



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
31 W. MILWAUKEE AVE., FORT ATKINSON, WI 53538

**October 2025 First Congregational
UCC Broadcaster**

October equals gathering. Gathering equals' harvest. Harvest equals abundance. Abundance equals sharing. Sharing equals Stewardship. Stewardship equals vitality. Vitality equals faith expressions. Faith expressions equals connection to God. Connection to God equals sharing to help others. Sharing to help others equals connection to God.

Seasons bring about the cycles we return to again and again as we prioritize what is most meaningful and important as we have been given the gift of another trip around the sun. What do we do with the resources and skills we have been given?



Recently I challenged myself to do something that was out of my comfort zone. I had never done it, but there was a need, and I knew I could offer some assistance. The soccer coach at the high school was in need of an announcer for the soccer game. I know very little about this sport, but I offered to help to welcome people and announce the teams. The names would be the hardest part and I knew that going in but was willing to try anyway. I did it. I was glad I did it. I counted all of the players on the team and multiplied by two or three, and none of the other 40 parents volunteered.

The next day I would be remiss if I said I wasn't looking for an email from the coach just giving a pat on the back to say, "thanks for stepping up and helping out." Crickets. No email. I haven't signed up to do it since. There are a lot of "asks" in the church. Asking to help with worship, asking to bring food, asking for your time to help, and coming soon there will be an ask of your monetary giving to keep the church functioning and vitality for a sustained future through an annual pledge. For some of you, extra giving is a sacrifice. Whatever is given is appreciated and I personally want to thank you! I thank you for all the ways you gave something to the church. Thank you for the prayers you shared for one another. Thank you for your deep and wide hearts that express gratitude for this congregation, a community of faith, which means something.

I am thankful for each of you and will work harder to express my thanks for all you give, all you do, and all that you are, again and again!

With gratitude,

Pastor Sara

Council Highlights – September 2025

Organ Update: We have received a letter from Allen Organ with an estimate of \$30,000 for the large job of installation and set up for our new organ. An organ fund has been established to cover these costs. Marvin Olsen has suggested a committee who will assist with the completion of this project. We hope to have a concert after installation and be treated to beautiful music!

Jefferson County Youth Safe Space Request: The Council was asked by Kathi Cauley, Jefferson County Human Services liaison and church member to consider agreeing to be the fiscal agent for Jefferson County Youth Safe Space Grant. The Safe Space group is for LGBTQIA+ youth and allies to come together to build community, support, share information and socialize. The group is for anyone under the age of 18. They have received a grant of \$5000 from It Get's Better. The funds will be used to create an event like a resource fair, play games, crafts, balloon art, music and have time together. The fiscal agent must be a non-profit organization. We were asked to be the fiscal agent, that will distribute approved funds from the \$5000 grant. After discussion, the Council approved this request.

Moderator: Sandy Czech will continue at the Moderator position until December/January. Thereafter, Linda Glendon will take on the Moderator role. Council positions will need to be filled for the upcoming year. Please contact Sandy if you are interested. Many thanks to Sandy and Linda!

Stewardship: Linda Glendon, our next Moderator, is working with Henry and Charlie on preparing for our upcoming Stewardship campaign. Look for a letter in your mailbox soon! Please consider how you can support your church financially and through your time and talents. Thank you!

Safety Concerns: It is unfortunate, but in these more volatile times, we must keep our members and visitors safe. Therefore, the Grant Street doors will be locked most of the week and after worship starts on Sundays. In addition, the parking lot door, Pastor Sara's office and Henry's office doors will be closed and locked.

Upcoming Events: Please make sure that you are following the Bulletin, Broadcaster or website for all the upcoming Fall events!

Next meeting is October 21, 2025.

Complete Council Minutes are available in the church office.



Habitat for Humanity®

Habitat for Humanity is building its **first house** in Jefferson County, and it will be built in Fort Atkinson on land donated by the hospital at 700 Schumacher Way. We are putting together church work teams for October 9 and November 4. Jobs for all skill levels are available. A sign up sheet and more information are available in the narthex.

Contact Mike Rankin (920-929-4186) if you have any questions.

NEW MEMBERS!

First Congregational United Church of Christ in Fort Atkinson welcomed eight new members during worship on Sunday, Sept. 21. Pictured from left to right, they are: the Rev. Gerald Bertsch, Cynthia Bertsch, Bobby Garner, Oma Garner, the Rev. Victoria Smith Ubben, Sherman Lyons, Kelsey Stade and Deidre Osborne. Each was introduced during the service by a "shepherd" (sponsor from the church council or Church Relations



Committee), presented a certificate of membership by the Rev. Dr. Sara Rabe and mingled with congregation members at a reception following the service.

First Congregational Church UCC- Fort Atkinson

All Church Bowling Event

Friday November 14, 2025

Rock River Lanes— 6:30pm

\$3.00 per game & free shoe rental.

