

FEBRUARY ISSUE

Volume 34 - Issue 2

The Congregational COLUMNS

Blessed by Challenges

RENEWAL IN 2019

By Marianne King - Moderator

The first Friday of every month, you'll find Barb Dunham, Jane Boyd, Jackie Hipke, Ellen Devlin, and Randy Goelzer cooking dinner for the St. Vincent DePaul Meal Program. Don Schaeffer or Bill Trump usually delivers the food to its destination on Greenfield Avenue and 10th Street. The Elwings, Sgarlatas, Wiegands, Littles and Szymanskis, as well as a host of other volunteers, serve the dinner to folks who depend on St. Vincent's for a hot meal in hard times. I wish I could name all who contribute efforts to the meal program. Let's just say it takes a village.

I'm very aware that First Congregational Church faces serious challenges in the coming years. Yet I am not discouraged, because we are blessed with caring, giving, and creative members like those on the St. Vincent's crew. As we grapple with financial and staffing issues, take heart in the knowledge that, with God's help, this congregation has and will continue to do amazing things.

Ten years ago, First Church had 360 "pledge units." (I'd love to retire that term if I could think of a good alternative.) Today we have 180. Just this past year we lost 21 pledges, mostly through natural attrition. Members move away. Transportation becomes a challenge. Circumstances change. People pass away.

Declining church membership and the subsequent loss of pledge income has become the norm among most mainline churches. The average pledge

at First Church, however, is higher than ever. Stewardship & Benevolences, the Personnel and Budget & Finance Committees, and Council -- with the support of church staff -- have put their heads together and come up with a balanced budget for 2019. As natural attrition continues, however, the problem will only snowball.

The only sustainable solution is to grow our church family. Christ told his disciples to "proclaim the gospel to all Creation." We are compelled to make our church a safe and supportive place where people of all ages and backgrounds can explore their faith and find comfort in Christian fellowship.

Much is already happening. All efforts are driven by the concept of bless and add: maintain and enhance those things that the congregation treasures; add events and activities that appeal to prospective new members.

A few examples: First Church will soon offer a casual worship service at 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Progress on developing a day care center continues. A robust schedule of communications to the community kicked off in December with a postcard to area households. Community Through Understanding is exploring more ways to build interfaith and interracial understanding. Tonia Wallner and the Board of Christian Education are creating more ways for our youth to participate in church life. A retooled Covenant Class is

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THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN WAUWATOSA

Off the Top of My Head

By Rev. William S. Trump, Senior Minister

Many of you, I am sure, are familiar with the watchwords of congregationalism – faith, freedom, and fellowship. These ideals have been exemplified in the life and work of the First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa for more than one hundred seventy-five years. We have learned over the years to treasure the freedom of the local church and the fellowship opportunities of our church life as vital elements in the practice of our faith.

About twenty-five years ago Dr. George Lamore, in his Bible lecture at our National Association Annual Meeting, challenged the gathered congregationalists to add a fourth “F” to our congregational watchwords – FUTURE. He emphasized the need to look

ahead to the challenges that will be meeting us in the years ahead. He reminded us that trying to recreate the church of the 60’s and 70’s won’t work. We must respond to the world of the 21st century with its unique



problems and challenges. At the same time we cannot divorce ourselves from the rich tradition and the cloud of witnesses that built the First Congregational Church. As we identify the problems we will face and prepare ourselves to meet these challenges we must be open to the leading of God’s spirit. I am encouraged and

energized as we look at the potential for the future of our church.

Bill



RENEWAL IN 2019

Continued from front cover

getting excellent reviews.

In fact, the challenges that once seemed so threatening now look like blessings. Members are identifying needs and stepping into the breach. There’s a growing energy among the congregation. With faith in God, we have an exciting opportunity to breathe new life into First Church. Whether it’s cooking for St. Vincent’s, leading a Bible study, serving on a board, singing in the choir, ushering on Sunday mornings, offering

comfort to someone who’s hurting, offering your prayers, or just being present, I know our faith in God and love for First Church will guide us into a vibrant future.

Thank you to Past Moderator Nick Sgarlata, Vice Moderator Jim Harris, the Council and Boards, Bill, Barry, Chip, Jill, Cindy and Mark for their hard work, wise counsel, creativity, and energy. My stint as Moderator was a pleasure.

