



The Hilltop Chimes

March 2024

First Congregational United Church of Christ
120 Kuckkan Lane Watertown, WI 53094
Rev. Dr. Christopher Ross, Pastor

Church Office: Hours: M-TH 10-noon and 1-4
Office Phone/Fax: 920-261-6213
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****Please call with pastoral care needs.**
Email: rev.fatmoses@gmail.com



From the Pastor's Desk

Growing up, I often heard how March "comes in like a lion, but goes out like a lamb." While I'm not qualified to make weather predictions, the calendar does show this March to be quite the month.

The start of March marks my first anniversary serving with you at First Congregational UCC of Watertown. Can you believe it's been a year? It remains a pleasure (and a privilege) to serve among you.

But the month of March has bigger things in store. Saint Patrick's Day—March 17—falls on a Sunday this year, and so we'll be holding a Celtic-style worship service that day. Feel free to dress for the occasion!

The following Sunday—March 24—is Palm Sunday this year and ushers in Holy Week. On Wednesday evenings this Lent, we've been hearing a day-by-day account of that week using Mark's Gospel. Hopefully, these midweek evening services have prepared us to better appreciate this year's Holy Week, which will again include a Tenebrae worship with Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday evening and an afternoon service on Good Friday.

This year's Easter breakfast will find itself sandwiched between a new sunrise service (that will conclude this year's Lenten series) scheduled for 6:30 a.m. and our regular 10 a.m. Easter worship that will also include Communion.

As with all our worship and programming, all our welcome. It's a great time to come and share this very busy month with us.

Social Justice Team to be Formed

As you may be aware, last fall, First Congregational UCC and three other congregations in the Watertown area began offering joint programming that consisted of a series of Sunday afternoon sessions (usually once a month) at the public library called "Building a Welcoming Watertown." These sessions were co-hosted by the four pastors but also featured keynote speakers from the WISDOM statewide interfaith organizing network (<https://wisdomwisconsin.org/>).

As a result of these sessions, a group attending from First Congregational began wondering if our congregation should form a Social Justice Team. At its February meeting, our Church Council approved this new Team. We have scheduled our first meeting for **Sunday, March 3 at 11:30 a.m.** (during the last part of fellowship time following Sunday worship).

You are invited to join us! We are just getting started and are looking for interested folks and possible ideas. If you know of others who might be interested, please extend this invitation to them as well! Although serving as a witness of an inclusive Christianity that lives in direct contrast against Christian nationalism is part of what has brought together, we are looking at getting involved in many areas. Here is one resource that could help get us started: <https://www.wcucc.org/justice-ministries/>

If you're interested in joining this new Team or just want to check us out, we look forward to seeing you on March 3. Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions.

Moderator's Message

Our large church refrigerator became even warmer than the Winter of 2024! Its compressor failed. Adam Marcus researched the possibilities of "repair or replace." After discussion (and knowing the appliance was more than 20 years old) the Council decided to replace it. After looking at different brands and companies to supply and service a new refrigerator, a likely candidate was suggested and approved. The new machine was delivered on Wednesday morning, February 21st. The money to pay for it is coming from the Special Purchases Memorial Fund. Thank you, Adam, for coming through for us again.

Our Bridge-Builders team has been attending workshops that you probably have heard mentioned in announcements. We've met three times as a large ecumenical group on Sunday afternoons at the Watertown Public Library and has been named for our initial purposes "Building a Welcoming Watertown." We have had fellowship with three other churches, and we worked on interviewing skills. But we (at the First Congregation) felt a bit awkward with the process. The interviewing for us seemed a bit forced and felt we'd make others feel uncomfortable. Not "welcoming!" Jennifer Bakke spent a whole week interviewing participants of the group to see what direction we might go. The decision was to work with the other churches as we can, but we would like to work as a Social Justice Team and determine our own methodology and goals. All (I mean all!) are welcome! The Church Council officially recognized The Social Justice Team at its meeting. We'll have our kick-off after fellowship on Sunday, March 3.

The Rainmaker Committee (Jim Ortega, Sue Harms, Laurel Bentz) has been working diligently to develop a philosophy to take care of the large anonymous donation given to us a couple of years ago. From their draft statement (with slight editing for here):

Our Rainmaker Fund is intended to support the spiritual, social, and economic needs of those who call Watertown and the surrounding

community home ... and to support new and innovative projects in any area of our congregation and perhaps, in time, invest in the wider community.

The committee has also developed an application for funding. If you have an idea to improve our church and serving its mission, please contact one of the members for details.

