



# Congregational Connections

Monthly E-Newsletter of First Congregational Church, UCC | Port Washington, Wisconsin | December 2021

## CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS: OLD AND NEW

Let me begin with a minor confession: I love Christmas. I know that's not a big deal, I'm certainly not alone in loving Christmas. Even in my teen years when church was particularly "uncool" I still looked forward to Christmas Eve worship; lighting the little individual candles and singing the traditional carols. Tolland, CT Christmas services were not complete until the choir's outstanding baritone sang "Sweet Little Jesus Boy", and the lead soprano sang, "O Holy Night" and we would all stand on the front stairs of church after the whole congregation processed outside singing "Silent Night, Holy Night" and wait for a closing blessing. And, in my mind's eye at least, the snow was always gently falling down around us as my brother and I made our way to the family car seeing who could keep their candle burning longest.

Our minister would frequently tell a story on Christmas Eve instead of a sermon. We used to tease my Mom, because she would get all teary-eyed at the heart-warming ending. The stories always seemed to be about some vulnerable creature on a cold wintry night, like a little bunny, or one of the stable animals from Bethlehem, being lost and alone, before being saved by the care, compassion, and sacrifice of another. Of course, I would never admit it, but I'd get teary eyed too. My Mom got sick in 1989 and received a liver transplant in the late fall of that year. She was very weak as December days began to pass, but she was determined to get home so she could attend the Christmas Eve worship service back home—and she did. Being at church on Christmas Eve was crucial to her, and really to all of us.

I still look forward to the Christmas Eve services, as well as the "build-up" during the weeks of Advent as we move closer week by week. My family now has its own traditions. Now they tease me about praying too long, telling stories about vulnerable creatures, like a little bunny, out on a cold, wintry night instead of a sermon and getting teary-eyed. We have also had a variety of silly misfortunes over the years trying to find dinner for Henry after the last service has been finished

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## ...CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS CONTINUED...

and we're headed home (somehow, despite the best of intentions and posted Christmas Eve hours, we always end up at a gas station convenience store).

This year I'm looking forward to the Christmas traditions that are a part of this community of faith. The Christmas Tree Sale is already impressive! I'm excited for the Confirmation Class to lead the early service with a Christmas pageant, to hear the lovely choir singing at the middle service of lessons and carols and Christmas Eve Communion at the later service. I'm looking forward to seeing the sanctuary lit up by candlelight during evening Advent Candlelight Communion services and then by a congregation holding aloft their individual candles. I pray we will continue to build upon the foundation of Christmas traditions here and create some new ones of our own as well! Being at church on Christmas Eve is still crucial to all of us.

I wish you all a blessed Advent Season, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year too!

Blessings, Pastor Scott



## ADVENT CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICES

Join us on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 in December for a brief service of reflection and communion by candlelight in the sanctuary. The mid-week services, December 1, 8, 15, and 22, will use scripture and prayer to create a calm and peaceful space amidst the hurry and busy-ness of the season. Each of the services will conclude with a simple sharing of Communion, the Lord's Supper. Come and enjoy a respite from the December rush in the beauty of our church; fill your spirit as we bring the light of Christ into our lives and into the world.



## WORSHIP WITH US

We celebrate two Sunday morning worship services at 8:00 and 10:00. Nursery care is available at the 10:00 service. Please note, there will be no Nursery on Christmas Eve and December 26.

## CLICK AWAY

Remember to be on the lookout for orange text throughout this e-newsletter. The orange text is linked up to other documents or web pages that you might find helpful and interesting.

## CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEXT E-NEWSLETTER

If you have any celebrations, concerns/prayer requests or other contributions that you would like us to include in a future e-newsletter, let us know. Please email us 7-10 days before the first day of the month.

Join Us!



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5**  
**12:00-2:00 pm**

## ADVENT CRAFT WORKSHOP

The Fellowship Team is planning a fun, free event to help celebrate Advent and Christmas! Join the team, members, and friends for an afternoon creating Advent crafts, on Sunday, December 5, from Noon to 2:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. This event is open to all ages! Invite your neighbors and friends! Along with creating crafts that everyone can take home, stockings will be made for families at Family Promise. Light snacks and Christmas cookies will be offered.

Please sign up in advance by contacting Jennifer Dimmer, our Fellowship Team Chair, ([jenniferdimmer@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferdimmer@gmail.com), (414) 303-1813).



