

NOVEMBER 2023

Volume 37 - Issue 11

The Congregational COLUMNS

“Thanksmas”

By Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith,
Senior Minister

Recently in the office the term “thanksmas” has been bantered about, referring to a blended season of these months that seem so very full of opportunities. We are wrapped in scents, tastes, and visual extravagances that intend to bring light and warmth as the days move from chill to cold. We are also wrapped in the cadence of the church in this season in which we embrace remembrance, gratitude, and the deepening of Advent.

Stewardship’s “Funding the Future” focus has begun, celebrating the growing engagement and commitment we make together, leaning into our understanding and experience of God not only within, but emanating out into the community. I am reminded again how grateful I am to be in ministry with all of you; the openness shared as we seek to know and be changed by the variety of ways God’s will breathes through us. It is a privilege I am humbled by as we take in the world both near and far together.

November begins for us with that mark of remembrance for loved ones who passed from this life. We will name and place flowers for those who passed this year. We will also have a time of silence during which we will be invited to light a candle in remembrance of friends or loved ones on our heart. I know I will light a candle for my father and others that have laid both love and a space in my heart that treasures the light they carried.

Of course, Thanksgiving for Congregationalists is a time to remember our roots as part of those first Pilgrims; their daring move, the losses and help received, woven through with trust and gratitude for God’s guidance. Yet I cannot help but reflect, as I write this, of the world that groans around us, and the challenge to respond in a way of faith that seeks to know Emmanuel, “God with us,” beyond ourselves.

Although Advent will begin December 3, for so many of us there is a blended “thanksmas” about the end of November, and so I will touch on a few opportunities (you will find more in other articles).

An Advent book discussion with *Light of the World* by Amy Jill Levine, (University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies) offers, “a new look at the history of the birth of Christ.” *Light of the World* will aid our discussion of the biblical text that give us the story of Jesus’ birth. There are a few copies in the office, \$14. Or order a copy through your favorite bookseller.

There are four sessions: Wednesday evening sessions are on November 29, December 6, 13, 20 from 6-7. Sunday mornings are on December 3, 10, 17 11:30-12:30. Please note, if you come to Sunday mornings you may join the Wednesday evening on December 20 to complete the four week discussion.

During Sunday Morning Adult Ed. for Advent (December 3, 10, 17) we will read Advent Scriptures using a method called *Lectio Divina* in which together we read/listen through a passage several times in a process of prayer and contemplation and response.

Do you have questions about the church or wonder what Congregationalism is? Let’s touch base. In the first half of November we will hold two gatherings to talk through these things, let me know if you would like to be part of these groups. Or, please know, I am happy to simply talk together.

In ministry with you,
Rev. Julie



THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN WAUWATOSA

Worship & Discovery

Women's Ministry

Tuesdays, November 7, 14, 21 & 28 from 8-9^{am}

Women's Ministry invites anyone interested to join us every Tuesday morning at 8:00 a.m. Or, feel free to sit in on specific sessions of interest. All are welcome!

Adult Ministry

Sundays, November 5 & 19 at 8:45^{am}

During November, Adult Ministry will meet the first and third Sundays of the month at 8:45 am in Room 107. The group will watch Parts 3 & 4 of the video series, *The Bible for Grown-ups* by Andy Stanley, followed by time for discussion. Facilitator Patty Reddy may be contacted with any questions.

Men's Ministry

Wednesdays, November 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 at 9^{am}

Men's Ministry meets Wednesdays in the Lounge for lively conversation on interesting topics. The group is currently studying the Book of Revelation, the final and only apocalyptic book of the New Testament. For more information contact Hank Collis at hcollis@twc.com.

Women's Ministry Retreat

Friday & Saturday-January 5 & 6, 2024

We will travel to Christ's Pond in Random Lake, Wisconsin, for our retreat. If you'd like more information or are interested in attending, contact Patty Reddy: patreddy@wauwatosa@gmail.com



Breast Cancer Support Group

Tesha Kathryn Urban
Facilitator

Breast cancer patients, caregivers and survivors are welcome to support one another on their journey.

JOIN US
2nd Thursday of the month, November 9
11:30 am – 1:00 pm in the Parlor

PLEASE REGISTER
Contact *Healing Hearts*
262.751.0874 / info.hhwc@gmail.com
Or visit www.healingheartswisconsin.org
to submit an inquiry.