Replacing Norm Hurtubise on Council. After no reply at the Annual Meeting for a plea to find someone to take Norm's place on the Council after his passing, three people have come forward! Thank you three for stepping forward. The Council is happy to welcome Bill Edington for the last ten months of Norm's term. Norm's specialty was bringing up sanctuary and worship concerns. Bill is also the guy to turn to for such responsibilities. As well, the Council officially welcomed Pam Martin as a member of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee.

One last note: Two choirs from Watertown High School will be performing in our sanctuary on Tuesday, March 19th in the evening. It is a great way for them to share their talents and music and a great way for us to share our facility with the community. Hopefully you can come and enjoy it!

Serving in the Christ-Spirit, *Tom*

Basic Church History Study Sundays at 8:45 a.m.

Adult Sunday School continues in March. Chris is 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 meet 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



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 accept singers at any time during the choir season. During March we will sing on Mar. 3, 10, 17, Maundy Thursday, Mar. 28, and Easter Sunday, Mar. 31.

Choir will not rehearse or sing on March 24 (Palm Sunday) due to my being out of town.

The choir has two responsibilities in the service, one is serving as leading voices for congregational singing and the second is to share a musical rendering of scripture or focus of the service in the form of an anthem.

Thank you to Cooper Wood who played piano for the service on February 11, and to Tom Rusch who continued his faithful playing as both service musician and choir accompanist for the remaining February services.

Looking Deeper into the Music

The choir recently sang "We Walk in Love" as an anthem, but it came out of the recent collection named the "Justice Choir Songbook." I thought that I would share some insight into the composition from the composer herself:

Reflections on "We Walk in Love" from Deanna Witkowski:

"In early 2017, I responded to a call for scores for a new collection of social justice songs being curated by Abbie Betinis, Tesfa Wondemagegnhehu, and Ahmed Anzaldúa. The songs to be selected as part of a new movement called Justice Choir would be offered free of charge for anyone to sing for non-commercial

use: at concerts, marches, protests, and in houses of worship.

The idea was to have accessible, easy-to-learn songs that speak into the moment that we are living in now, and to provide opportunities for all to create community by singing together. When I saw a Facebook post from Abbie about the call for scores, I immediately responded by sitting down at the piano. I wrote and harmonized a simple tune in 3/4- not rangy, no big jumps, something that everyone could sing.

Next, I went to my living room couch with a large sketchbook on my lap. I started writing lists of nouns: "love, purpose, voice, compassion, truth, bridge, justice, kindness." Then I pulled out the text to James Weldon Johnson's hymn, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," and started adding more nouns: "hope, faith." I began a list of verbs: "dream, stand, fight, cry, walk, join, speak."

My boyfriend sat with me when I got stuck on a phrase or two and contributed to the lyric. We sang the three verses to each other multiple times before I returned to the piano and recorded myself singing and playing the song, "We Walk in Love."

Juanita Edington
c.920-988-2416/h.206-6111
jaemusiclover@gmail.com

Women's Fellowship Breakfast

–Saturday, March 16th

Join us Saturday, March 16th 10 a.m. at Two Sisters, (1300 Memorial Drive, Wttn).

All are invited and, as always... Invite a Friend! We order from the menu.

This month we meet on the 3rd Saturday. We ask for your RSVP by Wednesday, March 13^h 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. RSVP – Sign up sheet on Narthex table

lbentz@firstcongwtn.org
920-261-6213





Easter Breakfast Sunday, March 31st

It's time to begin planning for Holy Week and Easter. In past years, the Easter breakfast has often been provided by Confirmands, their mentors, and their parents.

However, this year, we're moving away from that tradition and opening it up to anyone who would like to take on the planning and oversight of this project. Council member, Jennifer Rhodes and her sister, Jill Rhodes have stepped forward to take on this task.

The breakfast will be served starting at 8 a.m. (between the 6:30 Sunrise service and the 10 a.m. Easter service.)

There will be opportunities to help: providing ingredients for the baked dishes, being a kitchen crew helper, with table setting and cleaning up afterwards.

If you'd like to help lead this year's Easter breakfast please look for the Sign Up Sheets on Sunday mornings. Or contact Laurel in the church office.. Thank you!



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.



We are planning for summer! Enrollment, themes and classroom planning are all in the works. This last month we talked about pets, Valentine's Day and dental health. If you are interested in coming in to read a book or direct a project, please let us know. We are also looking for someone that would be interested in helping in the kitchen on days that our cook isn't available.

Please let us know if you are interested! Thank you for your continued support.

Gingerbread Phone: 920-261-9727

Email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com

Website: www.gingerbreadchildcare.com

From the Coordinator
of Children and
Youth Ministries



Melissa Mattke

Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries

mmattke@firstcongwtn.org 920-261-6213

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

Sunday School:

We have been continuing to meet on Sundays (except for Communion Sunday) during the service. Sometimes we have a fun lesson and sometimes we just chat about our lives. Either way we are sharing our love for each other and always pray about how we can share that love with others!