## CHRISTMAS GIVING

In celebration of Christmas, you are invited to order a poinsettia and/or donate to one of the six community organizations that our church supports on an ongoing basis: Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity, The Food Pantry, Ozaukee Family Services, Balance, and Advocates. Your poinsettia will help decorate our sanctuary for Christmas. Your gift of money will help lift the spirits of those who are in need within our own community. You may give in honor or in memory of loved ones. Names will appear in our Christmas Eve bulletins. [Click here](#) for the form. Please submit the information to the Church Office by Friday, December 17. You may contribute using a check or submitting a payment through our church [PayPal](#).



## CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

For over 100 years the United Church of Christ has received the Christmas Fund Offering to provide emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. We receive this offering during Sunday worship on December 19 and 26. You may contribute through the end of the month.



## FAMILY SERVICE IN DECEMBER

Please note that in December, our 10:00 Family Service will be held on the third Sunday, December 19.

## CHURCH SCHOOL PLANS FOR DECEMBER 12

This month our Church School will be meeting again the second Sunday morning of the month, December 12, at 10:00. In this season of Advent, we will begin the class with our traditional worship service (and new church school “handshake”!) and then plan for the older children to read the Christmas Story to the younger ones. This story is, after all, the “reason for the season”! Once we’ve become familiar again with the story of Jesus’ birth, we are planning to build a few holiday crafts (see photos below). After class and after worship, everyone is invited to come down for Fellowship time, once again hosted by the Church School. Please bring your children for Church School, we have a great time together!



## OUR 36th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE SALE - HUGE OPENING WEEKEND!

The Christmas Tree Lot opened the day after Thanksgiving and in its first weekend 162 trees and 6 wreaths were sold. This is our biggest fundraiser for our church. We are well on our way to a profitable sale! Thank you to everyone who has taken part so far! If you would like to help sell trees, please [click here](#). Please continue to spread the word!

## DECORATING ORNAMENTS FOR TREE SALE CUSTOMERS

Both kids and adults are invited to decorate wooden ornaments to give to customers as a Thank You at the Tree Sale. Over 100 were distributed on opening weekend, but we are in need of more for the rest of the sale. The wooden ornaments are available in the church’s Little Free Library.

You may be interested to know that along with the ornament, each person and family who purchases a tree or wreath is given a brochure inviting them to join us and providing information for our services this season. Thank you to those who have already decorated ornaments, including our Confirmants!





## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Make room in your Christmas schedule to remember the “reason for the season”. Each of the services is different, but they all involve telling the story of Jesus’ birth, singing some of your favorite Christmas Carols and experiencing the rich joy of the coming of God’s Son into the world.

### **5:00 p.m. Christmas Pageant**

Join Mary and Joseph as they journey toward Bethlehem. Experience the wonder of the shepherds as they encounter angel messengers and a child wrapped in swaddling cloths laying in a manger. Led by our Confirmation Class, this worship service for the young, and young at heart, is a wonderful celebration of Christmas joy for the whole family.

### **7:00 p.m. Service of Lessons and Carols**

Beginning in prophecy and continuing through the Gospel stories of Jesus’ birth, this service tells the story of salvation in scripture text and Christmas carols. This is a beautiful and inspiring narrative, with our Chancel Choir leading the way in song. It is a classic and traditionally rich service with all the joy of the season brought forward; reminding all of us that in Christ’s birth “the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.”

### **9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion**

What could be more meaningful on a Christmas Eve than communing with one another and with Christ through sharing the simple elements of bread and juice. This service includes much of the other services, retelling the story of Jesus’ birth, singing the beloved Christmas carols, but adds an essential element of Jesus’ ministry as we break bread together.

Join us for worship! Make room in your schedule (make room in your life!) for the story and celebration of Jesus’ birth. If you have guests joining you for Christmas or Christmas Eve, bring them along! You will be glad you celebrated amidst your church family!



## ONE SERVICE ON DECEMBER 26

The Sunday morning following Christmas, December 26, we celebrate with one service at 10:00. Ken Matthews, a life-long member of our church, will conduct the service for the 32d year, he started this tradition back in 1989! Ken has been leading this service as a gift to our pastors after a busy season.

