

The Hilltop Chimes

First Congregational United Church of Christ
120 Kuckkan Lane Watertown, WI 53094
Website: www.firstcongwttn.org

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

February 2025



From the Pastor's Desk

There's something about the way the calendar falls this year that avoids a complaint I often hear (or even think) in church: Easter is *late* this year—not until the second half of April. That means that Lent starts

later, and that Ash Wednesday doesn't show up until March.

We may be led to believe that this means there's not much happening in February (besides the Annual Congregational Meeting), and that's not quite right. When Lent falls later, that means we have a longer Epiphany season. Because of its widely varying length, Epiphany often doesn't get the attention it deserves. It's always sandwiched in between the end of Christmastide and the beginning of Lent, so it may appear to be of lesser importance.

The truth is with its start in the arrival of the *Magi* and the baptism of Jesus, the lectionary readings during this season often include "call" stories—Jesus' own sense of call and vocation, the prophets' encounters with God that launch their messages, the stories of Jesus' call to the disciples to follow, and Paul's vision of what the church is called to be.

In a time of social and political turmoil and uncertainty, when so many remain fearful and anxious, these stories ask us to consider our own calling. What does God call us to be and do? Why do we gather as the church? How does our response to God's love matter for the world? These are all good questions, and they have been constant questions for people of faith throughout our history.

We are called to explore these questions together, and that is one reason we gather for worship each week. So, come with your questions. Come and wonder "why" together. Come and discern where God may be calling us and what may be next for us as a community.

--Chris

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

From Church Council:

Sunday, February 9th 2025

You are invited to our Annual Meeting at 11:00 am.

We encourage all active members to join in to approve our annual report.

The reports are available via email and in the Narthex on Sunday, February 2nd. Please have your copy on hand for the meeting.

---Jim Ortega, Moderator

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@firstcongwttn.org.



Thank you to Tom Rusch and Cooper Wood who played keyboard during January, and Tom who accompanied the choir, as well. Additional thanks go to guest singers on Christmas Eve who didn't make it into the January Chimes: Ekko Edington, Jonathan Edington, Charly Ladwig, Erin Lynch, Jackson Palmer, and Eliza Zabel and Juanita Edington-cello, who joined Tom on the Dec. 29th prelude.

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. Check weekly announcements for changes to the regular schedule. 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 age and above are welcome.

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

Stories behind the hymns:

On January 5th the congregation sang "Arise, Your Light Is Come" NCH 164, text by Ruth Duck and the next day I found out through the Wisconsin Conference that Ruth had passed away. There are 14 texts by Ruth in the New Century Hymnal. So, I thought I would share about this pioneer of using inclusive language in hymn writing and who also served churches in southeastern Wisconsin as pastor.

"Ruth Carolyn Duck died peacefully from pneumonia on December 26 with loved ones near her.

Born in Washington D.C. on November 21, 1947 to Jesse Thomas Duck and Louise Farmer Duck, Ruth grew up in Washington and in Annapolis, MD. At the age of sixteen she and her family moved to Memphis, TN where she learned of the ministry of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and soon became

clear about the injustice of racism. She received her BA from Southwestern at Memphis University (now Rhodes College) in 1969, a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from Chicago Theological Seminary in 1973, a Master of Arts (M.A.) from the University of Notre Dame in 1987, and a Doctor of Theology (Th.D.) degree from Boston University School of Theology in 1989. Her academic work focused on liturgy, worship, and the Trinitarian baptismal formula.

An ordained minister in the United Church of Christ (UCC), pastor at several UCC churches in earlier years in the Midwest, a liturgical theologian and professor of worship who taught for twenty-seven years at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, Ruth was best known as the writer of some two hundred published hymn texts and psalm paraphrases. Her hymns appear in numerous hymnals and supplements; she is often among those who have contributed the largest number of hymns in a given hymnal. She was a pioneer in the use of inclusive language that embraces everyone and enlarges our images of God in both hymn texts and other elements of Christian worship. All of her hymns are deeply scriptural, arising from Ruth's deep biblical knowledge. In addition, Ruth's sense of multiculturalism enabled issues of justice, equality, and care for God's creation to shape her creative crafting of hymns and worship resources.

Ruth was a life member of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada, which named her a Fellow in 2013, in recognition of her pioneering work in inclusive language for worship and her preeminence as a hymn poet and teacher.

She was a member and former president of the North American Academy of Liturgy; in 2018, she received its highest honor, the prestigious Berakah Award, that recognized her long-term contributions to liturgical scholarship and practice.

