



The Hilltop Chimes

First Congregational United Church of Christ
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November 2024



From the Pastor's Desk

We've finally arrived at the month news pundits have been anticipating. In case you need a reminder, Election Day is Tuesday, November 5. That makes it a good time to offer the reminder that, yes, political engagement is part of Christian discipleship.

At the center of Jesus' teaching was his absolute commitment to the Kingdom of God. This phrase is full of meaning, including political meaning. Political doesn't necessarily mean partisan, of course; it doesn't have to have anything to do with what party you support. To proclaim the sovereignty of God—as Jesus did in word and deed—means to deny sovereignty to the empires of this world. As I've heard one colleague remark, you can't make the gospel political, because it already is.

Understanding Jesus' actions to include a political aspect shouldn't surprise us. His own religious tradition—the Judaism of the Law and the Prophets we find in the Hebrew Scriptures—is also grounded in stories of a real-world, political nature. For Moses as leader of a slave rebellion to declare to the Pharaoh of Egypt, "Let my people go!" was a political act. When prophets like Amos declare, "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (5:24), those words follow a withering criticism of those seeking spirituality without social justice. Our entire Bible is rife with a

political side to the spiritual life due to God's continuous demands for justice.

Our own religious tradition in the United Church of Christ also shows a long and deep commitment to social justice. It was a Pennsylvania congregation of the German Reformed heritage that took the political risk to hide the Liberty Bell under its floorboards, to keep the British from melting it down during the Revolutionary War. Countless Congregationalists were committed to the anti-slavery abolitionist cause (remembering Moses, of course), lighting the political spark that led to the U.S. Civil War. And German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a minister of the German Evangelical Church, was a leader in the Confessional Church resistance movement and was executed by Nazis for what he believed to be his Christian convictions.

Let's remember in and out of election season that our biblical values are to guide us in all areas of our lives. Scripture is clear: we are to love enemies and stand against cruelty (Lk. 6:27; Heb. 13:3), we are to work for lasting peace and resist war-mongering (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3; Mt. 5:9; Lk. 6:29), we are to care for the goodness of God's creation (Gen. 1:31; Gen. 9:16), we are always to lift up the poor as our first economic priority (Isa. 58; Lk. 1), we are to welcome the stranger (Lev. 19:34; Deut. 10:19; Mt. 25:35; Rom. 12:13), and we as Christ's Body are to break down dividing walls (Eph. 2:14). The Bible does not allow us to scapegoat entire peoples, including foreigners and strangers in our land. These are Christian values regardless of any partisan affiliations.

(From the Pastor's Desk continued...)

The constant biblical call for social justice means that our morals must always have a social dimension. Christian morality is concerned for the good of all. That also means our values inform even our political priorities. Just as we cannot separate morality from Christian faith, neither can we remove social justice concerns from authentic discipleship.

As Jesus reminds us of the Great Commandment, there's a second part after "Love your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and might," and that's to "love your neighbor as yourself." Our Christian identity doesn't cease when we step outside the church door; in fact, out in the world is exactly where we're called to live it out. That's what discipleship is, and it's always political.

-Chris

CONSECRATION SUNDAY
Sunday, November 17th

Once again we will gather in gratitude to dedicate our Estimates of giving for 2025 during worship.

Watch for messages from our leadership and make plans to be here that morning to turn in your form.

The Rainmaker Fund

What is the Rainmaker Fund?

Well, it is a sum of money that was generously gifted to our Church several years ago (pre-COVID -19), and now we are finally ready to put it to good use!

As you all know, we have changed the way that we govern our Church — we no longer have Boards, so that means we don't even have an established /focused "Mission Board". Instead, we now rely on our devoted members to accomplish Church business through committees. AND, we have established one such committee: the Rainmaker Committee to review requests for money to be used from the Rainmaker Fund.