BRIDGER BRASS

Sunday, November 12
12:00^{pm}

First Congregational Church
1511 Church Street, Wauwatosa
Free to the Public • All Invited

Featuring the Music of:
Astor Piazzolla Kevin McKee
Arturo Marquez Michael Kamen
John Stevens Reena Esmail
Anthony DiLorenzo

Fellowship Invites You to Celebrate the Season at Pie Fest

Fellowship's Slice of Thanksgiving Sunday,
November 19th,
will initiate Thanksgiving week at First Church.

In keeping with the holiday,
the Board of Fellowship will offer
a variety of pies at the Coffee Hour
following the service.

If you're interested in baking a pie,
please contact a member of Fellowship.

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

Office Telephone
414-258-7375

On-Call Minister
414-258-7378

Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith
Senior Minister

Tesha Kathryn Urban
Associate Minister

Jim Harris
Administrator

Tonia Wallner
Director of Christian Education

Rhonda Kwiecien
Director of Music & Keyboard Artist

Ellen Shuler
Director of FCC Choir

Roxanne Trump-Miles
Director of Jr. Choir

Jillian Bruss
Financial Secretary

Marianne King
Office Coordinator

Cindy Walsh - Staff Support

Mark Lund - Custodian

Cathy Denny - Columns Coordinator
sdenny1-cathy@wi.rr.com

First Congregational Church
1511 Church Street
Wauwatosa, WI 53213
(414) 258-7375

Like us on Facebook!

Operating Statement Summary

Year to Date as of September 2023

	2023	2022
Pledge Base Rec'd	67%	70%
Pledge Income	\$330,386	\$308,888
Total Income	\$472,570	\$447,825
Total Expenses	\$445,131	\$351,352
Net Income	\$27,439	\$96,482

Detailed financials available in the office

The Way of Gospelsed Generativity

By Tesha Kathryn Urban,
Associate Minister



When I served as the chaplain at Congregational Home — our church-initiated, long-term care facility in Brookfield — my understanding of life, and my experience of God deepened and widened in wonderful ways. Each resident was a teacher for me.

The elders of our church community continue to inspire me with their wisdom and teachings. Recently, I was at Harwood Place to celebrate communion and share reflections about our faith journeys. During our visit, we explored a concern that arose: “With all the problems going on in the world, I feel guilty for how good I have it.”

When the comment was shared, it was as if a wellspring of grace had entered the room. It felt like a suspension of time that opened us into a deep pause — to recognize with compassion the suffering that people are experiencing, as we noticed and named all that we have.

With so many challenges in our world, in our country, and in our neighborhoods, I have become more aware of my ability to go about my life and even “look away” whenever I want to. In thinking more about this, I’m aware of my privileges. Not everyone has this ability. Looking away is not possible when one is homeless or food insecure or living in rubble and trauma. The invitation from our wise elders

helped me slow down and enter into this Gospelsed-pause, as we anchored in the way of Jesus.

The sense of “guilt” is a valid feeling, and I wonder if it opens us into an awareness of God’s grace, and also our privileges, in a way that prompts us to



Colorful beauty enlivens the grounds of our church-initiated Congregational Home.

do something and strive for the better. When we do, we can be transformed inwardly and outwardly and our world can be transformed one person at a time also.

The developmental psychologist Erik Erikson shared that when we approach mid-life, and we live into our later years, we have an opportunity to become more “generative.” A generative person is one who is concerned about the wellbeing of future generations, and s/he is engaged in some kind of activity that is aimed toward leaving a positive legacy. It is a journey of awakening to all of life, beyond just ourselves. Being church is a wonderful example of this, because we live into our “generativity” through all aspects of our Covenant, as we respond to God’s grace.

This season of Thanksgiving invites us to experience a spirit of generativity as we recognize the needs around us, notice our privileges, and respond by living into our Covenant. How will you live into our Covenant this month, and allow it to live through you?

And for further thought: We are “welcoming home” our church elders for a special gathering November 12. Rev. Julie and I will facilitate a time of sharing with our gathered ones, so we can appreciate our collective journey, including our special memories of being church and our hopes for the future. We hope you can join us.

Join Us on November 12th for Welcome Home Sunday

Several church members and their friends join us online for worship, and we are excited to designate one day this fall to welcome everyone “home.”

The Care Board is coordinating a warm welcome for our church family members and their friends to join us November 12th for a special gathering.