**Please sign up at church or email
church office:**

officefortucc@gmail.com

Daycholah Retreat

Sixteen members of First Congregational United Church of Christ enjoyed a wonderfully relaxing and spiritual weekend Sept. 26-28 at the Daycholah Center on the southeastern shore of Green Lake in Ripon.

The Rev. Dr. Sara Rabe led the fall retreat, the theme of which was “Broken to Beautiful.” Housed in the comfortable Oak Mound Lodge, attendees enjoyed nature walks, arts and crafts, music, meditation, worship, a campfire and fieldtrip, all focusing on that theme.

Pastor Sara noted that everyone has things that lay heavy on the heart, whether it be health, job, financial or family issues; death of a loved one; worries about the future; angst about the present or past; or simply the many little stresses that often accompany everyday life. By mending those “broken” parts of us, she shared, we can be — and are — beautiful.

Activities exemplifying that transition included selecting sea glass, which starts out as discarded broken bottles but is made smooth by tumbling against the waves, sand and rocks; practicing spiritual healing with rocks and gems; and trying our hand at Kintsugi.

Kintsugi is the Japanese area of repairing broken pottery with lacquer mixed with powdered gold, highlighting the breaks as part of the object’s history rather than concealing them. It celebrates imperfections, seeing beauty in the damaged and repaired, symbolizing resilience and transformation. Retreat participants had fun breaking plates and then trying to glue them back together. The successful ones used gold paint (rather than the real deal) to highlight the cracks, creating art from what otherwise would have been trash.

Continuing that theme was a fieldtrip to Wes Hunting Studio Glass in Princeton, a second-generation art glass studio where guests were wowed by the glass-blowing process that turned chips and chunks of glass into gorgeous vases, bowls and other works of beauty.

Each day featured utterly perfect weather, three absolutely delicious and filling meals and sunset vespers at the aptly named Vesper Point. Nights featured a movie, “The Swimmers,” on Friday and a bonfire with s’mores and popcorn Saturday.

The weekend capped off in the lay chapel, where an extremely moving and joy-filled Sunday worship service celebrated the reawakened beauty in each and every one of us.

This marked First Congregational UCC’s third annual retreat to the Daycholah Center, affiliated with United Church Camps Outdoor Ministry.



Loren Gray

An Appreciation of Superior Service for the Church

What is a legacy? A legacy can be defined as a long-lasting impact that a person can make through their actions, values, and contributions that will continue to influence others long after they have left. It encompasses spiritual, emotional, cultural, and moral footprints that are left in lessons they teach, relationships they nurture and professional guidance they offer.



Do you know that one of our legacy's has retired. Loren Gray has been the Church Treasurer for over 20 years. He has been doing "our financial math" and making sure all our bills were paid, for more than 20 years. That is more than 240 monthly reports (each about 7 pages long), given over 20 annual meeting reports (with no notes), and signed countless checks. He has been the constant through more than 20 Moderators and Councils, several clerks, secretaries, treasurers, and Pastors. He has been the financial advisor and liaison for our day care (through 3 directors), and been our contact for insurance and investment companies. The list of behind-the-scenes management he has been involved in, seems endless. He also knows the by-laws and constitution of our church inside and out! His attention to details is amazing. His guidance, critical and analytical thinking, have guided me and many Moderators, to help in problem solving. He sits quietly and is taking everything in. He has challenged the Council, by raising topics that need to be addressed. I have such great respect for him. I want to thank him for helping me to be a better Moderator.

Kim Lutes has stepped up to take the position as our Treasurer. She knows she has big shoe to fill. Loren is guiding, and mentoring Kim. His communication, strong organizational skills, and team-work will help Kim lead our church to meet the challenges of this important position.

Please join me in thanking Loren for all the time, talents and treasures he has given to our church. I know, as he sits quietly in his up-front pew, he is still taking it all in, and will still give guidance when it is needed. Thank-you Loren for being such a legacy.

Sincerely,

Sandra Czech, Moderator

Creation Care September Event

First Congregational United Church of Christ in Fort Atkinson played host to the Wisconsin Conference UCC's Regional Creation Care event on Saturday, Sept. 6.

The Rev. Dr. John Helt, our pastor from 1994-2002, and the Rev. Bob Ullman, co-chairs of the state conference's Creation Care Team, led the program, attended by UCC Creation Care Team members from throughout Wisconsin.

Lunch was served by Lend-a-Hand.

Pastor Helt stayed overnight for Sunday worship, during which he gave the sermon, sang a duet with Charlie Knapp and reconnected with friends.



2026 Stewardship Campaign

Our 2026 Stewardship campaign is approaching fast! The theme chosen is The Oak Tree. I believe The Oak Tree is a very fitting symbol of our deep faith, and many strengths as a congregation.

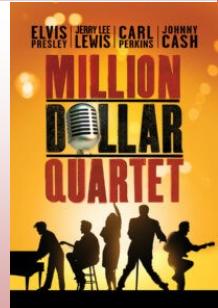
I will present the details at the October 19th worship service. You will receive an envelope with all of the information soon. Enclosed will be your pledge card along with a time and talent form with opportunities to prayerfully consider.

