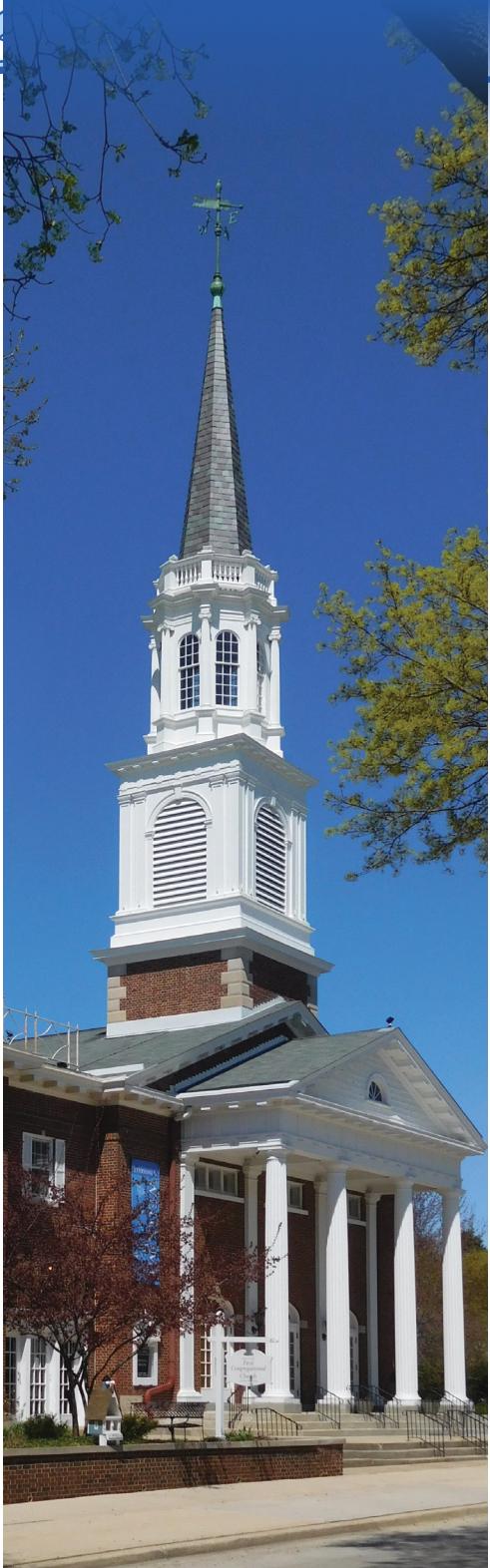


NOVEMBER 2025

Volume 40 - Issue 10



THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN WAUWATOSA

The Congregational COLUMNS

A Time for Remembering

By Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith

Ah November. The month when the trees begin to be relieved of their fall splendor and chillier days settle in around us. The month when we celebrate the story of those first pilgrims who traveled to the New World to begin a new way of life with the freedom to worship as they felt God called them to do.



November. The month when we celebrate Thanksgiving, remembering the people and situations we are thankful for. I am grateful to have so much to look back on each year in this way, but today, I want to look forward with all of you, thankful for what is ahead. Yes, this month we have our Staying Connected luncheon on November 9, when the Care Board invites and helps bring some of our more homebound to worship and lunch with all of us. Then the Pie Feast on the 23rd stretches our taste buds and stomachs in preparation for Thanksgiving dinner. During November the Giving Tree appears, and the end of the month brings us to the start of Advent.

I am, with all of you, grateful for the people and initiatives that draw us forward. Some that are less evident, but bubbling through the work of your Communications Committee. They are working on launching a new, engaging and facile website, as well as creative ways we are reaching out to communicate with, and invite others to know who we are and what God is doing.

Leaping ahead to January, I am grateful we can look forward to particular events for the church and, maybe more importantly, for the community at large. Saturday, January 10, we are hosting speaker Erin Walsh from Spark & Stitch Institute to speak about Raising Thriving Kids in the Digital Age. Targeted to parents and grandparents of elementary through high school youth, the event will help us consider the impact of technology, screens, and AI. The program will be open to the public at no charge. The next day, January 11, we will host the Winter Farmer's Market and Brunch. Again, it's for open for all. Watch for more communication to come.