That committee consists of Sue Harms (through Dec 2025), Laurel Bentz (through Dec 2026), and Jim Ortega (through Dec 2024), along with guidance from Pastor Chris and our Moderator, Tom Rusch (through Dec 2024)! We review the applications and make recommendations to Church Council, which has the final say!

So, if a church member has an idea for a mission-oriented project within our church that they are passionate about! ...A good idea that they are interested in (and willing) to organize, then That church member can complete an application form, and put forward a proposal to see if their project might qualify for some of the Rainmaker Fund to help finance part of that worthy project!

Keep in mind projects need to be specifically for OUR church, for our members. We're not ready, or able to fund outside projects quite yet. Maybe someday!

The application forms can be found on the central table in the narthex, or in the Church Office. Please return completed applications to a committee member, the moderator, the Pastor or to the church office.

And we hope ideas from our congregation members will flow like (a refreshing) rain!

-Jim Ortega



Melissa Mattke

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

Sunday School:- Sunday School has started and we have had a few meetings. Our groups may be small, but we do have fun! We have talked about what we can pray about and what is the right way to pray...oh ya..there isn't a right way to pray!!!

We will continue to meet on Sundays before the worship service. Come join the fun!



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

22nd Advent Recital approaching



Soon we turn the calendar to November and that means Advent will be here sooner than we can imagine. The 22nd Advent Recital at First Congregational UCC in Watertown is scheduled for **Sunday, December 15 at 7:00 p.m.** I am extending this invitation for performers to share their talents in the spirit of the season with our congregation and community.

You can do a solo, ensemble, vocal, instrumental, and you are welcome to do more than one selection and/or medium. I encourage you to add what you feel called to share. Please feel free to include family members or friends.

You don't need to be a member of the church to perform. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask.

Please let me know if you plan on participating as soon as you are able.

Juanita Edington
jaemusiclover@gmail.com
 920-988-2416

Thank you to Evan Chowanec, Don Christensen, Bill and Juanita Edington, and Jesse Fremont, who contributed as special musicians during the month of October. Thanks to Tom Rusch, Cooper Wood who played keyboard during October, and to Tom, who accompanies the choir, as well.

Senior Choir-continues to rehearse at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. We rehearse and sing in service almost weekly, but there will be some pre-planned days off. We can always use additional singers and you do not have to make a weekly commitment to be a part of the choir. High school aged and above are welcome.

Euterpe Music Club presented October meeting at First Congregational UCC

Our church was pleased to host the Euterpe Music Club with their October music program of Lukas Jaeger, accompanied by Rhonda Kwiecien as they performed "He is Here, He is There" on October 7th. Lukas, based in southeastern Wisconsin is a collaborative violinist, violist, and vocalist with over 20 years of experience as a performer in various styles-ranging from lyric opera to bluegrass and jazz. He is a graduate of St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN and is actively involved in the music ministry of Dr. Martin Luther Church in Oconomowoc as the Praise Team Coordinator.

Rhonda is a widely recognized collaborative pianist in the greater Milwaukee area. She is the senior member of Carroll University's collaborative piano team. In addition, Rhonda is the Keyboard Artist for First Congregational Church in Wauwatosa and the Collaborative Pianist for the Choral musical Department of Muskego High School.

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 Dale Bakke, Bill Edington and Pamela Martin who recorded during October.

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

Looking ahead...

Christmas Eve, Tuesday, Dec 24th 7:00 p.m.
Candlelight service with Holy Communion.

Christmas Day, Wednesday Dec 25th There will be
NO worship service held.



Melissa Mattke-Administrator/director

Gingerbread email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com

Melissa Cell: 262-719-1383

Gingerbread: Gingerbread has been continuing to grow! The themes in October have been very Fall-related: scarecrows, acorns, and of course, Halloween! November we look forward to being Thankful! The kids have been enjoying getting outside whenever we can. Our toddler playground is completed and being used daily.

We are looking forward and working on our Winter program. The program will be held on December 18th. You are welcome to come and watch us. Our total enrollment now is 114 and we have a short waitlist for the infant and toddler rooms. Our wish tree will be going up soon, so watch for that.