Ruth enjoyed her travels to many countries worldwide, lecturing, leading worship, and offering mentoring workshops on worship and hymn writing. She has written and edited numerous books, articles, and worship resources about and for Christian worship. In the last seven years of her life, Ruth was a resident of Pilgrim Place, an intentional continuing care retirement community in Claremont, California.

Preceded in death by members of her small family, Ruth will be missed by cousins Elene and Larry Cooper, many loving friends, and numerous students, all of whom benefited from the gift of her hymns, her worship leadership, her teaching, and her inspiring life. A celebration of her life with singing of some of her hymns will take place in Decker Hall at Pilgrim Place in Claremont on Saturday Feb. 22, 2025, at 3 pm.

The service will be live streamed and available afterwards online. The ZOOM link will be <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83206874402?pwd=fovfebBYouo5Rko1Hh1MotohPFkyl0.1> ZOOM ID: 832 0687 4402 Passcode: 996713” —from her website, Ruth Duck, hymnwriter



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

Website:

https://www.breadbasketwisconsin.org/?fbclid=IwY2xjawHb7XBleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHbu4Jzq_eZoicYhaUv6cxlhj5vulTakftth5rrc0UMjSfcm7JdH3cle2uA_aem_RSvPbvRibG_N7xx6qIOZ6g

- 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.

.....

Tech Opportunities

Videographer:

Thank you to Pamela Martin, Bill Edington & Dale Bakke who recorded during January.

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.

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

.....

Intentional Faith Formation:

Peace and Justice Issues
in Palestine and Israel

Continues Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Pastor Chris will continue adult education opportunity on peace and justice issues in Palestine and Israel. The class will continue to meet at 9 a.m. (Sunday school time) on Sundays.

.....

THE WATERTOWN FOOD PANTRY

Website:

<https://www.watertownfoodpantry.org/hours-of-operation.html>

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

There is a shopping cart in the narthex You are welcome to bring any food at any time .

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.



OFFERINGS
JANUARY AND FEBRUARY LOOSE COIN



January And February Loose Coin Offering Will Go To
The Matz Center Youth Crisis Stabilization Facility(Ycsf) Located In Watertown.

The Watertown youth crisis stabilization facility is open to boys and girls from all Wisconsin communities. Admission is coordinated through Jefferson County's emergency mental health services program.
matzcenterycsf@wiscs.org

"These facilities provide help for immediate needs and support for future well-being," said DHS Secretary-designee Kirsten Johnson. "Our support of this center is part of our ongoing efforts to ensure Wisconsinites of all ages have access to the right care at the right time in the right setting."

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/yssf.html>
There are brochures on the Narthex table.

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) Memo: "Matz Center"



Rotations of servers and Bakers are needed each Sunday of the month. **Bakers provide the snacks** and prior to worship, "servers" get the coffee started and place the snacks out in time to attend worship.

****SIGN UP to help** by contacting Jennifer Rhodes at myvibe04@yahoo.com or calling her at (920) 296-1378

****Schedules** are on the narthex table, if you need to switch dates please contact one of the volunteers directly.

We have 121 children enrolled currently. We have 13 on the waiting list. This summer we will see a lot of newborns coming in! We have not been able to get outside too much since it has been too cold, but when we do, we sure have fun!

Our themes in January were Superheroes, Arctic Animals, and Dinosaurs. We had fun making art projects and reading books about our themes.

Gingerbread Phone: 920-261-9727

Email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com

Website: www.gingerbreadchildcare.com



From the Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries

SUNDAY SCHOOL: We have started our Creation unit. We are starting at the beginning and making our way through the Bible. We are taking our time and asking a lot of questions. We always take an opportunity to talk about our week as well. We are making great friendships! I will be having hip replacement surgery on February 5th, so we will not be having Sunday School on Feb 9th or 16. We will see how I am feeling after that! Hopeful for a quick recovery!

YOUTH GROUP: I would like to plan a date in March to have a meeting to see if we have interest and availability for Youth Group to start. I will update you after my surgery and recovery with a date!

✠ Passing: Word has reached us that long time church member, Robert Schmutzler, passed away on January 7, 2025. He and Donna were in Colorado for the winter.

Funeral services will be planned for mid summer.

.....

February Birthdays



- 02/02 Sarah Miller
- 02/05 Jason Schwager
- 02/07 Zachariah Koch
- 02/08 Troy Maas Jr
- 02/10 Sean Driessen
- 02/12 Robert Larson
- 02/15 Juanita Edington
- 02/18 Nicholas Bathke
- 02/18 June Schroeder
- 02/21 Sam Vogel
- 02/23 Tucker Fremont
- 02/25 Rebekah Wood
- 02/27 Desiree Livermore

.....

