

JANUARY 2024

Volume 39 - Issue 1

The Congregational COLUMNS

A Look Back

By Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith

What an amazing year we have had here at First Church Tosa! I have learned, during this year together, that we are a community of people interested in deepening and growing in our faith and engagement with others.

This summer while our Nave was under construction we moved upstairs to the Social Hall to worship and then have fellowship together (a tidbit of history here: part of the Social Hall was part of the 1853 church building. Talk about history doing new things in new ways). And even though that room needed to be recreated each week, we seemed to enjoy the casual atmosphere it lent itself to. I heard several people comment that we should do this every summer (of course I am not talking about reconstructing the Nave every summer)!

We returned to our beautiful Nave in October, appreciating the glorious sound of the music ministries as well as the thundering sound of children running down from the balcony and pews for their message. The Chancel steps filled with children as we in the pews have welcomed many visitors and old friends.

We have engaged in additional new ministries as well as outreach to the community, and the building is humming with these activities. With the addition of Tesha to our ministry team we have broadened offerings of spiritual growth and care that engage people of the church and our neighbors.

The commitment you make through the Care Board, Christian Education, Stewardship/ Benevolence, Trustees, Fellowship, and Deacons lives and breathes the Covenant that invites so many others into what it means to be an authentic community together as we remember who we are:

As followers of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves to share in the worship and service of God, to grown in the knowledge and expression of our faith, to reach out with compassion to those in need, to treat each other with love and understanding, and to return to God a portion of God's gifts.

I am so grateful to be a part of God's work with all of you, and am humbled by the staff, and the many volunteers who pour themselves into simply being church. This is truly an exciting time to be a part of what's happening at "First Church."

We are glad to help you refresh or learn some basics about the Congregational Way and how that is lived out here. There will be two information sessions after church on January 7 and 14, and we will host another series in April. Please contact me or the Office if you have questions. We look forward to welcoming new members on January 28, the same day as our Annual Meeting. At First Church we celebrate the opportunity and responsibility we have as individuals and groups to take part in the life and work of the church.

We look forward to continuing and adding to gatherings such as WeCONNECT for our younger families, children and youth ministries, book and study groups, game nights, musical opportunities, as well as any one of the Jr. and Chancel choirs, spiritual nourishment, outreach, and mission ... to name a few. What are you feeling in your spirit? Is there something you would like to see and be part of? Let's sit and talk!

Welcome to 2024 and all that God has for us ahead!

Serving With You,

Rev. Julie

THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN WAUWATOSA

Worship & Discovery

Women's Ministry

Tuesdays, January 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 from 8-9^{am}

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

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: patreddywauwatosa@gmail.com

Women's Circle Showcases the Ronald McDonald House

Tuesday, January 9, 12:30^{pm} in the Lounge

Ronald McDonald House helps keep families together during a difficult time by housing the parent, legal guardian or primary caregiver of a child being treated at a partner hospital. Learn more about the work of this caring facility at the January meeting of First Church's Women's Circle. Dessert and coffee will be served.

Please RSVP by contacting Colleen Foster: fostercolleen1937@gmail.com or 414.425.6970

Men's Ministry

Wednesdays, January 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31 at 9^{am}

Join us in the Lounge for lively conversation on interesting topics. We are currently reading the Book of Daniel. For more information, contact Hank Collis at hcollis@twc.com.

Adult Learning

Sundays, January 7 & 21 at 8:45^{am}

Adult Ed will go back to meeting the first and third Sundays of every month. We will gather at 9:00am in Room 107 and work our way through the Book of Ephesians. All are welcome and asked to bring your Bible. For questions or more information contact Patty Reddy.

Women's Ministry Begins a New Study in January

Women of the Bible by Ann Spangler & Jean E. Syswerda is a bestselling devotional study focused on 52 remarkable women in Scripture. As you learn more about these incredible women, their everyday joys, and their struggles to live with faith and courage, you'll see that their stories aren't far from our own.

This updated and expanded year-long devotional, now with over one million copies sold, invites you to take a closer look at the lives of prominent--and not so prominent--women of Scripture, offering a fresh perspective on the story of salvation. From Eve to the Proverbs 31 woman, you'll have a chance to see the women of the Bible in a brand, new light.

Authors Ann Spangler and Jean E. Syswerda dive into the lives of these women, spending one week getting to know each of them better through an interactive devotional.

You are invited to join the group Tuesday mornings at 8am in the library. Or you are encouraged to study on your own and come when you are able. Books are available from Patty Reddy or the Office and can be ordered online.

Patty Reddy, Facilitator

Everything You Wanted to Know About First Church

Whether you're new to First Church or just want a refresher, Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith is facilitating two First Church Information Sessions:

Sunday, January 7 11:15am in the Parlor
and

Sunday, January 14 12noon in the Parlor

If, once you've attended a session, you would like to join First Church, we will welcome new members on Sunday, January 28, at the 10am Worship Service in the Nave.

