



The Hilltop Chimes

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

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**ALL ARE
WELCOME
HERE**



October 2025

From the Pastor's Desk



Among the many distressing news stories in recent months, one I can't stop reflecting on is the current presidential administration's attack on the Smithsonian History Museum.

Every display and every exhibit are to be reviewed for ideological conformity—anything seen as disparaging to the United States qualifies as a candidate for revision. From discussions at local school board policy meetings, it appears that this thinking will also be applied to curricula in Watertown public schools.

Such an approach sickens me—not just as an enthusiast for learning history, but also as a theologian. Although they are topics that we may like to avoid—concepts of *sin* and *evil* remain essential to Christian calls for repentance, redemption, and transformation. Traditional theology even holds the idea of *original sin*—the idea that all of humanity is automatically born into sin, so the notion that a whole people can be sinful—or find themselves trapped in sinfulness—is no new radical teaching.

But, for some reason, the process of studying, naming, and learning from those sins is getting sidelined. As one social media meme reads, “Some Christians expect to trace our sins back to Adam, but not to 1619.” Now, in case you don't know, the year 1619 gets referenced for a very specific reason: it marked the first time African slaves were brought to North America.

I believe the meaning of original sin remains true—not that we are born *with* sin, but that we have all been born *into* sin, that is sinful systems, patterns of the way we have structured our lives like systemic racism (whether in the form of slavery, Jim & Jane Crow, police brutality, or the prison-industrial complex). But 1619 doesn't really go back far enough. If we're going to apply a concept of inherited sin to our national history, we have to go back to 1492, when the gigantic American land grab and decimation of Native American indigenous people began, *a process from which we still benefit, and therefore a sin in which we still participate regardless of choice*. Because it is a system—a condition of life—that we haven't figured out how to end, original sin remains a meaningful concept.

But without real history, we wouldn't know that. Without true self-reflection, we wouldn't know how we still participate in historic systems that cause suffering. Make no mistake—colonization and genocide of Native Americans was a structural sin; and so are systemic racism, patriarchy, poverty, ableism, heterosexism, the presumption of cis normativity, cycles of warfare and violence, the ecological devastation of God's creation, bigotry of all kinds, and others we could name and more we still need to identify.

To do that, we need history, not ideological brainwashing. As people of faith, we continue to be called to support truth and learning so we can work toward repentance, transformation, and reconciliation with all.



-Chris
Totenfest - Service of Remembrance

Each year on the first Sunday of November we observe **Totenfest**, a special service of remembrance for those who have gone on before us. You are invited to send the name(s) of any loved one who has died since November 1,

2024. Please send their name and include their birthdate and date of death to Laurel in the church office no later than Wednesday October 29th.

On Sunday, November 2nd, during our 10:00 a.m. worship, the name of your loved one will read, the church bell will toll and you and others from your family are invited to come forward to light a candle in their memory.

Then the rest of the congregation is invited to come forward and light candles in remembrance of all those who have passed.

Although this is a prayerful and quiet moment in our worship, it is truly a celebration of life and all that these Saints have meant to us.

"Grief never ends ... but it changes. It is a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, nor a lack of faith ... It is the price of love."

NOW HIRING: We are currently seeking to hire a part-time Front Desk/Communications Coordinator for 24 hours per week

On behalf of the Employee Relations Committee, I'm sharing some anticipated changes in our Church Office roles. We are currently seeking to hire a part-time **Front Desk/Communications Coordinator** for 24 hours per week.

This role encompasses a variety of essential duties to support our church community. Responsibilities include greeting and assisting visitors to the Church Office, managing incoming calls and emails, coordinating communications for church events, regularly updating website content, and producing, editing, and sharing weekly church service video recordings. The coordinator will also oversee internal and external communications, including signage, bulletins, printed materials, direct mail, email, social media, web postings, and other platforms. Additionally, the role involves assisting

with general office tasks as needed to ensure smooth day-to-day operations.

Ideal candidates will possess strong writing and marketing skills, proficiency with social media platforms and Microsoft Office software, familiarity with website management tools, and excellent interpersonal abilities. Experience in communications or public relations is preferred, along with a demonstrated ability to learn video editing and manage multiple projects in a dynamic environment.

Interested applicants are encouraged to submit their resume to ERC.FirstCongUCCWtn@gmail.com \ for consideration

After 36 years of dedicated service to our Congregation, Laurel Bentz, Office Administrator, has requested to decrease her hours. We are deeply grateful for Laurel's decades of faithful commitment and look forward to her continued contributions in a new capacity. While some of her current responsibilities are shifting to the new Front Desk/Communications Coordinator position, she will continue to perform accounts receivable duties for the church and will also work to archive materials—a task that has not been performed in quite some time and is invaluable to our church's legacy. Laurel's wealth of knowledge about our church's history will serve us well as she takes on this important work. Laurel will begin her new role as **Accounts Receivable Specialist & Church Historian** by early fall, following the onboarding of our new Front Desk/Communications Coordinator

Kate Driessen, Employee Relations Committee Member

Pastor Chris is Out of the Office:

Chris will be on vacation Friday, October 10th – Saturday, November 1st.

