

The Hilltop Chimes

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

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ross, Pastor
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Church Office hours:
M-TH 10-noon and 1-4
Office Phone/Fax: 920-261-6213

January 2025

From the Pastor's Desk



As we enter this new year, I can't remember another time I've sensed so much anxiety about the future. Not only is our society bitterly divided, there are so many people worried about what may happen to them this

year because they don't fit into some artificially-constructed category of "normal." In fact, I had a recent conversation when I was referring to a group of people who may become increasingly vulnerable beginning on January 20, and my conversation partner wasn't clear on which group I meant...because the different at-risk categories are numerous.

Now, you may be thinking to yourself, "This isn't a very joyful way to ring in the New Year," and you'd be right. I realize there are some folks who think church should be an escape from the troubles of the real world, those who think worship should be a shot of positive energy for the week, those who insist that feeling good is central for bothering to come to church at all. Unfortunately, that's not real Christianity, and it reflects a poor understanding of discipleship.

We don't follow Jesus in order to feel good. We don't worship God for our own benefit. Our Christian vocation is always—and *always has been*—about loving **others**.

And so, what should we do as the 2025 calendar stretches before us? It may sound trite, but we continue being the church, we keep serving as the Body of Christ in Watertown and in the world today. When so many people are hurting or worried or isolated, God calls us even more loudly to respond. In a time of suffering and anxiety, now is the time for us to shine as the church—as a

people committed to caring for all and to God's liberation of the oppressed, a people dedicated to the salvation of all flesh, just as scripture attests again and again.

Arise, our light has come. May we follow in the way that seeks the welfare of all.

--Chris

New Member Orientation on January 5

Are you interested in joining First Congregational UCC as a member? Would you like more information on the background of our church and how we operate? Pastor Chris is offering a new member orientation after worship on January 5. All interested folks are invited to check it out!

Individuals choosing to join will then be officially received in worship on Sunday, January 12.

Community Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Worship at Our Church

This year, the day honoring the justice work and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior falls on Monday, January 20. The congregations involved in Building a Welcoming Watertown are joining together to offer a special worship service that evening, beginning at 6:30, right here in our sanctuary.

Come, be part of this community that seeks to remember—and be inspired to put into action—the same principles that grounded the Civil Rights Movement.

When? Monday, January 20, 6:30 p.m.

Where? The sanctuary of First Congregational United Church of Christ

Intentional Faith Formation: Peace and Justice Issues in Palestine and Israel

Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Sunday, January 12th
Pastor Chris will continue adult education opportunity
on peace and justice issues in Palestine and
Israel. The class will meet at 9 a.m. (Sunday school
time) on Sundays beginning January 12th
Watch this space for upcoming information.



Thank you to Tom Rusch and Cooper Wood who played keyboard during December, and Tom who accompanied the choir, as well. Additional thanks go to Laura Yurs, James Ortega, and Emily Ortega who are planning to play or sing on Christmas Eve.

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 age and above are welcome.

Please Note: There is no choir rehearsal on Sunday, January 5th.

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

Tech Opportunities

Thank you to Dale Bakke, Bill Edington, Juanita Edington and Pamela Martin who recorded during December.

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



On December 15th, we held the 22nd Advent Recital in our sanctuary. About 45 people were in attendance and \$100 in donations were received and added for Loose Coin offerings for our Bread Basket Christmas family. Our performers were: Evan Chowanec, Kristin Chowanec,

Kristin Curran, Vicky Daniels, Bill Edington, Juanita Edington, Carol Erickson, Grady Fremont, Jesse Fremont, Saedra Fremont, Tucker Fremont, Erin Lynch, Jennie Ortega, Jim Ortega, Zachary Oster, Thomas Rusch, Pamela Whitcomb, Cooper Wood, Eliza Zabel, and Penelope Zabel. It is always so heartwarming hearing the variety of music that the performers bring, and especially to see the involvement of multiple family members, and a variety of ages. The recital was video recorded and is available for viewing on our website and via Facebook and this link <https://vimeo.com/1039811216> , but it will not be broadcast via cable.

A reception was held after the recital in Fellowship Hall, coordinated by Sue Harms and Barb Weiss. Additional kitchen helpers were: Barb and Chuck Weiss, Jennifer and Dale Bakke. Bakers were: Jennifer Bakke, Ellen Brown, Juanita Edington, Sue Harms, Diane Koch, Joyce Uglow, and Barb Weiss. Thank you to all!



From the Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries

Sunday school: We wrapped up our Advent lessons and will be moving on to our New Year lessons! We really enjoy coloring and talking about our week!

- 1) Join our mailing list: for an email link sent out weekly "Welcome to Worship" from lbentz@firstcongwtn.org .
- 2) Visit 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 church website (see 'Media'): <https://firstcongwtn.org/> Services posted on Monday.

