



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

**April 2025 First Congregational UCC
Broadcaster**

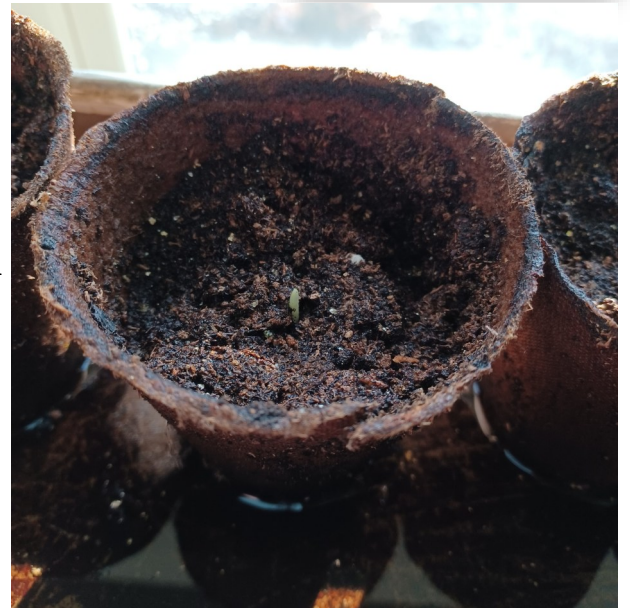
Seeds of change

Sunday March 9th the Sunday School children planted seeds of Easter Hope. With their tiny, skinny fingers they pressed the seeds into the dark soil to represent Jesus going into the dark tomb on Good Friday. Just as there was no way to be certain if the seeds would grow, there was no way to know if the little ones remembered the hope that was put into that dark hole.

Lo and behold, sprouts appeared. There is faith that new life will be restored, and Jesus' resurrection will provide abundant witness and proclamation that God is about to do a new thing. We know this in our faith and here at First Congregational Church UCC, we are all about planting seeds of Hope. We may not know the outcome, but we know that with courage we poke around in the shadows of darkness. We pray with Jesus in the garden on that night anxieties were running high, and we wait.

Lo and Behold- Christ is alive! Lo and Behold up from the grave he arose! Lo and behold there is HOPE!

Blessings for the remainder of Lent and on to this Easter season!



Pastor Sara

With the pending Easter Morn on the horizon, we may have expectations of what it means to have Christ alive in our lives. It indeed provides and opportunity for a new beginning a fresh start to the faithful journey. The following is a daily devotional. .

Expectations

By iucc on March 24, 2010

Luke 18:31-34

Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again." But they understood nothing about all these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

Reflection by Anthony B. Robinson

With Holy Week coming soon, it's pretty easy to listen in on this kind of story, where Jesus tells the disciples that soon he will be betrayed and suffer, be nailed to a cross and die, and after three days rise again, and think, "Dumb disciples, why don't they ever get it? Why couldn't they hear what he told them so plainly and not once but three times?"

I'm not sure the disciples were dumb, or at least that I am any smarter than they were. There are lots of times when I've heard only what I wanted to hear, not what was being said. And there have also been quite a number of times that I've been working with congregations, especially ones where people are angry and frightened, and I've noticed that our capacity for hearing what's being said or seeing what's going on can be just about nil. Truth can be spoken over and over and we just don't seem to hear it. Strange.

So why did Jesus bother? Why did he tell them what was about to go down? My hunch is that somehow, later, they would recall his words. They would say, "Remember? Oh, now I get it." And what exactly would they get? That when our plans and predictions go bust and our expectations aren't fulfilled, God is still God. God is still working and is able to bring about God's purposes in spite of, sometimes through, our sin. Just because what we thought would happen or should happen doesn't, it doesn't mean the whole story is over. The story is God's story, bigger than we can grasp, better than we can imagine.

May Resurrection Blessings find you,
Pastor Sara

A Special Thank-You to the Meals on Wheels Volunteers!

A **"Special Thank-You"** is extended to the following **Meals on Wheels volunteers** who helped to deliver **538 warm meals** during the month of **February**! Without their cooperativeness and eagerness to serve others, our church would not be able to participate in this program that reaches out to some of the elderly and homebound in our community.

In grateful appreciation of your service and spirit, we thank:

Marsha & Roger Anderson – Sarah Brietzke – Connie Czech –

Linda & Jeff Glendon – Sarah Johnsen – Craig King – Lynn Klug –

Ann & Dave Lueder – Brett Maasz – Carol Maasz – Mary Ellen & John Miller –

Sandra Mittelstadt – Mary & Larry Narkis – Tom Sehnert –

Lynne Slack – Eunice Ann, Joe & Grayson Slaney – Dave Stedman – Doreen Wendlandt

Remember – **September, 2025**, will be the next month that our church is responsible for supplying volunteers for "Meals on Wheels." If you have any questions about the program or would like to volunteer, please contact Mary Ellen Miller (563-9085) or the church office.

