



The Hilltop Chimes

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

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

Church Office hours:
M-TH 10-noon and 1-4
Office Phone/Fax: 920-261-6213

February 2026



From the Pastor's Desk

Although it may feel like we just got through all the chaos of Christmas and the novelty of a new year, the truth is that already in February, Lent looms for the church, daring to remind us of the depth of the discipleship to which we are called as Christians.

The accounts from our Gospel readings during the Lenten season usually take us on a journey between the mountaintop experience of the Transfiguration (observed on February 15 this year) to Jesus and the disciples' entrance into Jerusalem for the Passover festival to begin the saga of Holy Week on Palm Sunday (observed on March 29 this year).

That journey is not an easy one. It is a journey of preparation not for glory, but for confrontation with the Empire of Rome—an empire that took territory at will, instilled a brutal class system privileging its own preferred citizens over against the poor and people from other lands, demanded ultimate loyalty to its regime, and was run by a supreme tyrant that claimed religious sanction for every oppressive act. One of the central messages of Lent is that the journey of discipleship is a path of preparation for a showdown between the Reign of God and the Empire of this world.

Perhaps you see parallels with our own situation as followers of Jesus in 2026. As part of preparation for acts of faith-based confrontation, a program called the Palm Sunday Path has invited all of us to reflect more deeply this Lenten season

on this kind of discipleship of action on behalf of others.

We will begin this path together on the evening of Ash Wednesday, February 18 in worship. Then on the next five Wednesdays, we will dive into a single scripture passage each week selected by the Palm Sunday Path for Lenten study. These gatherings will be held at 1 p.m. at church and begin on February 25.

We live in troubled times. To respond faithfully, we are called to ground ourselves in a practice of discipleship we find in our scriptures. Please know that you are invited to come and take part, as always.

--Chris

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ross, Pastor

Pastoral concerns:

Please call(don't text) his cell (920) 838-5630.

Email: rev.fatmoses@gmail.com

****Reminder that Chris does not use texting.**

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

From Church Council:

Sunday, February 8th 2026: Our Congregational Annual Meeting will be held at 11:00 am. We encourage all active members to join in to approve our annual report.

The reports will be available on Sunday, February 1st in the Narthex. (they will also be emailed out so check your email.). Please have your copy on hand for the meeting.

---Jim Ortega, Moderator



Notes from the Music Director

Some delayed December thanks to Emily and James Ortega, Jackson Palmer, Dani Lynch, Eliza and Penelope Zabel, who all sang with the choir on Christmas Eve. Tom and I played In the Bleak Mid-Winter for special music for the Blue Christmas service, In January, even though we were suffering smaller numbers for a variety of reasons, we continued to sing each week. We also hosted the pick-up choir for the ecumenical MLK worship service with a total of eleven singers. Cooper Wood played for our Jan. 18th service, which allowed Tom some time away, and of course my continuing thanks goes to Tom Rusch, who serves the music program of our church in so many ways!

Senior Choir continues 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 and numbers 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 or special music to the service which is intended to expand upon the theme of the lectionary or the service, or provide music as a backdrop for prayerful meditation.

BEHIND THE ANTHEMS

The choir recently sang part of the song printed below and I just wanted to give a little background and the complete verses. "**Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing-day**" is an English carol usually attributed as "traditional"; its first written appearance is in William B. Sandys' *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern* of 1833.^[1] However, it is almost certainly of a much earlier date; Studwell (2006) places it in the 16th century.^[2] Cahill (2006) based on the phrase "to see the legend of my play" speculates that the text may be based on an earlier version associated with a mystery play of the late medieval period.^[a]

Numerous composers have made original settings of it or arranged the traditional tune, including Gustav Holst, John Gardner (op. 75.2, 1965), Igor Stravinsky, David Willcocks, John Rutter, Philip Lawson, James Burton,^[3] Ronald Corp, Philip Stopford, Andrew Carter, Jamie W. Hall and Jack Gibbons.

The verses of the hymn progress through the story of Jesus told in his own voice.^{[4][5]} An innovative feature of the telling is that Jesus' life is repeatedly characterized as a dance. This device was later used in the modern hymn "Lord of the Dance". (from Wikipedia)

Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance;

Chorus (sung after each verse)
*Sing, oh! my love, oh! my love, my love, my love,
This have I done for my true love.*

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance
Thus was I knit to man's nature
To call my true love to my dance.