There are so many ways to contribute to the operation and wellbeing of our Church. The date to turn these in by is November 9th.

Respectfully,
Linda Glendon
Vice Moderator

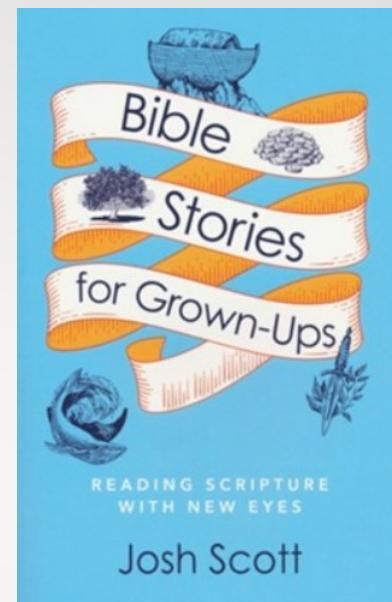
Save the Date for the Next Fireside Theater Outing

Nurture has reserved a block of seats on June 26 to see “Million Dollar Quartet”. Watch for the preliminary signup in February with final signup in April. The cost will be \$84.50 per person. Following worship Nurture will be hosting a Potluck which will include brats, hotdogs, veggie dogs, and all the trimmings.



Bible Stories for Grown Ups

Join us as adult education classes start up again on Sunday, Oct. 19 prior to worship. Over the course of six sessions we will explore some of the Bible's most told stories. We will investigate the contextual setting of each story and be challenged to view the stories from a new vantage point. Along the way we will discuss what each story reveals about the nature of God. Our guide on this journey is Josh Scott, the Lead Pastor at GracePoint Church in Nashville. If you enjoy reading stories in the Bible, if you enjoy conversing with others about the wisdom we all can find in the Bible, this is the place for you. Please consider joining our study, we need you. Please see Justin Frey for any inquiries.



Helper Schedule

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lay Reader	Tech Support
Oct. 5	Connie and Sandy Czech	David & Sharon Wisch	Zach Finch	Kurt Wesemann
Oct. 12	Sandy Mittelstadt	Jeff & Susan Woods	Sarah Brietzke	Bob Buell
Oct. 19	Linda Fromader	Mike & Nancy Rankin	Mary Narkis	Kevin Becker
Oct. 26	Jeff & Linda Glendon	Chris & Brenda Reed	Ruth Hammiller	Bob Buell

The Food Pantry items needed:

Hamburger helper

Pineapple

Mixed Vegetables

Pancake mix

Cheerios



Oct. 5 Communion Team

Pat Jung, Eunice Ann Slaney,

And Bob & Sue Buell

POLKA SUNDAY WITH THE DAVE AUSTIN BAND

Um Pa Pa- A worship service like none other highlighting the German Heritage of our ancestors as we are joined by the Dave Austin Polka Band for a Polka service at First Congregational Church United Church of Christ in Fort Atkinson on October 19, 2025 at 10:00 am, 31 W. Milwaukee Ave- Fort Atkinson WI.

The Dave Austin Polka Band has performed throughout Southern WI from places like the Essen Haus in Madison to the Polka Fest in New Glarus Wi. A toe tapping, soul lifting kind of service where hymns are sung to polka tunes. A festive event that brings smiles. A German style potluck meal after the service will continue the fellowship and joyful camaraderie.



SAVE THE DATES

Oct 6—Peanuts starts again at 8:00am. Why not come and join in the fun?? On the job training gleefully given!

Oct 16—Creation Care Meeting 11 AM

Oct 19—Polka Sunday with the Dave Austin Band

Adult Ed Begins at 8:45 in Werthman Room

Nov 9—Stewardship Sunday

Nov 14—All Church Bowling Event—Sign Up in Narthex @ Rock River Lanes 6:30 PM

Nov 15— 9 AM to Noon Fall Clean-Up—Come when you can, Stay as long as you are able

Flowers on the Altar

Special occasions of birthdays, anniversaries, or just cause...anyone is invited to sign up to purchase altar flowers. There is a clip board on the spinning rack in the church office to sign up. Or call the church office. Flowers are \$55 and you are welcome to take them home after worship.



**Have you moved? Relocated?
Change of address or phone
number?**

Please use this form to update your contact information if you have had a change in location or contact.

<https://forms.gle/9jdMYEt8dvhtjaQh9>

This is helpful information for our church directory and church office contacts.

Thank you

If you would like to have an event or announcement added to the list

Please let Henry know by the 25th of each month at officefortucc@gmail.com

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

31 W. Milwaukee Ave.

Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

Church Office: (920) 563-4802

Church Email: officefortucc@gmail.com

Moderator: Sandy Czech 2czechs.sc@gmail.com

Rev.Dr. Sara Rabe: revsara@fortucc@gmail.com

Church's Website: www.fortfcc.org

**First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ**

