

Tower Notes - March 2020

Celebrating 175 years of Community Based Ministry



First Congregational United Church of Christ
An Open & Affirming and Immigrant Welcoming Church 

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Rev. Tanya Sadagopan

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Pastor's Message

If you will listen to all that I command you, walk in my ways, and do what is right in my sight by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you, and will build you an enduring house. 1 Kings 11:38

Dear Members and Friends of Janesville UCC!

We celebrated 175 years of community-based ministry last month in a grand way! Thank you to all those who helped make the day so meaningful and memorable. We learned together about an influential member of the early church Lavinia Goodell, the prophetic work of Rev. Hiram Foote, and celebrated the many accomplishments of recent past included becoming an Open and Affirming and Immigrant Welcoming congregation. As a church we also learned that we are building a new multipurpose space intended to celebrate our heritage, showcase the arts, and encourage our spiritual growth with a meditation center and labyrinth. The Historic Renovation construction begins this month with completion expected by the end of the year.

What we have accomplished in our past is only one aspect of our ministry. It is who we are yet to become as a community that is most exciting. Our leadership in Janesville continues to make a difference in the lives of so many. Rep. Debra Kolste shared with me that our church is well respected and that leaders within our own church nurtured her own calling to serve the 44th district as our State Representative. We also nurtured the faith of four who chose to make ministry their life's work. This made me think about what makes our congregation unique? We are spiritually grounded and actively engaged in the art and practice of what it means to be a Christian in the world. In short, I believe that we live our faith out loud with courage and conviction.

How can we be both spiritually grounded and actively engaged in the work of love and justice? We must continue to strive to deepen our faith through prayer, meditation, study, reading, dialogue, and other spiritual practices. Lent is the time when we are invited to go deeper. Beginning with Ash Wednesday some may take on a variety of fasts from things that we consume—what we eat, what we buy, what we read, what we say. Others may begin to add into our lives activities and practices that support health, vitality, and a spiritual awakening—such as daily meditation, devotional readings, bible

studies, more frequent church attendance, volunteer activities, community activism for peace or justice, or caring for the environment. We can better reach out when our faith is deeply rooted.

This Lent I invite you to deepen your own spiritual practices. For my part, I have begun writing a daily devotional that is published on our Facebook page. We will host in April a special Holy Week of events and we invite individuals, couples and families to join us for these spiritual activities including a Maundy Thursday dramatic play and Prayer Stations on Good Friday. What will you let go of this season and what will you add so that you may grow? My prayer for you is this season will bring you closer to God and that you will come to know the work and ministry of Jesus on a more personal basis. This House of God has endured for many years and by God's grace it will continue for many years to come.

With deep gratitude,
Rev. Tanya Sadagopan

Worship in March; 5 Sundays of Lent

Mar 1: Theme: The Good Samaritan
Liturgist:
Coffee Hour: Barb Werfal & Diane Henrichs

Mar 15: Theme: TBD
Liturgist: Brittney Mansur
Coffee Hour:

Mar 8: Theme: Lament Over Jerusalem
Liturgist: Carolyn Brandeen
Coffee Hour: Sriram & Tanya

Mar 22: Theme: Prodigal Son
Liturgist:
Coffee Hour: Don & Ruth Robinson

Mar 29: Theme: Rich Man and Lazarus
Liturgist: Nathan Roehl
Coffee Hour: John & Brittney Mansur

Thank you to our ushers in February: Dawn Endl, Warren Myers, Bill Williams

Thank you to February coffee hour hosts: Mary Ann Harris, Becky Behling, Membership Ministry

Thank you to February liturgists: Wayne Olson, Nathan Roehl, Nancy Stabb

Thank you to all the acolytes, greeters, and extra ushers for stepping up at the last minute.



SAVE THE DATE: Anniversary Celebration

May 16, 2020: special music and church tours

Thought for the month: Don't let what you can't do stop what you can do.

March *BIRTHDAYS*, Happy Day to All!

