



The Hilltop Chimes

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

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ross, Pastor

Website: www.firstcongwttn.org

Church Office: Hours: M-TH 10-noon and 1-4
Office Phone/Fax: 920-261-6213
Office Email: lbentz@firstcongwttn.org

Pastor's Cell: (920) 838-5630
****Please call with pastoral care needs.**
Email: rev.fatmoses@gmail.com

From the Pastor's Desk



With Ash Wednesday on March 5, this month brings the season of Lent. As last year, in addition to worship on Ash Wednesday, we will offer midweek Lenten services for the next five Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

In the Wednesday evening services following Ash Wednesday, we'll be taking a look at a particular thread throughout Christian history: creeds. In 2025, we live in a time in which the most powerful Christian voices seek a Christian unity not rooted in respect of diversity, but in uniformity. Additionally, these same voices are not shy about using the levers of government to pursue their agenda.

Such a situation is not new to Christianity. As we'll see, the formulation of creeds often related to imposing a uniformity over and against diversity of thought; and at a very early point, the creeds also became tools of the government to enforce official versions of the faith.

But each creed arose out of specific historical circumstances, and each one was developed with a purpose in the minds of those who composed it.

Come and worship with us on Wednesday nights and learn more about how Christianity has attempted to balance a drive for institutional unity in the face of more diverse modes of faith and thought than we likely realize.

-Chris

(P.S. There's a lot going on at church this month! For example, we'll be holding Women's Sunday worship on March 8. And don't forget to check out the other articles on programming on several Sundays in March.)

Two Programs on Palestine and Israel in March

The adult Sunday school class that has been studying issues surrounding Palestine and Israel invites the rest of the congregation to two important programs scheduled for the month of March.

On Sunday, March 9 at 11:30 a.m. we will hear from Mr. Tom Beilman and Rev. Diane Dulin who have worked with the Conference's Palestine Justice Group. They can tell us about the origins of the resolution to be presented at the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Conference in June, the perspective of the Palestine Justice Group, and the process the resolution is undergoing.

On Sunday, March 30 at 6:30 p.m., we will hear from Rabbi Bonnie Margulis who is also connected to many justice causes, but may be offering a different perspective on the history and ongoing conflict in the region.

All are welcome to attend and take part!

Watertown Clergy Roundtable invites you to a mental health crisis training with Watertown Police Department Community Service Officer Kim Italiano on **Saturday, March 1, from 9-12** at Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in the multi-purpose room.

This QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Training focuses on mental health support and suicide prevention. All are welcome to attend. Refreshments provided.

--Rev. Carina Schiltz

Rev. Dr. Chris Ross, Pastor * Cell: (920) 838-5630 * Email: rev.fatmoses@gmail.com



Notes from the Music Director

Juanita Edington

c.920-988-2416 (feel free to text)

jaemusiclover@gmail.com

Thank you to Tom Rusch who played keyboard and accompanied the choir during February.

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.

Looking Deeper into the Music

During Black History Month, I had selected three anthems from the Justice Choir Songbook, which is a resource for music of the social justice movement, old and new. I encountered a couple of divergent readings that reinforce the idea of power of singing and community song.

One of those readings was shared by Pastor Chris from Christian Century and I will share the link here:

<https://www.christiancentury.org/voices/i-still-have-voice> As you read this piece, I think you can just as easily substitute the word congregation in place of choir and still make a connection to the power of joining voices together.

The second is actually more extensive, from the book "The Last House on the Street" a mystery that unfolds in 2010, but depends on extensive flashbacks to 1965. In 1965, a young North Carolinian white woman chooses to spend the summer volunteering to educate and enroll black voters with the group S.C.O.P.E. (Summer Community Organization and Political Education Project.) As part of their training, they participated in daily community singing of songs such as "I'll Fly Away," "We Shall Overcome," "This Little Light of Mine," "Eyes on the Prize," and more.

These songs helped to build community and strength amongst the trainees and later served to build bridges between the white students and the African American people they were hoping to prepare to register to vote. The songs were not entertainment, but builders of confidence, of solidarity, of familiarity, of faith.

Tech Opportunities Videographer:

Thank you to Pamela Martin, Melissa Mattke, Bill Edington & Dale Bakke who recorded during February.

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 (feel free to text)

jaemusiclover@gmail.com

Musical Event in March: Two choirs from Watertown High School will be performing in our sanctuary on Tuesday, March 18th 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!

Tom Rusch, Church Liaison

Wednesday Evening Lenten Worship

Ash Wednesday is March 5th and we'll be offering midweek Wednesday evening worship opportunities during Lent. Our gathering will last approximately thirty minutes.

Each of these services will begin at 7 p.m. (There will be no Wednesday evening service during Holy Week.)