Nurture Baked Potato Bar Pictures



The Food Pantry items needed:

Sweet cereal
Hamburger Helper
Boxed Potatoes
Applesauce
Tuna fish
Mac & Cheese



What Is Earth Day? (April 22nd every year)

Ever wonder how Earth Day began? The first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970, when Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson and San Francisco activist John McConnell separately asked Americans to join in a grassroots demonstration. Dealing with dangerously serious issues concerning toxic drinking water, air pollution, and the effects of pesticides, an impressive 20 million Americans—10% of the population—ventured outdoors and protested together. President Richard Nixon led the nation in creating the Environmental Protection Agency, which was followed with successful laws, including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

The theme for Earth Day 2025 is "Our Power, Our Planet". This theme encourages people to work together to transition to renewable energy sources and create a sustainable future.

Goals for Earth Day 2025: Triple the global generation of clean electricity by 2030, Invest in more sustainable materials, Improve air quality, and reduce mortality rates due to air pollution.



Celebrate Earth Day by appreciating and respecting the natural world. Here are some ideas to inspire you this year.

Support Our Pollinators! Select pollinator-friendly plants that attract butterflies, hummingbirds as well as flowers that attract pollinating bees.

Clean Up Plastic in Your Neighborhood! One of the best ways to connect with the Earth is through cleanups. Go on a walk with a trash bag and help to clean up any plastic that you find.

Go to a Park! Find a green space today. Savor the physical and psychological benefits of spending time outdoors!

Get Kids Involved! Pass down a love of nature and plants to kids. There are lots of opportunities for hands-on learning experiences outside.

Watch for details of our local Earth Day project, hosted by the Creation Care Team!

April Helper Schedule

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lay Reader	Tech Support
April 6	Linda Fromader	Jeff & Susan Woods	David Stedman	Kurt Wesemann
April 13 Palm Sunday	Jeff & Linda Glendon	Roger & Marsha Anderson	Mike Rankin	Kevin Becker
April 17 Maundy Thursday	Paul & Sandy Hankowitz	Chris Reed and Rich Frame	Sharon Wisch	Kurt Wesemann
April 20 Easter!!	Roy & Karen Hetts	Larry & Mary Narkis	Heidi Siefkes	Bob Buell
April 27	David & Sharon Wisch	Donna Abel and Trent Topel	Martha Firari	Kurt Wesemann

SHUTTERS IN SANCTUARY

The shutters in the sanctuary are in need of repair and painting. The Facilities Committee has looked at the shutters and is thinking about removing them. The shutters on the east wall have been closed and the shutters on the west wall have been left open for a number of years. We feel that it does not make any sense to take them down, repair, paint and put them back up if they are not going to be used. Some people may or may not agree with that idea, so the Committee is giving the congregation the opportunity to make their opinion known. Please leave your comments at the church office or contact Jeff Woods at 920-723-0817 by April 14. Thank you for your input.

April. 6th Communion Team

Chris & Brenda Reed,
David Stedman, and Lynn Klug

Treasurer Wanted

After 20 years, our longstanding treasurer, Loren Gray, has let us know that he plans a well-deserved retirement from this position in August 2025. This is an important position at The First Congregational United Church of Christ. It will take a special person to fill Loren's shoes. The most important characteristics are honesty, attention to detail and an interest in working with numbers and preparing reports. If you or someone you know fits this description, let the Moderator Group; Rich Frame, Sandy Czech or Linda Glendon, as well as Loren, know. We will share the details of the position. Accounting background is not necessary, but would be helpful. Loren will mentor the new treasurer. The hours vary weekly, approximately 2-4 hours per week. There is compensation for this position.

SAVE THE DATES



April 10— Creation Care Meeting 10 AM in the Werthmann Room

April 10— Lend a Hand 1:00 PM

April 13— Palm Sunday Worship—Nurture Yogurt Bar with Mini Muffins

April 16— Quilts Ministry 9-11 AM

April 17— Church Relations Meeting 1:30 PM

Maundy Thursday Worship 6:00 PM



April 20—Easter Sunday **Alleluia Christ is Risen Indeed**

April 22—Earth Day! Our Creation Care Team is organizing a local Earth Day Cleanup Project. Please mark your calendar for 6:00 p.m. on April 22, and plan to volunteer 1 - 2 hours in support of our environment. Watch for further details to come. (Rain date: Sat, April 26, at 9:00 a.m.) Thank you!

Coffee Fellowship Volunteers:

Please check the bulletin board in the narthex and sign up for a date in April or May. Thank you for your participation in this rewarding and fun ministry of hospitality for your fellow congregants and visitors! Coffee Fellowship is coordinated by the Church Relations Ministry.



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

The **Nurture Ministry** will host a Yogurt and Mini-Muffin event following **Palm Sunday** worship **April 13th**. If you would like to help provide mini muffins for the event, please contact Ann Olsen.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

31 W. Milwaukee Ave.

Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

Church Office: (920) 563-4802

Church Email: officefortucc@gmail.com

Moderator(Rich Frame): framkeen@ticon.net

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

Church's Website: www.fortfcc.org

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