

FEBRUARY 2021

Volume 36 - Issue 2

The Congregational COLUMNS

Reflection from the Moderator:

What a year 2020 has been! In his poem about the mouse and the plowman, Bobbie Burns says: "The best laid plans of mice and men oft go awry". It echoes Proverbs 16:9: "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps." I refer to that verse frequently when things seem to be out of control.

We all had great plans for 2020, didn't we? I know I did. Since March, our lives were upended, turmoil reigned, and our fears challenged our faith.

Despite the pandemic, our staff worked hard to keep the building clean and open to accommodate some of our small groups who continued to meet at church. The office staff kept our finances in order by recording pledges and paying bills, answering the phones, and preparing communications for the Sunday services.

Tonia was incredible and kept our youth engaged and guided them in their faith journey. She and the CE Board also figured out new ways to do some of the favorite annual activities, such as the Christmas workshop. Her efforts were Herculean, to say the least!

As we moved to adjust to the electronic world of church services, Bill Edens and Scott Mason did yeoman's work creating a very professional product and getting it out on YouTube. Their behind-the-scenes efforts provided our ministers with viable media to present their sermons and offer words of encouragement to our members.

Rhonda Kwiecien and Scott DeKok accepted temporary positions as Co-Directors of Music and rose to the challenge of finding singers and instrumentalists to provide wonderful music for the services. Kudos to Rhonda who accompanied singers/players when needed AND provided superb preludes and postludes as organist and pianist.

Our Boards and Committees did a great job keeping the Church connected when we couldn't be together. Zoom meetings to conduct the Church's business became a way of life for us. As Thanksgiving and Christmas approached, we got creative with our celebrations. Ridge Court became a popular spot for firepits, hot chocolate, fellowship, and song. It was heartening indeed to hear the Christmas Story "on a cold winter's night" while standing by the fire and singing a carol or two.

Because of the pandemic, the Church Council created a Special Health and Safety Committee to establish protocols that meet city, county, state, and federal guidelines and mandates for safe resumption of In-Person services. The Committee has also worked with the Trustees to procure sanitizing equipment that will allow us to resume activities and meetings at Church provided we meet the mandates/guidelines.

Finally, thank you for your commitment to honoring your pledges for 2020 to keep the church operating as well as your generous gifts to our Special Offerings which allowed us to make contributions to our designated missions and benevolences. And I thank you for all your support and encouragement throughout the past year.

I would like to close with a ray of hope. We, as families, as a Church, and a nation, have been torn apart many times in our history. The Revolutionary War, the Civil War, both World Wars, Vietnam, The Great Depression, are just a few of the great tests of our faith over the years. As families, Church, and a nation, we have managed to stay together through those trying times and have grown stronger as a result. With God's Grace and guidance, we will get through this pandemic and be wiser and stronger because of it. As it is written in Hebrews 10:24-25 "... let us consider how we may spur one another toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Let us stay the course together. May God's Grace shine on you all.

Harry Collis, *Moderator*

THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN WAUWATOSA

Worship & Discovery

Casual Worship



Saturdays at 4^{pm}

Until further notice, Casual Worship will be meeting in the Social Hall. It may be watched as a live-stream on Facebook Live.

Women's Ministry

Tuesdays, 7:30^{am}

Sessions meet in the Friendship Lounge. We are studying the Book of Revelation. Please bring a mask and a Bible and join us! Contact Pat Reddy at deltaformsldt@sbcglobal.net about participating via email.

Chancel Flowers for 2021

Floral arrangements are needed for various dates during the coming year. Consider giving flowers in honor of or in memory of someone special in your life. Please sign up on the board in the Atrium or call the Church Office at 414.258.7375 to schedule a date to provide flowers for the 10 am Worship Service.

Adult Learning Hour

The session meets Sundays at 8:45^{am} in Room LL2, which is next to the Choir Room.

Men's Ministry

Currently on hiatus.

Men's Bible Study

1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 6:30^{am}, in Room LL2

Led by Bruce Milne, the group is currently studying the Book of Romans. Men's Bible Study will meet in Room LL2 on the Lower Level on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. There is no meeting on the 5th Wednesday of the month when it occurs.

Please contact Bruce for information about meeting during social distancing at wbmilne@aol.com

Operating Statement Summary

Year to Date as of December 2020

	Current Year	Prior Year
Pledge base received	99.0%	99.0%
Pledge Income	\$528,718	\$481,912
Total Income	\$686,163	\$676,513
Total Expense	\$641,012	\$631,071
Net Income	\$45,151	\$45,441

Detailed financials available at office.

JUST FOR YOUTH

February 2021



Sunday School

Currently on hiatus.

Faith Finders

Monday, February 8 for grades 1-5

This group meets on the second Monday of the month for fellowship, games, and program time. They begin with an optional dinner at 5pm, followed by programming from 5:30-6:30^{pm}. Friends are welcome! Come and enjoy chicken tenders, french fries, and fruit. Donations for the meal are appreciated.

