

The Hilltop Chimes

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

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ross, Pastor

Cell: (920) 838-5630

Email: rev.fatmoses@gmail.com

Church Office hours: M-TH 10-noon and 1-

Office Phone/Fax: 920-261-6213

Website: www.firstcongwttn.org

September 2025



From the Pastor's Desk

You may have heard me talk about the importance of “showing up.” I have come to believe it is a sentiment at the very heart of Christian discipleship and ministry—we are called to show up with head and heart for worship; we are

called to show up compassionately in relationship with others; and we are called to show up to stick up for the most vulnerable, marginalized, and oppressed. *Showing up*, in a nutshell, is what I think Christianity is all about. (In theological terms, it's also exactly what happens in the incarnation—God shows up to begin the work of making things right.)

As many of you know, I've been spending significant time in efforts through Building a Welcoming Watertown at establishing a community overnight warming shelter in town. While we're still not there...yet...something happened in August that I want to share.

Folks showed up. They contacted their city council alders, they demonstrated outside City Hall, and they flooded the Common Council meeting on August 19. No fewer than *ten* individuals spoke in favor of setting up an overnight warming shelter in front of a standing-room only chamber. Those who showed up forced those in power to begin addressing this need, just like the persistent widow kept pestering the unjust judge in Jesus' parable in Luke 18.

This is what authentic Christian witness looks like in our time and place. When other voices claim that Christian identity is about speaking only English, kicking out immigrants, attacking ideals of diversity and inclusion, insisting that people are mistaken when

they explain who they were born to be, destroying God's creation, stocking up weapons of war, and “removing” the homeless in whatever way they find convenient, we are called to hear and act on the truly prophetic message in our midst. The God we know in Jesus Christ—the God of love and liberation—has nothing to do with the spirit of white Christian nationalism. And because of the powers and principalities of this present darkness, we are called to continue to serve as communities of resistance, just as the early church under the Roman Empire.

On August 19, the communities of resistance in Watertown—under whatever label we want to use, faith-based or otherwise—came together and showed what this resistance can look like locally, advocating for the unhoused who are here now. May it be only the beginning.

—Chris

Cell: (920) 838-5630

Email: rev.fatmoses@gmail.com



Prayers for the Palestinian People

By Dale Bakke

The conflict in Gaza and now in the West Bank is a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. The Israeli government is not allowing aid, neither food nor medical, to be delivered to Gaza in spite of the fact that people are starving, suffering and dying from lack of medical care. All of this in spite of the fact that over 62,000 Palestinians have been killed, over 18,000 of them are innocent children. Over 200,000 Palestinians have been injured, but the Israeli government continues to terrorize traumatized Palestinians. The Israeli Government continues to

(Prayers for the Palestinian... continued)

allow and even encourages settlers to confiscate Palestinian owned land in both Gaza and the West Bank. The Israeli army has killed over 200 journalists supposedly protected under international law surely to control the messaging, or lack thereof, and not allow any independent verification of what the real situation in Gaza is. As a Christian and loving, compassionate human being, we can't be blind to the suffering inflicted on the Palestinian people by the government of Israel. I encourage you, too, to study this as I have not only for myself but as a representative of our church.

Recently Speaker Mike Johnson of the House of Representatives was in Israel and during a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu commended the Israeli government for allowing settlers to confiscate land that will split the West Bank in two portions and limit Palestinian's autonomy to travel in the West Bank. He offered this acceptance in spite of UN resolutions and International courts stating that this is not allowed. Speaker Johnson said nothing about the Gaza strip where Palestinians are being forced into crowded areas amongst ruined infrastructure that is only a fraction of the area of the strip lacking sufficient services for the two million people.

In the past week, President Trump has ordered that the United States no longer allow visas to be issued to injured Palestinian children seeking medical care. Most of these children were injured by American bombs and military hardware paid for with our tax dollars. American policies are allowing the mass killing and maiming of innocent Palestinians to continue, displacing millions of innocent Palestinians and forcing them to leave their homes if they are not already destroyed.

