

The Hilltop Chimes

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

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Church Office hours:
M-TH 10-noon and 1-4
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December 2023

From the Pastor's Desk



December is here, and Advent has come upon us yet again. Undoubtedly, our thoughts have begun racing toward the gifts we have yet to buy, the decorations we have yet to put up, and the social

engagements we have yet to attend. Simply getting everything on the schedule can create an overwhelming sense of fatigue even before any of the activities get started.

No matter how much effort we put into getting the calendar right, we cannot capture the meaning that lies behind this season. In the traditional gospel accounts, we are reminded that the birth of the Christ child—the entrance into the world of Emmanuel, “God with us”—is unscheduled and comes as a surprise. One might even say it’s inconvenient.

The beginning of the new church liturgical year signals a shift in the primary gospel from which we’ll be hearing for the next twelve months. Mark—considered to be the earliest of the four gospels found in the Bible—provides most of the gospel texts for the coming year.

To concentrate on the narrative of Mark’s Gospel in this time of year creates some interesting dynamics. Why? Because Mark doesn’t

include any Christmas story! Instead, Mark’s version jumps immediately to the adult personalities of John the baptizer and Jesus of Nazareth with their radical and unsettling proclamations of the kingdom of God coming near, and the conflict that means for the earthly powers-that-be.

Although there’s no manger, there are no shepherds, there’s no star, nor are there *magi*, the message remains strikingly similar at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark. God and God’s reign suddenly enter into our world and demand decision—the same ole’ status quo or radical transformation—all in the promise that God takes on human flesh.

How will we respond this Advent and Christmas?
The choice always remains ours.

See you in church!

-Chris



Christmas Program:

The Church Christmas program will be on December 17th. If someone is willing to read/perform a skit, please let Melissa know.

josc.mom@hotmail.com 262-719-138
mmattke@firstcongwttn.org 920-261-6213

Meeting to be held December 10th for the 2024 Budget and Approval of New Church Council Members

As the 2023 year comes (too) quickly to an end, the Interim Church Council is making plans for 2024.

Stay tuned for budget details in the days ahead (via email) and please plan on attending our December 10th Congregational meeting to review and approve the budget for 2024.

Your participation and input are needed and appreciated. This will be a quick explanatory meeting and vote. Dale Bakke has put things together to show our needs and resources for the coming year. Some pledge cards are still out, but the general feedback from the Annual Stewardship Drive so far is very positive, and pledging is up! Thank you.

We will also have a slate of officers and members for the 2024 Church Council that will be presented for approval at the meeting.

Please attend. We need your input and approval!

--Tom Rusch, Moderator

*The Proposed Budget And Roster Of Officers For 2024
Will Be Emailed/Mailed. Hard Copies Available In
The Narthex As Of Monday, December 3rd.*



Christmas Eve Sunday Dec 24th

10:00 a.m. Worship, coffee hour.

7:00 p.m. Candlelight service with Holy Communion.

Christmas Day, Monday Dec 25th

There will be NO worship service held.

The Church office will be closed.



Notes from the Music Director

Senior Choir meets weekly on Sundays before church. We are always looking for more singers. Time is 9:00 a.m. and while regular attendance is appreciated, please don't let an irregular schedule prevent you from participating.

We will have a 6:00 rehearsal prior to the Christmas Eve service for any who may be able to join us for that service. We accept singers at any time during the choir season.

The choir will not have a rehearsal on December 31st and we will not sing during that service.

Thank you to Cooper Wood who was our pianist and accompanied choir on November 19th, and of course, to Tom Rusch who continued his faithful playing as both service musician and choir accompanist.

Juanita Edington

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

jaemusiclover@gmail.com



The 21st Advent Recital is coming up very quickly. It will be held on Sunday, December 3rd at 4:00 p.m. This is a nice way to take a step back from your holiday preparations and relax to music of the season in our sanctuary. Please feel free to invite friends or family.

I have reached out to musicians who have participated previously, and it looks like we are getting a good mix of youth, adults, solos, ensembles, vocals, and instrumentals. We may even sing a couple of carols. Hope to see you there.

THE WATERTOWN FOOD PANTRY

This month's Item: Ramen Noodles



Located in Immanuel Lutheran Church serves the people of Watertown to provide fresh food for individuals and families.

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.

KOATS FOR KIDS (AND ADULTS)

What: New or gently used coats, scarves, mittens, gloves, snow pants

Where: Drop Off at church Sunday mornings, or at the Office M-TH 10-4:00.

