

DECEMBER 2022

Volume 37 - Issue 12

# The Congregational COLUMNS

## While Waiting

*By Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith*

I expect you are aware of what your calendar looks like for December, and there are probably quite a few things filling it up! School music programs, shopping galore, parties and gatherings, sending Christmas notes, decorating and baking, making sure you have found all the socks, mittens, hats, ice skates, skis, snow shovels (and where is that bag of ice melt?). I am sure there is more, and then we come to church to take a Giving Tree tag, see the Advent Candles lit, go to the Advent Tea, enjoy the beauty of the Sanctuary, the music that fills us and sings God's story. On December 11th there is Breakfast with Jesus, followed by the "little ones" pageant, and later that day, the Christmas Workshop for crafts and ornaments. And don't forget, on December 18th, come a bit early - 9:30 or so - enjoy the FCC Brass Ensemble and add your voice to a carol sing before our special Christmas Music Sunday and Worship Service. Some of us will deliver cookies to those who are less able to come to us. There is the youth Christmas Play in the afternoon, and the sweetness of a candlelit service in the dark of Christmas Eve. On Christmas Day, please feel invited to come comfy that morning.

Now I have probably missed something! These are wonderful - not to be missed - ways we come together. These are cherished, long held events. Or, perhaps there is something you are joining in for the first time. It does sound like we will be very busy as we wait to celebrate and welcome the birth of the one we call God With Us, Emmanuel.

December is the season of Advent. The word Advent itself means both "coming" and "arrival." Traditionally, we think of Advent as a time of preparation, for the coming and arrival of the Christ Child.

And so, I simply wish to remind and invite you to pause in the midst of any, or every one of these events and ask yourself: what does it mean, during these Advent weeks of December, to wait for Jesus to come into your world? What and who are you expecting Him to be? Pause in all the excitement and anticipation, or in the places where this season reminds you of what you have lost, and embrace the joy that, indeed, Emmanuel is coming... Emmanuel Is.

**While waiting, "God with us" is here.**

Waiting with you,  
*Julie*

THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
IN WAUWATOSA



# Worship & Discovery

## Women's Ministry

*Tuesdays, December 6, 13, 20 & 27  
from 8-9<sup>am</sup>*

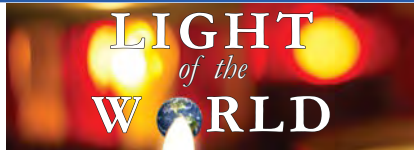
Women's Ministry meets in the Friendship Lounge. Study is *The One Year Book of Praying Through the Bible* by Cheri Fuller.

## Men's Ministry

*Second and Fourth Wednesdays,  
December 14 & 28 at 7:00<sup>am</sup>*

Meet in the Library for the DVD Series, "The History of Christianity: From the Disciples to the Dawn of the Reformation."

## Women of FCC...



Come Celebrate the Joy of Advent  
**First Congregational Church Advent Tea**  
Saturday, December 3, 2022  
2:30<sup>pm</sup> in the Social Hall  
Sign up in the Atrium or call 414-258-7375

## January Women's Circle Is for the Birds

Women's Circle presents "Enraptured with Raptors" on Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, featuring Lindsay Obermeier, Raptor Program and Animal Ambassador for the Schlitz Audubon Center.

The Audubon Center cares for birds that cannot be released to the wild for a variety of reasons. Raptors include hawks, owls, eagles, and falcons.

Sadly, these magnificent birds are threatened by disappearing habitats and other threats. The Raptor Program helps educate the public about these dynamic birds, and their importance to the ecosystem.

Women's Circle is at 12:30<sup>pm</sup> in the Lounge. Dessert and coffee will be served.

Please RSVP by contacting Colleen Foster: [fostercolleen1937@gmail.com](mailto:fostercolleen1937@gmail.com) or 4414.42.6970.



## Adult Learning Hour

*Sundays, December 4, 11, & 18  
at 8:45<sup>am</sup>*

The group will meet in Room 107. Topic is understanding the liturgical year.

## Men's Bible Study

*First & Third Wednesdays,  
December 7 & 21 at 7:00<sup>am</sup>*

Men's Bible Study meets at 7am on Wednesday mornings. Join us in Room 107 for interesting studies and good conversation.

## Annual Meeting

**Sunday, January 29, 2023**

*Immediately following a shortened 10<sup>am</sup> Worship*

The Annual Meeting will propose the 2023 budget for approval, vote on the slate of Board and Committee nominees and update the congregation about church projects.

