



The Hilltop Chimes

JUNE 2025

First Congregational United Church of Christ
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From the Pastor's Desk

As June hits, and summer begins, it's easy to be led to believe that things slow down at church as well. In my experience, that has not been true at all in Watertown, and it certainly does not look like the case for First

Congregational UCC this year either.

First, you may notice a change in worship starting this month. On an experimental basis, the Council has decided to stop passing the offering plate during worship, but instead invite folks to leave their offering in the collection plate as you enter or exit the sanctuary (or by other means, such as electronic giving).

The Wisconsin Conference of the UCC is holding its annual meeting in Green Lake on June 6-7. Dale Bakke and Tom Rusch have been appointed delegates from our congregation. This meeting will be important—among other items, the body will take up the resolution on Palestine and Israel (studied by our adult education Sunday school class for months); and at one point on Saturday, the meeting will divide into Associations to deliberate on dissolving each Association. Additionally, the Rev. Laura Yurs will be leading a workshop on Friday on her legal work dealing with the parole system in Wisconsin.

Beginning June 12, I will be offering a six-week Thursday afternoon Bible study on the Book of Revelation. The role of Revelation is unique in the New Testament, often misinterpreted by some

Christians and virtually ignored by others. Come to dive in to learn more about this strange scripture. Our time together will run from 2-3 p.m., and we'll be taking off the week of Independence Day. The study of Revelation won't be the only Christian educational opportunity this summer—there will also be a series of three monthly intergenerational "family fun nights" with the theme *Camp Chaos*. The first has been scheduled for 6-7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 18.

As last year, we as a congregation will be attending a Madison Mallards baseball game on Friday, June 20, and Laura and I again invite folks to our home for an open house beforehand (see separate article).

Finally, we will recognize 2025 graduates in worship on Sunday, June 22.

Come and be part of all that's happening at First Congregational UCC!

--Chris

Rev. Dr. Chris Ross, Pastor
Cell: (920) 838-5630

**Please call Pastor directly with pastoral concerns
Email: rev.fatmoses@gmail.com

Summer Office Hours;

The Office will continue normal business hours of M-TH 10-noon and 1-4
Summer worship time remains at 10 a.m.



Notes from the Music Director...

May was a month with additional musicians to thank. Cooper Wood stepped on to the piano bench for three of the four Sundays in May and accompanied the choir for two anthems during that time. Evan Chowanec provided special music on trumpet for one Sunday. Thanks to these youth who shared their musical gifts with our congregation.

Senior Choir-will rehearse at 9:15 on June 1st and 8th and then take a well-deserved break for the summer. The choir has sung in our services almost every Sunday since last September. Our regular members are Kristin Chowanec, Bill Edington, Jesse Fremont, Jennie and Jim Ortega, and Chuck Weiss, along with accompanist Tom Rusch and myself.

In addition, we had members attend infrequently, and occasional guests throughout the year: Ekko Edington, Jon Edington, Charly Ladwig, Tracy Livermore, Erin Lynch, Emily Ortega, James Ortega, Jackson Palmer, Nancy Stanell, Eliza Zabel, and instrumental accompanists-Cooper Wood, and Laura Yurs. I am so thankful for the dedication and the willingness of these singers and instrumentalists to offer their musical gifts and their time to the congregation and to their God.

Looking forward to next fall, we can always use more 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. Drop-ins are certainly welcome. Start-up will be sometime in September. Keep a look out in the Chimes for a specific date. If you play and instrument, let me know, you never know when there might be an opportunity to play.

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

♪ Summer Musicians Needed ♪

Summer musicians needed for:

JUNE 15, 22, 29

JULY 6, 13, 20, 27

AUGUST 3, 17, 24, 31 (the 10th is scheduled to be the Town Square ecumenical service)

If you know that you are going to be available on any of the dates listed and have a musical gift to share, please call or email so that I can get you in the calendar.

This is not restricted to church members, so if you wish to ask a friend or family member to join you, please feel free to consider sharing your love for music and God by providing special music.

Juanita Edington
c. 920-988-2416 (o.k. to text)
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Tech Opportunities

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

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

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From the
Coordinator of
Children and
Youth Ministries

Sunday School: Due to all of my health issues, we didn't get to "end" our Sunday School quite the way we anticipated. However, be ready to jump back into our trip through the Bible in the Fall! Have a wonderful summer!

Senior Recognition: We will be recognizing our seniors on June 22nd during the 10am service. If you have a senior in your family, please plan to attend!

UCC Summer Camps - Don't miss out!

