

Tower Notes – November 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

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:7

Dear Members and Friends of Janesville UCC,

November is a time when the last colorful leaves fall from the trees and our thoughts turn towards Thanksgiving and Christmas. We would normally be thinking about traveling to see family, taking vacations, and spending time with the many people we love. Yet, as we enter the ninth month of this pandemic, we must imagine a humble holiday season. We can simplify our plans and focus on what is really important—showing deep love and concern for one another.

Love means staying home—even when we are invited to a family or friends house for the holidays. Love means monitoring our health closely and getting tested if we think we may have been exposed to the virus. Love means wearing a mask when we must go out and encouraging others to do so. Love means sending cards and greetings in the mail and taking the time write a word of encouragement to someone who needs it. Love means sharing our resources with those who need it most. Giving and receiving Love must be reimaged—but not diminished. How will you show deep love this holiday season?

The Historic Renovation is well underway and for the first time in over 70 years the space is opened up with two grand stained-glass windows that reveal “God is Love” in one of the Rosette windows. This multipurpose space will include a place for prayer and meditation and a walking labyrinth. Contemplation is an important spiritual practice during these difficult days.

This month we begin our church Stewardship Campaign when we prayerfully consider our giving towards the many vital ministries of our church for 2021. You will be receiving in the mail a packet with all you need to consider your annual giving pledge. Your contributions matter more than ever as our staff have been working harder and more creatively, to bring the love of God home to our families. From online worship programming, to mailed devotionals, creative Advent in a box family packages to woven shared art projects, the Holy Spirit is moving through our talented staff to remind everyone that God’s love is steadfast. After our online service on November 22nd, we will be waiting by the blue doors so you can drop off your pledge should you choose to do so.

November 29th we begin Advent--my favorite time in our church calendar! We will explore Hope, Love, Joy and Peace this year in new ways. Consistory is making plans to decorate the exterior of our church for all to enjoy. Christian Ed is preparing for a traveling Advent Wreath, and our music staff is making preparations for special music to be played from our sanctuary. On Christmas Eve we will first gather online for a meaningful worship experience broadcast from our sanctuary, and then we will join together distanced and masked outside to listen to carols on the tower bells by candlelight while we hum or softly sing Silent Night heralding the birth of the baby that changes everything—Jesus the Christ who shows us the greatest love of all.

Humbly,
Pastor Tanya



Worship in November

Fall Sermon Series—Unraveled

Nov 1: ‘Love of Children’, Unraveled Part 7

Nov 22: Commitment Sunday
‘Beloved Community’

Nov 8: ‘Love of Creation’, Unraveled Part 8

Nov 29: First Sunday of Advent

Nov 15: ‘Love of Neighbor’, Unraveled Part 9

Thank you to our October liturgists: Ross Lalor, Carolyn Brandeen.

If you would like to be a liturgist, contact Pastor Tanya. You need ZOOM on your computer.

November BIRTHDAYS, Happy Day to All!

3 Richard Klossner
4 Robert Popian
6 Melinda Clark
11 David Arndt
13 Sarah Gehri

14 Janette Soddy
18 Nathan Merz
19 Lucia Hyzer
21 Logan Bagley

21 MaryAnn Harris
23 Tony Dieckhoff
29 Quinn McCabe
29 Jan Willeford
30 Marie Hartung



November ANNIVERSARIES, Congratulations

17 Alan & Elizabeth Dunwiddie
22 Jim & Janette Soddy
23 Rob & Gina Swenson



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.
Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

ECHO November Needs:

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

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



*This year ECHO expects to assist over 600 low income families with a Thanksgiving basket. Due to COVID-19, ECHO will **NOT** be accepting donations of cookies and dessert bars. Consider purchasing canned cranberries, green beans, and corn as a substitute. A limited number of volunteers will be accepted this year to help distribute the baskets. Sign up in advance by calling Fran at 754-5333. Monetary donations may also be sent to ECHO at 65 S High St.*

From OUTREACH Ministry:

Thank you to all who contributed to the offerings for those immigrants in our community who are struggling at this most difficult time. We collected \$465.00.

A powerful display titled "Immigrant Journeys from South of the Border" will be at Hedberg Library from Nov. 9 through Nov. 23. It was developed by the Wisconsin Humanities Council and Centro Hispanico and is touring the state. In words and pictures it tells the story of the journeys of eight Latino immigrants from 4 countries, and will help us get a better understanding of their struggles.

Diane Henrichs

Thanksgiving Day prayer: Dear Lord, Thank You for this gift of food
You've placed upon our table —
And help us all to do Your work
In any way we're able.



Sunday School and Youth Group News

Join us for Online Sunday School November 8th, 15th, 22nd at 10:00



Sunday School classes will be held online from 10:00-11:00 on these Sunday mornings. We will learn God's stories and will grow in **faith, fun, and fellowship** as we navigate our faith journeys together. Classes are geared for students in grades PK-5th grade, and all children are welcome to attend!

