that occur after mass shootings. NCC has repeated calls for comprehensive gun violence reform and the banning of military-grade weapons in our communities



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST~ BEGINS AGAIN!!!

Special Invitation all women of the church (of ALL AGES) are invited to take part in a brief meeting during coffee hour on May 7th. The goal is to gauge interest and get input to start monthly breakfast gatherings again.

The plan is to gather one Saturday a month at a local restaurant; and order from the menu and enjoy an hour of fellowship. It will be an excellent time to get to know each other better, plan special projects & exchange ideas. Maybe a local road trip or two. See you on May 7th.

CONTACT - Laurel Bentz lbentz@firstcongwtn.org



Tech Opportunities

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

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.

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



SENIOR CHOIR is going on Summer Break

Thank you to all our singers this first year of choir post-COVID. Our regular singers this year were Kristin Chowanec, Bill Edington, Jesse Fremont, Saedra Fremont, Tucker Fremont, Tracy Livermore, Jeannine Mallach, Jennie Ortega, Jim Ortega, Deanna Perschke, Donna Schmutzler, and Chuck Weiss.

We had guest singers Erin Lynch, Emily Ortega, James Ortega, Jackson Palmer, Sarah Gross, and choir emeritus, June Schroeder join us on occasion. Gratefully, there wasn't a day that we had to cancel singing in service and this is impressive since we did not have our occasional scheduled days off when the youth choirs would have sung.

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

Stories from a Recent Choir Anthem

(extracted from “History of Hymns: ‘Order My Steps’”
BY M. ROGER HOLLAND II)

“ORDER MY STEPS”

by Glenn Edward Burleigh

Order my steps in your word, dear Lord.

Lead me, guide me, every day,

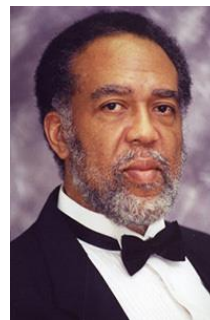
Send your anointing, Father, I pray.

Order my steps in your word.

*Please, order my steps in your word.**

*© 1991 Burleigh Inspirations Music.

“Order My Steps” is one of the most well-known gospel songs written in the late twentieth century. Its



popularity transcends the Black church experience and has found popularity with numerous grade school, community, and college choirs. The song was written in 1991 by African American composer Glenn Edward Burleigh (1949–2007), an Oklahoma native.

Burleigh draws directly on Psalm 119:133, Psalm 19:14, Ephesians 4:29, and portions of the Charles Wesley hymn, “A Charge to Keep I Have.”

The song was conceived while Burleigh viewed the St. Agnus Drill team (a variation of a step team) while visiting that church to preach. These teams are common on campuses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The activity of “stepping” is a combination of movement and rhythmic sounds created on the body and executed with precision that is an outgrowth of music created by enslaved Africans in the United States in the antebellum South who were forbidden to play drums.

Many contemporary church step teams employ scripture during their presentation to place the activity in a sacred framework. He was so inspired by the youth's performance that day, that he wrote the entire song that day.

Juanita Edington, Choir Director
c.920-988-2416 (feel free to text)

jaemusiclover@gmail.com

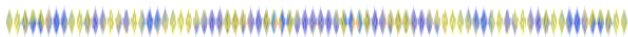




From the Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sunday School is over for the school year! We will start again in the Fall with more fun and games. Have a great summer everyone!

YOUTH GROUP: We will hopefully be able to start meeting as a group in the Fall. This time of year is difficult for us to get together in the evenings. Watch for possible "pop-up" times over the summer!!



Vacation Bible Event :

We have been invited to join in a SUMMER CELEBRATION on the 3rd Wednesdays of June, July and August.

"ALL AGES are invited as we gather for monthly Summer Celebration events on the third Wednesday of each month with activities and worship geared especially for children and families.

We'll get together in the Multipurpose Room for a meal at 5:30pm before things kick-off at 6:00pm. We'll explore scripture, sing, pray, learn, and play together! Our time will wrap up with outdoor worship (weather permitting) from 7:00pm-7:30pm.

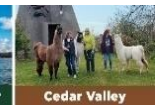
June 21st – Celebrate Creation!

July 19th – Celebrate Jesus!