Thank you to Jennifer Bakke for being our guest cook. We appreciate your help!

We thank you all for your continued support

CPR OPEN INVITATION: Gingerbread will be having our CPR class on November 13th at 6pm. If you are interested in joining us, the cost is \$40/person. It is a 3 hour class and you will be certified for 2 years. Please let Melissa know if you would like to participate so the instructor can plan properly.



KOATS FOR KIDS (AND ADULTS)

Drop Off New or gently used coats, scarves, mittens, gloves, snow pants at church Sunday mornings, or at the Office M-TH 10-4:00.

The drive continues through November. LEARN MORE about this annual collection visit: <https://www.cacscw.org/koats-for-kids/>

Jennifer Rhodes at 920-296-1378

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.

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. 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.

2024 Red Kettle Campaign

The Watertown/Jefferson County Salvation Army is doing everything we can to provide the many individuals and families who need emergency assistance with food, rent, utilities and other critical support..

Volunteers bell ringers are needed to ring bells during the local 2024 Red Kettle Campaign .We begin Saturday, November 23rd and extend through noon December 24th. To volunteer call Lori at (920) 261-7165. Thank you, Marie Miller

BOOK OF LIFE



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service – Sunday November 24th



4 p.m. Ecumenical Worship at the Grove – Towne Center at Marquardt Village. The offering is designated for Hometown Missions, but donations of socks and underwear will also be received. (First Congregational has been asked to bring snacks.)

November BIRTHDAYS

- 11/04 Danica Uttke
- 11/06 Emily Ortega
- 11/07 Elijah Fremont
- 11/15 Alicia Boettcher
- 11/17 Nicholas Miller
- 11/19 Peter Welbourne
- 11/22 Owen Schwager
- 11/22 Kellen Schwager
- 11/23 Angela Howard
- 11/23 Nathaniel Budewitz
- 11/27 Lee Hyde
- 11/29 Ruth Martin
- 11/30 Diane Koch



TOTENFEST - Service of Remembrance Sunday November 3rd

During 10:00 a.m. worship we will join in a special service of remembrance. Church members are invited to send the names of loved ones who have died since last year at this time to Laurel by Wednesday, October 30th.

Fall Back- 1 hour Sunday, November 3rd



Financial Report from the Trustees – As of September 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	\$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
August	\$19,604	\$14,945	\$20,579	\$14,995	\$22,890	\$16,012	-\$1,017	-\$25,243
September	\$19,604	\$15,844	\$20,579	\$15,844	\$22,890	\$24,367	-\$8,523	-\$33,766

November 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Daylight Savings Ends 1 a.m. Sunday November 3rd. Turn clock back 1 hour!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>					1 Pastor Vacation	2 Pastor Vacation
<p>3 All Saints Day / TOTENFEST Communion Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship State of the Budget Presentation 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast</p>	<p>4 1 p.m. – Staff meets</p>	<p>5 ELECTION DAY</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast</p>	<p>8 OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>9</p>
<p>10 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast</p>	<p>11 Veteran’s Day 4 P.M.: Hospitality Committee at the Globe</p>	<p>12 6 p.m. Building Use: Teen Self Defense</p>	<p>13 6 P.M. CPR CLASS OFFERED THROUGH GINGERBREAD.</p>	<p>14 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast</p>	<p>15 OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>16 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Wttn Sr. Center (Housing Summit: Bringing Landlords and Tenants Together)</p>
<p>17 Stewardship Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 11:30: Social Justice Team 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast</p>	<p>18 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 6:30 pm, COUNCIL</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast</p>	<p>22 OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>24 Reign of Christ Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 10:00 – Thanksgiving WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 4:00, Community Thanksgiving Service at the Grove at Marquardt. 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 7:00 pm, Gingerbread Board</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 Thanksgiving Day OFFICE CLOSED 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast</p>	<p>29 OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>30</p>