Covenant Class

Sunday, February 7 and 21 for 9th graders

Group meets at 8:30^{am} in the Friendship Lounge.

Pilgrim Fellowship (PF)

We started the year on a positive note and are looking forward to Sunday afternoon/evening meetings moving forward. E-mails will be sent with the exact schedule of dates and times, and we will meet two times per month. All Junior and Senior High students are welcome, and please feel free to bring your friends.

CONGREGATIONAL COLUMNS

A monthly newsletter produced by the First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa 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!



Off the Top of My Head

By Rev. William S. Trump, *Senior Minister*

Here is a prayer* I have found helpful to begin my day recently. I hope it can bring you the same comfort and inspiration I have found.

Gracious God, how blessed I am to live and serve a community of Your people. Gifted with the beauty of creation surrounding me, lead me into significant relationships that nurture and challenge me.

Lead me now, O God, as I seek to journey with my eyes fixed on Your Son.

Lead me in righteousness, that my journey might be a journey in which I embrace Christ's ways of compassion and justice, grace and mercy, hope and right living.

Lead me, God, in peace, as I seek Your will for our church.

Fill me with a peace that passes all human understanding, a peace the world cannot give to me, neither can it take away.

But, dear God, let me never be satisfied with personal peace



alone. Lead me into paths of peacemaking and reconciliation.

God, where there is brokenness, form me into an instrument of forgiveness.

Where there is despair, make me a channel of Your hope.

Where there is division, may I be empowered to bring healing and wholeness.

Where darkness abounds, grant me courage to walk in the light, my eyes fixed on Jesus, the light of the world.

God of healing and compassion, I hold before You those in special need of Your healing touch . . . God, make me mindful of those around me who silently hold hurts and brokenness within them. Teach me to look into another's eyes and heart.

O God . . . lead me. Amen.

-Bill

**Adapted from a Lenten prayer by Joel D. Kline*

Grateful Hearts!

Every year, the Board of Stewardship & Benevolence provides financial support to help organizations within and outside our local community. During 2020, the need was greater than ever as organizations struggled with growing needs and fewer resources. Thanks to the generosity of the First Church family, the Board was able to increase its donations. These are some samples of thankful notes FCC received.

Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative

Thank you so very much for your generous donation of \$1,000 to the Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative and for your continued support. With your support and generosity of the greater Milwaukee community, MHVI has been able to help over 5,500 veterans and their families since our inception.

Milwaukee Rescue Mission

Thank you for your donation of 154 - \$15 Pick 'n Save gift cards and one - \$15 Walmart gift card! Your generous gift means so much to our hurting and homeless neighbors.

(We also received a thank you for a donation of \$5,225.00 on 1/30/2020!)

NACCC

Thank you for your recent gift to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches in the amount of \$1,500. The NACCC, after careful review, will apply your donation as follows:

\$500 Myanmar

\$500 Mission Mazahua

\$500 Mission School of Hope

Tosa Community Food Pantry

Wow! As the treasurer of the Tosa Community Food Pantry, I send a letter of thanks which our donors can use for tax purposes. \$50, \$100, from so many generous people around Wauwatosa. But checks for \$5,388? That just doesn't happen. Your donation comes at a time when the need has never been greater, due to the COVID-19 virus. The money will go towards the pantry's purchase of food and other necessities for Wauwatosa area people in need.

(We also received a thank you for a \$1,270 donation in June.)

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

On behalf of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Milwaukee Board of Directors, along with our incredible volunteers and staff members, we are grateful for your generous gift in the amount of \$700.00 made on May 12, 2020, to the Meal Program. Your support allows us to continue carrying out our critical mission of eliminating poverty and hunger throughout Milwaukee County during the COVID-19 crisis.

Congregational Church of Myanmar

I [SaDo] am very pleased to receive your annual support (Easter Support for Grace Children's Ministry) . . . Please convey my greetings to your lovely people.

The First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa
1511 Church Street
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U.S. Hall of Fame Class of 2021

Elected to the Class of 2021 is the accomplished official Gale Tanger, longtime member of First Congregational Church.

Gale has served as a figure skating judge and official for over 50 years. The recipient of the International Skating Union's prestigious Gold Medal of Honor for outstanding contribution and distinguished service, she is a three-time PSA Official of the Year (2017, '10, '06). Tanger has served on the U.S. Olympic Committee and was the first female Chair of the Winter Sports Organizations. She has served at six Olympic Games, including as Team Leader at the 1994 Lillehammer Games, held shortly after the attack on Nancy Kerrigan by a teammate. She is a longtime Board member of the Wisconsin Figure Skating Club, the Pettit National Ice Center, and three-time PSA Official of the Year.



REGISTER NOW

for the **Youth Mission Trip 2021**
June 19-25

FCC members and non-members welcome!

The 2021 Youth Mission Team is now accepting applications. Due to successful past fundraising, the application fee is only \$100. This fee covers food, lodging, and travel expenses. Applications are located in the Atrium. Scholarships are available!

Need more info?

Contact Tonia Wallner: tonia@firstchurchtosa.org