August 16th – Celebrate Baptism

If you have questions or would like to help, please [contact Trevor Thom](mailto:trevor.thom@watertownimmanuel.org).

<https://www.watertownimmanuel.org/summer>



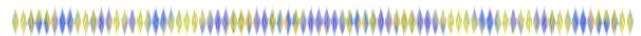
UCC Summer Camps Don't miss out!

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 the church office about additional scholarship support.

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

<https://ucc.org/calendar/>



Confirmation Class Tours the Fourth Street Church.

Pictured top row: Tyler Chowanec, Eli Fremont, Sean Driessen,

front row: Haily Zabel, Danica Uttke, Charly Ladwig and Max Chowanec.

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

JUNE LOOSE COIN
OFFERING

Gingerbread: Things are continuing to blossom at Gingerbread. We are getting ready for the summer. We are planning to garden and be outside as much as we can. Construction is scheduled to start in June and that is exciting! As always, if you would like to come in and read a story to us, please let me know. We are collecting donations of certain items.



Here is our Spring Wish List:

100% Juice
Gallon ZipLock Bags
Paper Bowls
Financial Donations towards our expansion
Gallons of water
Reams of white paper
Thank you all for your support of Gingerbread!

Report of Loose Coin Offerings

March – UCC One Great Hour of Sharing
\$35 in coin (plus \$473)

April – Flower Beds \$357 in coin (plus
memorial gift of \$1770)

May – Bread Basket/Food Pantry \$210 in
coin

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



BOOK OF LIFE



Birthdays in June

Nora Kuehl	06/02
Donna Schmutzler	06/05
Joyce Uglow	06/08
Melissa Mattke	06/12
Rebekah Palmer	06/16
Kathryn Driessen	06/17
Suzanne Harms	06/17
Kaye Piotrowski	06/23
Maggie Markus	06/28
Abby Miller	06/30

✚ Sunday, May 28, 2023 we welcomed into the membership of First Congregational UCC - Watertown these confirmands.

Evan Chowanec—son of Kristin & Aron Chowanec

Max Chowanec— son of Kristin & Aron Chowanec

Eli Fremont— son of Saedra & Jesse Fremont

Charly Ladwig, daughter of Melissa Mattke & Bobby Ladwig

Danica Uttke, daughter of Tracy Livermore

Hailey Zabel, daughter of Jami & Clarence Zabel II

Thank you to our 2023 Confirmation Mentors:

Dale Bakke, Bill Edington, Kate Driessen, Denyce Derleth ,Melissa Mattke, Jennie Ortega, and Tom Rusch

How to Join Us for Worship

- 1) Through the email link sent out weekly "Welcome to Worship" from lbentz@firstcongwttn.org. Join our mailing list.
- 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 Monday

Financial Updates

GENERAL FUND As of April 30, 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	\$21,622	\$3,457	-\$3,996
March	\$17,328	\$16,136	\$18,548	\$16,199	\$22,275	\$26,989	-\$10,790	-\$14,786
April	\$17,328	\$17,674	\$18,548	\$17,962	\$22,275	\$24,042	-\$6,080	-\$20,866

June 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 4pm – Prayer Requests Due 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 Meditation Youth Rm	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3
4 Holy Communion 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship; Scripts Sale 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	5 1:00, Staff meets	6	7 5:30-7:30 Building Use GB Teacher Training Fellowship Hall	8 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 4pm – Prayer Requests Due 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 Meditation Youth Rm	9 OFFICE CLOSED	10 Women's Breakfast 10 a.m. Two Sisters
11 10:00 - WORSHIP 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	12	13	14	15 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 4pm – Prayer Requests Due 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 Meditation Youth Rm	16 OFFICE CLOSED	17
18 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship; Scripts Sale 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	19 6:30, Council		21 5:30-7:30 Building Use GB Teacher Training Fellowship Hall VBS -Celebrate Creation @ Immanuel ELCA 5:30-7:30	22 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 4pm – Prayer Requests Due 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 Meditation Youth Rm	25 OFFICE CLOSED	24
25 10:00 – WORSHIP 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	26	27 7:00 Gingerbread Bd	28 5:30-7:30 Building Use GB Teacher Training Fellowship Hall	29 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 4pm – Prayer Requests Due 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 Meditation Youth Rm	30	