

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

31 W. MILWAUKEE AVE., FORT ATKINSON, WI 53538

November 2026

First Congregational UCC Broadcaster



Thankful hearts gather in honor of abundance shared and received in this harvest season, we remember the lessons of the ancestors.

A young man asked his Lakota grandfather what the answer was to life's difficulties. "Gahelia kiyo," said the old man, "keep going," and then he said, "there are many realities in life such as joy and sadness, winning and losing, standing and falling, plenty and hunger and good and bad but the ultimate reality is that life is a journey. And sometimes we walk it in sunlight and sometimes in shadow. None of us ask to be born but we are here and we must walk our journey with our strengths. And our weaknesses. No matter how weary we may be, or no matter what faces us. Above all we must keep going."

I will always be grateful for the amount of good health I have. I will always be grateful to wake up to a new day. I will approach each day knowing that those who have gone before me are watching and those who come after me will reap what I do with that day. I will not let the good or the bad of the past own me, but I will let it teach me. I will never forget those who have helped along the way and I will endeavor to forgive those who tried to hinder me, I will never forget where I came from. I will never forget that I have an obligation to give happiness and that giving happiness is the way to receive it. Character weighs nothing but it has a weighty impact. I will never forget that I came into the world with nothing. Living this moment and this day well is within my ability.

Written by Joseph Marshall The Lakota Way of Strength and Courage.

Blessings during this time of generosity and gratitude,

God be with you!

Pastor Sara

Council Highlights – October 2026

TDS & Church Security Changes: TDS has been installed. The new security system will be installed in the coming weeks. At that time, the church building will be locked during the week. Cameras will be installed and a keypad will be used for admittance. More information to come!

Stewardship and Time & Talent Sheets: Stewardship 2027 letters along with Time & Talent Sheets should be in your home mailbox soon! Please review and thoughtfully consider how you can support your church both financially and through your talents. Several Ministries are looking for additional volunteers. These include Church Relations, Nurture and Outreach (Food Pantry). Stewardship Sunday is on November 15, 2026.

Mission Slogan Change: The Council has approved a change in our church slogan from "Church of the Open Door" to "Church of the Open Heart".

Fall Clean-Up: Our next cleanup date is on Saturday, November 14, 2026, from 9 AM – 11 AM.

Next meeting is November 17, 2026.

Complete Council Minutes are available in the church office.

Everywhere Plastic Water Bottles!

Plastic Water Bottles: Worldwide, as of 2026, plastic bottle production and consumption reached 500 to 600 billion just for water. This averages out to about 1.3 billion bottles every day. Roughly 1 million plastic water bottles are sold every minute across the globe.

The United States remains one of the largest consumers of bottled water in the world. Americans buy approximately 50 billion plastic bottles per year. The average American uses about 156 to 167 single-use bottles annually. In the U.S. alone, more than 60 million plastic water bottles are thrown away every year. Only 23% to 30% are recycled. Approximately 70% to 80% of plastic water bottles end up in landfills or as litter. It is estimated that 8 million tons of plastic enter the oceans every year, where a single bottle can take up to 450 years to decompose. Producing bottles just for the U.S. market requires more than 17 million barrels of oil annually-enough to fuel over 1 million cars for a year.

Data from 2025 and 2026 shows a growing concern: those who drink primarily bottled water may ingest an additional 90,000 microplastic particles per year compared to those who drink tap water. When you buy a plastic bottle of water, you are essentially paying for the plastic, the shipping, and the branding. The water itself usually accounts for less than 1% of the total cost.

What can you do? **Switching from single-use plastic bottles to a reusable water container is one of those small changes that makes a huge dent in both your wallet and your environmental footprint!** A high-quality reuseable bottle can keep water ice-cold for 24 hours or tea hot for 12 hours. A solid reuseable bottle can survive drops and years of wear and tear. Christmas will be here soon, what a great gift idea!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of your Creation Care Team

(Resources available on request)

Church Fall Clean Up November 14th

8-11 a.m. at the Church. Work will include raking leaves, spreading wood chips, trimming bushes, and other outside work.

Please join if you are able. Many hands make quick work.

Outreach Committee Kindness Initiatives

The Outreach Committee is bringing you two opportunities to put your faith in action and to spread kindness.

Ephesians 4:32. **Be kind and compassionate to one another**, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Shoes that Fit - Please help us provide shoes for area children!

Did you know that 1 in 5 children needs proper footwear in the United States?

Our church has partnered with Jefferson County Head Start for more than a fifteen years to provide shoes and boots for preschoolers. On average, it costs $75 to purchase shoes and boots for one child. Please help us make a real difference in a local child's life!

How to help:

- If you would like to purchase the shoes and boots yourself, there will be a signup sheet and gift tags in the church narthex area. You do not need to gift wrap.
- If you would like to donate money to help the church buy shoes, please send money to the church by **December 6**. Please put "Shoes that Fit" in the memo.

Thank you so much for considering! Please contact Kathi if you have any questions!
Kathi Cauley at kcauley3045@gmail.com or 920-728-0520.

Homeless Coalition Gift Tree

As you know, our congregation provides support to the Homeless Coalition. The Coalition is currently assisting three families. The Outreach Committee thought we could light up the families' holidays by providing needed items. We can practice our faith and kindness by purchasing these items. You will find "gift tags" and a signup sheet in the narthex area in November. Below is the suggested list at this time but please stay tuned for the specifics. Please contact Joe Slaney with questions at 920-723-8878 or eajslaney@yahoo.com.