Back in June of 2024 at the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ a resolution was passed requesting that congregations study the "Declaration for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel Resolution". This was in response to the adoption of this Resolution at the 2021 General Synod of the United Church of Christ (national) prior to the Hamas attacks on October 7, 2023. The crisis has become more critical and more amplified since this time

with the endless Israeli bombardments and military exercises. The Israeli government's refusal to allow any significant aid has created a dire humanitarian crisis that the United States is complicit in supporting.

For further information or to give a donation in support of Palestinian basic care please visit <https://wcucc.org/palestine-justice-working-group/>.

Solar Panel Report: Solar SunDay

We are well on our way to completing the first phase of the City's multiple permits process to begin installation of our new solar panel array, including work nearing completion of a survey of our church property and securing the services of Lemke Fence Co., which submitted the winning bid to build the City zoning requirement of a fence enclosure.

As we discussed during our July Congregational meeting, we are seeking assistance from each of you, as you are able, to contribute toward our capital campaign to help fund this worthwhile project. We are estimating that this project will cost around

\$175,000 in total before any tax credits. We are asking you to joyfully consider a financial pledge to be delivered during a **special "Solar SunDay Sunshine" service on September 21st.**

This month we will provide pledge cards that may be filled out and turned in during our "Solar SunDay Sunshine" service or returned any time in person during office hours, or mailed to the church office, if that is your preference.

Your tax-deductible contribution will help our Church reduce the price of our continually rising electrical power cost and (as good stewards) this smart investment will also help reduce our environmental footprint for many, many years to come.

Thank you in advance for your consideration, thoughtfulness, and kind generosity! Your questions and comments are welcomed.

Blessings to all, Jim Ortega, Moderator



Notes from the Music Director

My heartfelt thanks go out to our August special musicians: Evan Chowanec, trumpet; Jennie Ortega, flute; and Bill Edington, trumpet. Thank you to Tom Rusch and Cooper Wood for providing our keyboard music and Tom for accompanying one special music selection during the month.

Senior Choir will be starting September 7th. We meet at 9:00 a.m. in the choir room and meet weekly unless noted ahead of time. (We will not rehearse or sing in service on September 21st; James and Jim Ortega will be our special musicians that morning.)

We can always use more singers. There are no special requirements to be in the choir. Familiarity with music reading is helpful but not required. In the past few years, I have been choosing and adapting the music that I use to the skills of the singers that attending. We generally work on 2-3 pieces of music each week, so that we are working ahead and have several rehearsals on the same piece of music before singing it in a service.

My main belief as a church musician is that providing music, including singing in choir, is another way of serving the congregation and giving an offering to God. We not only serve as leaders of the hymns but also add an anthem to the service which is intended to expand upon the theme of the lectionary or service.

You do not have to be a church member or make a weekly commitment to be a part of the choir. High school age and above are welcome (and I would consider advanced 8th graders.) Drop-ins are certainly welcome. And, if you play an instrument, please let me know. You never know when there might be an opportunity to play.

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

Tech Opportunities

Thank you to Dale Bakke and Pamela Martin who recorded during August.

We record each service and are looking to expand our camera operators. 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
jaemusiclover@gmail.com
c.920-988-2416



From the Coordinator
of Children and
Youth Ministries



SUNDAY SCHOOL: Ages Preschool - grade 5

With the school year approaching, we will be starting our Sunday School class on **September 7th from 9-9:45**. Sunday school is for anyone from Kindergarten-5th grade. Watch for registration forms in the Narthex.

We will be continuing our walk thru the Bible this year. If you are interested in teaching Sunday school, please let me know!

Melissa Mattke
Or contact me or 262-719-1383
josc.mom@hotmail.com/



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 call her at (920) 296-1378

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

SEPTEMBER SCHEDULE:

Sept. 7: Bake: Ellen Brown, Dale Bakke
Serve: Dale Bakke

Sept. 14: Bake: Brian Cowan, Jennifer Rhodes
Serve: Brian Cowan, Jennifer Rodes

Sept. 21: Bake: Tom Rusch, Diane Koch
Serve: Sue Harms

Sept. 28: Bake: Joce Uglow, Barb Weiss
Serve: Jesse Fremont



The Fun Team was formed to increase our congregation's morale, camaraderie, and collaboration. In a stressful world, we all need to smile and play. Thank you to all who have participated in the *Fun Team*

challenges. We have lifted our spirits while making Gratitude Chains and playing games. We shared jokes, riddles, and would you rather... situations.