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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414-258-7375

On-Call Minister
414-258-7378

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Senior Minister

Tesha Kathryn Urban
Associate Minister

Jim Harris
Administrator

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Director of Christian Education

Rhonda Kwiecien
Director of Music & Keyboard Artist

Ellen Shuler
Director of FCC Choir

Roxanne Trump-Miles
Director of Jr. Choir

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First Congregational Church
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Wauwatosa, WI 53213
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Like us on Facebook!

Operating Statement Summary

Year to Date as of November 2023

	2023	2022
Pledge Base Rec'd	87%	83%
Pledge Income	\$425,712	\$389,906
Total Income	\$587,250	\$554,796
Total Expense	\$569,649	\$459,615
Net Income	\$17,601	\$95,182

Detailed financials available in the office

Officers, Boards, Committees & Nominations for 2024

Church Officers

- ***Moderator:** Randy Sitzberger
- ***Vice Moderator:** JC Moore
- ***Past Moderator:** Mike Huitink
- ***Treasurer:** Rick Nowacki
- ***Assist. Treasurer:** Cindy Walsh
- ***FCC Clerk:** Diane Collis
- ***NACCC Delegate:** Dick Berger

Church Council At-Large – Members: 6

1. Butch Boyd, 2nd year
2. Frank Sterbin, 2nd year
3. Jeff Petrus, 2nd year
4. Hank Collis, 3rd year
5. OPEN*
6. Mary Kay Olston, 1st year*

Board of Congregational Care –Members 6-10

1. Sharon Nortman, 2nd year
2. Mary Berger, 2nd year
3. Sarah De Young, 2nd year
4. Ann Harris, 3rd year
5. Zile Rudzitis, 1st year*
6. Roxanne Miles, 1st year*

Board of Christian Education – Members 6

1. Sandy Huitink, 2nd year
2. Ardith Moore, 2nd year
3. Diane Saeger, 3rd year
4. DdG Wakefield, 3rd year
5. Sue Donohoe, 1st year*
6. Markie Pfenning, 1st year*

Board of Deacons – Members 8

1. Jon Stern, 2nd year
2. Carol Hudson, 2nd year
3. Carolyn Simpson, 2nd year
4. Pat Reddy, 3rd year
5. Rich Raymond, 3rd year
6. Margie Idzikowski, 3rd year
7. Mary Dummert, 1st year*
8. OPEN*

Board of Stewardship/Benevolence –Members 6

1. Debbie Hayden, 1st year*
2. OPEN*
3. Sharon Raymond, 2nd year
4. Dylan Thomas, 2nd year
5. Bobby Russ, 3rd year
6. Kristin Stern, 3rd year

Nominating Committee – Members 5

1. Steve Hayes*
2. Michelle Russ*
3. OPEN*
4. Council at Large
5. Council at Large

Board of Fellowship – Members 7

1. Casey Zoss, 2nd year
2. Paige Galfano, 2nd year
3. Scott Rondeau, 3rd nd year
4. Barb Dunham, 3rd year
5. Elizabeth Carger, 3rd year
6. Sophee Jones, 1st year*
7. SaraLee Allison, 1st year*
8. Denise O'Meara, 1st year
9. Keith Harmon, 1st year*

Board of Trustees – Members 9

1. Sarah Blake, 1st year*
2. Ben Hudson, 1st year*
3. George Meyer, 1st year*
4. Kurt Raddemann, 2nd year
5. Charlie Wakefield, 2nd year
6. Paul Kwiecien, 2nd year
7. Michelle Russ, 3rd year
8. Mike Elwing, 3rd year
9. Bob Ornst, Jr., 3rd year

Personnel Committee – Members 7

1. Moderator
2. Vice Moderator
3. Emily Hayes (2nd year of 1st term)
4. Jennifer Wakefield (1st year of 3rd term)
5. Lisa Mauer (2nd year of 3rd term)
6. Merrill York (2nd year of 3rd term)
7. Pierre Payne (1st year of 1st term)*



2024 Budget Update

A sincere thank you to all who have turned in your estimated pledge, bringing us closer to our 2024 goal of \$533,000. As of December 19th, we had received 123 pledges totaling \$449,000. (For comparison, as of December 13, 2023, we had received 134 pledges totaling \$453,500.)

This past year has been characterized by growth in our First Church family, the addition of programs for adult learning, grief support and healing, and family, child and youth enrichment, as well as increased outreach to our community. First Church has also benefited from the many contributions of Rev. Tesha Kathryn Urban, our new Associate Minister.

The Budget & Finance Committee is working on the budget that will be presented at the Annual Meeting on January 28, but needs to hear from you. If you have not turned in your estimated pledge, please prayerfully consider what level of support you can afford to provide First Church. Your support allows us to continue serving our members and those in need.