Family #1

Boy age 8 : Packer's blanket, Headphones, Football, Remote Control Car
Boy age 7: Crafts, Karaoke Machine, Blanket, Soccer Balls
Girl age 4: Baby dolls, Toy Kitchen, Toy Food, Blanket, Stuffed animals or Coloring Books
Boy age 2: Dinosaur, Blanket, Legos, Blocks, Puzzles, Toy ,Cars, Books
Adults - Any household items - towels, food containers, oven mitts

Family #2

Girl age 12: Book light Jogging outfit /size medium ladies Pajamas/size medium ladies
Boy age 4. Fidget Toys, Paints, Crafts, anything Superman
Adult/Mom: Bath and Body Set, Medium size cooking pan/non scratch

Family # 3

Girl age 5: Anything Minecraft, curtains, crafts
Adult /mom: Bathroom robe- 1 size fits all or medium

“Good Grief: What A Gift!”

Stewardship is about much more than money. It is about recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God—our time, our talents, our resources, our relationships and our opportunities to serve.

Like the characters in Peanuts, we sometimes focus so much on what is going wrong that we overlook the blessings right in front of us. Throughout our stewardship campaign, we will look at stewardship through the familiar, sometimes humorous, and always surprisingly insightful perspective of Charles Schulz’s beloved characters. We will discover that generosity isn’t simply about giving something away. It’s about responding with gratitude to the gifts we have already received.



Stewardship Sunday this year will be on November 15th.

Time and Talent Sheets and Pledge Cards for 2027 will be distributed and mailed several weeks in advance of Stewardship Sunday, and we ask that you prayerfully consider how you can support the missions of First Congregational United Church of Christ. Watch for more “Good Grief: What A Gift!” activities and messages throughout our stewardship campaign. Together, let’s celebrate the gifts God has given us and discover new ways to share those gifts with others.

Stewardship Sunday is November

Our theme this year is, “Good Grief: What A Gift!” Please remember to have your Time and Talent Sheets and Pledge Cards ready to present that day. If Charles Schulz taught us anything through his PEANUTS characters, it’s that life isn’t always easy, but it’s better when we face it together. He reminds us, through his characters, that even ordinary people can make a difference. Good grief! What a gift it would be to have you serve! We ask you to also prayerfully consider serving on one of our church ministries as well. Together, we can make a difference—one small act of love at a time.

Helper Schedule				
Date	**Greeters**	**Ushers**	**Lay Reader**	**Tech Support**
Nov 1	**Jane Winiarski**	**Larry & Mary Narkis**	**Bob Rose**	**Kevin Becker**
Nov 8	**Ann Williams**	**Heidi & Michael Siefkes**	**Jo Ann Rose**	**Kurt Wesemann**
Nov 15	**Tom & Patty Sehnert**	**Linda & Jeff Glendon**	**Sharon Wisch**	**Bob Buell**
Nov 22	**Roy & Karen Hetts**	**Trent Topel**	**Martha Firari**	**Kevin Becker**
Nov 29	**Chris & Brenda Reed**	**Christine Spangler and Justin Frey**	**Sharyl Beranek**	**Kurt Wesemann**

FORT HOLIDAY WINTER MARKET

The Fort Holiday Winter Market is being held on Saturday, December 5, 2026. We are working in partnership with the Fort Atkinson Farmers Market, and along with our offerings we will be a venue for other market participants.

As in years past, we will offer cheese, our famous Congregational Peanuts, bakery, lunch, Lend a Hand soups and a great selection of Raffle Baskets! Again, we are asking for donations for the raffle baskets. These can be dropped off at the church beginning November 15, and all donations must be received by November 30th. You can bring your complete themed basket, or you can bring the contents to be put together in a basket. There will be a few volunteers who will be the "basket makers". Baskets will be displayed at the Winter Market, then on December 6 and 13th. The drawing will be on December 13th after worship.

There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex after worship starting November 8th Thank you for your generosity!

There will be many opportunities for volunteer helpers for the Winter Market, so please watch for announcements coming soon!

Please contact Nancy Onufer with any questions at 920-691-6106.

SAVE THE DATES

- Nov. 1 - All Saints Sunday; (Standard Time begins)
- Nov. 14 - Fall Clean up 8-11 a.m.
- Nov. 15 - Stewardship Sunday
- Nov. 17 - Council Meeting 6 p.m.
- Nov. 28 - Hanging of the Greens 9 a.m
- Nov. 29 - First Sunday in Advent
- Dec. 5 - Winter Market

Book Study

Your Creation Care Team cordially invites you to participate in a thought-provoking book study beginning in January! Watch the December Broadcaster or talk to a Creation Care Team member for further details.

Keeping in touch.

Life happens...if you or someone you know has moved to a skilled care facility, or had a transition in health status, please tell your children or loved one to reach out to Pastor Sara. She would still like to stay in touch and offer Pastoral Care.

Food Pantry Needs October



Canned Sweet Potatoes

Pasta

Corn

Corn

Turkey Gravy

Mandarin Oranges

Raisin Bran

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

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Church Office (Henry): (920) 563-4802

Church Email: officefortucc@gmail.com

Moderator: Linda Glendon jlglendon@tds.net

Rev. Dr. Sara Rabe: revsarafortucc@gmail.com

Church's Website: www.fortfcc.org

First Congregational Church United Church of Christ