When: Starting October 1st.

LEARN MORE about this annual collection

visit: <https://www.cacscw.org/koats-for-kids/>

Jennifer Rhodes at 920-296-1378

THE BREAD BASKET PANTRY, located in the YMCA building in Watertown. Another amazing local resource for our community

- In addition to food items, Coats and winter clothing are especially needed. Many individuals and families don't arrive prepared for our winters.
- **Bread Basket** is in need of egg cartons and plastic grocery bags with handles. Vivian Howard will get them over to them.
- There is a shopping cart in the narthex You are welcome to bring any food at any time .
 - **THE BREAD BASKET HOURS ARE:**
 - Mondays 12:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
 - Fridays 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.



The Christmas Fund

Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

THE CHRISTMAS FUND has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

In addition, the **LOOSE COIN MISSION OFFERING** will go towards this special UCC Offering.



Gingerbread: We are still growing in numbers, we have 88 children enrolled! Gingerbread is getting ready for our Holiday program on December 20 at 6pm. You are all welcome to come and watch us sing!

Watch our hallways for our artwork and also our Giving Tree. We will be asking for donations for items that are needed/desired in our classrooms. We appreciate your support!

Melissa Mattke-Administrator/director
Gingerbread email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com
Melissa Cell: 262-719-1383

Women's Fellowship Breakfast – December 9th

Join us at 10 a.m. at Two Sisters, (1300 Memorial Drive, Wttn). All are invited and, as always... Invite a Friend! We order from the menu

We ask for your RSVP by Tuesday, December 6th in order for their staff to hold a space for us.

****Two Sisters** has welcomed us each time and we have enjoyed good food and fellowship.



Tech Opportunities



As the year falls into the regular programming, it seems to be a good time to find some additional people who aren't involved in Choir or Sunday School who will be willing to run tech. In the past there

was a sign up with a regular rotation, similar to our liturgists.

Your primary responsibilities are to run the camera focusing on the "action at the moment" (the liturgist, acolyte, minister, choir, or special musician/s) and make microphone adjustments as needed. I am currently taking care of the editing and production.

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

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

Juanita Edington
c.920-988-2416

jaemusiclover@gmail.com

From the Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries

Sunday School: We have been working on different Bible stories and different ways of giving thanks. We do not always have a big group, but we get a lot of work done!

Sunday School will not meet on Dec. 24th

Youth Group: Let's try to get together in 2024! We can meet on Wednesday evenings! Please reach out to me and let me know if you are interested!

The **Church Christmas program** will be on December 17th. **SEE Page 1**
mmattke@firstcongwtn.org 920-261-6213
josc.mom@hotmail.com 262-719-1383



How to Join Us for Worship

- 1) Join our mailing list: for an email link sent out weekly "Welcome to Worship" from lbentz@firstcongwtn.org.
- 2) Visit 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 church website (see 'Media'): <https://firstcongwtn.org/> Services posted on Monday

CHRISTMAS FLOWER

The flowers will be used to beautify the sanctuary for Christmas Eve service. They will be labeled and you will be able to take yours home that evening.



ORDER FORMS are in the Narthex and also on page 6 of this newsletter. Please fill out the form, include your check and drop it in the Narthex or at the church office.

Make Check payable to 1st Congregational UCC and attach to this order. **DEADLINE:**
Sunday, DECEMBER 10th

DECEMBER

Jan Smith	12/01
Cindy Stockhus	12/01
William Piotrowski	12/02
Maverick Schumacher	12/02
Rob Miller	12/11
Ann Vogel	12/13
Lila Bocher (100 th)	12/15
Lily Kulick	12/16
Paul Neitzel	12/16
Denyce Derleth	12/21
Rev. Chris Ross	12/21
Mary Brey	12/24
Sophia Mattke	12/29
Joyce Larson	12/31



BIRTHDAYS

JANUARY

Brad Niay	01/01
Daniel Edwards	01/04
Nicholas Oxford	01/04
Lee Buescher	01/08
Tracy Livermore	01/08
CJ Zabel	01/20
Frances Milburn	01/21
Bruce Williams	01/23
Jeannine Mallach	01/23
Charly Ladwig	01/25
Donna Ninmann	01/28
Kay Fuchs	01/31

BOOK OF LIFE

TOTENFEST - Service of Remembrance

On Sunday, November 6 during 10:00 a.m. worship we held a special service of remembrance. Church members were invited to send the names of loved ones who have died since last year at this time