## ADVENT IS UNDERWAY

Happy Advent! Happy New (Liturgical) Year! November 28 was the first Sunday of the church season of Advent and the beginning of a new liturgical year. Advent will continue through December until Christmas Eve. This season explores the themes of longing, promise, waiting, and preparation as we, like Mary, await the birth of Jesus.



Here's what you'll see in the sanctuary for Advent:

- Advent stained-glass pieces have been hung: a star, a manger.
- Our standing Advent wreath is fitted with 4 new candles for the four Sundays in Advent.
- A live Christmas tree is in the corner of the sanctuary.
- The stable is out and sits under the communion table. Our creche characters will move from windowsill to windowsill, week by week, as they make their Advent journey forward.



## FOLLOWING OUR LITURGICAL CALENDAR

You can see all the seasons of the church year laid out on the wonderful fabric mural in our entry stairway.

The calendar begins with blue (Advent), then gold for Christmas, followed by bright white (Epiphany). Lent begins with a grey panel (Ash Wednesday), then purples, and ends with black (Good Friday). Easter Sunday is gold and Eastertide is a warm white. Pentecost is a fiery red panel and is followed by the long season of Pentecost with all its varied greens.

A symbol hangs below the current season to help you read the calendar. For Advent the symbol (in blue) is a modified Jesse Tree, a sort of Biblical family tree for Jesus.

*We thank Jane Spalding for contributing both of these articles about Advent and the Liturgical seasons.*

# STEWARDSHIP TEAM UPDATES

The Stewardship Team would like to thank those who have responded to the Fall Stewardship Campaign. As of December 1, we have received \$107,487 in pledges.



Even though the campaign has wrapped up, it is never too late to make a formal financial commitment to the church. See below for the ways to submit a pledge.

The Stewardship Team will be providing more information and details in the coming weeks. Stay tuned to learn more about how the campaign went and our financial status.

## WAYS TO SUBMIT YOUR PLEDGE

### *Send In Mail*

Print and complete a [Pledge Form](#) and mail to church.

### *Bring to Church*

You can bring your pledge to worship any Sunday or to the office during the week.

### *Submit Online*

You can submit an [Online Pledge Form](#).



## BRAT FRY A SUCCESS!

On Sunday, November 28, the Stewardship Team hosted a Brat Fry in Fellowship Hall to raise funds for our window repair loan repayments. The good-will offering brought in a \$758 profit!

Special thanks to Joe and Bev Mueller for coordinating the Brat Fry. Thanks to all the servers: David Franks and Louise Mollinger, Jason and Joshua Jacque, and Gary and Meg Tackes. Thank you to everyone who baked cookies for the sale, they were delicious!



Some of our Brat Fry Crew (l-r) Joe Mueller, Bev Mueller, Louise Mollinger, David Franks, Meg Tackes, and Gary Tackes.

# WORSHIP LEADERS

Beginning in November we have had Worship Leaders assisting Pastor Scott during the 8:00 and 10:00 worship services. You can be a Worship Leader too! Each Sunday the Worship Leaders help lead the responsive readings, unison prayers printed in the bulletins and read the scripture passages. Talk to Pastor Scott if you would like to help in this important ministry. We are still looking for some assistance on Christmas Eve.

## Worship Leaders in December

### **December 5** *Second Sunday of Advent*

8:00 Kitchie Allen  
10:00 Gary Tackes

### **December 12** *Third Sunday of Advent*

8:00 Phil Stepanski  
10:00 Jason Jacque

### **December 19** *Fourth Sunday of Advent, Family Sunday*

8:00 Joe and Bev Mueller  
10:00 Confirmation Class

### **December 24** *Christmas Eve*

5:00 Confirmation Class  
  
7:00 1. Phil Stepanski  
2. Jane Spalding  
3. Jane Schneider  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
  
9:00 1. Don Niederfrank  
2. Kathy Bretl  
3. Kitchie Allen  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### **December 26** *First Sunday After Christmas*

10:00 Ken Matthews



# SCRIPTURE FOR DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

## **December 5: Philippians 1:3-11 and Luke 1:68-79**

*Second Sunday of Advent; Communion Sunday*

We listen as Zechariah, after being silent for months, finds his voice in a song of praise and prophecy as he blesses his son, John; a promise that cascades into promises of hope for all.

## **December 12: Philippians 4:4-7 and Luke 3:1-18**

*Third Sunday of Advent*

John the Baptist's ministry in the wilderness brings good news that asks us to change our ways, turn toward God, and prepare the way for the Messiah with acts of compassion and justice. Rejoice!