Blessings,
Marianne King

New FCC Lenten 2019 Program

Sunday Mornings from 11:15 - 12:45 beginning starting on March 17th

Pastors Bill and Barry will lead a four-part program discussing the book, “Everything Happens For A Reason And Other Lies I’ve Loved” by Kate Bowler. A brief presentation about the chapters for each week will be followed by questions for discussion around the tables. Reviewers have said that this story made them feel “more present, grateful and less alone... an inspiring story of finding faith.” The Deacons will provide Brunch.

CONGREGATIONAL COLUMNS

A monthly newsletter produced by the First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa staff to keep members and the community up to date on activities at the church.

www.FirstChurchTosa.org

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Like us on Facebook!



A HEARTFELT *Thank You*

Board of Stewardship and Benevolences

We have received many very heartfelt thank you notes from organizations that we have supported and thought we would share a portion of each with you.

Milwaukee Rescue Mission:

Thank you for your gift. We've already put it to work providing food, shelter and other care for our hungry and homeless neighbors. As you may know, every \$2.04 you give can provide a meal to a man, woman or child in need – so your gift goes a long way....

I am so grateful for the very generous and faithful partnership from First Congregational over many years! God's best to you all in 2019.

Repairers of the Breach:

It is with sincere appreciation that we acknowledge receipt of your check. We greatly value your support. This donation has been received from your 2018 benevolent giving to help the homeless members at Repairers of the Breach.

Gift of Adoption:

On behalf of Gift of Adoption and the children we serve, I would like to thank the First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa for investing in our mission--to help bring more children home. Your donation to support the Wisconsin Chapter gives hope to parentless children waiting to be united

with a family to call their own. Gift of Adoption grants remove the financial barriers that often prevent or delay a child's adoption, giving an otherwise at-risk child the loving family he or she needs to thrive.

HEAR Wisconsin:

Thank you so much for your generous and thoughtful contribution to HEAR Wisconsin. At HEAR Wisconsin, our goal is to ensure that every child, adult, and senior who is deaf or living with hearing loss receives the specialized services we provide.

Your gift will go a long way to reach the underserved populations or to help ease costs for families with children using our services.

Together, we are impacting lives.

Fisher House Wisconsin, Inc.:

We are extremely grateful for your very generous donation. Your donation allows us to provide a "Home Away From Home" for military and veterans' families so they can be close to a loved one during hospitalization for an illness, disease or injury.

Since welcoming our first guests on April 25, 2016, we have been able to help over 2000 families when their needs are greatest. Families are able to stay as long as there is a need and there is never a cost to stay at the Fisher House.

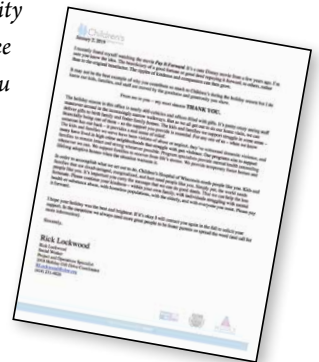
Children's Hospital:

Thank You - on Behalf of so many children that received your loving support and care through Children's Hospital Community Services Giving Tree this year. Thank you to Barb Dunham, and her helpers at church. For many years, Barb has been a crucial organizer, collector and coordinator - getting the gifts from you to the caseworkers for their home deliveries.

Why does giving in anonymity 'feel' so good? You are allowing our Heavenly Father's love to flow through your heart through Christ...His loving attributes get reinforced within you. The innumerable blessings and gifts we receive from our Heavenly Father rarely have a gift tag attached - yet they always bear His Signature all over them.

This year, FCC supported more than 90 Giving Tree wishes! FCC is the largest single supporter of this effort.

These thank you notes provide a reminder of how blessed and appreciated we are in this congregation.



BALANCE

By Rev. Barry W. Szymanski, Minister of Pastoral Care

Let's look at ourselves for a moment and see how we are made. Pretend that you construct a model of your body the way a 2-year old would do: you would pile up building blocks. Each block would be a part of your body, and one of the blocks is your memory, another block is your mind, another your common sense, then each of your emotions, each of your talents, your soul, and your spirituality. You place one block on top of the other starting with your feet. Place each building block on top of the other until you get to the top block: your spirituality. Yes, when you picture all of the blocks they are very, very high!