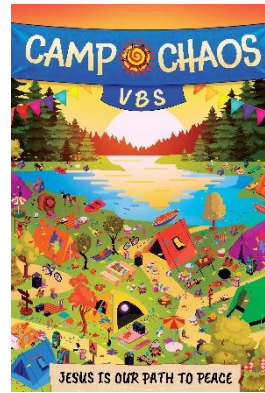


The camp schedules for 2025 are ready.. The Larson Camp Fund provides scholarships of 50% to help cover the cost for children and youth attending any of the camp sessions offered.... Including grandchildren! When you choose a Family Camp the youth have 1/2 of their fees paid through this fund.

Please contact the church office about additional scholarship support or if you have any questions.

Information can also be obtained on-line at

<https://uccu@uccu.org/>



Family Fun Nights

(All Ages VBS):

Do you ever feel like your life is chaotic? Who doesn't right? Well come join us to see how Jesus is peace in our chaotic world.

We will be meeting on June 18, July 16, and August 20 at 6:00pm-7:30pm. We will be

doing crafts, having a snack and having FUN!

Come join us at our Camp Chaos!!

Madison Mallards Baseball Game



Friday, June 20, 2025

Sign up in the narthex

GATES OPEN AT 5:35 P.M. and first pitch is at 6:35 pm. We promise it will be an evening of fun, friendship, good food, and a great time.

PEPSI TAILGATE PARTY is 90 min prior to game and includes - brats, hot dogs, hamburgers and veggie burgers, cranberry walnut chicken salad, potato salad, cole slaw and chips.

(You can go back for seconds. Bottomless Pepsi products and water for duration of tailgate. Once you sit down in the stands, you will then pay for whatever you want to drink or eat.)

TICKET COST includes baseball game and tailgate
\$25 Adults (\$32 Adults if you prefer beer to soda)
\$10 Children (Children 5 and under/ free, but will sit on parent's lap)

Special Invitation: Laura and I would like to invite the congregation to an open house at our home before the Mallards baseball game on Friday, June 20. We'll be offering snacks from 3-5, and then we can plan on driving over to the ballgame. (Even if you don't plan to go to the game, you're still welcome to the open house!) Our address is 432 West Clover Lane in Cottage Grove.

--Pastor Chris



Summer is coming and so are all of the children!

Gingerbread will be quite busy this summer. We anticipate 80-90 children daily! Our enrollment is 128 right now and each room is at full capacity and has a waiting list. We have 22 staff members.

If you have any special projects/talents you would like to share with our friends, please let me know and we will plan for a special event for you! If you would like to make a donation, we are always looking for: 100% juice, paper plates, crackers, pretzels, and scrap paper. Grocery and Amazon gift cards are helpful also! Thank you for your continued support!

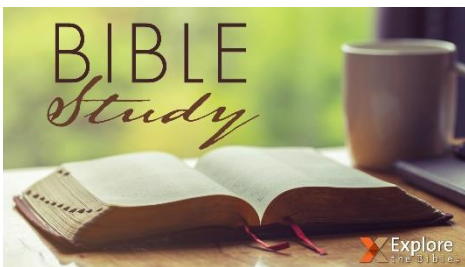
Raise Right gift Cards: Gingerbread has taken over the selling of Raise Right Gift Cards (formerly Scripts.) If you are looking to purchase gift cards, please let me know and I will get some ordered for you. I will also be selling them after church monthly. This is a great way to help with Gingerbread's fundraising efforts.

Melissa Mattke

Gingerbread Phone: 920-261-9727

Email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com

Website: www.gingerbreadchildcare.com



Starting Thursday, June 12th there will be a six-week afternoon Bible study on the Book of Revelation. The role of Revelation is unique in the New Testament, often misinterpreted by some Christians and virtually ignored by others. Come to dive in to learn more about this strange scripture.

Our time together will run from 2-3 p.m., and we'll be taking off the week of Independence Day.



Coffee Fellowship: Rotations of servers and Bakers are needed each Sunday of the month. Bakers provide the snacks. 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.**

June SCHEDULE:

June 1: Bake:, Ellen Brown, Dale Bakke
Serve: Dale Bakke

June 8th: Bake: Jennifer and Brian
Serve: Jennifer and Brian

June 15: Bake: Jennifer Rhodes
Serve: Jesse Fremont

June 22: Bake: Tom Rusch, Diane Koch
Serve: _____

June 29: Bake: Joyce Uglow, Barb Weiss
Serve: Barb Weiss

You Can Serve in Worship

Ushers: It's the hope that we will have a rotation of volunteers to usher and greet on Sunday mornings. Training is provided. Ushers arrive at 9:30 to open the main entrance doors, turn the lights on and greet worshippers. In addition, you would assist the acolyte in lighting the taper of the candle lighter.

If you are interested, check in with Bill Edington on Sunday or contact Laurel in the church office (920) 261-6213 lbentz@firstcongwttn.org.