## **December 19: Hebrews 10:5-10 and Luke 1:39-55**

*Fourth Sunday of Advent; Family Sunday*

When Mary and her cousin, Elizabeth meet, their prophetic voices invite all of us to rejoice in the surprising joy and justice of God's reign. The word of the angel is confirmed and Mary is empowered to bear the good news to the world.

## **December 24: Isaiah 9:2-7 and Luke 2:1-20**

*Christmas Eve Worship at 5:00 pm, 7:00 pm, and 9:00 pm Communion*

Each one of our Christmas Eve services is different, but in all of them the message of Jesus' birth is proclaimed, for in the words of the beloved Christmas carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem, "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight."

## **December 26: Psalm 148 and Luke 2:41-52**

*First Sunday after Christmas (no 8:00 a.m. worship, only 10:00 a.m. worship)*

Finding joy during the Christmas season sometimes seems so easy, and other times the most difficult thing in the world. Whether joy comes easily or with great difficulty, we are invited to praise God and rest in the joy of God's presence in the birth of Emmanuel, God with us.



## A SUMMARY OF OUR FALL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Fall Congregational Meeting was held after worship on Sunday, November 21, in Fellowship Hall. It was a “hybrid” meeting with people attending in person as well as several people attending virtually via Zoom conference call. The 2022 Proposed Budget was made available earlier in the week via an email link and paper copies were made available for all those in attendance.

Our Moderator, Jeanne Mantsch called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m., and Pastor Scott McLeod opened the meeting with prayer. The Church Treasurer, Kathy Bretl, presented the proposed budget for 2022 and walked everyone through the different line items. Financial Administrator, Lorraine Halls, was available to answer specific questions. The expected expenses for 2022 come to \$262,015.00 with the listed income in the proposed budget, based on last year’s income: \$184,378.00. At the time of the meeting, approximately \$50,000 has been received in pledges, although we hope to know more about the pledges for 2022 over the next 4 to 6 weeks. At this point the proposed 2022 budget shows a potential deficit of \$77,637.00.

The largest increase in expense is due to the beginning of loan repayment for a loan taken in 2020 to repair the windows and steeple. Bill Bond asked about fulfilling the remaining \$2,500 for Lighthouse Youth Ministry in 2021 and it was announced that a fundraiser is planned before the close of the year. It was noted that \$91,425.00 is available in different accounts for use by the church for expenses, and this does not include funds held specifically for mission nor those monies given for specific purposes as memorials.

Claude Zimmerman brought the issue of the growing list of needs for the building that will have to be addressed soon, including the recent example of the discovery of a water heater that was about to burst. Thanks to a generous donation two water heaters were able to be purchased and installed. Louise Mollinger, asked that the Finance Team work on a philosophy of how care for the building could be included in an overall plan for ministry of the church. Pastor Scott shared that there is a need to do long-range planning in the new year to address some of the concerns about the building and our important ministry in the community. He also thanked everyone for their diligence and faithfulness in “an unprecedented time”.

With no further questions and no further business, Jeanne Mantsch adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:45 a.m.

## IN MEMORIAM - MARLYS HERBERT

Marlys Herbert, a longtime member of our church (64 years!), died on Saturday, November 20, at the age of 93. Marlys served as our church secretary for 18 years. The family is planning a memorial service in May. You may [click here](#) to read Marlys's obituary.



## LIGHTHOUSE OUTING TO SHALOM ZOO

All middle and high school youth are invited to join Lighthouse Youth Ministry on their next outing to Shalom Zoo in West Bend on Sunday evening, December 19, at 6:00. The Shalom Zoo will be lit up with special holiday LED lights for a night drive-thru. At the end, each person will receive a treat bag and will be able to enjoy a campfire. The petting zoo will be open; feed for the animals is available for purchase. The event is free, but you must sign up online, [click here](#) to do so.