I am thankful to be a part of this growing faith community and will be bold enough to name my own hope that our Stewardship drive will enable us to bring another minister on board. So many of you are active and serving in so many ways here: on boards and committees, leading a number of midweek small groups, as well as Sunday morning education and formation for youth and adults. Thank you. You will find much about these activities throughout this Columns. AND, I do believe our continuing growth and outreach need an additional, creative minister to support our growth here and outside these walls. I know I am looking forward, with hope, to where God is leading us.

Do you have thoughts, questions, ideas you would like to discuss? Let's meet and talk! I look forward to these opportunities. Email, call, or text.

Giving thanks with you,

Julie



Worship & Discovery

Women's Ministry

Tuesday, Nov. 4th, 11th, 18th, & 25th from 8-9^{am} in the Library

Join the group on Tuesday mornings from 8-9am in the Library when you are able, or just obtain the *365-Day Devotion* for your at-home quiet time. You do not need be a member to join the discussion. Consider inviting a friend or neighbor to come along and give this morning gathering a try. All are welcome.

Discovery: Experiencing God

Sundays, Nov. 9th, 2^{3rd} & 30th from 9-10^{am} in the Friendship Lounge

Discovery meets every second, fourth and fifth Sunday at 9 am. During each program, Chip Smith, facilitator, will help us understand ways we experience God.

Adult Education: The Story

Sundays, Nov. 2nd & 16th from 9-10^{am} in the Lounge

Adult Education, led by Patty Reddy, is continuing its journey through *The Story*, edited by Randy Frazee. The study will discuss Chapters 22 and 23, respectively. If you didn't start the book study last year, you are welcome to join now. The book is available in the Office. Cost is \$6.

Please contact Patty Reddy with any questions: patreddywauwatosa@gmail.com / 414.254.2638.



Discovering Guatemala

Tuesday, November 11 ~ 12:30 pm
In the Lounge

Speakers: Fred & Jan Schuler

Please sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium if you plan to attend.



Men's Ministry

Wednesdays, Nov. 5th, 12th, 19th, & 26th from 9-10^{am} in the Parlor

Our vision is to help each other along our "Faith Journey." Please join us any Wednesday at 9am in the Library for lively discussions. For information contact Hank Collis via email: CaptainHarry30@outlook.com.

Take a Break at the Women's Retreat at ChristPond

Women of First Church are welcome to join Patty Reddy for a retreat at ChristPond, a secluded place for spiritual growth and renewal. The retreat begins at noon on Friday, January 16th, and continues through 4 pm on Saturday, January 17th.

The retreat center offers a quiet, comfortable and relaxing atmosphere in a natural and secluded setting outside Random Lake. It takes about an hour to drive to ChristPond from Milwaukee, so you can stay for the entire event or drive up for a single day. ChristPond is located at N1599 Hwy 57, just north of Random Lake and 3 miles on the east side of Hwy 57, about 12 miles south of Plymouth.

The retreat house accommodates 16 overnight guests, so you're encouraged to let us know as soon as possible if you would like to stay overnight. Feel free to invite a friend...or friends!

For more information or to make a reservation, contact Patty Reddy: email patreddywauwatosa@gmail.com.

Operating Statement Summary

Year to Date as of September 2025

	2025	2024
Pledge Base Received	68.0%	67.0%
Pledge Income	\$370,067	\$339,242
Total Income	\$497,688	\$486,152
<u>Total Expense</u>	<u>\$461,365</u>	<u>\$439,609</u>
Net Income	\$36,323	\$46,544

Detailed financials available in the office

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

Jim Harris
Administrator

Tonia Wallner
Director of Christian Education

Rhonda Kwiecien
Director of Music & Keyboard Artist

Jeremiah Cawley
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
Facility Manager

Debbie Hayden
CE Assistant

Michael "Chip" Smith
Ministerial Intern

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!

Focus on the Boards: Trustees

by JC Moore, Moderator

Welcome to the last installment of my series on the First Church boards. This final article will be on Trustees. Many people shy away from this board as its focus is on our beautiful building; and some may find things like maintenance updates and building use policy intimidating or, at best, mundane. After all, the other boards that I have reported on thus far have been about more desirable things, like learning and caring and giving and fellowship. However, when I mentioned this to the chair, George Meyer, he quickly corrected me by pointing out that Trustee's responsibility involves not just care of the building and grounds, but also its use.

