



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

February 2025 First Congregational UCC Broadcaster

Why we do what we do.

A year ago, I noticed a puzzle that circulated around people's homes in the winter months. It was a particularly unique and beautiful wooden puzzle that Amy and I were honored enough to participate in the creation. The idea of the puzzle exchange was born and implemented this winter. It was fun to observe the first couple weeks of the exchange where people excitedly brought in the books, magazines and puzzles and all who were near, oohed and ahhed with delight of a new treasure to take home with them. The narthex (the area outside of the sanctuary) was buzzing as clusters of people hovered round. "Have you seen this?" "Have you tried that?" Stories were told, memories were shared. Pieces of ourselves were revealed in the puzzle that is shed of our selfhood, to them become a siblinghood belonging to the community of faith.

What seems like the cluttering of space transforms to faith friendships being formed. That is why we do what we do.

On the table was the Winter 2024 Plough magazine. I thumbed through it, took it home and some insights were gleaned. "Christ comes to introduce us to the self we have not met- the unique responsive spark that springs up out of the recognition that we emerge as gifts from the hand of God." p. 61 That's fairly good, I thought. Then an article written by Philip Britts, a British poet and farmer. "We are human and finite and thus cannot live perpetually in a sense of expectation, or in a continuous Advent...Spiritual depth, if it is true, is the working of God coming down and penetrating to the depths of our hearts, and not of our own soul's climbing."



Why do we come to worship, and participate in the life and mission, following the way of Christ? We do what we do because we emerge as gifts from the hand of God. We evolve from expectation to trust in knowing that the work of God meets us. "God comes to us when we offer a cup of water to the thirsty...human love can redeem." p. 116

Blessings to our coming in and going out. We are strengthened in our inner being by belonging to the siblinghood of Christ.

In faith,

Pastor Sara



NEW MEMBERS!

First Congregational United Church of Christ welcomed six new members during its Sunday, Jan. 19, worship service. Joining the church were Kim and Nick Lutes, Craig Klug and Lynne Kay Stack, Jean Anhalt, and Kathi Cauley.

Married for nine years, **Kim and Nick Lutes** reside in Lake Mills. Kim is a corporate paralegal who also owns Slap Shot Sweets, a cottage bakery specializing in decorated cookies. She enjoys reading and cross-stitching, and has joined the

church choir.

Nick enjoys creating sculptures and playing hockey. Both he and Kim love history and have experienced memorable vacations centering on that interest.

Lynne Slack and Craig Klug moved from the Madison area to Hebron about five years ago. Lynn worked for the state Department of Instruction and Craig is a carpenter. Lynn joined the prayer quilt group three months ago. In addition to quilting, she enjoys reading and puzzles, while Craig enjoys hunting, fishing and woodworking.

Jean Anhalt, originally from Kiel (just like Pastor Sara), is a longtime Fort Atkinson resident with two grown sons, Alex and Sam, and four grandchildren.

Retired, she has many hobbies and is interested in doing more volunteering and community outreach.

Kathi Cauley and her husband, **Dave Grimes**, reside just outside of Fort Atkinson. They enjoy the great outdoors, gardening, skiing and hiking.

Kathi was employed at Jefferson County Human Services for 30 years, retiring in December 2022 as director. She now has a small practice doing mental health counseling and works with the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation.

Chase away the Winter Blewz



Sunday January 11- February 9, 2025

Book, Magazine & Puzzle Exchange

Bring in puzzles or magazines (with your name on- if you want returned) to share and exchange. There will be a table in the narthex to pick, choose and bring back for exchange

The Food Pantry items needed:

Hamburger Helper
Soups
Mandarin Oranges
Rice Crispy Cereal
Pasta



February Helper Schedule

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lay Reader	Tech Support
Feb. 2	Terry Teipner	Linda Formader and Chad Klauer	Zach Finch	Kurt Wesemann
Feb. 9	Christine McKinney	Rich Frame and Sandy Mittelstadt	Linda Glendon	Kevin Becker
Feb. 16	Sharyl Beranek	Larry & Mary Narkis	Ruth Hammiller	Bob Buell
Feb. 23	Roger and Marsha Anderson	Mike & Nancy Rankin	Lynn Klug	Kurt Wesemann



Feb. 2nd Communion Team

Susan & Jeff Woods
and Heidi & Mike Siefkes

Volunteers for “Meals on Wheels” – Can You Help?

From February 3 – 28, 2025, our church is responsible for providing volunteers to deliver noon meals to elderly homebound residents and to those who may find it difficult to prepare meals in Fort Atkinson. Meals are prepared at Fort Memorial Hospital, and picked up there, Monday through Friday at 10:50 a.m. by the volunteers. Currently, there are two routes in the city, with delivery taking about one hour; empty containers are then returned to the hospital.

So, please, give it some thought! Volunteers are needed for each route and it is extremely helpful to have two people for each route: one to drive, and the other to follow the schedule and read the Driving Directions. If you can only help one or two days, or perhaps a whole week – whatever you do will be greatly appreciated.