## OUR CHURCH IS RAISING FUNDS FOR LIGHTHOUSE

Our church is one of the five original churches that began the ecumenical youth ministry program in Port Washington known as "Lighthouse". Each year for the past three years we have contributed \$2,500.00 towards the ongoing ministry expenses of Lighthouse from our church budget and then sought additional funds from church members who cared deeply about this youth programming effort. Each Sunday in December, we will again be turning to our members, much like we did in 2019, with hope that everyone recognizes the potential for this ministry in Port Washington. There will be a Lighthouse display with giving envelopes of different dollar amounts. We invite all those who are interested to take one (or two or three!) and contribute that amount to Lighthouse's ministry by putting it in the offering plate. We are also glad to accept donations through the church's PayPal account. Keep an eye out for the display at church, and please read the article in this newsletter from Lighthouse Board President Alex Piper as she gives an update on Lighthouse's youth ministry. If you have questions about Lighthouse's ministry, please talk to Savannah Anderson, who is serving on the Lighthouse Board or to Pastor Scott, who is serving on the Pastoral Advisory Committee.

## CONFIRMATION PROGRAM UPDATES

Our Confirmation Class was busy in October and November. In class they have been introduced to two of the three persons of the Holy Trinity (God the creator, and Jesus the Christ). They have also been working their way through many of the major stories of the Old Testament as they become more familiar with the Bible. In October they had a "Mission Experience" working for a day at Daycholah Center on Green Lake. They have also started helping to lead worship services on Family Sundays as well as taking turns volunteering for childcare duties during the 10:00 worship services each Sunday.

In November, their "Mission Experience" was serving at The Food Pantry here in Port Washington on Wednesday evening, November 10. The class helped pack and assemble over 80 Thanksgiving Gift bags for folks coming to the Food Pantry before the Thanksgiving holiday. The gift bags contained some special seasonal snacks as well as toiletry items. Our thanks to Kerry O'Brien who worked alongside the group as a parent-helper for the evening's project. Thanks also to Pat Kozak, the Food Pantry Director, and Cathy Schowalter, an active volunteer, who helped put the group to work, and also gave a tour of the pantry with an overview of the pantry's ministry in the community. One of the ongoing goals of our church's Confirmation program is to help youth put their faith into action. The Confirmands were certainly able to do this by serving at the Food Pantry.

This month in class they will be learning about the Holy Spirit (the third person of the Trinity) as well as serving in a "Mission Experience" helping Family Promise and, of course, leading the 5:00 pm Christmas Eve worship service. Education, service and worship; they are doing a little something of everything!



Our Confirmation Class helping at The Food Pantry on Wednesday evening, November 10. Front row l-r: Kerry O'Brien (parent), Graham Garthus, Grant Eslinger Middle row: Brooke Peiffer Back row l-r, Amari Daevel, Mia Blum, Libby Holmes, Katja Cira, Avery Roehrig, Pastor Scott, Grady Karrels, Matthew Dimmer, and Dylan Crain

## TREE LOT SET-UP



Thank you to everyone who helped set up our Christmas Tree Lot on November 13: *Bill Bond, Steve Davidson, Brady Fleishmann, Austin Lemke, Angelo Lopez, Pastor Scott, Eric Olson, Ralph and Elijah Perez, Max Reyes, Joe Rychtik, Matt Schlehlein, Scott Symes, and Brayden Thompson.*

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## CHRISTMAS TREE UNLOADING



Thank you to all of the high schoolers who helped to unload 468 trees on November 23!

*Top row l-r:*

*Pastor Scott, Diego Armendariz, Brandon Kassens, Flint O'Connor, Casey Arendt, Landon Reisimer, Parker Mikulski, Nick Bensen, Ashley Bensen, Joe Rychtik*

*Bottom row l-r:*

*James Brahm, Elijah Perez, Michael Bunyan, Ever Armendariz, Gabe Chandler, Eva Perez, Ava Mrozek, Ella Gilhooly*

# LIGHTHOUSE

## A LETTER FROM NEW PRESIDENT OF LIGHTHOUSE YOUTH MINISTRY

Dear Congregational Leaders,

11/1/2021

On behalf of the Lighthouse Youth Ministry Board of Directors and the youth in our program, I would like to thank you for your continued support and share with you some important information about our ministry.

In 2021, we were able to restart in-person activities. Youth are coming together to share in many fun activities that have built relationships. They have had the opportunity to work in missions this summer. They have continued to grow in their relationship with God. We are sad to report that Erica Brooks, our youth director has submitted her resignation to better focus on her work at Vineyard and her new marriage! We will continue our current scheduled activities through the end of December, and we will be transitioning to monthly events for January through May 2022 that will be led by the board and volunteers from our partner congregations.