However, culture and society and time continually move the base of the blocks you piled up. This is not what you want to happen – but just as the world we live in changes, so does the ground we build our lives on changes also. So the base you build your blocks on – *your life* – is changing all the time. But there is an additional problem in our blocks, our lives, because we are created with a lot of oily slippery grease between each building block. We can't avoid this. Therefore because of the movement of the grounded base below us, and the slippage due to the grease, each of our blocks is constantly sliding away from the block below it. This movement we constantly experience is the vitality of life.

Without this constant change in our lives we would become static. We would become stuck.



So, minute by minute, hour by hour, every day, we are constantly striving to bring each block of who we are back to center. We want to stay together to stand tall. We want to be 'righteous.' We don't want to fall over. We try our hardest to remain balanced. Yet no matter what we do to maintain our centered-ness we find it very difficult. The reality of life is to wobble!

I don't, for a moment, ever feel that I am ever steady and straight.

Yet I think we experience the joy of life by continually working to keep bringing everything we are [each of our blocks] back to centeredness. It is in trying when we are most happy. If we ever feel smug that we have succeeded, then life itself will take us off balance again!

Understanding we are God's creatures, we know we can't do it alone. In fact very often, to steady ourselves so we don't lose balance and tumble over, we must rely on God's strength and His grace. In our pride if we feel that we rely on ourselves totally and absolutely, then our self-righteousness will itself eventually cause us to fall – possibly with dire effect. Yet, if we admit that God's Holy Spirit is fervently working to help us – and we are willing to accept God's gracious help – then with humility we recognize our true humanity – and then will be as balanced as any human being can be!

Pastor Barry

Chili Cook-Off and Dessert Bake-Off

by Ryan Kangas

Margaret Cousins once claimed that "Chili is not so much food as state of mind." You'll find that state of mind on full display at the First Church Chili Cook-Off and Dessert Bake-Off Competition on **Sunday, February 17** at 11:00am. Amateurs and experts alike are encouraged to enter their own chili and dessert masterpieces. Even if you're not submitting a dish, we need your discerning taste buds to help decide the winners of the first, second, and third place prizes for the chili and dessert categories. Every individual who enters chili or a dessert earns free admission. The cost for those who are just eating and taste-testing is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children ages 6-12, and FREE for little ones age 5 and under, with a maximum cost of \$15 per family. In addition to chili and dessert taste-testing and a vote in deciding

the winners, your reservation gets you a bowl of delicious non-competition chili, assorted toppings, corn bread, and beverages. Sign up at the Gathering Table to register your entry or to be a taste-tester.

Contest Procedures - February 17th

- Bring entries to the Social Hall between 7:45am - 10:00am
- Provide a name or description for your entry, and it will be assigned a number for voting.

Chili entries - you provide a crockpot so it can be kept warm.

Dessert entries - should be cut into small 1" x 1" pieces.

- After finishing taste-testing, each individual may cast one vote for best chili and one vote for best dessert.
- At the end of the meal, the chilis and desserts with the most votes will be announced and first, second, and third place prizes will be awarded.

JUST FOR YOUTH

February 2019



Sunday School

*Sunday, February 3, 10, 17 and 24
for ages 3 – 5th grade*

Children will begin in church with their families during 10 am worship. They will be dismissed to Sunday School during the service.

Discovery Kids

*Sunday, February 3, 10, 17, 24
for kids of all ages in LL5*

Kids enjoy this special time of additional activities, led by volunteers at 9 am, before their traditional Sunday School at 10 am. Those who rehearse with the choir will join them after practice. Older youth are invited to help lead.

Faith Finders

*Monday, February 11
for grades 1 – 5*

This group meets on the second Monday of the month for singing, fellowship, games, and program time. They begin with an optional dinner at 5 pm, followed by programming from 5:30 - 6:30 pm. Friends are welcome! Come and enjoy tacos and a Valentine's celebration.

Covenant Class

*Sunday, February 3 and 17
for 9th graders*

Covenant Class will be held at 8:30 am in the Library.

Pilgrim Fellowship (PF)

*Sunday, February 3, 10, 17, 24
for grades 6 – 12*

Teens will begin in church with their families during 10 am worship and will be dismissed to PF during the service.

SAVE THE DATE

Youth Mission Trip
Italian Dinner and
Silent Auction

Saturday, April 6, 2019



Be a Secret Buddy!

Five years ago, we started the Secret Buddy program with the intent to connect the generations of our church. It has been an incredible success! During the upcoming Lenten season, our children in 1st-5th grades will again be 'pen pals' with our interested adult members. Then, they will meet their Secret Buddy after worship on April 28th.