January - February Loose Coin:

At their December meeting Church council moved to change the Loose Coin to cover 2 months at a time.

January and February loose coin offering will go to the Watertown Youth Crisis Stabilization Facility.

"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."

A youth crisis stabilization facility provides a young person an opportunity to recover from their distress in a supportive and structured environment. It is a short-term program designed to help them return home as quickly as possible, with most stays only a few days in length. The services offered by specially trained staff assist the person in developing skills to manage their stress and symptoms and in building connections in their community to help them thrive during times of adversity.

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.

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/news/releases/010824.htm>

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 Wtn



Gingerbread: Our Winter program was a huge success. The sanctuary was full of friends and families! Our enrollment is up to 116 with 12 on a waiting list. Winter break brought our school agers back to the building and it was fun to see them again! Our themes will be Winter related. Stop down and see our art projects hanging in the hallways!! Thank you for your continued support of our program!

Gingerbread Phone: 920-261-9727

Email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com

Website: www.gingerbreadchildcare.com



Community Support Center
Centro de Apoyo Comunitario

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.

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.

Building a Welcoming Community

Hello, Welcoming Watertown friends,
We look forward to another powerful gathering

on **Sunday, January 26 from 1:00 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



BLOOD DRIVE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC – WATERTOWN BLOOD DRIVE!

Blood transfusions are a lifeline for countless individuals. From accident victims to cancer patients, those who need blood transfusions often face life-threatening situations. Every donation has the potential to save multiple lives. Whether you're battling a chronic illness, recovering from surgery, or simply helping a neighbor in need, blood transfusions can be the difference between life and death.

**Thursday
January 23
1:00 pm – 5:30 pm**

LOCATION: First Congregational UCC – Watertown Fellowship Hall

MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT: Visit the link below or call 877.232.4376 to secure your spot today:



tinyurl.com/fcuccw12325



Blood Drive: our next blood drive will be on January 23rd from 1pm-6pm. Please let Melissa Mattke know if you would like to register for a time to donate. This time of year always brings a low number of donors. Let's do our part to help!

BOOK OF LIFE



Brad Niay	01/01	Frances Milburn	01/21
Daniel Edwards	01/04	Bruce Williams	01/23
Nicholas Oxford	01/04	Charly Ladwig	01/25
Lee Buescher	01/08	Donna Niay	01/28
Tracy Livermore	01/08	Kay Fuchs	01/30
CJ Zabel	01/20		



Christmas Poinsettia Memorial and Dedications

The Christmas Eve Poinsettias were provided by:



- * Bill & Juanita Edington, in honor of our children and grandchildren.
- * Laurel W Bentz, in memory of my brother Paul Welbourne
- * Diane Koch, in memory of Dean Koch



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

Financial Updates - GENERAL FUND November 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
October	\$19,604	\$15,942	\$20,579	\$16,442	\$22,890	\$17,930	-\$1,488	-\$35,254
November	\$19,604	\$16,425	\$20,579	\$16,940	\$22,890	\$21,909	-\$4,969	-\$40,223

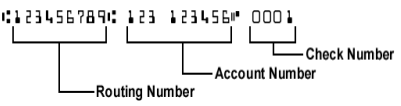
OFFERING ENVELOPES or EFT

Envelopes for 2025: 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 2025 we have a box at church for you. See Laurel Bentz to get your set.

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)	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 2025- Corrections (*)

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://firstcongwtn.org/			1 <i>NEW YEAR'S DAY</i> Office Closed	2 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4
5 <i>Epiphany Sunday</i> 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir ; Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP, Communion; Coffee Fellowship New Member Orientation 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	6 <i>Epiphany</i> 1 :00 p.m. Staff meets	7	8	9 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	10 OFFICE CLOSED	11
12 <i>Baptism of Christ</i> 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 9:00 a.m – <i>Pastor's Study Group</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP; New Members received. Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	13 *6 :30 p.m. Council meets	14	15	16 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	17 OFFICE CLOSED	18
19 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 9:00 a.m – <i>Pastor's Study Group</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship *11:30, Social Justice 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	20 Office Closed <i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i> 6:30 pm, Ecumenical MLK worship service in our sanctuary.	21 * NEWSLETTER DEADLINE * Annual Report DEADLINE	22	23 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast 1-6:00 BLOOD DRIVE	24 OFFICE CLOSED	25
26 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 9:00 a.m – <i>Pastor's Study Group</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast *1:00- Building a Welcoming Watertown at Wttn Public Library 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	27	28 *7 :00 p.m. Gingerbread Board meets	29	30 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	31 OFFICE CLOSED	