We will worship together at 10 a.m. in our Nave with it’s newly renovated Chancel, and after worship we will gather for a light lunch and special connections. Rev. Julie and Tesha will facilitate memory-sharing among our gathered group and open space to share our hopes, too!

Afterward, everyone is welcome to attend a special concert by Bridger Brass ensemble in the Nave at 12 p.m.

Transportation is being arranged, whether our members and their friends live at Congregational Home, Harwood Place, or in their own homes. Please contact the church Office at 414.258.7375 to let us know if you plan to attend the lunch and/or need to be picked up.

This will be a wonderful opportunity for connecting and re-connecting! We are excited to welcome everyone together with a wide embrace. We hope to see you!

Care Board

- Anne Callen, Sharon Nortman, Ann Steinmetz Harris,
Sarah DeYoung and Mary Berger

Church Community, Friends, Family & Neighbors
please join us to

Celebrate the Joy of Advent
through the reading of Scripture,
singing of beloved carols and fellowship
at

First Congregational Church Advent Tea
Saturday, December 2, 2023
in the Social Hall

Doors open 2:00^{pm} • Program 2:30^{pm}

Consider Hosting a Table!

To hostess contact Patty Reddy: patreddywauwatosa@gmail.com
Sign up in the Atrium or call 414-258-7375

JUST FOR YOUTH

November 2023



Sunday School Sunday, November 5, 12, 19, & 26
for ages 4 – 5th grade

Children will begin in church with their families during 10^{am} worship and dismissed to Sunday School during the service.

Pilgrim Fellowship (PF) Sunday, November 5, 12, 19, & 26
for grades 6 – 12

Teens begin in church with their families during 10^{am} worship and dismissed to PF during the service.

Covenant Class November 5, & 19
for 9th graders 8:30^{am}

Meet in the Conference Room.

Junior Choir Sunday, November 5, 12, 19, & 26
for K-8th grades Meet at 9:15^{am} in LL4.

Children usually sing once a month.

Faith Finders Returns Monday, November 13
for 1st - 6th graders We meet on the second Monday of the month for fellowship, games, and program time. We begin with an optional dinner at 5^{pm}, followed by activities from 5:30 - 6:30^{pm}. Friends are welcome! Come enjoy tacos this month. We will be making gingerbread cookies for the Christmas Workshop. No cost, but donations for the meal are appreciated.



Junior Choir
sang on
Sunday, October 14.

Living Gracefully

By Sarah DeYoung

Starting with this November issue of Columns there will be a series of articles focusing on the grace that one of our church family has gained through their connections with the life of our church. This month, Sharon Petrie kindly shared some thoughts during a recent interview.

Sharon was born in the Twin Cities area and spent most of her childhood growing up in Muskego, Wisconsin. She started attending First Church in 1969 after she and her husband, Jim, bought a home in Wauwatosa. Sharon has been involved in numerous church activities throughout her years here at First Church. Her daughters, Laura Anderson and Pam Cable, grew up in the activities of the church as well. Outside of church, Sharon loves to spend time gardening, walking in nature, and relaxing with her sweet Havanese dog, Coco.



We asked Sharon two questions, and what follows are her responses:

Question 1: Can you describe how one or two experiences with First Church have been important to your faith journey?

Sharon: Pastor Julie's recent sermon resonated strongly with me because First Church has truly been the cornerstone/foundation of my (and our entire family's) faith journey. As a result, it's impossible for me to single out only one or two experiences over the 55-plus years we've been affiliated with First Church. To name just a few:

- The longstanding friendships made and emotional support I've received through more than 50 years of participating in Women's Circle (originally Circle 7) and board service (Deacons, Trustees and Congregational Home).

- The friendships and support systems our daughters Pam (Cable) and Laura (Anderson) developed as children through their participation in Sunday School, Weekday Church School, Junior Choir, Bell Choir and PF (and have maintained to this day).
- Multiple generations of weddings, baptisms and funerals have all been made more meaningful to our family by taking place in the familiar, beautiful, safe, and supportive surroundings of First Church.

Question 2: The ups and downs of life teach us many lessons. Can you share one or two life lessons that may help others on their own life journeys?

Sharon: "For me, actions have always spoken louder than words. I recently saw a bumper sticker that beautifully and succinctly summed up my lifelong faith journey. It read: "Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly." For many, many years, First Church Wauwatosa has provided a special place and amazing people with whom I've been privileged to journey in accordance with the words and examples of Jesus.