Links to our virtual classroom will be texted to families each week. Want to get added to the list? Have questions? Need help connecting? Please reach out to Jamie Dieckhoff, Director of Christian Education: jamie@janesvilleucc.org. Please invite your friends and family to attend!

This month, come and learn to Shine in God's Light with stories about **faithfulness** with Moses and the Israelites!



ADVENT 2020



Join us for Intergenerational Worship Sundays Nov. 29-Dec. 20 at 10am
Sundays through Advent, we all worship together on the Janesville UCC Facebook Live page. Sunday School classes will resume

Family Advent Celebration Materials

Families will receive at-home Advent celebration kits from the church. To get added to the distribution list, contact Jamie Dieckhoff: jamie@janesvilleucc.org

Special Events

Look for "Special Events" announcements as Advent and Christmas plans are finalized!

Back by popular demand- Stories to Spark the Spirit!



Are you in the mood to hear a story that may inspire you, comfort you, or maybe even challenge you? Perhaps you just need a new bedtime story to add to your family's collection? Well, look on our First Congregational Church, Janesville UCC Facebook page for fresh and exciting stories read aloud by Jamie, Lindsey, or even Pastor Tanya! Stories will be added regularly, and all ages (including adults) are encouraged to watch and read along!

Calling all students in grades 6-12 for online Youth Group!



This year we are gathering online to support each other and to learn and grow in our faith. We discuss how we can turn that faith into action and seek justice for all in God's world. Most sessions will be held virtually, and links will be sent to families and Youth via text. Dates and times are currently being set to accommodate the Youths' active schedules. Please email jamie@janesvilleucc.org to be added to the list.

Consistory Minutes October 27th, meeting via ZOOM

Treasurer Bo Klotz reported that while income continues to be down, expenses have also been down and that the church's financial position remains stable.

Work on the Historic Renovation project is underway with the demolition phase almost complete. A video has been posted on Facebook showing the progress being made.

Consistory has decided that, due to the COVID pandemic, services will continue to be held online through the end of the year.

UCC stewardship materials focusing on love will be used in the lead-up to Commitment Sunday, November 22. Nancy Stabb is heading the stewardship team.

Ministry chairs have been asked to review open ministry positions for 2021 and suggest persons to fill these positions.

The "Unraveled" series of sermons will continue through November. Also in November, each service will feature a stewardship speaker from the congregation.

Pastor Tanya continues to provide pastoral care and support to members and friends of the church.

Digital communications coordinator Angelica Chapman-Sykes is working closely with Pastor Tanya to provide online support and communication to members and friends of the church.

Outreach Ministry continues to support ECHO through the family Christmas gift tree, Thanksgiving meals, and the toilet paper drive. The ministry is supporting immigrant welcoming work through gas cards and monetary donations and will collect donations for CASA in November and the UCC Christmas Fund in December.

Christian Education Ministry reported that Jamie Dieckhoff and Pastor Tanya are seeking ideas for engaging children in online Sunday School, that faith formation is on hold till spring 2021, that 20 people are engaged in the self-guided Unraveled series, and that the Zoom account is active and working well.

Membership Ministry created a seasonal greeting that was included with the fall financial statements, and the ministry is now working on Christmas cards to be sent to members and friends of the church.

Submitted by Linda Stehura



Free Community Dinner



The next Community Meal will be on Saturday November 7th from 4:00 – 5:00. Brown bag lunches will be available that include tator-tot casserole, roll/butter, fresh fruit, cookies and a drink.

Guests can pick up bags outside off a table or they will be delivered to any vehicle that pulls up for curbside pickup. Health Dept does not want anyone to come inside the building nor have any human to human contact. Contact Bonnie Stalker (608-290-4098) or Nancy Stabb (608-302-9944) for more information.

Pictures from outdoor worship service on Sunday, October 11



Jim & Janet Hay, Sept Volunteers of the Month



Ross Lalor, liturgist

Thought for the month: Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, and others make it happen.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
JANESVILLE UCC

Bonnie Stalker



OCTOBER 2020

**VOLUNTEER
OF
THE
MONTH**

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



IF YOU'D LIKE TO
NOMINATE
SOMEONE FOR
VOLUNTEER OF THE
MONTH EMAIL
ANGELICA@JANESVILLEUCC.ORG

Important 2020 Member Contribution Update

Our expenses this year have consistently been under budget, and until recently our contributions have remained strong. As we approach the end of our budgetary year we wanted to give you an update on our giving. We have fallen short of our budget for September, eliminating the buffer we once had.

Member Contributions

Sept Budget	17,708	Year to date Budget	159,374
Sept Actual	9,780	Year to date Actual	137,722
Variance	(8,354)	Variance	(21,652)

We thank everyone for your generous giving toward our vital ministries. If you have the means, we encourage you to continue to invest in our innovative programs and talented staff so that we may finish this challenging year strong.