## 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](http://www.FirstChurchTosa.org)

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**Like us on Facebook!**

## FCC Worship Service & Christmas Concert

**Sunday, December 18, 2022 10<sup>am</sup> in the Nave**

Come celebrate the birth of Christ through music.

The FCC Choir will sing a selection of wonderful Christmas music as part of the December 18<sup>th</sup> Worship Service in the Nave.

If you love to sing, you are invited to join the Choir for the Advent and Christmas season. The Choir rehearses Thursdays at 7:30 pm in LL1 (Choir Room).

*Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord*

### Operating Statement Summary

*Year to Date as of October 2022*

	Current Year	Prior Year
Pledge Base Received	76%	79%
Pledge Income	\$356,122	\$394,574
Total Income	\$500,711	\$506,198
Total Expenses	\$403,503	\$426,506
Net Income	\$97,208	\$79,693

*Detailed financials available in the office.*



# Christmas Special Supports Two, Special Missions

This year, the Board of Stewardship, Benevolence and Church Relations has selected two missions and one long-time friend as beneficiaries of the Special Christmas Offering. Each of these organizations continues to lift up their communities in many ways.

## Happy Life Children's Home, Kenya

The Happy Life Mission is a non-profit Christian organization whose main vision is to give hope to abandoned children in Kenya through its three-fold ministry:



*Toddlers were excited for the first day of school at Happy Life Mission.*

- Provides a Rescue Mission for over 150 vulnerable and abandoned children in an effort to provide a "forever family" for each of them through local adoption.
- Provision of quality Christian education to nearly 400 children who have not been adopted, as well as other children in the wider community.
- Provision of comprehensive pediatric medical care and maternity services through the Jesse Kay Children's Hospital. Happy Life is based on the belief that God has a plan for each of these children, to give them hope and a future, according to Jeremiah 29:11.

Directors Jim and Sharon Powell have been good friends of the National Association for Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) for many years.

## Panamerican Institute, Mexico

Panamerican Institute is a mission school founded by the late Congregational minister, Rev. Edgar S. Welty, in the early 1960s. The school is located in Tijuana, Mexico, south of San Diego, California. Its operation depends 100% on donations. Panamerican Institute



*Students were ready for in-person classes to resume at Panamerican Institute.*

provides technical education to students from poor families in Tijuana. The Institute, NACCC's mission partner for many years, is focused on keeping kids at school and working towards a better future. Contributions enable the mission to provide hope for a better life for their students and their families, creating a better Christian community.

## Milwaukee Rescue Mission

The Rescue Mission's core values are love, dignity, community, and missional integrity. It offers practical assistance such as food, clothing, and shelter, as well as transformative programs that help hurting people get off the streets and turn their lives around permanently. It serves the homeless and people in need with short- and long-term assistance, education, pastoral care, help in overcoming substance abuse, job training and much more. Last year it provided over 365,000 meals and more than 70,000 nights of shelter.

We hope you will support these charities with a special offering this Christmas season.

## Board of Stewardship, Benevolence and Church Relations

- Randy Sitzberger (Chair), Fred Kingsley, J C Moore, Bobby Russ, Will Schoyer, and Kristin Stern

# End of Year Info for Pledgers

The Board of Stewardship, Benevolence and Church Relations is very gratified by the many Pledge Cards that have been turned in for 2023. We encourage those who haven't done so yet to bring or mail your card to the church Office as soon as possible to aid the Budget & Finance Committee, which has begun planning for the 2023. The committee can work more efficiently if they have a clear idea of the amount of income we can anticipate.

As the current year comes to a close, we want to make sure we apply your pledge checks to the correct year. If you plan to donate toward your 2022 pledge this month, please write 2022 in the memo line.

You are welcome to combine your pledge contribution with a donation to the Christmas Special Offering, but please indicate on your check the amount you would like each to go toward.

Any contributions to your 2022 pledge must be delivered to the church Office no later than noon on Friday, December 30, to be included on your year-end statement.

You will receive your year-end statement in early January. Please call the Office at (414) 258-7375 if you have any questions.

We thank all of you whose support made it possible for First Church to meet its operating budget and increase our financial support of important organizations that help those in need, such as Sojourner Truth House of Peace, Milwaukee Rescue Mission, Homeless Veterans Initiative and the Tosa Food Pantry.