Trustees and the building staff have always done an amazing job of maintaining our beautiful, white-steepled church on a hilltop. So much so that it's become iconically connected with Wauwatosa Village. From nearly anywhere in the village, one can look to the southwest and see the steeple perched reassuringly on the hill. On the other hand, our church is more than just a building on a hill in the center of town. It's people and part of our community. Trustees works hard to make sure it can function as part of the heart of Tosa. When First Church hosts summer concerts or farmers markets or speakers of interest, we are providing a location for entertainment, discussion, and fellowship with neighbors. We also serve as a gathering place for Tosa by allowing local groups like the Scouts,

Big Band, choral groups, and non-profit organizations to use the church for rehearsals, meetings, and events. When we use the church to collect and store groceries and care items and assist the community after the floods, we reach out to neighbors in need. Nearly every evening, a variety of meetings and events are happening in our busy church. Trustees makes sure the building is sound, staffed, and available to do all this.

As George pointed out, some of the board members have an interest in maintenance and construction and are suited to the building care parts of its mission. These can include approving building purchases, planning repair of the stained glass window or the AC, or even major projects like the Nave renovation or new elevator.

Other members, however, are oriented towards outreach and building use. In turn, they enjoy things like establishing building hours and use policies. They review whether proposed activities are acceptable and consistent with our values and the Covenant. They think about how the building can be used to connect to our neighbors. George reminded me of the new bulletin board meant to inform members of the congregation and community about local events, and how Trustees was involved in writing the policy for its use.

Up to Date with Stewardship

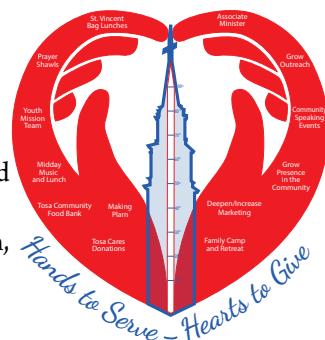
Our Stewardship campaign, "Hands to Serve, Hearts to Give," continues to reflect the spirit of generosity and shared purpose that defines our church family. As we have shared earlier, our central goal for 2026, and beyond, is to welcome an Associate Minister to our ministry team. This is more than just adding a position, it's about expanding our capacity to care deeply for one another, to reach those seeking connection, to nurture faith across all generations, and to share the work of worship and pastoral leadership in meaningful ways.

To bring this vision to life, we will need to increase our annual budget by approximately \$60,000 in 2026 and sustain that level of support in the years ahead. This is a bold step, but one we believe is both necessary and possible through our collective commitment.

With your support, the future of our church will be one that is bright and full of possibility—rooted in compassion, energized by growth, and guided by a shared calling to serve. Thank you for walking with us in faith, and for giving with both your hands and your heart.

Gratefully,

*Your Board of Stewardship and Benevolence
Tori Raddeemann and Dylan Thomas, co-chairs,
Hank Collis, Lanae Haertel, Deb Hayden,
Elizabeth Strasma, Marty Vander Velde*



Donate a Happy Thanksgiving

Help put a Thanksgiving turkey on the tables of local families in need through your cash donations to Milwaukee Rescue Mission. MRM will turn your donations into gift cards that families may use to purchase a turkey.

As a not-for-profit organization, the mission is required to keep scrupulous account of donations for end-of-year tax purposes. Providing your support in the form of a check, instead of a physical gift card, makes it easier and quicker for the Mission to submit accurate reporting for tax exemption purposes.

Our goal is to donate \$2,500 in cash so the Mission can provide for 100 turkeys. To participate:

- Please make your check payable to Milwaukee Rescue Mission.
- Put your donation in the offering plate or bring it to the Office.
- Please provide your donation by Monday, November 9th.

Thank you for your continued support of the Milwaukee Resuce Mission and the people it serves.



A Word (Or Two) From Hank Collis, The Year Round Delegate to the NACCC

There are many good things happening at the National Association for Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) headquarters this year. One of the best is that Peggy Griffith has been brought on staff as the Interim Director of Development. We all wish Peggy the best as she brings her time and Lay Ministry talents to this position.