ERIC MICHAEL ZABEL, Penelope and Eliza Zabel's father (granddaughters of Bill & Juanita Edington)
Born: May 22, 1986
Died: November 11, 2022

DENNIS EWING, Val Ewing's husband
Born: January 21, 1927
Died: January 18, 2023

EDWIN LIVERMORE, Tracy Livermore's father
Born: August 9, 1931
Died: February 6, 2023

CHARLES KUBICEK, Diane Koch's brother
Born: November 28, 1950
Died: February 16, 2023

ROBERT LEWIS BAKKE, Dale Bakke's father
Born: April 6, 1934
Died: March 14, 2023

JUNE EHRSAM, Lynda Eicher's aunt
Born: March 16, 1931
Died: March 31, 2023

ETHEL WILLING, Stacy Winkelmann's mother
Born: July 7, 1936
Died: April 11, 2023

STAN GREEN, Lynda Eicher's cousin
Born: November 19, 1949
Died: May 26, 2023

MICHAEL WEISS, Chuck Weiss's brother
Born: March 9, 1956
Died: June 7, 2023

CORDELL NIAY, Donna Ninmann & Bernie Niay's son
Born: April 30, 1993
Died: June 10, 2023

AGNES PIRKEL, Pam Martin's mother
Born: May 21, 1937
Died: July 6, 2023

JOYCE ELAINE ROSS, Pastor Chris Ross's mother
Born: May 15, 1944
Died: July 21, 2023

JACKIE KADINGER, Calvin Edwards' mother
Born: February 23, 1984
Died: August 17, 2023

WILLIAM EVANS, Stacy Winkelmann's uncle
Born: November 16, 1934
Died: October 3, 2023

JAMES ALLEN SCHOBEL, Katie Milella's Uncle
Born: August 28, 1943
Died: October 10, 2023

ISRAEL OSORIO, Osiel Osorio's older brother.
Born: Sept 1, 1965
Died: October 20, 2023

Financial Report– As of October., 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
May	\$17,328	\$22,750	\$18,548	\$23,050	\$22,275	\$28,419	-\$5,369	-\$26,235
June	\$17,328	\$14,455	\$18,548	\$16,958	\$22,275	\$22,571	-\$5,613	-\$31,848
July	\$17,328	\$20,791	\$18,548	\$22,189	\$22,275	\$17,234	\$4,955	-\$26,893
August	\$17,328	\$15,875	\$18,548	\$16,010	\$22,275	\$17,013	-\$1,003	-\$27,896
September	\$17,328	\$12,967	\$18,548	\$13,034	\$22,275	\$21,705	-\$8,671	-\$36,567
October	\$17,328	\$17,170	\$18,548	\$18,230	\$22,275	\$17,494	\$736	-\$35,831

Poinsettia Order Form:

These flowers will be used to beautify the sanctuary for Christmas Eve service.
 . They will be labeled and you will be able to take yours home that evening.

I WOULD LIKE TO ORDER :

Single poinsettia \$20 (5-7 blooms)

____ Standard Red

____ White

____ Pink

____ Marble

Double poinsettia \$40 (10-12 blooms)

____ Standard Red

____ White

____ Pink

____ Marble

“Given in honor/memory of....” (circle one):

Your Name: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____ Check # _____

Make Check payable to 1st Congregational UCC and attach to this
 order. **DEADLINE: Sunday, DECEMBER 10th**

December 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT Communion Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; Sunday School 4:00, Advent Recital 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	4 1 p.m. – Staff meets	5	6	7 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group	8 OFFICE CLOSED	9 10:00 Women's Breakfast at Two Sisters
10 2 ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; Sunday School 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast 11:00 A.M. CONGREGATIONAL MEETING	11	12	13	14 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group	15 OFFICE CLOSED	16
17 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; Sunday School Christmas Program Coffee Fellowship	18 6:30 pm, INTERIM COUNCIL	19 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	20 6:00: Gingerbread Christmas Program	21 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group	22 OFFICE CLOSED	23
24 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; NO Sunday School Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast 7:00: CHRISTMAS EVE Candlelight Service (Communion)	25 Christmas Day OFFICE CLOSED	26 7:00 pm, Gingerbread Board	27	28 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30
31 Watch Night 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; Sunday School Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	January 1 New Year's Day OFFICE CLOSED					