## Board of Stewardship, Benevolence and Church Relations

- Randy Sitzberger (Chair), Fred Kingsley, J C Moore, Bobby Russ, Will Schoyer, and Kristin Stern



# **Christmas at First Church**

**Women's Advent Tea**  
**Saturday, December 3**  
2:30<sup>pm</sup> in Social Hall

**Second Sunday of Advent**  
**Sunday, December 4**

Worship: 8<sup>am</sup> in Chapel  
Worship: 10<sup>am</sup> in Nave  
Christmas Kringle Coffee Hour: 11am in Social Hall

**Children's Sunday**  
**Sunday, December 11**

Breakfast with Baby Jesus: 9<sup>am</sup> in Social Hall  
Christmas Workshop: 3<sup>pm</sup> in Social Hall  
Pizza Supper: 5<sup>pm</sup> in Social Hall

**Music Sunday**  
**Sunday, December 18**

Worship: 8<sup>am</sup> in Chapel  
Brass Ensemble: 9:30<sup>am</sup> in Atrium  
Church Hymn Sing: 9:40<sup>am</sup> in Nave  
Worship: 10<sup>am</sup> in Nave  
Special Christmas Coffee Hour: 11<sup>am</sup> in Social Hall

**Christmas Eve**  
**Saturday, December 24**

Family Service & PF Play: 4<sup>pm</sup> in Nave  
Candlelight Lessons & Carols: 10<sup>pm</sup> in Nave

**Christmas Day**  
**Sunday, December 25**

Worship: 10<sup>am</sup> in Nave



# Newcomers and Members Will Enjoy Intro to First Church Sessions



Congregationalism is a tradition, dating back to the 1600s, that respects the individual's understanding of God's Word according to his or her conscience and as guided by the Holy Spirit. First Church has embraced Congregational principles since it gathered in 1842. Like other Congregational churches, members of the First Church family share a unique covenant that shapes our relationships with God, the church and one another.

The Board of Deacons and Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith have developed *Intro to First Church*, informal sessions designed for those who are contemplating joining the church or simply want to learn more about us. No strings attached.

The interactive format will help attendees understand the Congregational Way of being a church and how we practice our Christian faith within and beyond the walls of our church building.

Sessions are scheduled for two Sundays, January 8 and January 15, immediately following the 10<sup>am</sup> worship service in the Parlor (second floor). Child care will be provided. Individuals and families are invited to bring their questions and join us.

If you are interested in attending, please add your name(s) to the sign-up sheet on the Gathering Table in the Atrium.

## Year End Online Giving

First Church offers secure, online giving. If you'd like to set up pledge contributions online, visit the FCC website ([firstchurchtosa.org](http://firstchurchtosa.org)) and click on the Giving icon from the menu at the top of the page. To set up your account, go to the For Member Online Contributions box and click on Login Page. Then click on create account. If you already have an online account, use the same process, type in your username and password and click on Sign In.



If you plan on making an online contribution for 2022 and want it included on your year-end statement, please make your contribution by Tuesday, December 27<sup>th</sup>. There is typically a 3-day lag between the time you enter your contribution and when the funds are received by the church.

If you have any questions, please contact the church Office at 414.258.7375.

## JUST FOR YOUTH December 2022



**Sunday School** for ages 3 – 5<sup>th</sup> grade  
Sunday, December 4, 11, 18  
Children begin in church with their families during 10<sup>am</sup> worship and then dismissed to Sunday School.

**Junior Choir** K-8<sup>th</sup> grades  
Sunday, December 4, 11, 18  
for K-8<sup>th</sup> grades  
Meet at 9:00 in LL4  
Children will sing once a month.

### Covenant Class

December 4 & 18 Group meets at 8:30<sup>am</sup> in the Conference Room.

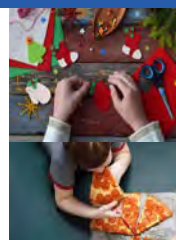
**Pilgrim Fellowship (PF)** grades 6-12  
Sunday, December 4, 11, 18  
Teens will begin in church with their families during 10<sup>am</sup> worship and will be dismissed to PF during the service.

## December 11<sup>th</sup> in the Social Hall



### Breakfast with Baby Jesus at 9<sup>am</sup>

Join this First Church tradition of celebrating our children. Our families with young children are invited to this event, and they can wear their pajamas, bring their favorite stuffed animal, and enjoy a light breakfast and Christmas cheer.



### Christmas Workshop at 3<sup>pm</sup>

followed by

### Pizza Supper at 5<sup>pm</sup>

**Workshop cost:** \$5 per child for all crafts  
**Supper cost:** \$5 for adults, \$2 for children

The First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa  
1511 Church Street  
Wauwatosa, WI 53213-2593

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Your Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_  
(and/or)

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_