In a manger laid, and wrapped I was
So very poor, this was my chance
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass
To call my true love to my dance.

(continued →)

Then afterwards baptized I was;
The Holy Ghost on me did glance,
My Father's voice heard I from above,
To call my true love to my dance.

Into the desert I was led,
Where I fasted without substance;
The Devil bade me make stones my bread,
To have me break my true love's dance.

The Jews on me they made great suit,
And with me made great variance,
Because they loved darkness rather than light,
To call my true love to my dance.

For thirty pence Judas me sold,
His covetousness for to advance:
Mark whom I kiss, the same do hold!
The same is he shall lead the dance.

Before Pilate the Jews me brought,
Where Barabbas had deliverance;
They scourged me and set me at nought,
Judged me to die to lead the dance.

Then on the cross hanged I was,
Where a spear my heart did glance;
There issued forth both water and blood,
To call my true love to my dance.

Then down to hell I took my way
For my true love's deliverance,
And rose again on the third day,
Up to my true love and the dance.

Then up to heaven I did ascend,
Where now I dwell in sure substance
On the right hand of God, that man
May come unto the general dance.

.....

God of the Movements and Martyrs

On Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday, we sang this anthem/hymn which was "Written in honor of the 85th anniversary of the North Carolina Council of Churches in 2020.

The council was formed in 1935 to address racial injustice, and continues to work for peace, justice, equity, and inclusion. The hymn honors Christians who have been working for a better world for generations, because of their faith, and invites all of us to join in that sacred work."

Interestingly, this hymn has eight different arrangements in different voicings and styles that are available, with the version we sang being more in the contemporary Praise and Worship style while using Progressive Theology throughout its lyrics.

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

Tech Opportunities_Videographer:

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

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 (feel free to text)



From the Coordinator of
Children and Youth Ministries

Sunday School: we continue meeting
at 9 a.m. Sunday mornings.

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



✓ **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.

✓ **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 is 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/>

✓ **January - February Loose Coin:**



January and February loose coin offering will go to Building a Welcoming Watertown's **Emergency Warming Shelter Program**. (See page 5)

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: "Warming Shelter"



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 Sue Harms at robsue900@charter.net or call her at (920) 261-7710

FEBRUARY

2/1	Serve: Fran Milburn	Bake: Diane Koch
2/8	Serve: Jesse Fremont	Bake: Pam Martin
2/15	Serve Jerold Martinez	Bake: Joyce Uglow
2/22	Serve: Lexi Davis	Bake: Diane Scheunemann

Our Love Fund Hard at Work

As we closed out 2025 I am proud to report that your gifts to the fund were far greater than I could imagine! The challenges faced in 2025 were expected to increase in the new year and it turns out the #1 need was for **rent**. Rent increased for all of the folks who came in for help. They stretch their dollars while the cost of groceries increases.

We hear from those who have lost their home or apartment and now they start from scratch. They looked for work, then wait 2 weeks for the first paycheck. Some come to us while living in their cars while at the same time going to work so they save funds to rent. We've help with food, rent, gas and resources they can pursue for county aid. One thing we hear often: *"I have never had to ask for this kind of help. Things were okay and then I got laid off."*

When you receive the Annual Report there will be financial details of what the Love Fund monies have gone to so please take some time to read through it.

Thank you for your financial support and your faith in the work of our LOVE FUND.

Peace & Grace, Laurel W Bentz

WARM NEIGHBORS WARM HEARTS

In this season of gratitude and giving,
Building a Welcoming Watertown invites you
to help keep our neighbors out of the cold this winter
through a new **Emergency Warming Shelter** program!

YOUR IMPACT:

Every donation helps cover the cost of **overnight housing, food, and other needs** for people in need of emergency housing during frigid temperatures and severe winter weather.

SEND YOUR GIFT TO:

**Immanuel Evangelical
Lutheran Church**
209 North Ninth Street,
Watertown, WI 53094

Checks should be made out to
"Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church" with
"Warming Shelter" in the memo line.