Youth Group:

After Easter, in the Spring! We will then begin to meet again on the 3rd Wednesday of each month in the youth room at 6pm! Come for food and fun!

Watch for more details!!



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

By the grace of God, all of us have the power to give, and the gifts we give make the world more the way God intended it to be – a place

where everyone has what they need. Together, we can achieve a fair balance in our world by giving back to God what God has so richly bestowed upon us.

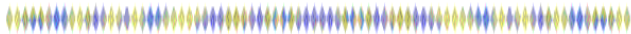
One Great Hour of Sharing provides support for health, education, agricultural and emergency relief initiatives in 138 countries by working with local, national, and global partners.

During the month of March, will you give to One Great Hour of Sharing .

Learn more:

<https://youtu.be/OlCHXc0kiQM>

March Loose Coin: OGHS



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.



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.



Sunday, March 10th

How to Join Us for Worship

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

Book of Life



On February 27, First Congregational United Church of Christ of Watertown hosted leaders from Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice, the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, WISDOM, the Wisconsin Council of Churches, and the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ for a "Creating Beloved Community" retreat.

Pictured left to right: are Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, *Executive Director of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice*; Ahmed Quereshi, *Executive Director of the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee*; Pastor Chris; the Rev. Breanna Illene from *the Wisconsin Council of Churches*; David Liners, *Executive Director of WISDOM*; Rachel Saladis from *the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ* and the Rev. Kerri Parker, *Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches*.

March Birthdays

- 3/1 Ellen Brown
- 3/4 Kristi Scheunemann
- 3/4 Laura Yurs
- 3/4 Jovito Tomaneng
- 3/5 Audrey Wolter
- 3/6 Grady Fremont
- 3/11 Thomas Derleth
- 3/11 Thomas Rusch
- 3/14 Savannah Buss
- 3/20 Barbara Weiss
- 3/24 Donna King
- 3/25 John Lemke
- 3/25 Hannah Smith
- 3/26 Jami Zabel
- 3/26 Olivia Mattke
- 3/27 Florence Bingner
- 3/28 Liam Matthews
- 3/28 Aurora Pauli
- 3/31 Doug Budewitz

Wednesday Evening Worship

Reminder: Lenten worship services continue each Wednesday leading up to Holy Week. Our gathering last approximately thirty minutes. Each of these services will begin at 7 p.m. (There will be no Wednesday evening service during Holy Week.)

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, March 24th: 10 a.m. Worship

Maundy Thursday, March 28: 7:00 Service of Tenebrae and Communion

Good Friday, March 29th: 3:00 Worship at our church

Easter Sunday, March 31st: 6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service; 8 a.m. Easter Breakfast followed by 10 a.m. Worship and Communion

Financial Update – General Fund 1/30/2024

2024	BUDGETED CONTRIBUTIONS	ACTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	BUDGETED TOTAL INCOME	ACTUAL TOTAL INCOME	BUDGETED EXPENSES	ACTUAL EXPENSES	MONTH GAIN OR LOSS	YEAR GAIN OR LOSS
January	\$19,604	\$16,475	\$20,579	\$17,588	\$22,889	\$19,558	-\$1,970	-\$1,970

March 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 OFFICE CLOSED	2
3 8:45 a.m. – Church History Study 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; Sunday School 11:30 – Social Justice Team 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	4 1 p.m. Staff meets	5	6 7:00-7:30 Lenten Worship Service	7 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	8 OFFICE CLOSED	9
10 Daylight Savings Begins! 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	11	12	13 7:00-7:30 Lenten Worship Service	14 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	15 OFFICE CLOSED	16 10 a.m.: Womens' Breakfast at Two Sisters
17 St. Patrick's Day 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	18 6:30, Council	19 7 p.m. WHS Choral Concert	20 7:00-7:30 Lenten Worship Service NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	22 OFFICE CLOSED	23
24 Palm Sunday 8:45 a.m. – Church History Study NO Sr. Choir 10:00 - WORSHIP; Sunday School Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	25	26 7:00, Gingerbread Board TBD	27	28 Maundy Thursday 7:00 – Service of Tenebrae, Communion 6:30, Sr. Choir rehearses	29 Good Friday 3:00 Service	30 Holy Saturday
31 Easter Sunday 6:30 a.m. – Sunrise Service 8:45 a.m. – Church History Study 8:00 A.M.-EASTER BREAKFAST 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir 10:00 – WORSHIP; Communion NO Sunday School; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast				Loose Coin Offering UCC One Great Hour of Sharing https://youtu.be/OlCHXc0kiQM		