New Members:

Sunday, January 12th we welcomed six new members into our church community.

Seated: *Irma Muniz*,
Left to right: *Maria Cruz, Angela Viola, Jerald Martinez, David Olkowski and Lori Rhode* into membership of our church.

Please take time to meet and greet them at the next Fellowship Hour.



Angela Viola and Jerald Martinez:

Angela works for Dane County Health and Human Services, Economic Support. Jerald is retired from Equus, FSET Case Management. Son, Nate, is a 2024 Graduate. They have 3 dogs: Link, Mabel, Riki and enjoy walking and spending time with and caring for them.

David Olkowski

Dave is a stay at home dad with Sarah Lill (cartographer) and homeschools their children, Ina and Iggy. He enjoys learning to play drums

Lori Rhode

Lori is retired. Her husband Doug is a retired electrical engineer from Ford Motor Co.. They have adult daughters, Eleanor, Anne and Julia who are in Chicago. She enjoys quilting, gardening, crafts reading and camping.

Maria Cruz and Irma Muniz,

Maria is an Order Specialist at Pacific Cycle and enjoys Cross Fit and joining 5K for fun. Her mother, Irma, is retired and enjoys shopping at all Walmart and Ross store in the area. Daughter, Sofia Cruz (goes by Spidey) is in First grade and enjoys Taekwondo and singing.

.....

Financial Updates - GENERAL FUND December 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	\$20,050	-\$4,430	-\$6,380
March	\$19,604	\$22,492	\$20,579	\$23,127	\$22,890	\$20,900	\$2,227	-\$4,153
April	\$19,604	\$21,334	\$20,579	\$22,153	\$22,889	\$18,755	\$3,398	-\$755
May	\$19,604	\$16,679	\$20,579	\$16,907	\$22,890	\$21,817	-\$4,910	-\$5,665
June	\$19,604	\$19,959	\$20,579	\$22,527	\$22,890	\$35,378	-\$12,851	-\$18,516
July	\$19,604	\$16,513	\$20,579	\$17,719	\$22,890	\$17,409	\$310	-\$18,206
August	\$19,604	\$14,945	\$20,579	\$14,995	\$22,890	\$16,012	-\$1,017	-\$19,223
September	\$19,604	\$15,844	\$20,579	\$15,844	\$22,890	\$24,367	-\$8,523	-\$27,746
October	\$19,604	\$15,942	\$20,579	\$16,442	\$22,890	\$17,930	-\$1,488	-\$29,234
November	\$19,604	\$16,425	\$20,579	\$16,940	\$22,890	\$22,010	-\$5,070	-\$34,304
December	\$19,605	\$17,951	\$20,580	\$18,901	\$22,890	\$20,891	-\$1,990	-\$36,294

f

Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) On the next page there is the form used for signing up for direct deposit contributions. We work with Vanco to provide this option for the congregation.

Offering envelopes: in addition, boxed sets of envelopes are also available.

If you have questions please contact the office at Laurel W Bentz

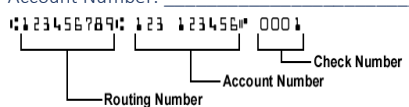
lbentz@firstcongwtn.org

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.

February 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
LOOKING AHEAD: The Congregational Annual Meeting will be held Sunday February 9 th at 11 a.m.						1
2 Communion Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 9:00 a.m – Pastor’s Study Group 10:00 – WORSHIP; Communion; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	3 1 :00 p.m. Staff meets	4	5	6 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	7 OFFICE CLOSED	8
9 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; No Sunday School 9:00 a.m – Pastor’s Study Group 10:00 – WORSHIP; Installation of Council Followed by the ANNUAL MEETING; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	10	11	12	13 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	14 Valentine’s Day OFFICE CLOSED	15
16 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; No Sunday School 9:00 a.m – Pastor’s Study Group 10:00 – WORSHIP; 11:30, Social Justice Team Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	17 6:30 pm, COUNCIL Newsletter Deadline	18	19	20 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	21 OFFICE CLOSED	22 9 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. SE Assoc Annual Meeting in Hales Corners
23 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 9:00 a.m – Pastor’s Study Group 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast *TBD 1:00- Building a Welcoming Watertown at Wtnn Public Library	24	25 7:00, Gingerbread Board TBD	26	27 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	28	