**GIVE
ONLINE**



**BUILDING A
WELCOMING WATERTOWN**
Where We All Belong!

BOOK OF LIFE

February Birthdays



02/02 Sarah Miller
 02/05 Jason Schwager
 02/07 Zachariah Koch
 02/08 Troy Maas Jr
 02/10 Sean Driessen
 02/12 Robert Larson
 02/15 Juanita Edington
 02/18 Nicholas Bathke
 02/18 June Schroeder
 02/21 Sam Vogel
 02/23 Tucker Fremont
 02/25 Rebekah Wood
 02/27 Desiree Livermore



Join us in welcoming **Jody Reamer, Front Desk/Communications Coordinator**. She started January 6th and shares some background with us:

"I live here in Watertown and have most of my life. I am engaged to be married and I have two kids. My son is 25 and my daughter is 11. I am a huge animal lover and we have two rescue dogs and a cat. I have my own side business where I create custom work for clients, from t-shirt quilts to handwoven wall hangings and upcycled clothing. I love anything creative!"

Jody is working with Juanita, learning the basics of our video editing. Laurel is helping her adjust to our office setting, how to work on bulletins, newsletters as well as receptionist duties. Jody will also manage the website and assist with Facebook.

Office hours are being worked out but for now we are maintaining Monday -Thursday 10 a.m. – Noon and 1:00-4:00.

Laurel will continue on staff for Accts Receivable and Church Historical Archives.

Financial Updates - GENERAL FUND December 31, 2024

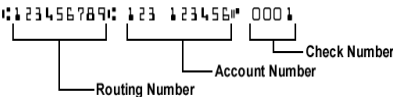
2025	BUDGETED CONTRIBUTIONS	ACTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	BUDGETED TOTAL INCOME	ACTUAL TOTAL INCOME	BUDGETED EXPENSES	ACTUAL EXPENSES	MONTH GAIN OR LOSS	YEAR GAIN OR LOSS
January	\$19,604	\$19,590	\$20,579	\$20,186	\$23,969	\$21,044	-\$858	
February	\$19,604	\$18,049	\$20,579	\$18,049	\$23,969	\$19,106	-\$1,057	
March	\$19,604	\$17,964	\$20,579	\$18,964	\$23,969	\$23,574	-\$4,610	
April	\$19,604	\$16,667	\$20,579	\$16,667	\$23,969	\$19,029	-\$2,362	
May	\$19,604	\$17,096	\$20,579	\$18,311	\$23,969	\$24,117	-\$5,806	
June	\$19,604	\$15,757	\$20,579	\$17,200	\$23,969	\$33,617	-\$16,417	
July	\$19,604	\$16,524	\$20,579	\$17,524	\$23,969	\$21,835	-\$4,311	
August	\$19,604	\$21,290	\$20,579	\$21,805	\$23,969	\$17,488	\$4,317	
September	\$19,604	\$31,925	\$20,579	\$32,905	\$23,969	\$24,288	\$8,617	
October	\$19,604	\$21,153	\$20,579	\$20,653	\$23,969	\$23,660	-\$3,007	
November	\$19,604	\$18,216	\$20,579	\$18,730	\$23,969	\$21,014	-\$2,284	
December	\$19,605	\$16,284	\$20,580	\$17,388	\$23,969	\$18,946	-\$1,558	-\$29,336

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@firstcongwtn.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: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> New authorization <input type="checkbox"/> Change banking information </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation amount <input type="checkbox"/> Discontinue electronic donation </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation date </div> </div>		
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) <input type="checkbox"/> One Time	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: _____ <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">  </div>
	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.

February 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
LOOKING AHEAD: The Congregational Annual Meeting will be held Sunday February 8 th at 11 a.m.						
1 Communion Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP; Communion; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	2 1 :00 p.m. Staff meets	3	4	5 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	6 OFFICE CLOSED	7
8 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP; ANNUAL MEETING ; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	9	10	11	12 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	13 OFFICE CLOSED	14 Valentine's Day
15 Transfiguration Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 11:30, Social Justice Team 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	16 6:30 pm, COUNCIL	17	18 Ash Wednesday 7:00, Worship w/ Imposition of Ashes <i>*Choir rehearses beforehand.</i> Newsletter Deadline	19 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	20 OFFICE CLOSED	21
22 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; Sunday School 10:00 – WORSHIP; Coffee Fellowship 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	23	24	25 1:00: Lenten Bible Study:	26 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	27	28