


Tower Notes - June 2023

Celebrating 178 years of Community Based Ministry

 **First Congregational United Church of Christ**
An Open & Affirming and Immigrant Welcoming Church
54 South Jackson Street, Janesville, Wisconsin 53548

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Like us on Facebook: *Janesville UCC*

Rev. Dr. Tanya Sadagopan

E-mail revtanya@janesvilleucc.org



Pastor's Message

'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'
Matthew 25:21

Happy Summer Days Janesville UCC Members and friends!

So many new things are happening in the life of our church this month. After 17 years of faithful service to the families of our church, our Director of Christian Education programming Jamie Dieckhoff is retiring on June 4th. Please come and help us celebrate the gifts she has shared with so many over the years! She has supported a generation of young people to grow in their love of God, their confidence in their selves, and the ability to use their gifts for love and justice in the world. Jamie made sure that LGBTQIA+ advocacy and inclusion of all people from all sorts of families was at the heart of her work. God has moved powerfully through her creativity with summer programming, Christmas pageantry, and Good Friday prayer stations. It has been an immense pleasure for me to work with Jamie these last 8 years.

We are also so happy to announce our new Director of Christian Education is a member of our church and a familiar face in the office! Congratulations to Debi Cox who will begin her time on staff with us later this summer. She is eager to share her many gifts with the adults and families of the church. Since this is a brand-new position for Debi, be sure and give her time to get adjusted. She will need volunteers to help with programming and especially with ways to reach the community to share the good news of our programs with folks who may be seeking a new place to call their church home! You are the key to her success!

June will be a busy month for me as I will be working for *the Church At Large!* June 9-11 you will find me at the WI UCC Annual Meeting at Green Lake Conference Center. Our President Tom Clippert and I have been invited to serve on a panel discussing the best practices for developing and maintaining healthy congregations by good relationships between congregational presidents and their senior clergy. The General Synod of the UCC is held every two years in the summer. This year Synod #34 June 29 – July 5 is held in Indianapolis, and I have been chosen as a delegate representing our Wisconsin Conference. Joining me will be our members Kenneth Forbeck and Nandini Sadagopan both as young delegates from our

**The 34th General Synod of the
United Church of Christ**

Indiana Convention Center
100 S Capitol Ave
Indianapolis, IN 46225

June 30, 2023 – July 4, 2023



state. We will each be working hard all week to do the annual work of the national church. We invite your prayers and ask that you celebrate with us when we come back!

June 12 you are invited to join me at City Council as our church will be recognized as part of their PRIDE declaration at their 6pm meeting. Wear your pride gear and come support our city's declaration. June 18th for Father's Day we will celebrate the grand adventurers of God. Send me a note and tell me about any grand adventures you have gone on with your dad or ones that you have taken your children on over the years! Your story might even make it into my sermon!

This month you will receive a special communication sharing the colorized sketches of our two new stained-glass windows. The new window designs will arrive in our offices early in June and will be displayed in the sanctuary over the summer. I will prepare a special supplement to this newsletter with photos of the designs. It will arrive in your mailbox like the newsletter normally does. In it you will see the designs and read about the theological and scriptural basis for both of those memorial windows. These works of art are given in memory of the families of Dick Skyles, Lillie Markham, and Greg Anderson. Our President will call a special meeting of Consistory which will be announced two weeks prior to review those drawings. At this one issue meeting we will discuss any feedback that may come in from the congregation. We believe that you will be pleased and feel delighted that God is moving powerfully in our midst and that we are privileged to bring such art and beauty and light into our sanctuary. Look for a more detailed update soon!

If you are traveling this month, please pick up a postcard along your way and send it to me: Pastor Tanya, First Congregational UCC, 54 S. Jackson St., Janesville 53548. We want to know where you are going and what exciting things you are up to. When you come back, share with us during coffee hour all about your adventures! We believe you are going to meet God wherever you go on your summer travels.

Finally, we are conducting a small survey for my summer sermon series—*As a Matter of Faith*. Look for a survey in worship, fill it out and drop it in the offering plate. It asks you about the big questions you may have about faith, God, or Jesus that you are wrestling with this season. I will pick from those and create a sermon series for July and August.

Stay connected this summer, bring your friends to church!
I look forward to hearing from you soon!

All my blessings,
Pastor Tanya

Worship in June

- June 4: Jamie's Retirement Service
- June 11: Guest Speaker-Pastor Tanya at WI UCC Annual Mtg
- June 18: Father's Day-The Great Adventure of God
- June 25: Reflections from WI UCC Annual Mtg

Thank you to our May liturgists: Nathan Roehl, Diane Henrichs, Carolyn Brandeen.

