

The Hilltop Chimes

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

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ross, Pastor

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September 2024



From the Pastor's Desk

Summer vacation—if you happened to have one—has flown by us. The Olympians have all finished their events and returned home. The political party conventions have wrapped up their business. School begins this

month. It's official: fall has arrived and a new program year has begun to unfold.

This fall will certainly bring its own busyness—not just getting back into the gear of regular life, not just the routine seasonal activities, not just preparing for cooler weather—but an important decision for our republic. There will be no way this fall to ignore the reality that we find ourselves in the final stretch of an election season.

A lot of religious terminology and claims of Christian identity have been invoked by politicians and political movements in our contemporary era. Although some may think that religion has nothing to do with politics, I don't know anyone who truly believes that, and I think our current campaign cycles have made such a claim impossible.

But the truth is such a claim on the division of faith and public life has never been accurate. Christian teaching has always had bearing on social ethics, which includes how we engage political structures. In other words, our Christian discipleship has always had something to say—and should still inform—our political values. Unfortunately, what complicates these dynamics even more is that those who promote the idea of faith-formed politics most loudly in our society

seem to be the *least* informed about biblical content and Christian values.

As a congregation from a Christian tradition that values both intellectually infused faith exploration and justice-based social engagement, we are called to take part in—and serve as an example of—a discipleship of higher political discourse. To help equip us for such discipleship, I will be offering a six-week class on “Adult Christian Civics” on Tuesday evenings, starting this month. (Please see accompanying article.)

May we start this autumn season reflecting how we can re-commit our discipleship to loving God with all our hearts *and minds* and *loving our neighbors* as ourselves.

—Chris

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Pastor's Study Group
NEW CLASS ON TUESDAY EVENINGS:
“Adult Christian Civics”

Unless you've been living under a rock, you know we find ourselves in the middle of a major election season. The national party conventions have met, debate schedules are being negotiated, and we will select a new president and vice-president in November. We will also cast our vote for one of Wisconsin's U.S. Senate seats as well as our member of Congress. In addition, we'll be deciding state legislative seats and other local offices. Make no mistake, there will be much on our November ballots.

(continued →)

("Pastor's Study" continued...)

You are also likely aware of this congregation's commitment to put our faith into action, that our understanding of discipleship informs our interactions with the public square. And scripture shows us time and again how although we are not to be partisan, Jesus and the early church are certainly called to engagement with political forces.

This season creates an opportunity to think together about how our faith lives and our political choices intersect. Beginning September 10, we will gather for six weeks on Tuesday evenings at 6 for our next adult education programming. We will be drawing on the Wisconsin Council of Churches' study guide called *"Jesus and Justice in Public."*

But we won't be doing classroom learning alone. Watertown's Common Council also meets on two Tuesday evenings a month. So, for three of our sessions (September 17, October 1, and October 15), we will end class by traveling to city hall and attending meetings of our local government, perhaps applying what we're learning and making observations for our next session together.

Although our class will end on October 15, our "final exam" will be held on Tuesday, November 5 as we seek to put our discipleship commitments into place when we make political choices for the common good.



Renewal Project of the Gaston Memorial Flower Garden.

We will be starting the process to rejuvenate our raised flower bed by the entrance to the Narthex (the Gaston Memorial Flower Garden). The cement blocks that hold the beds have succumbed to our Wisconsin weather with its freezing and thawing and the use of salt. We have a contractor scheduled to arrive in late September to rebuild a new foundation and walls with a stairwell to more easily access the flower beds.

To prepare for this, the current plants will be cut back in the very near future to remove as many weeds as possible. We will use a heavy weed barrier to try to control the weeds after the new wall is in place and are planning to place more perennials in the bed with a bark mulch to minimize maintenance requirements.

If there are any flowers in the current bed that you would like to save please leave a message to Dale.Bakke@Live.com or one of the members of the Property Oversight Committee prior to Labor Day weekend.

We look forward to getting the new flower bed's foundation laid this fall!

Blessing of Animals



Outdoor Worship on the Ruth Christensen Memorial Patio

On September 22, to help celebrate the beginning of the autumn season, we will be holding worship outdoors on the church patio. You are invited to bring your non-human family members, as the service will include a Blessing of the Pets! Please see Chris if you have any questions.