During that time the Rev. Katie Van Der Linden, Pastor at Ebenezer Moravian Church will be available for pastoral care emergencies. She can be reached at (610) 442-3790.

Solar Panel Report: Solar SunDay

Dear Church friends and family:

We sought your assistance, to contribute toward a capital campaign to help fund our solar project. We estimate that this project will cost around \$175,000 in total before any tax credits.

And, we are proud to report on the incredible generosity of our members as of this past Solar SunDay! A total of \$100,004 over the next three years has been pledged! Therefore, after the 30% federal tax credit is realized next year, we will only have about \$22,500 of the project cost unaccounted for between now and the close of 2027.

Thank you so much for your thoughtful and generous giving!

On behalf of the Solar Committee.

Dale Bakke, Tom Rusch, Adam Markus, Bill Edington,
Jesse Fremont, Jim Ortega

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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



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.

OCTOBER SCHEDULE:

Oct 5th: Bake: Brian Cowan, Jennifer Rhodes
Serve: Brian Cowan, Jennifer Rhodes

Oct 12th: Bake: Brian Cowan, Jennifer Rhodes
Serve: Brian Cowan, Jennifer Rhodes

Oct 19th: Bake: Barb Weiss , Dale Bakke
Serve: Fran Milburn

Oct 26th: Bake: Diane Koch , Ellen Brown
Serve: Dale Bakke

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Building a Welcoming Community Sponsors "Milk, Learn How your Milk Gets To Your Table"

Hello, Welcoming Watertown people!

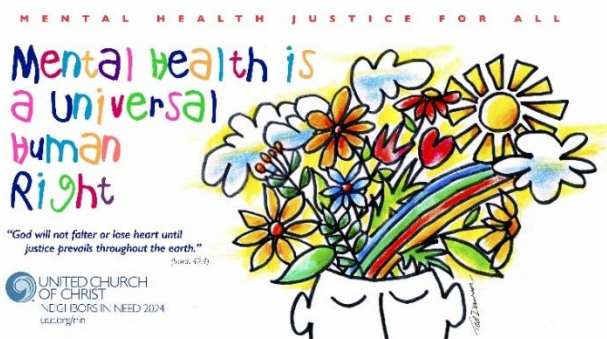
Sunday, October 5th come to Watertown Public Library and learn from author Ruth Conniff about the relationships among dairy farmers, dairy workers and communities.

She will discuss her book, "Milked: How an American Crisis Brought Together Midwestern Dairy farmers and Mexican workers.



Where: Watertown Public Library Large
Community Room

When: Sunday, October 5th 1-3 p.m.



October Special UCC Mission Offering

What is the "Neighbors in Need" special mission offering?

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice.

Who participates in Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering?

Anyone can give a donation by contributing to the Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering (NIN SMO) either through their congregation's annual collection drive or anytime online at ucc.org/nin.

How is the offering used?

Through this offering we express our deep commitment to reaching out and touching our neighbors with justice and compassion. This allows us to speak prophetically to those in power and to advocate for a society where all people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. In the spirit of Christ, we will seek to confront evil in the world and to alleviate suffering. We will do this through direct service as well as advocacy.



UNDIES SUNDAY IN OCTOBER

Back by popular demand! Undies Sundays are in October ! Once again, our church holds this special drive to collect packages of new underwear and socks for kids in our local grade schools.

Sometimes children come to school without spare underwear and socks. The schools are so grateful for the donations we deliver. All children's sizes are welcome!

Let's fill the Undies Collection Cart in the narthex.

--Denyce Derleth

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KOATS FOR KIDS (AND ADULTS)

What: New or gently used coats, scarves, mittens, gloves, snow pants

Where: Drop Off at church Sunday mornings, or at the Office M-TH 10-4:00.

When: Starting October 1st.

LEARN MORE about this annual collection

visit: <https://www.cacscw.org/koats-for-kids/>

Jennifer Rhodes at 920-296-1378
Chair of First Congregational UCC
"Coats for Kids" Campaign



BLOOD DRIVE REPORT

Our blood drive last month was a slow one! There were only 4 donors. We will get our schedule for next year soon, please plan to sign up and donate.

Watch the bulletin/website for information on the next drive.

--Melissa Mattke



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/>



The new school year is in full swing. We are a full house, we have multiple children on waitlists. We are working hard to help all of the families in the community. If you would like to come read a book or do an art project with our classes, please let me know. .

---Melissa Mattke, Director

Gingerbread Phone: 920-261-9727

Email: gbchildcare120@gmail.com Website:

www.gingerbreadchildcare.com

From the Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries



SUNDAY SCHOOL: Ages Preschool - grade 5

We have been working our way through the Bible the last few weeks. If you would like to join us we meet at 9-945am on Sunday mornings. We would love to have you join our group if you are in grades K-5!

YOUTH GROUP: Middle School and High School

If you are interested in participating in Youth Group, please let me know! We would be meeting on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings, or Sundays after church.

