

The Hilltop Chimes

January 2024

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ross, Pastor
Cell: (920) 838-5630
Email: rev.fatmoses@gmail.com

Church Office hours:
M-TH 10-noon and 1-4
Office Phone/Fax: 920-261-6213

From the Pastor's Desk



In the midst of a transition into a new calendar year, it's always a good time to reflect on where we've been together. Since arriving as your pastor, I have been part of leading two adult education classes: "Saving Jesus" and *The First Paul*.

Chronologically, it makes sense to keep moving forward with this direction. Such a direction takes us beyond the close of the Bible into the realm of church history. Although that may sound abstract, the truth is that looking at history is anything but abstract. A lot has happened in Christianity in the two millennia since the books of the Bible were finished, and much of that history continues to inform who we are today as Christians. In fact, I don't think it's possible to fully appreciate how we interpret scripture, and how the different churches are different, *without* a basic understanding of church history.

So, beginning on January 14, I'll be leading a basic church history class that covers the era between the New Testament and *Crisis in Watertown*. And to help make this class more accessible for folks' schedules, we'll be meeting on Sunday mornings at 8:45 in the office conference room.

Bothering to learn history may be more essential now than ever. We live in a time in which factions in society find studying history to be dangerous. Some voices would rather we not have an understanding of the past. But as followers of the One who proclaimed that truth will set us free (John 8:32), we have inherited a commitment to learning history—even the less pretty parts that may make us comfortable—and thus, become less ignorant. We are called to love God with *mind*, as well as with heart and soul. Certainly, such a commitment includes learning our own history as the Church.

With this new year, why not take advantage of this new adult education opportunity? All are welcome!

--Chris



On January 3, 5-7 p.m., First Congregational UCC will host a smaller group training session with the WISDOM interfaith organizing network. Any lay leaders are welcome. Pizza will be provided.

WISDOM is a statewide network, comprised mainly of faith-based organizations. WISDOM began with Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope's (MICA) founding in 1988. It has now grown to 13 affiliate organizations across the state of Wisconsin from Eau Claire to Kenosha. We work on campaigns fighting for immigrant rights and to correct the narrative around formerly incarcerated individuals, and much more. Our priorities have expanded to include multi-issue work from a faith-based lens as we fight for racial, social and economic justice for all. WISDOM is a proud member of the national [Gamaliel Network](#).

Building a Welcoming Community

Hello, Welcoming Watertown friends,
We look forward to another powerful gathering on **Sunday, January 14 from 12:30-2:30 at the community room in the Watertown Public Library**. We will have a light lunch and continue our training on building the welcoming community that you envision. More information coming closer to the date. Thanks for inviting others! Peace to you.
Pastor Carina Schiltz of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, on behalf of the Welcoming Watertown churches and friends

Moderator's Message:

I enjoy the dark part of the year. It gives me a chance to think through "What happened this year?" And "How did THAT happen?" and "What's next?" All of those statements deserve exclamation marks, also!!!

In the final days of Advent and Christmas we have a lot to be thankful for. We have a new pastor. We have a flourishing preschool and child care center in our church. We have a new constitution. And we're ready to go from an interim church council to a ready to serve post-COVID council.

From our last "Interim" Church Council meeting on the 18th, these things need to be brought to your attention:

Adam Markus and Dale Bakke will be leaving the Interim Council but will be serving in another capacity: They will be forming the Property Oversight and Financial Oversight Committees. We've had trustees in the past and these committees will reestablish this connection with our assets and budgets and make our investments work for us, as well as keeping our beautiful church building secure and strong. If you are willing to share your expertise on building and financial matters, please contact Dale or Adam!

Mindy Markus and Jennifer Rhodes will be replacing them on the Church Council. Welcome!

After the Congregational Meeting on December 10th, Jim Ortega notified me that he would take on the role of Vice-Moderator. Thank you, Jim! Please thank these three people if you see them for taking these jobs on. We'll vote on his nomination as Vice Moderator at the Annual Meeting.