Until the end of the year, the Fun Team will be creating new and fun ways for us all to come together and have a good time after services. *On the first and second Sundays of the month*, we will be setting up a fun table with new, funny, creative, and silly adventures for you to try.

We have enjoyed your feedback and look forward to having more laughter-filled times with you.

Pam Martin & Jennifer Bakke



The summer is winding down and children will be heading off to school soon! We had a blast this summer with all of our grade schoolers. Thank you for letting us borrow Fellowship Hall this summer!

We had so much fun playing in the sprinklers and getting outside when we could. The air quality and the heat held us inside more often than we wanted to, but we had fun to make indoors on those days.

As we gear up for the school year, we are still pretty full in our enrollment. We will be starting our new 4K class on September 4th. We are now the only half-day program in the Watertown School District.

We are always in need of 100% juice, paper plates, scrap paper and Walmart/Amazon gift cards. If you would like to come volunteer to read to one of our classes, please let me know.

---Melissa Mattke, Director

Gingerbread Phone: 920-261-9727

Email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com Website: www.gingerbreadchildcare.com

Blood Drive

Thursday, September 18th

Our turn to host the Versiti Blood drive is

Thursday, September 18th from 1-6:00 p.m..

We only have 2 people on the schedule so far, so please sign up soon! Our goal is 12 people.

It is so important to keep the blood supply in good standing. All of the donations stay local! Here is the link to sign up:

https://donateblood.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/11605114

Melissa Mattke

Or contact me or 262-719-1383

iosc.mom@hotmail.com/



These days we are seeing “hard times” fall pretty hard on struggling families. Our Love Fund is an anchor for our church’s ability to care for individuals and families in need.

However, *at this time*, we are severely challenged to provide for specific needs in our community. Housing, food insecurity and transportation.

- **Housing:** Includes rent/security deposits. The uptick in lack of housing opportunities and the loss of employment. 2 week delays/wait for their first paycheck. Domestic Abuse victims seeking help. Winter and summer temperatures are life threatening for those whose only shelter is their car.
- **Emergency Utility Assistance:** we have met with families who have had gas & electric shut off during the extreme heat of the summer. They work with We Energies on budget billing but still fall behind.
- **Extreme food insecurity:** we are able to provide Gift cards for Groceries
- **Transportation to work:** we are able to provide “Fuel Only” gas cards

We are seeing people who have NEVER had to ask for help before and have suddenly fallen short providing food and housing for themselves and their families. Locating affordable housing in Watertown is a crisis as more families are homeless and living in their cars.

(We are not alone. We work with our contacts through case workers in Jefferson and Dodge County, CAC Community Action Coalition and the caseworker at the Police Department. In addition, we also coordinate assistance with St. Paul’s Episcopal church, the Moravian churches and Immanuel ELCA’s Hometown Missions.)

“Love Offering” Envelopes are always available at the entrance to the sanctuary. Thank you for the continued support during time like these.

LOOSE COIN MISSION SEPTEMBER -OCTOBER

New Beginnings Domestic Violence Services



Council has designated September and October loose coin offering to New Beginnings Domestic Violence Services in Whitewater.

For details check of the link listed belows

<https://www.newbeginningswalworth.com/>

You may also use “Loose Coin Offering” Envelopes that are always available at the entrance to the sanctuary. Thank you for the continued support during time like these.

THE BREAD BASKET PANTRY

Is 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/>

Saturday, September 20th Centering Retreat



~ CENTERING RETREAT ~

AFFIRMING YOUR COURAGE WITHIN

September 20th 2025

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

20 minute breakout sessions

First Congregational United Church of Christ

120 Kuckkan Lane Watertown, WI 53094

In these challenging times, come awaken your inner strength, and restore your hope among a community of others who are looking for the same. Take your pick of workshops below. Try more than one!