March & April LOOSE COIN

March & April Loose Coin Offering Will Go to
Weekend Food to Go and Grow (through the
Community Shared Mission Project)



The Shared Community Mission

Group's Weekend Food Bag program is currently filling 56 food bags each week for needy children. Our church's portion this week is one half of those (28). Since there is often some left from previous donations the number is sometimes less than 28.

How to Help:

1. Donate to Loose Coin in March & April
2. Donating the designated items at church on Sunday prior to the Thursday.
 - Sunday, March 2nd*--boxes regular crackers for *March 6th*
 - March 16th*--The Spring Break bag for March 20th is a "special" bag and we are donating caramel dip- one per family
3. Help pack the duffle bags: weekly at 10:30 on Thursday Mornings at the Methodist Church, 112 Hall St.

Denyce Derleth, who is our representative, is the contact person.

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: "Weekend Food to Go and Grow"

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® is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Love of Neighbor. During the month of March, will you give to One Great Hour of Sharing .

Learn more: https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/oghs_be_the_light_ucc_vfi_nal-1080p.mp4

.....
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.



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.

MARCH SCHEDULE:

March 2: Bake: Ellen Brown, Barb Weiss

Serve: Dale Bakke

March 9: Bake: Jennifer and Brian.

Serve: Jennifer and Brian

March 16: Bake: Fran Milburn, Jennifer Rhodes.

Serve: Jesse Fremont

March 23: Bake: Tom Rusch & Diane Koch

Serve: Tracy Livermore

March 30: Bake: Joyce Uglow & Barb Weiss

Serve: Barb Weiss



First Congregational UCC was called on to fill in for a Bread & Roses dinner on Thursday, February 20th.

Thank you to Denyce & Tom Derleth and Barb & Chuck Weiss for volunteering at short notice. The meals are now served at the former Windwood Country Club on Hwy CW. We were asked to provide 2 gallons of milk and to work serving and helping with cleanup.



. If you are interested in coming in to read a book or direct a project, please let us know.

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

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!

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.

Book of Life



Meet the Church Council for 2025

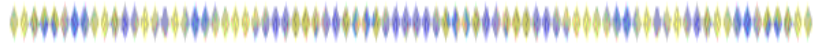
Left to right: Rev. Chris Ross, Pastor; Jim Ortega, Moderator; Tom Rusch, Vice Moderator; Bill Edington, Kate Driessen, Clerk; Jennifer Rhodes, Mindy Markus and Fran Milburn
 They were installed during worship on Sunday, February 16th.
 Thanks to out going Council member, Tracy Livermore.

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 Maria Cruz
- 3/27 Florence Bingner
- 3/28 Liam Matthews
- 3/28 Aurora Pauli
- 3/31 Doug Budewitz

How to Join Us for Worship

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



Sunday, March 9th

Financial Update – General Fund 1/31/2025

2025	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	\$18,599	\$20,579	\$20,186	\$23,969	\$19,997	\$189	\$189

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<h1>March 2025</h1>						1 9-NOON Mental Health Crisis training at Immanuel ELCA
2 Transfiguration Sunday Communion Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 9:00 a.m – Pastor’s Study Group 10:00 – WORSHIP; Communion; Coffee Hour 1:00, Build a Welcoming Wttn at the library 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	3 1 p.m. Staff meets	4	5 Ash Wednesday 6:30, Sr. Choir rehearsal 7:00 -Service of Imposition of Ashes	6 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	7 OFFICE CLOSED	8 International Women’s Day
9 Women’s Sunday Daylight Savings Begins! 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School NO 9:00 a.m – Pastor’s Study Group 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Hour 11:30, Isreal/ Palestine Justice Group (see page 1) 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	10	11	12 7:00 Lenten Worship Service	13 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	14 OFFICE CLOSED	15
16 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 9:00 a.m – Pastor’s Study Group 10:00 WORSHIP; Coffee Hour 11:30, Social Justice Team 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	17 St. Patrick’s Day 6:30, Council	18 7 p.m. WHS Choral Concert	19 7:00 Lenten Worship Service	20 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	21 OFFICE CLOSED	22
23 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 9:00 a.m – Pastor’s Study Group 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Hour 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	24 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	25 7:00, Gingerbread Board	26 7:00 Lenten Worship Service	27 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29
30 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School NO 9:00 a.m – Pastor’s Study Group 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Hour 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast 6:30, Isreal/ Palestine Justice Group w/ presentation from Rabbi Bonnie (see page 1)	31 1:30 Rainmaker Committee			March & April Loose Coin Offering: <u>Weekend Food to Go and Grow</u> -through the Community Shared Mission Project. (see page 3)		