Some quick notes that will hopefully be found elsewhere in the Chimes:

- January Loose Coin will be going to Watertown High School's Gosling Nest – a food and personal items bank at the High School. (See article within the Chimes.)
- February 11 will be the Chili Cookoff along with the Annual Meeting (and also the Super Bowl).
- A Mallards game is being planned for this summer.

Always another plea for people to **fill out their Time and Talent Sheets** (available in the narthex, if you don't still have the one that was sent to you). Only 13 people have done so thus far.

I can't believe a full year in my office as Moderator is over. It is unbelievable how supportive and cooperative our congregation is. We are at a very good place now. Something that we can be very thankful for.

Serving in the Christ-Spirit,

Tom Rusch

"Watertown Health Equity Workshop: Building a Healthy Community for All"

Organized by Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice along with local community partners.

Sunday, February 4th: from 12-4:30 at Ebenezer Moravian Church. (N8095 High Rd, Watertown,

All are encouraged to attend.

Basic Church History Study begins Sunday, January 14th

As mentioned earlier, Chris will be leading a basic church history class that covers the era between the New Testament and *Crisis in Watertown*. And to help make this class more accessible for folks' schedules, we'll be meeting on Sunday mornings at 8:45 in the office conference room.

Questions/more details: check in with Chris

Cell: (920) 838-5630

Email: rev.fatmoses@gmail.com

Women's Fellowship Breakfast – January 13th

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, January 9th 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.





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 coffee fellowship; those who served as ushers and Liturgists. The money counters who took careful care of the offerings

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 accept singers at any time during the choir season.

Thank you to Laura Yurs who played flute with the choir on December 3rd, Saedra Fremont who was our soloist on the December 24th a.m. service, and of course, to Tom Rusch who continued his faithful playing as both service musician and choir accompanist.

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



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3rd- The 21st Annual Advent Recital was held Sunday, December 3rd in our sanctuary. I would like to thank our performers, Evan and Max Chowanec, Bill and Juanita Edington, Charly Ladwig, Erin Lynch, Tess Mueller, James, Jennie, and Jim Ortega, Tom Rusch, Briar Wegner, Laura Yurs, Eliza and Penelope Zabel, and the Rock River Woodwind Quintet: Chris Curran, Vicki Daniels, Erin Lynch, Zachary Oster, and Pamela Whitcomb.

A reception followed the recital and thanks go to all who contributed in some way: Sue Harms was our organizer; Sue Harms, Vivian Howard and Barb Weiss did setup and cleanup. Ellen Brown, Juanita Edington, Sue Harms, Vivian Howard, Jennie Ortega, Jennifer Rhodes, and Barb Weiss provided goodies.

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

Annual Christmas Program



Front Row: Melissa Mattke, Charly Ladwig, Amos, Laura Yurs, Saedra Fremont, Amorie Livermore and Juanita Edington. Back Row: Emily, Jennie Ortega, Alicia Asher & Lexy Davis, Fran Milburn, Lee Buescher, Jim Ortega, Karen Siegel, James Ortega.

Our intergenerational Christmas program was a hit! We had "The Best Mom Ever" Mary headbands and the ever-dapper Joseph top hat along with the world's finest sheep herding shepherds. Let's not forget Amos, the biggest and hairiest star! We laughed and best of all remembered the true meaning of Christmas with our family and friends!

"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

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.

Acolytes: The purpose of candle lighting is to "bring the light of the Holy spirit" into our 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.

If you are interested , please contact Laurel at lbentz@firstcongwtn.org .

Videographer: We record each service and are looking to expand our recorders. The 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. Thanks.

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

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Servers are needed each Sunday 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.**



Growth is continuing to happen at Gingerbread. We had our Holiday program and Open House 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



From the Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries

SUNDAY SCHOOL: We are continuing to meet on Sundays! We have been enjoying some inspiring conversations.

YOUTH GROUP: We will meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month in the youth room at 6pm! Come for food and fun!

Wednesday, January 17th 6:00 p.m.



January's Loose Coin:

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.

From a past article, it was stated that one out of every three Watertown students was currently experiencing food hardship, meaning their family can't always afford the food they need.