The Lighthouse Board is using this time of transition to better understand the needs of the youth in our community and the dreams and expectations of our partner congregations. We feel this is imperative to building a stronger foundation and to better plan for programming and staffing needs as we grow into the future. We are in the process of securing experts in the areas of youth ministry and community needs assessments to ensure that this process is done well. Once this process is complete, we will start our search for a new program director.

Lighthouse was born in 2017 when lay leaders and pastors from five congregations dreamt together about providing a vibrant Christian youth ministry in our community. Four years later, despite a global pandemic, five pastoral transitions, two youth director transitions, and a steep learning curve, we have been building the roadmap that others will certainly follow if we are successful! That is exciting stuff!

In the coming weeks you will be receiving an invoice for Lighthouse 2022 dues. We ask that you include us in your 2022 budgets and assist us with identifying members of your congregation who can serve as board members, youth reps, or other volunteers. We ask for your support as we survey and interview our youth and members. But most importantly, we ask for your prayers that we can continue to grow to become the vibrant youth ministry we all dreamt of connecting youth to their faiths in meaningful (and FUN) ways!

Sincerely, Alexandra Pieper (President of Lighthouse Board of Directors)

## OUR THANKS

To Nick Sanem and Family, Libby Holmes and Family, Grant Eslinger and Family, and Dylan Crain and Family for providing Nursery Care in November.

To Louise Mollinger and David Franks, Avery Roehrig and Family, and our Church School kids for hosting our Fellowship Hours in November.

To Joe Mueller, Don Niederfrank, Jane Schneider, Mike and Jane Spalding, and Carolyn Heatwole for serving as our Worship Leaders in November.

To the Church School Leadership Team for conducting Church School Sunday on Sunday morning, November 14: Savannah Anderson, Jennifer Dimmer, Tina Olson, Dawn Rychtik, and Shandy Roehrig.

To Kerry O'Brien for helping with the Confirmation Experience to The Food Pantry on November 10. Thanks to Kelly Blum for serving as Parent Helper for the November 15th Class.

To Kay Rego for designing the envelope for our Stewardship materials. Thanks to Bev Mueller for assembling the entire mailing.

To Mike Dimmer for cutting back all of the shrubs and perennials around the entire perimeter of the church.

To Joe and Bev Mueller for facilitating the Brat Fry, and to everyone who supported the event!

To Jennifer Dimmer for coordinating Christmas Cookies made by church members and friends that were served at the Stewardship Team Brat Fry.

To the anonymous member who paid for two new water heaters that were needed!

To Mike Spalding for selecting our hymns for each Sunday service.

To everyone who contributed food items to support Advocates.



## IN OUR PRAYERS

Jim and Sherri Melichar. Jim continues to receive hospice care at home.

Wendy and Jim Weber. Wendy was recently diagnosed with neuroendocrine cancer, a rare, slow-growing cancer which will require surgery.

# APPROVED OCTOBER CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

(The October Minutes were approved at the November 11, 2021 meeting.)

## **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

Church Council Minutes

October 14, 2021

Call to Order- By Jeanne Mantsch @ 6:10 pm

Pastor Scott, Kathy Bretl, Jennifer Dimmer, Mike Spalding, Bill Bond, Savannah Anderson, Jason Jacque, Ric Probst, Phil Stepanski, Jeanne Mantsch, and Rhonda Thompson

Opening Meditation- Ric Probst – Something to Think About – Unless we eliminate mask mandate we will continue losing members. He asks us “Is sticking with mask mandate worth losing members?”

Approval of the Minutes – September, 2021 – Bill motions to approve the September minutes and Ric seconds the motion. The minutes are approved.

Financial Administrator's Report (Kathy) – Donations to Memorial Fund are not part of the budget and will be reported separately from the Budget vs Actual report.

### Old Business

Reopening committee report – Survey results (Phil)-Survey resulted in 73 responses and results were published as part of the November newsletter. It seems the results present the committee with a no win solution; again, no matter what is decided someone will not be happy and the risk of losing members continues with any decision made. Discussion revolves around looking at others and their comfort levels and whether or not changing the wording on any memos and posted signage would have a better impact. The committee is recommending no changes be made at this time.

Phil will send air purification/filtration information to Bill. Pastor Scott would like the chance to reach out personally to any member considering leaving the church.