More details will follow, but we are seeking adult volunteers to be a Buddy to one of our First Church children as soon as possible. This way, we can get our children and adults paired up and ready to start the program in early March. We know that, as in past years, this will be a rewarding experience for the children and adults alike.

Please let Tonia know if you are interested in participating, either in person, via email (tonia@firstchurchtosa.org), or via phone (414-258-7375, ext. 230).

The WCA Youth and Camp Committee is proud to host World Vision's 30 Hour Famine!

When: Friday, February 22 at 7:00 PM - Saturday, February 23 at 3:00 PM

Where: North Shore Congregational Church

Who: Youth participants in grades 6-12 and *NEW* this year-College students

What: An over-night event filled with thought-provoking discussions, games, inspirational videos, and service events - and mash them all up into an unforgettable day-and-a-half of fasting from technology (and/or food) while raising funds for the hungry!

RSVP: Mandatory RSVP to becca.penno@gmail.com by FEB 15th!

This event requires each participant interested in attending to join our fundraising team, and raise a minimum of 40\$ in order to attend the event. Our team can be found on 30hourfamine.org, by searching Wisconsin Congregational Association under teams! Join the team, or simply donate to support the participants who will be fasting from food (or technology.)



This is really a great opportunity to help those in our community and all around the globe! Hope to see you all there soon!

If you are interested in signing up for these events OR have questions contact Tonia at: tonia@firstchurchtosa.org

EVENT - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
details online at firstchurchtosa.org

4 O'clock

2019 Free Concert Series - held on select Sundays at 4 O'clock. Bring a guest and enjoy some great music.



FEBRUARY 10, 2019
Vintage Mix



MARCH 10, 2019
Milwaukee Symphony
Brass Quintet



MAY 5, 2019
Jubilate Chorale
Vicki Taylor, Director

All Concerts at 4:00 pm

Discovery Hour

Adult Learning Hour

Sundays, 8:45 am, Rm. 107

We will be following Jesus from His birth through the ascension in a chronological parallel study of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The classes are led by Pat Reddy. All are welcome and weekly attendance is not mandatory! For more info, contact Pat: 414-771-8292

Women's Ministry

Wednesdays, 7:00 am, in the Parlor

We will be reading the book of Psalms. Please bring your Bibles.

Men's Bible Study

Wednesdays, 6:30 am, January 2 & 16 in Rm. 107

Led by Bruce Milne, we meet on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month. We do not meet on the 5th Wednesday of the month.

Men's Ministry

Wednesdays, 6:30 am, January 9 & 23 in Rm. 107

We typically meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month and are using the DVD series, The Dead Sea Scrolls. There is open discussion and reflections on the contents.

Taize-inspired Services

Have you experienced our Taize-inspired services here at First Church? We hope so! But if you haven't yet, there are still more opportunities coming up! Services are held in the chapel at 8 am on the dates listed below. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Upcoming Taize-inspired services:

February 3 May 26
March 3 & 31 June 16

Women's Choir - Rehearsals

February 24 and March 3 & 10 in the Choir Room

The women of First Church are invited to sing with the Women's Choir, which is the counterpart to the long-standing tradition of the Men's Choir here at First Church. It is an excellent opportunity for the women of FCC to be part of our music ministry. The Women's Choir will sing for the 10 am worship service on Sunday, March 10, rehearsals will be at 9-9:30 on February 24 & March 3 in the choir room.

For questions, contact Patrick Dill at dillp@firstchurchtosa.org.

Operating Statement Summary as of December 2018

Year to Date

	Current Year	Prior Year
Pledge base received	100%	99.6%
Pledge Income	\$556,101	\$569,881
Total Income	\$727,665	\$710,024
Total Expense	\$672,157	\$660,774
Net Income	\$55,508	\$49,250
Detailed financials available at office.		
	2018	2017
Pledge Base	\$555,292	\$572,243