A recent email from the administrators stated that "...we can always use shelf stable foods for teenagers, easy to make meals for them (although we have tons of mac and cheese at this moment). We can always use teen friendly items like liquid shower soap and loofahs, deodorant. We currently need masculine scented liquid shower soap. Students also need items for home (such as laundry detergent, hand soap)."

Please make every effort to contribute funds or goods as you can. We'll also put out a box by the Watertown Food Pantry shopping cart for items you might want to directly give to the Nest.

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

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

Partnering for Mission and Giving:
An Opportunity to Help Your
Community!!

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 WATERTOWN FOOD PANTRY

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.

OFFERING ENVELOPES or EFT

Envelopes for 2024: Using envelopes benefits the volunteer counters when they prepare the bank deposit. If you have used the mailable envelopes in the past or would like to use them in 2023 we have a box at church for you.

BOOK OF LIFE

January Birthdays



| | |
|------------------|-------|
| 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 |

Christmas Poinsettia Memorial and Dedications

The Christmas Eve Poinsettias were provided by:

- * Lee Buescher, in memory of the Buescher loved ones
- * Bill & Juanita Edington, in honor of our children and grandchildren.
- * Laurel W Bentz, in memory of my brother Paul Welbourne
- * Lynda Eicher, in memory of my parents, John & Helen Eicher.
- * Diane Koch, in memory of Dean Koch
- * Fran Milburn, in memory of Milburn and Grimsrud loved ones.
- * Irene Neitzel, Diane and Paul, in memory of Neal Neitzel
- * Jennie Ortega, in honor of Erin Lynch, Kelsey Johnson, Emily Savides, Marissa Abbott, Bella Reichardt, Lily Kulick, Sophie Mattke and Charly Ladwig.
- * Cindy Stockhus, in honor of my sons: Mark and Tyler.
- * Chris Ross & Laura Yurs, in memory of Joyce Ross.
- * Norm & Joyce Uglow, in honor of our grandchildren Charley and Hayden.

Financial Updates - GENERAL FUND November 30, 2023

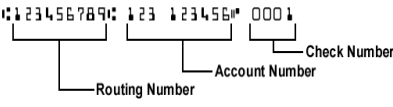
| 2023 | BUDGETED CONTRIBUTIONS | ACTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS | BUDGETED TOTAL INCOME | ACTUAL TOTAL INCOME | BUDGETED EXPENSES | ACTUAL EXPENSES | MONTH GAIN OR LOSS | YEAR GAIN OR LOSS |
|-----------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 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 |
| 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 |
| November | \$17,328 | \$21,377 | \$18,548 | \$23,969 | \$22,275 | \$17,322 | \$6,647 | -\$29,184 |

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 2024

| 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://firstcongwtnn.org/ | | | | | | | |
| Sunday, December 31 10:00 a.m. Watch Night service Coffee Fellowship | 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Office Closed | 2 | 3 5-7:00: WISDOM group training session (lay leaders welcome) | 4 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group | 5 OFFICE CLOSED | 6 EPIPHANY | |
| 7 Baptism of Christ Communion Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; Sunday School 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast | 8 1 :00 p.m. Staff meets 6:30 pm, COUNCIL | 9 | 10 | 11 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group | 12 OFFICE CLOSED | 13 10 a.m.: Womens' Breakfast at Two Sisters | |
| 14 8:45 a.m. – Church History Study 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; Sunday School Coffee Fellowship 12:30-2:30 Welcoming Wttn Group at Public Library 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast | 15 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY | 16 | 17 6:00, Youth Group <div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Annual Report DEADLINE</div> | 18 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group | 19 OFFICE CLOSED | 20 | |
| 21 8:45 a.m. – Church History Study 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; Sunday School Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast | 22 1:30 Rainmaker Committee | 23 7:00, Gingerbread Board meets | 24 <div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Newsletter Deadline</div> | 25 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast 6:30-7:00 – Meditation Group | 26 OFFICE CLOSED | 27 | |
| 28 8:45 a.m. – Church History Study 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; Sunday School Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast | 29 | 30 | | LOOKING AHEAD: The Congregational Annual Meeting will be held Sunday February 11 th at 11 a.m. | | | |