A recent article in the NACCC E-News Messenger highlights the efforts of its Church Vitality Ministry Council "that awards one-time grants to member churches to launch bold, collaborative, and Spirit-led projects aimed at renewing local ministry." The Messenger focuses on some of these grantees who are making remarkable strides, tackling real-world challenges, and embracing fresh opportunities to serve their communities.

At next June's NACCC Annual Meeting & Conference in



Massachusetts, attendees will participate in the intergenerational mission project with Seafarer's Friend, an NACCC mission partner located in Boston. During the meeting, we will fill "ditty bags" to be given out to mariners on ships that come into port. Ditty bags are used by sailors to hold small, necessary items. The NACCC is looking for volunteers to knit/crochet hats and scarves to put into the bags which must be sewn by volunteers, as well.

Instructions for the knitting and sewing are found on the Seafarer's Friend website www.seafarersfriend.org or email js2026ma@gmail.com.

The knitting and sewing efforts will take some time, so the Mission Project hopes church members will get this message and consider volunteering.

Looking Back: Benevolence

As we enter the final months of the year, there's a lot to celebrate—both within our church walls and out in the wider community. The Board of Stewardship and Benevolence would like to take a moment to highlight the benevolence efforts we've supported throughout the year and share some important updates with the congregation.

Two beloved programs will be returning this season: the Milwaukee Rescue Mission Thanksgiving Campaign and the Giving Tree. Both have received strong support from FCC members in past years, and we're excited to offer them again.

The Milwaukee Rescue Mission is currently accepting donations in \$25 increments through November 9. For the Giving Tree, this year's recipients will be Bridge to Brighter, Milwaukee Homeless Veterans, and Milwaukee Treatment Court. The tree will be set up in the Atrium by mid-November, and you can find more details in upcoming What's Happening inserts in the Orders of Worship.

We've also selected recipients for our Thanksgiving and Christmas Special Offerings. This Thanksgiving, offerings will support Asociacion Civil Cristiana Congregacional, a mission in Argentina, and Milwaukee's Sojourner Family Peace Center. For Christmas, we'll be supporting the Milwaukee Rescue Mission, PanAmerican Institute (a technical school of underprivileged students in Mexico), and Happy Life Children's Home (a caring home providing education, health care, and adoption services for abandoned children in Kenya).

In addition to these seasonal efforts, we're proud to share that, so far this year, the board has donated to the following organizations:

- One Great Hour of Sharing (for flood relief in Texas and Southeastern Wisconsin)
- Milwaukee Homeless Veterans
- Fisher House
- Guest House
- Hope House
- Friends of Milwaukee County Treatment Courts
- Latino Alliance Applying Solutions
- Seafarer's Friends
- Fishers of Men Mission
- St. Vincent's of Milwaukee
- Bridge to Brighter
- WCA – Clayton Wakefield Camp Scholarship

If you have suggestions for future benevolence recipients, we welcome your input. Please fill out the form located next to the Suggestion Box on the Stewardship and Benevolence bulletin board across from Friendship Lounge.

Thank you for continuing to believe in the impact our church can make—both within our congregation and far beyond. Please let me know if you have questions or need any clarification.

Thank you for your continued support,
Tori Raddeemann, Co-Chair

Help deck our halls!
Hanging of the Greens
Saturday, November 22nd
9:00 am in the Sanctuary

Please sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium.

Fall Pie Feast

Sunday, November 23rd
11 am in the Social Hall

**Bake your favorite pie to share.
Bring it to the Kitchen before 10 am Worship.**

JUST FOR YOUTH

November 2025



Sunday School

November 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th for ages 4 – 5th grade
Children will begin in church with their families during 10^{am} worship and will be dismissed to Sunday School during the service.

Faith Finders

Monday, November 10th for 1st - 5th 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.

Junior Choir

November 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th for K-8th grades

Meet at 9:15^{am} in LL4. Children usually sing once a month.



Share Lunch with Friends Old and New

On Sunday, November 9th, the Care Board and Fellowship Board will host the Stay Connected luncheon. All are welcome to break bread with friends, as well as members of our congregation who have difficulty getting here on a regular basis because of mobility and transportation issues.

Immediately following the 10 am Worship Service, we'll gather in the Social Hall for lunch and conversation. This is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with friends, old and new.