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 2 Larry Hausner | 8 Dorothy Hanson | 19 Greg Shebesta |
| 2 Brian Knutson | 10 Linda Stehura | 20 Evelyn Kummer |
| 3 Geri Frase | 13 Pat Scott | 22 Wayne Olson |
| 3 Austin Trumpy | 14 Warren Myers | 24 Nancy Restivo |
| 4 Alyssa Seeley | 17 Amy Schollmeier Mohr | 28 Malachi Eide |
| 6 Kristine Bertenshaw | 17 Roberta Tucker | 30 Marlyn Kolinsky |



March *ANNIVERSARIES*, Congratulations

- 1 Gerald & Sally Albers
- 1 Sriram & Tanya Sadagopan
- 7 Larry & Mary Hausner
- 11 Bill & Jeannine Fitzgerald
- 20 Don & Ruth Robinson



If your name ever gets missed from the birthday or anniversary list, please let Becky know.



As we are fed at Christ's table we go out to feed others. Our total contribution for February was 42 pounds. Thank you to everyone who contributed food and money.

Life is an echo... what you send out, you get back!

ECHO March Needs:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Diapers (sz 3-6) | Toothbrushes | Twisty Ties |
| Peanut butter & jelly | Feminine products | Razors |
| Spaghetti & sauce | Deodorant | Toilet paper |
| Mac & Cheese | Dish soap | Soup |
| Brown paper bags | Shampoo | Tuna |
| Breakfast bars | Laundry Soap | Money |

SWING into SPRING
Saturday, March 28, 2020
7:00-10:00pm
Pontiac Convention Center
Featuring music by

Cash Bar - Silent Auction - Raffle - Wine Pull
Tickets : \$20
 Available at ECHO - 65 S High St or at www.echojanesville.org
Free Swing Lesson by John Curran of Madison Area Ballroom, Inc. Starts promptly at 6:00 p.m.
 Proceeds Benefit **ECHO**
 Everyone Cooperating to Help Others

2019 SERVICE SNAPSHOT

- 3,768 Rock County households served
- 3,633,076 meals provided
- 2,967 Nights in a local motel for the homeless
- 351 months of rent paid to keep families housed
- 429 children received school supplies
- 517 children received Christmas presents

Thank you for assisting us in meeting our mission of meeting housing, food and other basic human needs and addressing the barriers to self-sufficiency.

Free Community Dinner



The next Community Meal will be on Saturday March 7th at 4:00. The menu will be chili and soups, green salad, mixed fruit, cheese cake, and a beverage.

Contact Bonnie Stalker or Nancy Stabb for more information or to help out.

March Giving Opportunity

One Great Hour of Sharing® (OGHS) is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the UCC.

Your gifts to OGHS help assist refugees with a safe place to rest, educational opportunities, and nourishing food to eat when they are hungry.

Your gifts to OGHS assist learning centers where girls and boys can escape the life of refugee camps and experience the normalcy children in many parts of the world take for granted.

Your gifts to OGHS help support well-trained savings and loan groups that allow families to buy resilient vegetable seeds for farming, yarn for weaving stunningly beautiful traditional fabric, and egg-laying chickens for a sustainable source of protein essential to childrens growth and development.

Your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing help make this world look more like the world God imagines. Look for the envelopes attached to the red pew folders or give online at <https://app.easytithethe.com/App/Giving/janesvilleucc>

From Outreach Ministry

Outreach Ministry lost a friend in January with the unexpected passing of Greg Anderson. Greg was a passionate advocate for the Gifts homeless men's shelter. For many years he helped with overnight supervision at the shelter when it was our turn, and he recruited others to help as well. Greg was a fully participating member of the Outreach Ministry for the last 2 years. He was always ready to assist in whatever needed doing. He did his share of Special Mission offering appeals, the most recent being the Christmas Fund appeal in December 2019. He delivered Meals on Wheels, he helped plan and set up the Outreach Prayer Vigil station on Good Friday. He had an enthusiasm for all things helpful, especially if it required a truck. We will miss his probing questions and irrepressible good humor.

Much thanks to those members who donated to the Denominational Christmas Fund for retired clergy. We collected \$1431 for the fund in November and December.