We wish you a happy and healthy New Year.

Blessings,

Jim Harris, FCC Administrator

First Congregational Church Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 28, 2024

Immediately following a (shortened) 10am Worship Service

The Annual Meeting will propose the 2024 budget for approval, vote on the slate of Board and Committee nominees, and update the congregation about church projects. This is your opportunity to see Congregationalist polity in action and participate in church decisions!

Consider Providing Chancel Flowers in 2024

If you are interested in donating flowers for the Chancel during 2024, please contact Patty Reddy, Deacons, regarding the available Sundays or sign up on the Flower Chart on the Gathering Table. Chancel flowers are a lovely way to honor or remember loved ones and share special milestones.

Stewardship Update

Greetings !

The Stewardship and Benevolence Board is anxious to share more information about some of the organizations that we support, and this month we want to share more about “Dryhootch.”

Dryhootch was founded by a former combat veteran, Bob Curry, who recognized a need to have a ‘hootch’ (borrowing the military term for safe place) where true peers - veterans – are able to interact and share experiences with other veterans who were transitioning to a non-military environment, yet still dealing with potential demons from their recent lives in service of their country.

My friend Cindy and I visited their café on West National Avenue in a recent Saturday morning and met Otis Winstead and Levi Maker – the President /CEO and Director, respectively, of Dryhootch. This was nothing pre-planned – we simply caught them in the act of doing their jobs. Their warmth towards us and enthusiasm for the mission were inspiring. Otis is winding down and hopes to retire within the next year or so, but he continues to provide leadership and service to the organization, none the less.

While we were there, we met a number of men who were involved with the organization. Each was eager to show and tell us about their services. It was clear that Dryhootch had a strong impact on their lives and was continuing to provide genuine, practical aid to them.

We were there for just a short time, but we both left feeling uplifted by the experience of rubbing shoulders with these humble men who were not just talking about providing aid and respect for our veterans who need it, but actually doing it. We plan to visit the Brady Street coffee shop at some point in the near future. We also came away thankful for the support that First Congregational provides to Dryhootch and motivated to urge our continued support of this team that is dedicated to “helping the veteran & their family who survived the war, survive the peace.”

Fred Kingsley, co-chair

All are invited to the Winter Farmer's Market at First Church

Sunday, January 14,
First Church will host its first ever Winter Farmers Market in association with the Food, Faith, and Farmer Network.

All are welcome to shop area vendors, enjoy a tasty market brunch, and build connections with our rural community. The Farmers Market and brunch (prepared by our Fellowship Board) will be from 9:00 am until 12 noon in the Social Hall.

The Farmers Market will offer produce, proteins, artisan creations, jams, jellies, honey, baked goods and more! You will help area farmers generate income during winter, while they provide you with healthful, sustainable, locally sourced, and high-quality products.

The Winter Farmers Market is designed to build awareness of nutrition and health, environmental stewardship and sustainability, food security, economic justice for farmers, and build a relationship between urban and rural communities.

Proceeds from the brunch, as well as some of the money earned by the vendors, support the Harvest of Hope Fund that assists farmers in distress.

Bring your family, friends, and neighbors! If you plan to enjoy the brunch, please sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium.

See you there!



JUST FOR YOUTH January 2024



Sunday School *January 7, 14, 21 & 28*
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, January 7, 14, 21 & 28*
for grades 6 – 12

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

Covenant Class *January 7 & 14*
for 9th graders 8:30^{am}

Meet in the Conference Room.

Junior Choir *Sunday, January 7, 14, 21 & 28*
for K-8th grades Meet at 9:15^{am} in LL4.

Children usually sing once a month.

Faith Finders *Monday, January 8*
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! No cost, but donations for the meal are appreciated.

Winter FARMERS MARKET

*All are
welcome*

Sunday, January 14th
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

First Congregational Church
of Wauwatosa
1511 Church St, Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Products include

Sweet Breads
Gluten-free, Vegan Breads
Eggs
Mushrooms
Meats
Soaps
Natural Body Care
Preserves
Salsa
Apples & Cider
Syrups
Oats
Granola
Wool Products

*Freewill donation
accepted to
support the work of*

***Come Shop a Variety of
Locally Grown & Artisan Crafted Products***

Stay and Enjoy

Brunch & Fellowship

Locally-sourced meal served featuring:

*Vegetarian Egg Strata, Sausage,
Baked Apples, Oatmeal, Cider and Beverages*

Suggested Brunch donation:

\$10 per person · \$25 per family



This Winter Farmers Market, co-hosted by **First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa**, is a project sponsored by **Food, Faith and Farming Network** - a non-profit organization connecting land and people, and promoting earth stewardship and community since the 1980s.

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

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Christmas Pageant (*top*)
Christmas Play (*center*)
“A Charlie Brown Christmas”
Kringle Hour (*right*)