Our thanks to Sharon for sharing her experiences, insights, and for her wonderful example of living gracefully.

Boy Scout Wreath & Greenery Pick Up



Orders of wreaths and other greenery from Troop 47 will be available for pick up on Sunday, November 19th. Your order will be available in the church Parking Lot before and following the 10am Worship Service.

Board of Benevolence Highlights Two Important Organizations

And he would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.” (Luke 3:11)

Thanks to the legacy of generosity at First Church, we can support the missions of two local and much needed benevolences: The Friends of the Milwaukee County Treatment Courts (FMCTC) and Milwaukee’s Homeless Veterans Initiative (MHVI).

Treatment Courts offer individuals the opportunity to change their life circumstances and become alcohol and drug free while diverting low-level offenders from unnecessary incarceration. FMCTC supports individuals who have chosen to attend treatment by assisting them with gift cards for food, gas, transportation, personal care items, writing and art supplies, and other items and services that help them comply with the court while attending their treatment program.

FMCTC increases awareness and support of the Milwaukee County Treatment Courts’ life-changing work through community partnering and outreach, maintaining a network of treatment court alumni, serving in an advisory capacity to the treatment courts, and raising funds to enhance the treatment court programs.

By supporting program participants in their efforts to successfully complete treatment, we help improve their lives, as well as the community. We will be doing a drive for their needs, which are listed on their website under the Contribution tab at Friends of the Milwaukee County Treatment Courts (friendsoftreatmentcourts.com)

Some of the most impactful donations are gift cards for fast food, Wal-Mart, Gas cards and movie passes. With our support and the efforts of this great organization, more people can succeed in improving their lives.

If you are interested in learning more about this important program, please go online to: <https://spectrumnews1.com/wi/milwaukee/news/2021/03/16/program-works-to-help-keep-wisconsin-veterans-out-of-jail#>

The Milwaukee Homeless Veteran Initiative (MHVI) provides the services that homeless and at-risk veterans need to reach and maintain their highest level of independence.

Founded and run by veterans, MHVI offers unique programs to fill the gaps in services to homeless veterans without duplicating what others do. When possible, MHVI partners with the Veterans Administration, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, County Veterans Service Officers, and other non-profit agencies.

Since 2008, MHVI has served thousands of veterans and their families in Southeastern Wisconsin. They don’t leave our wounded behind. What a noble cause, and more needed than ever.

Thank you for your continued generosity and fellowship.

Board of Stewardship and Benevolence -

Sharon Raymond, Deb Hayden, Kristin Stern, Fredrick J. Kingsley (Esq.) Bobby Russ, Dylan Thomas

Help Us Hang the Greens!

Saturday, November 25th – 9^{am}



Everyone is invited to join the Deacons for the Hanging of the Greens as we decorate our church for Advent and Christmas. We’ll meet Saturday, November 25, at 9:00am in the Atrium.

This is a family friendly event and fun for all ages!

Please sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium, call the church Office at 414.258.7375, or email marianne@firstchurchtosa.org if you plan to join us.

Watch the GreenSheet for updates and more information.

The Board of Deacons will gladly accept donations toward the purchase of the Christmas decorations for the office with your check made payable to FCC. Dedications will be printed in the Christmas Eve Orders of Worship for both the 4:00pm and 10:00pm Worship Services.

- Board of Deacons

Make Thanksgiving Happen for Families in Need

As we approach Thanksgiving, we will again support the Milwaukee Rescue Mission as it provides Thanksgiving dinner baskets to those in need. Baskets provide a turkey and all ingredients for the holiday meal. The generous support of First Church helps make this holiday program possible. Donations of \$20 Pick ‘n Save and/or Walmart gift cards will be collected now through November 12th. Our goal is 125 cards. Please bring your gift cards to the Office or drop them into the mail slot.



The Milwaukee Rescue Mission is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Thank you for generous support.

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

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Christmas Decor Donations

The time to plan for Christmas decorations is drawing near. Since so many people appreciate these annual decorations, the Deacons are again requesting donations to contribute toward their purchase. You may make an offering in your own name, in honor of or in memory of a loved one. Dedications will be printed in the Christmas Eve orders of worship for both the 4 pm and 10 pm services.

**Thank you for helping to make Christmas a special time
at First Congregational Church!**

Your Name(s)

In honor of:

(and/or)

In memory of:

Amount: \$

Please return completed form to the Office, Thanks!