If you are in need of financial assistance, please let us know so that we can support you. The confidential Pastor's Discretionary Account provides limited financial assistance to those who have an immediate one-time need. Your gifts to this account are always welcome.

If you have had a change in your financial circumstances and would like to adjust your pledge, please let us know. We will adjust your giving statements accordingly.

Thank you.

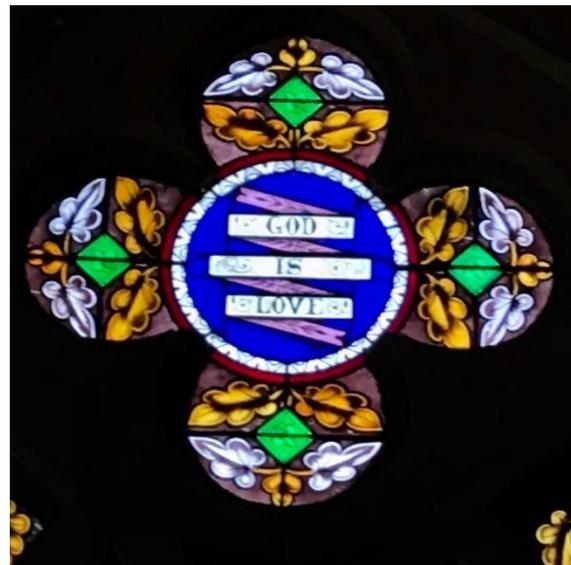
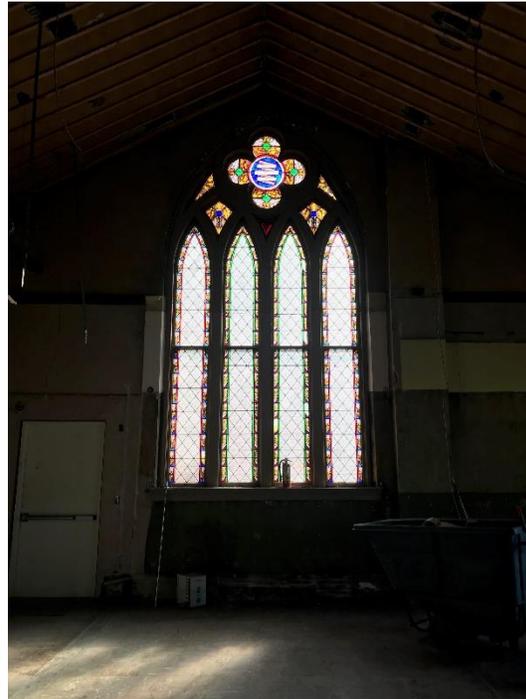
Members of Consistory



Pictures from Pastor Tanya's home sanctuary

Historic Renovation Demolition Completed

We are so excited to share with you the first images of the Historic Renovation on the 2nd floor above the offices after the demolition of the walls and drop ceiling. The stained glass windows you are seeing have been covered by a drop ceiling for the past 70 years. We are so pleased to see the newly revealed Rosette Windows that say “God Is Love” and “Feed My Lambs” in their center. These windows are in the oldest space of the church—that was built in 1868. But the grander of the space we can see that the community worshiped in this space while the new sanctuary was being built. The Rosette Windows and their message tell us that the ministry ideals of that 23 year old congregation cared about what we care about today. Our church outreach to our neighbors reflects the window “Feed My Lambs” and our Inclusive Ministries of LGBTQ advocacy and immigrant and racial justice is reflected in the window “God is Love.” To see these messages in a bottle from our past is quite a give. Love and Outreach have long been a part of this church’s spiritual calling for its entire history. This renovated space is well on its way to adding another place for God’s love to reach more people both within our building and well into the community.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST | JANESVILLE UCC

Janet & Jim Hay



SEPTEMBER 2020

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



IF YOU'D LIKE TO
NOMINATE
SOMEONE FOR
VOLUNTEER OF THE
MONTH EMAIL
[ANGELICA@JANESVILLE
UCC.ORG](mailto:ANGELICA@JANESVILLE
UCC.ORG)



*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: Wednesday Mornings 9:00 - 1:00 or by appointment.

Ministers

Pastor

Christian Ed. Director

Music Director

Organist

Digital Communications

Secretary

Bookkeeper

Nursery Coordinator

Custodian

All Members of First Congregational UCC

Rev. Tanya Sadagopan

Jamie Dieckhoff

Dr. Brian Knutson

David Newman

Angelica Chapman-Sykes

Becky Kingsbury

Denise Caldwell

Lindsey Anderson

Church Leadership & Volunteers

President

Treasurer

Finance Chair

Lawn Mowing

Mike Rundle

Bo Klotz

David Arndt

Schollmeiers, Greg Shebesta, Mark Carlson, Bill Williams,
Ian & Dave Groth, Doug Newton