Notes from the Music Director

We have just a couple of slots to fill for special music this summer-September 1 and 8, so please contact me if you are interested and available. We need to know at least a week in advance to adequately prepare hymn selection. This music can be instrumental or vocal. Thanks in advance!

Thank you to Evan Chowanec, Kristin Chowanec, and Saedra Fremont who provided special music selections and to Sue Weihert, Cooper Wood and Tom Rusch who contributed as service musicians and/or accompanists for the August services.

Senior Choir-will have their first rehearsal on September 8th at 9:00 a.m. We will rehearse and sing in service almost weekly, but there will be some pre-planned days off. I'm looking forward to sharing some new music from national conference for our small, but mighty, choir.



Tech Opportunities

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.

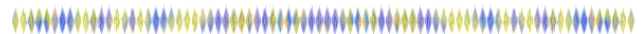
Please contact me if you are interested and when you are available. Training is available. Thanks.

Thank you to Bill Edington and Pamela Martin who recorded during August.

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

How to Join Us for Worship

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



From the Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries



SUNDAY SCHOOL: Ages Preschool - grade 5

Registration will begin on September 8th! Our first day of Sunday School will be September 29th. If you are interested in teaching Sunday School, please see me. I would like to set up a rotation for teachers.

YOUTH GROUP: Middle School and High School

If you are interested in participating in Youth Group, please let me know! We would be meeting on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings, or Sundays after church.

Melissa Mattke
Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries
iosc.mom@hotmail.com 262-719-1383



This has been an exciting summer! All of our rooms are full of laughter (and crying)! We have 70-80 friends here every day! Thank you all for your continued support! If you ever want to come and read a story to our friends, please contact me and we will set up a time for you to do that!

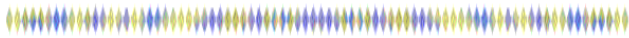
Our toddler playground is almost completed! Come check it out! As summer is coming to a close, we are registering for the Fall. Please feel free to share that we are enrolling for ages 3-13 beginning in September.

If you would like to donate here is our current "wish list": Walmart or Piggly Wiggly gift cards, 100% juice, white paper, and paper plates.

---Melissa Mattke, Director

Gingerbread Phone: 920-261-9727

Email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com Website: www.gingerbreadchildcare.com



First Congregational UCC-Watertown

BLOOD DRIVE

Thursday, September 5th

1:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Fellowship Hall

120 Kuckkan Lane
Watertown, WI

30 available spots!



Sign up with the QR code, tinyurl.com/firstuccsept5, or call 877-232-4376!

\$20 e-gift card

As a thank you, all attempting donors with a valid email address will receive a \$20 e-gift card.



Or contact me or 262-719-1383
[josc.mom@hotmail.com/](mailto:josc.mom@hotmail.com)

MENTAL HEALTH JUSTICE FOR ALL

Mental health is
a universal
human
Right

"God will not falter or lose heart until
justice prevails throughout the earth."
(Isaiah 42:9)

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
NEIGHBORS IN NEED 2024
ucc.org/nin



Special UCC Mission Offering

What is the "Neighbors in Need" special mission offering?

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice.

Who participates in Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering?

Anyone can give a donation by contributing to the Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering (NIN SMO) either through their congregation's annual collection drive or anytime online at ucc.org/nin.

How is the offering used?

Through this offering we express our deep commitment to reaching out and touching our neighbors with justice and compassion. This allows us to speak prophetically to those in power and to advocate for a society where all people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. In the spirit of Christ, we will seek to confront evil in the world and to alleviate suffering. We will do this through direct service as well as advocacy.



Book of Life

✝ Passing: *Arlene Bennett*, passed away on Friday, August 9 2024. Please hold her family in your prayers.