1. **Labyrinth by Jennifer Bakke** –walk a handhooked labyrinth from St. Bernard's
Or - Finger walk a Handheld labyrinth
2. **Chair yoga – qigong by Nancy Bauer** – gentle, simple movements for all levels
3. **Lectio divina by Georgia Irre** – guided scriptural meditation
4. **Singing bowls by Angel Seibel** (donations accepted)) – bathe in the healing of sound

Register by contacting Nancy at 920-988-7016 or nayobauer@yahoo.com

Choose the workshop of your choice or indicate **all**

There is no charge to register but we are asking **donations to be used for the Building a welcoming watertown warming center**



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 September 7th at 1:00.**

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

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@firstcongwtn.org.

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 church website (see 'Media'):
<https://firstcongwtn.org/> Services posted on Monday

Book of Life

September Birthdays

09/01 Colette Kuehl
 09/02 Karla Bakke
 09/04 Carol Yager
 09/05 Kristin Chowanec
 09/06 Lori Schwager
 09/09 Norm Uglow
 09/18 Keegan Behlke
 09/20 Dale Bakke
 09/20 Owen Behlke
 09/22 Daryll Boettcher
 09/23 Josie Mack
 09/23 Tyler Chowanec
 09/24 Constance Swenson
 09/25 Reed Larson
 09/25 Carlee Winkelman
 09/27 Alexia Asher
 09/30 Jennifer Rhodes
 09/30 Brody Wood



Hungry caterpillar

October Birthdays


10/01 Jeffrey Pauli
 10/02 Jennie Ortega
 10/02 Alexandra Davis
 10/03 Greg Kulick
 10/03 John Welbourne
 10/10 Stacy Winkelman
 10/11 Louise Lemke
 10/11 Bruce Bentz
 10/12 Jack Mattke
 10/13 Pamela Lohaus
 10/13 Andrew Behlke
 10/15 Clarence Zabel III
 10/15 Ayden Kulick
 10/16 Easton Schumacher
 10/18 Camie Wood
 10/19 Roger Martin
 10/21 Joseph Schumacher
 10/21 Mari Ulatowski
 10/21 Janet Stangler



Financial Report from the Trustees – As of July 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	\$17,590	\$20,579	\$19,186	\$23,969	\$21,044	-\$1,858	
February	\$19,604	\$16,034	\$20,579	\$16,049	\$23,969	\$19,106	-\$3,057	
March	\$19,604	\$15,964	\$20,579	\$16,964	\$23,969	\$23,574	-\$6,610	
April	\$19,604	\$14,667	\$20,579	\$14,667	\$23,969	\$19,029	-\$4,362	
May	\$19,604	\$15,096	\$20,579	\$16,311	\$23,969	\$24,117	-\$7,806	
June	\$19,604	\$13,757	\$20,579	\$14,007	\$23,969	\$33,617	-\$19,610	
July	\$19,604	\$14,524	\$20,579	\$15,524	\$23,969	\$21,723	-\$6,199	-\$49,502

September 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 LABOR DAY OFFICE CLOSED	2 Pastor returns from vacation	3	4 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	5 OFFICE CLOSED	6)
7 Communion Sunday 9 a.m. Sr.Choir rehearses 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP, Communion Coffee Fellowship 1:00- Building a Welcoming Watertown 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	8 1:00, Staff meets 6:00, BSA troop 11	9	10	11 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	12 OFFICE CLOSED	13
14 9 a.m. Sr.Choir rehearses 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	15 6:00, BSA troop 11 6:30 pm, COUNCIL	16	17	18 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast BLOOD DRIVE 1-6:00 in Fellowship Hall	19 OFFICE CLOSED	20 
21 Solar SunDay Sunshine 9 a.m. Sr.Choir rehearses 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP, Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	22 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 6:00-7:30, BSA troop 11 hosts Cub Scout Pack 111 Sign Up Meeting. 6:30, Wttn Brass Quartet Rehearsal	23	24	25 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27
28 9 a.m. Sr.Choir rehearses 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	29 6:00, BSA troop 11 6:30, Wttn Brass Quartet Rehearsal	30	September and October Loose Coin: New Beginnings Domestic Violence Services in Whitewater. 