Thanks also to Larry Barton for repairing and weatherizing the Little Free Library we maintain at the Jeffris Flats.

Needed: Children's easy reader books and story books for the Little Free Library at Jeffris Flats.

Sunday School and Youth Group News



A thank you from Christian Education Ministry:

We would like to give a huge thank you to Jim and Janet Hay. As part of our church's 175th Anniversary, Jim and Janet spent time with the Sunday school children sharing the history of our church. The Christian Education Ministry feels it is important for our children to learn the history of their church. Jim and Janet had so many stories to share with the children and Janet also spent time finding pictures to share. We cannot thank them enough for all their help.

We would also like to give another huge thank you to Tony Dieckhoff. Tony took the children on a tour of the old basement of our church. On another Sunday, the children went up to see the bells in the bell tower. Tony played a song on the bells for them. We then went outside so we could hear what a song sounds like outside from our magnificent bells. Thank you Tony for the great experiences you gave to the children.



There are exciting opportunities awaiting you at our wonderful local UCC Church camps at **Pilgrim Center** on Green Lake, **Moon Beach** in St. Germain, and the newest addition of **Cedar Valley** in Washington County. **There are camps for all ages and interests to explore faith and to have fun surrounded by the beauty of God's creation.** Visit ucci.org for the 2020 camp schedule and registration information.

There are camp scholarship opportunities available through our church and the UCCI Board. Forms will be available in the Fireside Room. Please contact Jamie Dieckhoff at jamie@janessvilleucc.org



March 15th: Youth Community Engagement Focus Group 11:30-1:30 (lunch will be served and we will welcome guest presenter Erin Conway from the UW Extension)

National Youth Event 2020



2020 NATIONAL YOUTH EVENT

National Youth Event has been scheduled for **July 22-25** at Purdue University in Indiana and **we are planning to go!** We plan to take the Wisconsin UCC bus leaving from Madison on July 22 and return in the evening of the 25th. Contact Jamie Dieckhoff at jamie@janessvilleucc.org to register asap.

In February, the Youth Group made beds to comfort homeless pets in Rock County. We had a great time delivering them and visiting the animals at the RCHS shelter!



Consistory Highlights from February 25, 2020

Consistory expressed appreciation to all who contributed to making the 175th anniversary service and luncheon a success. Consistory especially noted custodian Andrew Driscoll, music director Brian Knutson, organist David Newman, secretary Becky Kingsbury, and Jean Schollmeier, who made sure the balloons that were ordered were delivered and in place.

The January financial report showed member contributions for the month to be \$5,500 below the budgeted \$17,500 amount (figures rounded). The 175th anniversary fund has a total of \$11,359.36, with catered luncheon and other expenses yet to be paid.

The 175th worship service and the catered luncheon were well attended: 166 persons at worship and about 140 persons at the luncheon. A professional photographer took pictures at both events.

Consistory recognized the staff's efforts during the past two months. It was decided that secretary Becky Kingsbury, organist David Newman, music director Brian Knutson, and Rev. Tanya Sadagopan be given comp time equal to one week's work to compensate for the additional time required for five funerals and the 175th anniversary celebration.

Pastor Tanya distributed ashes on Ash Wednesday and hosted a short worship service Wednesday evening. Her sermons through Lent will be based on stories from Luke.

The Wednesday evening program, "Exploring Queer Theology and Our Place on God's Rainbow," is going well. The study has about nine participants.

Church custodian Andrew Driscoll is leaving to take a full-time position at Adams Elementary School. A collection will be taken for Andrew as a thank-you gift for his dedication to this church.

The church has several staff positions to fill: digital communications director, nursery supervisor, and custodian.

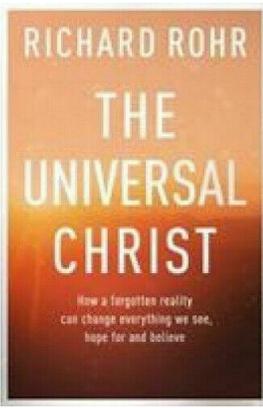
Outreach Ministry is involved in local immigration study. Nancy Stabb and Joellyn Merz visited the Building Bridges exhibit at the UCC church in Verona, and Nancy is working to bring this exhibit to the Hedberg Library and to Beloit College. Also, Nancy, Diane Henrichs, and Carolyn Brandeen are attending meetings of the Janesville Immigration Task Force.