Melissa Mattke

Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries

josc.mom@hotmail.com 262-719-1383

☞ DAILY DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS ☞

Upper Room & These Days devotional booklets are available in the church Narthex. You can stop by during the week during office hours or pick them up on Sunday. All are welcome to pick one up, (\$1 donation helps to defray the cost.)

-- Laurel W Bentz



Notes from the Music Director

My heartfelt thanks go out to Jennie & Jim Ortega who provided special music on our Solar Sunday, with an appropriate selection, "Morning Has Broken." Thank you to Tom Rusch and Cooper Wood for providing our keyboard music and accompanying the choir during September.

Senior Choir has started at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings in the choir room and meets weekly, unless noted ahead of time. 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 attend. 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.

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 musically enthusiastic or advanced 8th graders.) Drop-ins are also welcome. If you play an instrument, please let me know. You never know when there might be an opportunity to play.

Church musicians, vocal or instrumental, are providing ministry in another way. 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 the service.

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



Tech Opportunities

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

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



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

Book of Life



October Birthdays

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

The Euterpe Music Club is holding their October program meeting on October 6, at 7:00 pm at First Congregational UCC church. The program features the music of Watertown Brass Quintet.

The program is open to the public and is free of charge, but donations are accepted for the Euterpe scholarship fund, which helps area students attend summer music camp or college.

POSTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Church council meets each month and the minutes from meetings will be posted on the bulletin board in the office area hallway.

If you have questions or concerns please feel free to speak with our Moderator, Jim Ortega

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

In order to get this church communication out and in people's hands before the 1st of the month. These are the new deadlines:
October 20th for November newsletter

Quarterly Giving Statements: 3rd quarter giving statements will be delivered (first class /email) the 2nd week of October. Please check your email around October 9th. Look it over and contact Laurel in the church office if you have questions.

Reminder: the last day for donations to be included in 2025 is Sunday, December 28th.

Financial Report from the Trustees – As of August 30., 2025

Note: This report has accounting adjustments that changed monthly yearly gains/losses.

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	\$19,590	\$20,579	\$21,186	\$23,969	\$21,044	\$142	\$142
February	\$19,604	\$18,034	\$20,579	\$18,049	\$23,969	\$19,106	-\$1,057	-\$915
March	\$19,604	\$17,964	\$20,579	\$18,964	\$23,969	\$23,574	-\$4,610	-\$5,525
April	\$19,604	\$16,667	\$20,579	\$16,667	\$23,969	\$19,029	-\$2,362	-\$7,887
May	\$19,604	\$17,096	\$20,579	\$18,311	\$23,969	\$24,117	-\$5,806	-\$13,693
June	\$19,604	\$15,757	\$20,579	\$17,200	\$23,969	\$33,617	-\$16,417	-\$30,110
July	\$19,604	\$16,524	\$20,579	\$17,524	\$23,969	\$21,741	-\$4,217	-\$34,327
August	\$19,604	\$21,289	\$20,579	\$21,804	\$23,969	\$17,488	\$4,316	-\$30,011

October 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Pastor Chris is Out of the Office: Chris will be on vacation Friday, October 10th – Saturday, November 1st. During that time the Rev. Katie Van Der Linden, Pastor at Ebenezer Moravian Church will be available for pastoral care emergencies. She can be reached at (610) 442-3790.			1	2 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4
5 World Communion Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; 9 a.m. <i>Sunday School</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP ; Communion Coffee Fellowship 1:00-3:00 Author Program. @ Public Library (Building Welcoming Wttn) 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	6 1:00 p.m. Staff meeting 7:00: EUTERPE Music Club Concert: Watertown Brass Quintet	7	8	9 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	10 OFFICE CLOSED Pastor Vacation	11 Pastor Vacation
12 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; 9 a.m. <i>Sunday School</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP; guest, Rev. Shelby Jeigy Coffee Fellowship; Pastor Vacation 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	13 Indigenous People's Day Pastor Vacation	14 Pastor Vacation	15 Pastor Vacation	16 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast Pastor Vacation	17 OFFICE CLOSED Pastor Vacation	18 Pastor Vacation
19 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; 9 a.m. <i>Sunday School</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP; guest: Ariana Hones Coffee Fellowship; Pastor Vacation 11:30: Social Justice Team 1:00-Building Welcoming Wttn (library) 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 6:30 pm, COUNCIL Pastor Vacation	21 Pastor Vacation	22 Pastor Vacation	23 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast Pastor Vacation	24 United Nations Day OFFICE CLOSED Pastor Vacation	25 Noon-3:00 BooBash at the Towne Square Pastor Vacation
26 Reformation Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; 9 a.m. <i>Sunday School</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP; Melissa Mattke, worship leader Coffee Fellowship; Pastor Vacation 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	27 Pastor Vacation	28 Pastor Vacation	29 Reminder: Send Names to be included in Totenfest Pastor Vacation	30 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast Pastor Vacation	31 All Hallow's Eve Pastor Vacation	November 1 Pastor Vacation