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 2019 CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH						
3 8 am Taize & Comm. 8:30 Covenant Class 8:45 Adult Learning 9 Jr. Choir, Discovery Kids 10 Worship/Comm/PF/SS/Nursery 11 Coffee Fellowship	4 9 am Harmony Singers 11 Dist. Citizen Award Council 12:30 pm Heritage Garden Club 1 Staff Meeting 7 Alcohol Anon 8 AA - Charlie Stone Group	5 9 am Yoga 6:45 pm Boy Scouts 7 Quilters Anon.	6 6:30 am Men's Bible Study 7 Women's Ministry 6 pm Debtors Anon. 7 Personnel	7 9 am Big Band 10 Sidetracks 6 pm BSF 6:30 Handbells 7:30 FCC Choir	1 8 am Prepare for St. Vincent's 5:15 pm Serve for St. Vincent's	2 9:30 am Threat & Defense Workshop 10 Puris of Wisdom
8 am Chapel Worship 10 8:45 Adult Learning 9 Bd/Fellowship, Jr. Choir, Discovery Kids 10 Worship/PF/SS/Nursery 11 Coffee Fellowship 4 pm 4 O'Clock Concert	11 9 am Harmony Singers 11:30 TCTC 1 pm Staff Mtg 5 Faith Finders' Meal 5:30 Faith Finders 6:30 Bd/Deacons 7 Bd/Trustees, Bd/Christian Ed, Al-Anon. 8 AA - CSG	12 9 am YOGA 12 pm Circle 7 6:45 Boy Scouts	13 6:30 am Men's Ministry 7 Women's Ministry 9 Cream City Rug Club 6 pm Debtors Anon.	14 9 am Big Band 10 am Sidetracks 6 pm BSF 6:30 Handbells 7:30 FCC Choir	15	16 9:30 am Beatitudes w/ Pastor Barry
17 8 am Chapel Worship 8:30 Covenant Class 8:45 Adult Learning 9 Jr. Choir, Discovery Kids 10 Worship/PF/SS/Nursery 11 Chili/Dessert Contest	18 9 am Harmony Singers 1 pm Staff Mtg 5:30 Bd/Congregational Care 7 Al Anon 8 pm AA - CSG	19 9 am Yoga 6:45 pm Boy Scouts 7 Historic Heights Book Club, Tosa Quilters	20 6:30 am Men's Bible Study 7 Women's Ministry 10 Harwood Communion & Chat 6 pm Debtors Anon.	21 9 am Big Band 10 Sidetracks 6 pm BSF 6:30 Handbells 7:30 FCC Choir	22	23 9 am MSO - Stars of Tomorrow Auditions
24 8 am Chapel Worship 8:45 Adult Learning 9 Woman's Choir, Jr. Choir, Discovery Kids 10 Worship/PF/SS/Nursery 11 Coffee Fellowship 1 pm Boy Scouts - Crossover Ceremony	25 9 am Harmony Singers 1 pm Staff Mtg 7 Al Anon 8 AA	26 9 am Yoga 5:30 pm Communications 6:45 Boy Scouts 7 Church Council	27 6:30 am Men's Ministry 7 Women's Ministry 6 pm Debtors Anon.	28 9 am Big Band 10 Sidetracks 6 pm BSF 6:30 Handbells 7:30 FCC Choir	<div> <div> <i>4 O'clocks</i> Vintage Mix on February 10 </div> <div> CHILI & DESERT COOK OFF on February 17 </div> </div>	

Note: Dates and times sometimes change after publishing, so check our online calendar for the latest information - www.firstchurchtosa.org

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Scout Troop 47 News

Winter Camping

by scribe Alex Rack

On January 12th & 13th, Boy Scout Troop 47 went to the Racine area to camp at The Wadewitz Nature Camp. The year-round camping is only open to scouting organizations although this



nature camp has 168 acres of hiking trails and cross-country skiing open to the public. The Troop had lots of fun! First after getting set up we went on a 2 hour hike around the park and learned about the best methods for making fires. The Scouts also tried to do a one match fire challenge. Most of the groups were able to light the fire using several matches and the true winners were the adults who actually started the fire with only one match!



After sleeping through a really cold night in the unheated barn house, the Troop woke on Sunday morning and had breakfast. The Troop went geocaching (treasure hunting) and found all three caches they went looking for. Overall most of the Scouts thought it was a fun and cool trip, minus the cold.

Church Family News

Please keep these members and their families as they grieve for lost loved ones or celebrate new beginnings.

Verna Reich passed away on Wednesday, November 28, 2018. Services were held.

Richard Werwath passed away on Monday, December 10, 2018. Services were held.

Rowena Radtke passed away on Wednesday, December 26, 2018. Services were held.

Owen Christopher Moore, son of Avery and Amy Moore was baptised on Sunday, December 23rd.