THE BREAD BASKET PANTRY



Is newly located at 208 S. 3rd St., Watertown and is another amazing local resource for our community. In addition to food items, clothing are especially needed. Many individuals and families don't arrive prepared for our seasons

There is a shopping cart in the narthex You are welcome to bring any food at any time . **There is always a need for** egg cartons

THE BREAD BASKET HOURS ARE:

- Mondays 12:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesdays 11 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- Fridays 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m

Learn more at their website:

<https://www.breadbasketwisconsin.org/>

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 3 p.m.—5:30 p.m.
- Fridays 10 a.m. -12 p.m.

Learn more at their website:

<https://www.watertownfoodpantry.org/>

Loose Coin for May -June: Wisconsin Council of Churches

Urgent Help Needed to Maintain Critical Services to Sensitive Populations



Every day, the current federal administration announces a new funding freeze or reduction in services. These cuts have collectively undermined the systems that we use to care for our most vulnerable neighbors both here in the United States and abroad. Today, one of those funding cuts directly impacted the ministry of the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC).

A multi-year contract that the WCC had with the State of Wisconsin to assist with vaccine outreach initiatives was terminated immediately. The instruction to terminate the project came from the federal level. At the WCC we recognize we are not alone in the destructive outcomes of these cancelled contracts. The WCC work most directly affected is community health.

To Learn more:

<https://www.wichurches.org/articles/chwfundraiser>

Building a Welcoming Community

Hello, Welcoming Watertown people!

We wanted to make sure you can mark your calendars for our next full group gathering at the Community Room, Watertown Public Library, on **Sunday June 1st at 1:00.**

.More details to come the closer we get to the meeting.

Tom Rusch, on behalf of Welcoming
Watertown

BOOK OF LIFE



Birthdays in June

Nora Kuehl	06/02
Donna Schmutzler	06/05
Joyce Uglow	06/08
Melissa Mattke	06/12
Kathryn Driessen	06/17
Suzanne Harms	06/17
Kaye Piotrowski	06/23
Maggie Markus	06/28
Abby Miller	06/30

Birthdays in July

Tyler Oxford	07/01
Rowan Blaszak	07/05
Jeff Nicholas	07/08
Emryn Milburn	07/11
Judy Draeger	07/18
Russell Ehnert	07/20
Evan Chowanec	07/22
Paige Driessen	07/25
Calvin Edwards	07/25
Hailey Zabel	07/27
Ryan Scheunemann	07/27

The Gaston Memorial Garden Makeover



October 3, 2024



May 22, 2025

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

Financial Update: GENERAL FUND as of April 30 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	\$17,590	\$20,579	\$19,186	\$23,969	\$21,044	-\$1,858	-\$1,858
February	\$19,604	\$16,034	\$20,579	\$16,049	\$23,969	\$19,106	-\$3,057	-\$4,915
March	\$19,604	\$15,964	\$20,579	\$16,964	\$23,969	\$23,574	-\$6,610	-\$11,525
April	\$19,604	\$14,667	\$20,579	\$14,667	\$23,969	\$19,029	-\$4,362	-\$15,887

June 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Ascension Sunday Holy Communion 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship <i>1:00: Welcoming</i> <i>Watertown/Public Library</i> 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	2 1:00, Staff meets	3	4	5 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast 6:00, Gingerbread 4K graduation	6 OFFICE CLOSED <i>Wis. Conference Annual Meeting →</i>	7 <i>Wis. Conference Annual Meeting</i>
8 Pentecost 9:00 a.m. Last Sr. Choir rehearsal until fall; 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	9 1:30, Rainmaker Committee	10	11	12 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 2-3:00 p.m.- Adult Ed. Study on Revelation 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast	13 OFFICE CLOSED	14
15 Father’s Day 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	16 6:30, Council	17	18 Family Fun Night! 6:00-7:30 VBS Camp Chaos!	19 JUNETEENTH 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 2-3:00 p.m.- Adult Ed. Study on Revelation 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast	20 OFFICE CLOSED 3:00-5:00: Chris & Laura Ross/Yurs – Open House MALLARDS GAME 5:35: Gates Open 6:35 p.m. Game time	21
22 UCC Anniversary Sunday Graduation Recognition 10:00 – WORSHIP;Coffee Fellowship 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	23 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	24 7:00, Gingerbread Board	25	26 10am – Cable TV Broadcast 2-3:00 p.m.- Adult Ed. Study on Revelation 5pm – Cable TV Broadcast	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28
29 Open & Affirming Sunday 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 6:00 - Cable TV Broadcast	30		 Loose Offering: Wisconsin Council of Churches			