

The Hilltop Chimes

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

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ross, Pastor

Email: rev.fatmoses@gmail.com

Cell: (920) 838-5630*

*Please CALL Pastor directly with pastoral concerns Don't text.

Church Office hours: M-TH 9 – 11:00 & Noon-2:00

Office Phone/Fax: 920-261-6213

Website: www.firstcongwtttn.org

October 2026

From the Pastor's Desk



Many of you know that October is my favorite month, and many of you also know the main reason: Halloween. I realize it may sound strange coming from a pastor, but Halloween is absolutely my favorite holiday. (I'm happy to

explain why Halloween is the best holiday, but that's better for a conversation...a long conversation.)

For Halloween fans—especially for those of us in Wisconsin—this year is one of the big ones. Exactly one hundred years ago this Halloween, the most famous magician in history—who grew up in Appleton, Wisconsin—died performing a trick gone wrong.

As the story goes, Harry Houdini had promised his wife that—if he could—he would return after death to make contact. As a result, each year on Halloween, she held a seance. (As far as anyone knows, nothing ever came of this plan.)

But Houdini's interest in seances had already been long-established. Because he knew so many tricks from his profession, he could often figure out how those pretending to be psychics were actually pulling off their illusions. He also witnessed how often people in grief were getting exploited. So, he decided to expose such fraud and made quite the name for himself in these pursuits. He even had a famous feud with Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, who did believe in such seances.

Although we're not in the illusion business, I believe we in the church have something in common with Harry Houdini. He was someone who believed in creating moments of awe, but not going so far as insisting it was rooted in real magic. And at the same time, he made it a mission to stick up for folks who were being exploited. He was able to maintain both essential pieces at the same time—an appreciation for amazement and a commitment to truth and fairness. In this way, it's not all that different from our calling as the church.

Happy Halloween! As Wisconsinites, let us remember Harry Houdini this year, but let us always remember to "fear not" no matter the season.

Rev. Dr. Chris Ross, Pastor

Pastor Chris is Out of the Office:

Chris will be on vacation Friday, October 9th – Saturday, October 31st.

During this time, the Rev. Jim Langreder is available for pastoral care emergencies: (262) 309-5086.

**ALL ARE
WELCOME
HERE**



Totenfest - Service of Remembrance Sunday, November 1st



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, 2025.

Please send their name and include their birthdate and date of death to Laurel in the church office no later than Wednesday October 28th.

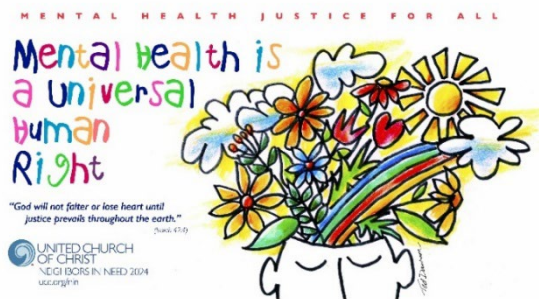
On Sunday, November 1st during our 10:00 a.m. worship, the name of your loved one will read, the church bell will toll and you and others from your family are invited to come forward to light a candle in their memory.

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."

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.



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

OCTOBER SCHEDULE:

- Oct 4th:** Bake: Diane Koch
Serve: Fran Milburn
- Oct 11th:** Bake: Pam Martin
Serve: Jesse Fremont
- Oct 18th:** Bake: Joyce Uglow
Serve: Jerold Martinez
- Oct 25th:** Bake: Diane Scheunemann
Serve: Lexi Davis



THE LOVE FUND: 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.

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

A Big Thank you to those who contributed in September!

BLOOD DRIVE REPORT

We had a successful blood drive in September. We collected 17 units of blood and saved 51 lives! Thank you to everyone that made this a success.

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

--Melissa Mattke

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/>

S.O.S. Support Our Students - Report

The Shared Community Mission Group again collected many school supplies and distributed them to area school children on August 10th and 11th. Tables of school supplies were sorted and displayed on tables surrounding St. Henry's gym. Each registered child with an adult was able to take his or her teacher's list and find all needed supplies. This year we were able to help 344 children.

Some more expensive items have been stored for next year. Following the distribution boxes of extra items were delivered to each school. Also this year, a box was made and delivered to the Menasha school that was destroyed by the tornado on Monday July 27th.

It takes many people and much planning and shopping to accomplish this every year. Besides the thirteen churches and SCMG members we also have community helpers and donations. We are very grateful. Come join us next year.

--Denyce Derleth

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



From the Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Ages Preschool - grade 5

We have had a few weeks of meeting on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m.. Our groups again are small, but we have enjoyed learning, talking about our week and getting to know each other. We have been talking about best friends and how important it is to be a good friend.

Melissa Mattke
Coordinator of Children and Youth Ministries
josc.mom@hotmail.com 262-719-1383



Gingerbread: We are steadily growing at Gingerbread Too. We have 80 children there and 91 at Gingerbread. We are now serving meals at both locations.

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



Notes from the Music Director

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

Thanks to Jesse Fremont who provided special music selections during September. The Choir provided anthems the other three Sundays. We will welcome Judy Kluetzman as guest keyboardist while Tom has a well-deserved day away, so thanks go to Judy and to Tom Rusch for leading our keyboard music this month.

Choir rehearsals began on September 6th at 9:00 a.m. in the choir room. We are always looking to add new singers. We do not have any auditions, and the main requirements are an enjoyment of singing and a desire to help prepare the congregation and ourselves to be ready to do God's work when we leave worship. We generally work on songs for three Sundays before singing them in service and there is a wide variety of musical knowledge and experience in the choir, so I work with who we have and where we are musically.