Ruth Robinson and Janet Hay will present a nonpartisan program on voting and voter registration after church on March 1. On March 15 after church, Mary Buelow from the Hedberg Public Library will present a program on the importance of the 2020 census.

Education Ministry is preparing a parent survey about summer Sunday School options, collecting scholarship applications by March 20, and getting new furniture and art work in the education wing installed by May.

Membership Ministry is planning informal fellowship opportunities. Breakfast at Citrus Café is at the top of the list.

Submitted by Linda Stehura



Seekers book club will begin reading and discussing the book “The Universal Christ” by Richard Rohr in March. They meet at 4:00 on Thursdays in their meeting room #203. If you have questions about Seekers, contact Larry Barton at lwbarton@charter.net

We are looking for a collaborative, creative individual to join our team as a **DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**. In this role you’ll use your knowledge of digital communications to share our story and communicate our message to members of the congregation and a wider community, sparking spiritual curiosity and growth. You’ll help **GUIDE OUR DEVELOPING MARKETING STRATEGY** while adding to your professional portfolio. A successful applicant will have experience capturing and editing visual content, knowledge of social media messaging and advertising, and a passion for using technology to increase community engagement.



Position is part-time, 15-20 hours per week, with a maximum of 1000 hours per year. Position reports to the Pastor.

#KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY#: Work with the Pastor and collaborate with the staff to develop a digital communication strategy to tell the church’s story and engage targeted audiences.

#QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS#: A PERSON OF FAITH with the ability to communicate a MESSAGE OF HOPE to multiple generations. Experience capturing photos and videos with a strong sense of what makes something visually appealing and engaging.

#EDUCATION#: College degree in a related field such as Marketing, Communications or Advertising preferred.

TO APPLY: please send a resume, cover letter, and 3 references to revtanya@janesvilleucc.org

From the League of Women Voters

Are you ready to vote?

On-Line Voter Services

Go To: myvote.wi.gov



This picture from the notice last month about the death of Kathy Watson, is actually Rev. Louise Armstrong, not Kathy



This is Kathy Watson



Also, we apologize to George & Roberta Tucker for spelling daughter Gayle's name wrong.



Parish Care Honors Leaders at 175th Anniversary

The centerpiece of this display is the roll of presidents of the congregation from 1995 to 2019 – seventeen leaders since our 150th anniversary in 1995.

The roll of presidents also highlighted years of clergy transition and the declarations of becoming Open and Affirming as well as Immigrant Welcoming.

The cloud of 40 names surrounding them were offered by those who wished to add others to honor -- present or past, junior or senior, single or couple.

Not listed but a roll of clergy providing spiritual guidance over the 25 years follow.

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| 1995-1996 | Louise Armstrong |
| 1996-2004 | Gary Stillwell |
| 2004-2006 | Meg Shepherd |
| 2006-2014 | Wes Bixby |
| 2014-2015 | Brenda Barnes Jamieson |
| 2015-present | Tanya Sadagopan |

PICTURES FROM OUR 175TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Lavinia Goodell put her faith into practice in her daily life, by Nancy Knopp

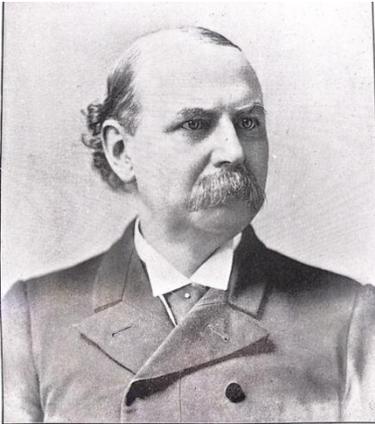
Although Lavinia's father, William Goodell was not an ordained pastor, in the 1840s he founded an independent church in upstate New York comprised of people from Presbyterian and Methodist congregations who had withdrawn from those bodies on account of their complicity with slavery. William Goodell continued preaching intermittently throughout his life and preached in Janesville on at least one occasion. His commitments to racial, ethnic, and gender justice were ahead of his time and were an outgrowth of his Christian faith.