Please RSVP by contacting the Office at 414.258.7375, marianne@firstchurchofthea.org, or sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium. Be sure to let us know if you need transportation to and from the church on November 9th, and we'll arrange a ride for you.

We look forward to seeing you!

Wisconsin Stories Told Through Art

Milwaukee Art Museum has a number of Wisconsin artists represented in its collection. On November 16th, you are invited to participate in a unique tour that investigates Wisconsin's history through the artworks of artists from our state. Church member SaraLee Allison, who is a docent at Milwaukee Art Museum, will provide a tour for members of our congregation on Sunday, November 16, beginning at 2:00 pm.

Attendees will meet 10 minutes before 2 pm at the Ticket Desk in the art museum's Windover Hall (aka the Calatrava addition). Individuals who are not museum members are responsible for purchasing an entrance ticket. Underground parking is on the south side of the building and costs \$7 for up to an hour and \$10 for up to \$2 hours.

If you plan to go, please sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium. Also note if you'd like to carpool from the church.

Covenant Class

November 9th & 23rd for 9th graders
We meet from 4:00-6:00^{pm} in the Friendship Lounge.

Pilgrim Fellowship (PF)

November 2nd, 9th, 23rd & 30th grades 6-12

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

More Youth Programming

We will be holding monthly Youth gatherings this year, which will take place the first Sunday of each month from 4-6pm.

We will end each gathering with dinner at around 5:30.

Thanksgiving Begins With Thanks

In 1620, the Pilgrims brought Congregationalism with them to America, which makes Thanksgiving especially meaningful to First Church. In 1621, the Pilgrims held a feast to give thanks for a bountiful harvest and their survival in a new and challenging land. We hope you'll join us in worship as we thank God for the many blessings He continues to bestow.

It is a First Church tradition to hold a special church service on Thanksgiving Day, at 9:00 am in the Sanctuary. We hope you'll join us in worship as we thank God for the many blessings He continues to bestow.

Music Notes

The Junior Choir has begun their 2025-26 season with a beautiful performance of *Sing Him a Song of Praise*. There is still time to join the Junior Choir, and we welcome all children, grades K4 through 8th grade, who love to sing.

The choir rehearses every Sunday from 9:30 am to 9:55 am in the Junior Choir Room – LL4E on the Lower Level. Parents are welcome to join us during rehearsal or have coffee in the Atrium.

The Junior Choir sings once a month during the 10 am Worship Service in the Sanctuary.

Coming up, we will sing November 23rd and December 21st.

A highlight of our year is **Christmas Music Sunday on December 21st**. The Junior Choir, along with our Chancel Choir and Jubilation Ringers, will help First Church celebrate the season with glorious music.

Hope to see you soon! Questions??? See Mrs. Miles or text 414-202-8089.

Mrs. Roxanne Trump-Miles, Junior Choir Director

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

Dated Material - Please deliver immediately.

PRSR STD
AUTO
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MILWAUKEE, WI
PERMIT NO. 5276



In This Issue

1 _____
A Time for Remembering

2 _____
Worship & Discovery

3 _____
Focus on the Boards: Trustees
Up to Date with Stewardship

4 _____
A Word (Or Two) From Hank Collis,
The Year Round Delegate to the NACCC
Looking Back: Benevolence
Hanging of the Greens
Fall Pie Fest

5 _____
Just for Youth
Share Lunch with Friends Old and New
Thanksgiving Begins With Thanks
Wisconsin Stories Told Through Art
Music Notes

Ready, Set, Decorate!

Sunday, November 2nd is your last chance to order wreaths and other Christmas décor from our Boy Scout Troop 47. Scouts will be in the Atrium before and following the 10 am Worship Service to take your orders for wreaths, swags, pots and more. Your order will be available for pick up on Sunday, November 23rd in the First Church parking lot.



Christmas Decorations & Dedications

So many people appreciate the annual Christmas decorations.

The Deacons are again requesting donations to contribute toward their purchase.

You may make an offering your own name, in honor of or in memory of a loved one.

The "dedications" will be printed in the Christmas Eve orders of worship.

Thank you for helping to make Christmas Eve orders of worship.

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

Your Name(s) _____

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

Amount: \$ _____ *Please return completed form to the Office.*