TECH OPPORTUNITIES

Thank you to our current recording team, Pamela Martin, Dale Bakke, Jerald Martinez, Bill Edington, Juanita Edington, and Laurel Bentz.

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. Please contact Bill Edington or me if you are interested and when you are available. Training is available. Thanks.

I am currently taking care of the editing, production, distribution to Watertown TV, and to Laurel for her further distribution to parishioners and the public via email, Facebook, and our website.

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



2026 Poinsettia Order Form:

It seems early but it's time to plan for the flowers that will beautify the sanctuary for Christmas Eve service. As always, plants will be labeled and you may take yours home that Christmas Eve.

The *order form* is on the next page; copies are available on the narthex table. →

SPECIAL REQUEST

Since Jody Reamer resigned her position in the church office, your Employee Relations Committee has begun a search to fill this part-time position opening. We do naturally need someone to greet and assist church visitors and answer incoming phone calls, but the majority of time will be carrying out various clerical tasks. Thus, potential candidates will require proficiency in Microsoft Office software, and familiarity with social media platforms. This employee will be responsible for preparation of assorted church communications, as well as other duties associated with the management of an office setting.

Based on the candidate, this position may allow flexibility in work hours and possibly some work from home. If candidate requires childcare, such assistance may be provided at the Gingerbread Childcare Center.

If anyone is aware of a potential candidate, please inform any member of the ERC or Pastor Chris. (ERC: Kate Driessen, Rob Harms, Josie Mack and Barb Weiss)

Please pass the word to family members, friends and colleagues.

Thank You.

Financial Report from the Trustees – As of August 30., 2026

2026	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	\$16,584	\$20,579	\$18,084	\$24,219	\$23,487	-\$5,403	-\$5,403
February	\$19,604	\$26,585	\$20,579	\$30,269	\$24,219	\$23,306	\$6,963	\$1,560
March	\$19,604	\$24,011	\$20,579	\$25,339	\$24,219	\$21,026	\$4,313	\$5,873
April	\$19,604	\$14,900	\$20,579	\$15,600	\$24,219	\$22,724	-\$7,124	-\$1,251
May	\$19,604	\$17,176	\$20,579	\$17,692	\$24,219	\$21,860	-\$4,168	-\$5,419
June	\$19,604	\$14,697	\$20,579	\$14,697	\$24,219	\$38,586	-\$23,889	-\$29,308
July	\$19,604	\$15,591	\$20,579	\$16,091	\$24,219	\$17,876	-\$1,785	-\$31,093
August	\$19,604	\$14,562	\$20,579	\$15,127	\$24,219	\$15,364	-\$237	-\$31,330



2026 Poinsettia Order Form:

These flowers will be used to beautify the sanctuary for Christmas Eve service. . They will be labeled and you will be able to take yours home that evening.

ORDER DEADLINE: Sunday, October 18th.

I WOULD LIKE TO ORDER :

Single poinsettia \$19 (6.5")

____ Standard Red

____ White

____ Pink

____ Red Glitter

Double poinsettia \$41 (7.5")

____ Standard Red

____ White

____ Pink

____ Red Glitter

____ Red & White Combo

****Dedications are included in the Christmas Eve Bulletin:**

"Given in honor/memory of...." (circle one):

Your Name: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____ Check # _____

Make Check payable to 1st Congregational UCC and attach to this order.

Memo: Christmas Flowers. **ORDER DEADLINE: Sunday, October 18th**

October 2026

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 this time, the Rev. Jim Langreder is available for pastoral care emergencies: (262) 309-5086.				1 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3
4 World Communion Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; 9 a.m. <i>Sunday School</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP; Communion Coffee Fellowship 1:00- Building Welcoming Wttn meets at the library. 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast	5 10:00 a.m. Staff meeting 6:00, BSA troop 11 6:30, Pack 111	6	7 6:30 P.M.--ADULT ED. ON WORLD RELIGIONS	8 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast	9 OFFICE CLOSED Pastor Vacation	10 Pastor Vacation
11 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; 9 a.m. <i>Sunday School</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP; <i>guest minister</i> Coffee Fellowship 10 a.m. – Noon: BWV Narrative Advocacy Training at Wttn Library. 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast Pastor Vacation	12 Indigenous People's Day 6:00, BSA troop 11 6:30, Pack 111 Pastor Vacation	13 Pastor Vacation	14 Pastor Vacation	15 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast Pastor Vacation	16 OFFICE CLOSED Pastor Vacation	17 Pastor Vacation
18 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; 9 a.m. <i>Sunday School</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP; <i>guest minister</i> Coffee Fellowship 11:30: Social Justice Team DEADLINE: POINSETTIA ORDERS 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast Pastor Vacation	19 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 6:30 pm, COUNCIL 6:00, BSA troop 11 6:30, Pack 111 Pastor Vacation	20 Pastor Vacation	21 Pastor Vacation	22 Our Turn to Help: BREAD & ROSES DINNER 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast Pastor Vacation	23 OFFICE CLOSED Pastor Vacation	24 United Nations Day Noon-3:00 BooBash at the Towne Square Pastor Vacation
25 Reformation Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sr. Choir; 9 a.m. <i>Sunday School</i> 10:00 – WORSHIP; <i>Melissa Mattke, worship leader</i> Coffee Fellowship; 6 pm - Cable TV Broadcast Pastor Vacation	26 6:00, BSA troop 11 6:30, Pack 111 Pastor Vacation	27 Pastor Vacation	28 <i>Reminder: Send Names to be included in Totenfest</i> Pastor Vacation	29 10am - Cable TV Broadcast 5pm - Cable TV Broadcast Pastor Vacation	30 OFFICE CLOSED Pastor Vacation	31 All Hallow's Eve Pastor Vacation