September Birthdays

- 09/01 Colette Kuehl
- 09/02 Karla Bakke
- 09/04 Carol Yager
- 09/05 Kristin Chowanec
- 09/06 Lori Schwager
- 09/09 Norm Uglow
- 09/18 Keegan Behlke
- 09/20 Dale Bakke
- 09/20 Owen Behlke
- 09/22 Daryll Boettcher
- 09/23 Josie Mack
- 09/23 Tyler Chowanec
- 09/24 Constance Swenson
- 09/25 Reed Larson
- 09/25 Carlee Winkelman
- 09/27 Alexia Asher
- 09/30 Jennifer Rhodes
- 09/30 Brody Wood

From Howard & Jeanne Bowman

"1st. Congregational UCC Friends: Our sojourn in Watertown has been brief and transitory. Shortly after arriving here a year ago, we discerned that we needed to move to Cedar Ridge Community (UCC) in West Bend seeking a closer match for our needs as we move into our older years. Pastor Chris, Moderator Tom and so many of you have been a bright light for us as we struggled with where we need to be. You truly live out your mission, including your willingness to risk in recently hosting Pridefest. Despite our minimal involvement, you extended to us an extravagant welcome and acceptance. You all are special and are a gift we will carry with us. "

Long time members, Louise and Jack Lemke have moved to Port Washington to be nearer to family. Their new address is 1300 W. Lincoln Ave #214; Port Washington WI 53174

POSTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Church council meets each month and the minutes from meetings will be posted on the bulletin board in the office area hallway. If you have questions or concerns please feel free to speak with our Moderator, Tom Rusch


NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

In order to get this church communication out and in people's hands before the 1st of the month. These are the new deadlines:
Sept 23 for Oct newsletter

Financial Report from the Trustees – As of July 31, 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	\$15,875	\$20,579	\$17,588	\$22,889	\$19,538	-\$1,950	-\$1,950
February	\$19,604	\$15,095	\$20,579	\$15,620	\$22,890	\$26,020	-\$10,400	-\$12,350
March	\$19,604	\$22,442	\$20,579	\$23,077	\$22,890	\$20,900	\$2,177	-\$10,173
April	\$19,604	\$21,334	\$20,579	\$22,153	\$22,889	\$18,755	\$3,398	-\$6,775
May	\$19,604	\$16,679	\$20,579	\$16,907	\$22,890	\$21,817	-\$4,910	-\$11,685
June	\$19,604	\$19,959	\$20,579	\$22,527	\$22,890	\$35,378	-\$12,851	-\$24,536
July	\$19,604	\$16,513	\$20,579	\$17,719	\$22,890	\$17,409	\$310	-\$24,226

September 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Communion Sunday 10:00 – WORSHIP Guest Minister, Rev. Tom Payden Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	2 LABOR DAY OFFICE CLOSED	3 Pastor returns from vacation	4	5 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast BLOOD DRIVE 1-6:00 in Fellowship Hall	6 OFFICE CLOSED	7
8 Rally Day 9 a.m. Sr.Choir rehearses 10:00 – WORSHIP, Sunday School Registration. Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	9 1:00, Staff meets	10 6:00 p.m.- Adult Christian Civics	11 5:00, Hospitality Committee meets at the Globe Apts.	12 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	13 OFFICE CLOSED	14
15 9 a.m. Sr.Choir rehearses 10:00 - WORSHIP Coffee Fellowship 11:30- Social Justice Team 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	16 TBD 6:30 pm, COUNCIL	17 6:00 p.m.- Adult Christian Civics	18	19 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	20 OFFICE CLOSED	21
22 9 a.m. Sr.Choir rehearses 10:00 – OUTDOOR WORSHIP on the Patio w/ Blessings of the Pets! Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	23 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	24 6:00 p.m.- Adult Christian Civics	25	26 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28
29 Christian Education Sunday 9 a.m. Sr.Choir rehearses 9a.m. Sunday School begins 10:00 - WORSHIP Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	30 1:30, Rainmaker Committee meets			<div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; font-size: small;">MENTAL HEALTH JUSTICE FOR ALL</p> <p style="font-size: x-large; color: multi;">Mental health is a universal human Right</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; color: gray;">"God will not falter or lose heart until justice prevails throughout the earth." <small>(Isaiah 42:34)</small></p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; color: gray;">UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEIGHBORS IN NEED 2024 ucc.org/nn</p> </div>		