The Congregational church was an important part of Lavinia's life in Janesville. In the 1870s the church, like Lavinia, was active in the temperance movement and was supportive of women's rights. It opened its doors to visiting women preachers, including Maggie Van Cott, the first woman licensed to preach in the Methodist Church. Frances Willard also lectured there on temperance.

Lavinia was extremely active in church activities. Her diaries and her letters note that she often attended both morning and evening services. She taught Sunday school. She helped organize oyster suppers and fundraisers, including something called a "pound party" in 1879 where she reported going to the pastor's home carrying a pound of sermon paper. Three different pastors served the church during Lavinia's years in Janesville, and it was the young pastor who arrived in 1876 who really forged her connection to the church.

Theophilus Parsons Sawin was Lavinia's contemporary. She took to him immediately. In three years of diary entries she mentioned him by name 108 times. He was not only her pastor. He became a confidante, a trusted advisor, a close friend. She socialized with him and his young family. They were both founding members of a literary club called the Round Table. He would often call on her at her office or her home.



Pastor T. P. Sawin

Always looking for new challenges, by early 1877 she had been elected the church clerk, the first woman to hold that position. She took her job seriously. After one meeting, she wrote, "an exciting discussion of church troubles. I was boiling over with indignation at the position of many prominent church members." And a few days later, "Mr. Sawin called and we had a very frank talk about church matters in which I expressed my opinions."

After she started her jail classes, she enlisted Pastor Sawin to accompany her to the jail on occasion, and she borrowed reading material for the inmates from him. He also loaned her literature for her own use, including an encyclopedia on insanity during a time when her mother was suffering from dementia, and Darwin's Origin of the Species.

Lavinia died of ovarian cancer in 1880 at age 40. Pastor Sawin officiated at her funeral. The tributes that he wrote about her soon after her death demonstrate the friendship they shared and offer a glimpse into how she put her faith into practice in her daily life and work. This is Pastor Sawin on Lavinia:

Physically weak from her very childhood, she succeeded in concealing the fact from all but her most intimate friends. Oftentimes for days confined to her bed in the morning, her friends would find her hard at work consulting authorities in preparing a brief, or an article for the press, or perhaps bent on some mission of mercy to the unfortunate and criminal. She was one who did not wait for an appeal to help.

From her class in Sunday school at the church, she was accustomed to go to the common jail, and gathering together the burglars, thieves and tramps, would teach them the lesson of the day, and then talk with them kindly, drawing out bits of their history and giving them good advice. Whatever she did was done as a servant of God, with an intense feeling of her responsibility to Him. Her faith was no mystical or sentimental emotion but a living, consuming action.

<http://www.laviniagoodell.com/lavinia-goodell-put-her-faith-into-practice-in-her-daily-life/?fbclid=IwAR3SV8ScGOR0HxQGOAHtMDrHQs8xLhuoHR3DGWmkapa5gEwhpOr1pliZmtU>



First Congregational Church
54 South Jackson Street
Janesville, WI 53548



*This page was attached
to the Tower Notes that
were mailed.*



First Congregational United Church of Christ

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9:00 am to 1 pm; *Closed Fridays*

Ministers	All Members of First Congregational UCC
Pastor	Rev. Tanya Sadagopan
Christian Ed. Director	Jamie Dieckhoff
Music Director	Dr. Brian Knutson
Organist	David Newman
Secretary	Becky Kingsbury
Bookkeeper	Denise Caldwell
Custodian	Andrew Driscoll

Church Leadership & Volunteers

President	Mike Rundle
Treasurer	Bo Klotz
Finance Chair	George Tucker
Lawn Mowing	Schollmeiers, Greg Shebesta, Mark Carlson, Bill Williams, Ian & Dave Groth, Doug Newton