Something to consider is whether or not insurance will provide coverage if we open and don't take precautions. Can Lorraine check into this? Savanna is willing to try to come up with some new messaging/language to use instead of “mask mandate”.

Nominating committee formation – Tabled till the November meeting

Lighthouse Youth Ministry board of directors representatives – Two members, one voting and one non voting member are needed. Pastor Scott will share a job description that could be useful to fill the position. Church membership is a requirement. The Youth Director has resigned and representatives will be needed to help with selection of a new Youth Director. Send names to Pastor Scott

*(continued on next page)*

## New Business

Stewardship Committee Report – (Jason)-Jason has shared a written Stewardship Campaign Timeline with details of who, what where and why. The theme Rooted in Love.

2022 Budget – (Kathy)- It was brought up that there is a variance in pledge amounts on a few documents; amounts are \$148,003 or \$156,000. The discrepancy was because the \$148,000 was written in a budget proposal to the congregation last year, but the Stewardship Team reported that additional pledges had been received and the new total was \$156,000. Somewhere in the transition the \$156,000 was not recorded, but it was the amount they had used to make decisions for approving a deficit budget for this current year. It was asked if the \$156,000 can be applied to this 2022 Budget form? Lorraine highlights that there will be a shortfall as the budget is projected based on the numbers carried over from the previous year. Pastor Scott said we need to think about “what kind of deficit are we willing to live with”? If we want to make deeper cuts, we need to look at staff and programs, but he does not want to do that nor does he think it's a good time to that. He's hoping this situation is a blip and things will come back around.

Phil added that every year since he can remember a Deficit Budget has been present to and approved by the congregation. Waiting until next month is prudent to see whether things are better than we think or worse than we hope.

In order to be able to think about it, Mike wanted to know whether any other teams had their budget requests denied. Kathy shared that Lorraine's statement from an email was that no team's budgets were being increased at this time due to the large anticipated deficit.

Building maintenance updates – (Bill)- Bill said there will be an approximate 4% increase in property expenses. Claude Zimmerman and Joe Mueller (members of the Property Team) have been pointing out things that need to be addressed down the road that will pose a significant monetary impact.

Beckie shared with Bill that the carpeting needs shampooing. He'll get the contact information from her.

Bill has two quotes from Professional Services that he has approved. The work won't be done for a while. 1) Carrying service into forced air units and 2) Boilers to be serviced in the spring

Bill then addressed needed repairs on the stained glass windows- the one on the SE corner of the sanctuary and the three tall windows at the back of the sanctuary. These windows are over 100 years old and are fast approaching the failing point. The estimate for both glass and woodwork is \$18,000 and to get on the list for next year, he'd need to contract for work this year.

He understands that he needs to table this request for now, but asked about whether this would be a project for a capital campaign. The possibility of a capital fundraising campaign was talked about and it was decided that Bill should meet with Pastor Scott to further discuss the issues and possibilities.

Mike asked what is the downfall if we scheduled repair of the stained glass windows now and cancel if the funds don't work out. Bill said that a \$4,000 nonrefundable deposit is required.

Phil said if we're talking about messaging (from the Reopening Committee Report earlier discussion), we may consider packaging Welcome Back and a capital campaign.

Bill added that we do need filtration for germ-free forced air.

Phil said we could include Air Purification in the package, also. This will be tabled until the November meeting.

Pastor Scott thanked the Council for sticking with things during an unprecedented time of a pandemic and a pastoral transition. He said it will take a few years for things to turn around. He thanked the Council for their prayerful, thoughtful work on the issues. He believes that we are going to get through this time- this church has gone through other tough times and it will get through this.

### On Hold

#### UCC Legacy Program (Jason)

#### Reminders:

Next Executive Committee Meeting –November 4, 2021

Next Council Meeting – November 11, 2021

Opening Meditation – See sign-up

Jeanne adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 4 - Nicole Lesnik    | 18 - Kelly Blum        |
| Laurel Sanford       | 20 - Nicole Nelson     |
| 5 - Jessica Clements | 21 - Taylor Peiffer    |
| Kelly Perket         | 22 - Maximus Shupe     |
| 6 - David Wickesberg | 24 - Kallyn Vandennack |
| 7 - Mark MacRae      | 25 - Courtney Cowen    |
| 14 - Lily Dimmer     | Barb Liebnow           |
| 15 - Jim Schmit      | 26 - Vegas Mantsch     |
| 16 - Kyle Schneider  | Emma Riemer            |
| Cory Schneider       | 27 - Michael Rego      |
| Elijah Perez         | 29 - Aila Bretl        |
| Gary Tackes          | 31 - Scott Briese      |

## DECEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

- 26 - Howard and Alice Clausing
- 27 - Steve and Cheri Farnsworth

# DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
		(1pm Finance Team on Dec. 1) →	<b>1</b> <b>12 pm</b> Wednesday Lunch Group  <b>6:30 pm</b> Advent Candlelight Service  <b>7 pm</b> Handbell Choir Rehearsal	<b>2</b> <b>8 am</b> Men's Breakfast – The Beacon  <b>7 pm</b> Executive Team	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> <i>Second Sunday of Advent</i> <b>8 am/10 am</b> Communion Service <b>9 am</b> Fellowship Hour Chancel Choir <b>12 pm</b> Advent Craft Workshop	<b>6</b> <b>5:45 pm</b> Children's Choir Rehearsal  <b>6:30 pm</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal  Lighthouse Board Meeting	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <b>12 pm</b> Wednesday Lunch Group  <b>6:30 pm</b> Advent Candlelight Service  <b>7 pm</b> Handbell Choir Rehearsal	<b>9</b> <b>8 am</b> Men's Breakfast – The Beacon  <b>7 pm</b> Church Council  Knellsville 4-H Club	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>  <b>8 am</b> Port Pre- School Breakfast with Santa in Fellowship Hall
<b>12</b> <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i> <b>8 am/10 am</b> Worship Service <b>10 am</b> Church School Handbell Choir  <b>11 am</b> Fellowship Hour	<b>13</b> <b>5:45 pm</b> Children's Choir Rehearsal  <b>6:30 pm</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <b>12 pm</b> Wednesday Lunch Group  <b>6:30 pm</b> Advent Candlelight Service  <b>7 pm</b> Handbell Choir Rehearsal	<b>16</b> <b>8 am</b> Men's Breakfast – The Beacon  <b>6 pm</b> Confirmation Mission Experience- Family Promise	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> <b>8 am</b> Worship Service/ <b>10 am</b> Family Service Children's Choir <b>11 am</b> Fellowship Hour <b>6 pm</b> Lighthouse Youth Group Event at Shalom	<b>20</b> <b>5:45 pm</b> Children's Choir Rehearsal  <b>6:30 pm</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal  Confirmation Class	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> <b>12 pm</b> Wednesday Lunch Group  <b>6:30 pm</b> Advent Candlelight Service  <b>7 pm</b> Handbell Choir Rehearsal	<b>23</b>      <b>5:30 pm</b> Zozakiewicz Baptism	<b>24</b> <i>Christmas Eve</i>  <b>5 pm</b> Family Service/Christmas Pageant <b>7 pm</b> Service of Lessons and Carols <b>9 pm</b> Candlelight Communion	<b>25</b> <i>Merry Christmas!</i>
<b>26</b>   <b>10 am</b> Worship Service	<b>27</b>   (No Office Hours This Week)	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>  <i>New Year's Eve</i>	



## CHURCH INFORMATION

First Congregational Church

*United Church of Christ*

131 North Webster Street

Port Washington, WI 53074

(262) 284-2022

website - [portucc.org](http://portucc.org), email - [office@portucc.org](mailto:office@portucc.org)



Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday mornings from 8:30 - 11:30

Pastor Scott's Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays, and by appointment

Office Staff Emails

Rev. Dr. Scott McLeod, Pastor - [pastor.scott@portucc.org](mailto:pastor.scott@portucc.org)

Amy Gilhooly, Communications Director - [amyg@portucc.org](mailto:amyg@portucc.org)

Beckie Perez, Office Manager - [office@portucc.org](mailto:office@portucc.org)

Lorraine Halls, Financial Administrator - [lorraine@portucc.org](mailto:lorraine@portucc.org)

## STAY CONNECTED

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*Please let us know if you have a new email address*

Check out the church website - [portucc.org](http://portucc.org)

## ONLINE GIVING WITH PAYPAL

PayPal is an easy way to give to the church to pay your pledge and/or make an extra financial gift. You can find the PayPal button on the home page of the church website ([portucc.org](http://portucc.org)) or use this QR code. Thank you!