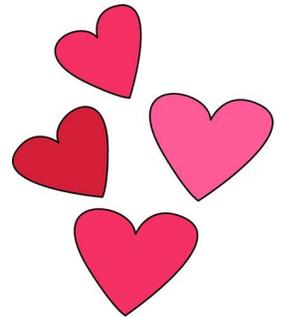
If you wish to volunteer, please call Mary Ellen Miller @920-563-9085 or the church office @920-563-4802. You will be richly rewarded as you participate in this Outreach ministry of our church, and thank you for your consideration to serve others.

Valentine's Day Values

According to the Greeting Card Association, in a recent year 145 million Valentine's Day cards, excluding children's classroom Valentines, were sold. In 2021, Americans spent \$21.8 billion on Valentine's gifts, says the National Retail Federation. This year, to conserve resources, consider sending e-cards, or creating special personalized cards from materials you have on hand, such as old magazines, family photos or calendar pictures. If purchasing gifts, avoid plastics and items in excessive packaging. Browse local thrift shops to find the perfect gift at a great price. You might also consider homemade gifts or a certificate for an experience and time spent together in lieu of more "stuff." A Wisconsin State Parks pass lasts 12 full months, and they're deeply discounted for those age 65 or older and for additional vehicles at the same address.

(<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov>)

Show your love for Mother Earth as you make new memories with your loved ones!



Respectfully submitted by the Creation Care Team

Tip of the Month

Paper or Plastic? Like most of us, you've probably accumulated a number of cloth or canvas tote bags over the years. Put these reusable bags to work in helping the environment! Bring them with you the next time you go to a grocery store, farmers market, or home retailer. It may take a few tries to remember them, but once you make the switch from traditional single-use paper or plastic, you'll be glad you did. Some retailers even offer a small credit (\$0.05 or more) for each reusable bag you use. Bonus tip: Storing the empty bags in your car is a way to make sure you won't forget them at home.

Council Highlights – January 2024

Council Year End: January 21, 2025, was the last meeting for Sandy Czech as Moderator, Chad Klauer, Past Moderator, and Council member, Mary Beyerly. Our thanks to them for their years of service and commitment to our church.

New Council & Ministry Members: Rich Frame will begin serving as our Moderator, along with new Council members, Holly Andrews and Chris Reed. We will also welcome several new Ministry members. There are openings as Delegates and a Vice-Moderator. If you are interested in serving our church, please contact Rich Frame.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Sara reported that she has been nominated to the National UCC Board of Directors. She will know the outcome in April. Congratulations!

We Are Growing! We welcomed 6 new members on 1/19/24. There are several people who have visited our church and may also become members soon!

Outreach: Many thanks to all who gave Christmas gifts for the Homeless Coalition. Our church continues to support emergency housing funding for the Homeless Coalition.

A UCC fund for the California Fires is being established. A UCC church did burn down and more information regarding donations to them is being investigated. More to come!

Plastic Recycling: Plastic collection continues! Please bring in your clean, clear plastic and put in the labeled barrel. We are recycling this plastic along with other local groups and will be awarded a Trex bench after collecting 1000 pounds!

Complete Council Minutes are available in the church office.



- 13—Lend-A-Hand 1 PM meeting
- 16—Newlywed Game
- 19—Prayer Quilt 9-11 AM
- 20—Creation Care Team Meeting 11 AM
- Church Relations 1:30 PM

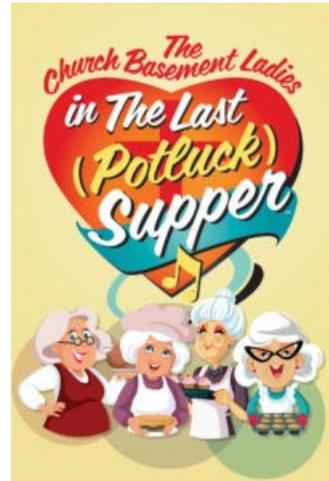


- 5—Ash Wednesday Service 6 PM
- 16—St. Patrick's Day—Baked Potato Bar

SAVE THE DATES

If you would like to have an event or announcement added to the list
Please let Henry know at officefortucc@gmail.com

The Nurture Ministry has reserved a block of seats for the Fireside's production of The Church Basement Ladies in The Last Potluck Supper on July 10. The cost for the matinee show (main floor seats) meal, and gratuity will be \$85.95 per person.



If Interested sign up in the Narthex.

Bible Study to explore the Gospel of John

A six-week adult Bible study from 8:45 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. before Sunday worship till March 2nd will explore the Gospel of John. The study, which was developed by Amy-Jill Levine, introduces readers to the world of the Gospel of John by unpacking the stories in their original context, along with examining how the text is read today. Many of the signature stories found in John's Gospel will be explored through weekly videos, reading the text, and group discussion. The study will be led by Mary Narkis.

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