If you would like to be a liturgist, contact Diane Holtz, or logon to
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508084aaba722a0f85-fall/124247659#/>

Thank you to our May Fellowship Hour hosts: Rita Feirn, Becky Behling & Mary Ann Harris, Bill & Mary Williams.

We would love to have you host Fellowship/Coffee Hour, sign up on the clip-board in the Fireside Room, or use this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508084AABA722A0F85-fellowship>

Thanks to our May ushers Mike Rundle, Linda Stehura, Nathan Roehl, Patti York, and Neil Deupree; plus those who step up at the last minute to help out during the offering. Please sign up on the clipboard in the Fireside Room.



Is doing well! Everyone is welcome to share a beverage and conversation after the worship service. We would like to have cookies to share. Can you donate some?

Anyone is welcome to host Fellowship Hour. You can bring your own treats or just use what is in the refrigerator and freezer. Membership Ministry

June BIRTHDAYS, Happy Day to All!

2 Lisa Endl	14 Claire Dieckhoff	24 Haley Budrow
2 Mary Virgil	14 Jane Lennox	25 Jan Knutson
2 Monette Wiskia	17 Helen Huffman	25 Pam Maxson
3 Minuette Farmakis	18 Jim Gay	26 Tom Clippert
3 Dave Schollmeier	18 Bonnie Stalker	27 Dave Griffiths
4 David McCabe	22 Kirsten Almo	28 Karissa Greer
4 Diana Pike	22 Alexia Essen	28 JP Merz
4 Sarah Popian	23 Paul Baltzer	28 Lisa Peterson
5 Helen, Nick, Ken Forbeck		



June ANNIVERSARIES, Congratulations

2 Neil & Kay Deupree	19 Doug & Melissa Newton
7 Amy & Tyson Mohr	21 Greg & Katie Shebesta
8 Roger & Jan Willeford	23 Linda & Tom Stehura
14 Jim & Karel Cripe	24 Mike & Gale Rundle
14 Brian & Jan Knutson	26 David & Kathy Arndt
18 Katie & Christian O'Connor	26 Lisa & Tom Peterson
19 Gregg & Becky Kingsbury	



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

Free Community Dinner



The next Community Meal will be on Saturday June 3rd at 4:00. Brown bag lunches will be available that include shredded turkey sandwich, fresh fruit, carrots, chips, cookies.

Guests can drive up to the back door and meals will be delivered to their vehicle. Contact Bonnie Stalker (608-290-4098) or Nancy Stabb at (608-302-9944) for more information.

Thought for the month: Never look down on anyone unless you're admiring their shoes.



As we are fed at Christ's table we go out to feed others.
The first Sunday of every month is Grocery Bag Sunday.
Take one home and fill it with some items listed below.
Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

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

ECHO June Needs:

Diapers (sz 4-6)	Toothbrushes	Spaghetios
Peanut butter & jelly	Feminine products	Tuna Helper
Spaghetti & sauce	Deodorant	Toilet paper
Diced tomatoes	Dish soap	Canned Tuna/Chicken
Brown paper bags	Shampoo	Laundry Soap
Hamburger Helper	Breakfast bars	Soup

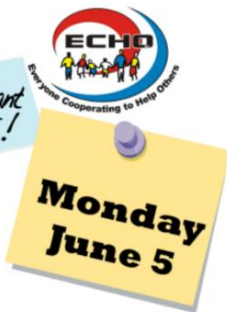


Dine out at these participating Janesville restaurants:

- Badger Bob's
- Basics Coffee & Deli
- Box Car's Pub & Grub
- Citrus Café
- Culvers - Milton Ave
- drafthouse
- Firehouse Subs
- GR's Sandwich Shoppe
- Hometown Hub
- H&S Japanese Express- (June 6th)
- Jeff's Kitchen- Open Special
- The Looking Glass
- Luke's Deli
- Mac's Pizza Shack
- My Apartment Pub
- Riley's Sports Bar
- Sandee's Thai Fusion
- Sidelines
- Whiskey Ranch

Visit www.echojanesville.org for an updated restaurant list.

Restaurants will donate 10% of their June 5th's receipts as they take action against hunger.



Thanks to Barbara Bendlin, Tabitha Ebert and Josh Streeter for cleaning up the garden by the parking lot door and planting new flowers. It looks beautiful!



Our Janesville UCC Walkers raised over \$5,600 for this year's CROP Walk on Sunday April 30th. More \$ is still coming in. That amount far exceeds 2022 & 2021. Thank you to all who asked friends & family to donate. 'Bee the Good You Want to see in the World' was a motivating theme. Our team did a tremendous job! ECHO will receive 25% of the CROP funds.



Spencer LaJoye Concert
on Saturday, October 7th.



Sunday School and Youth Group News

Hi!

I am Debi Cox and I am very excited to be your new Director of Christian Education. Christian Ed here has a proud tradition and I hope that we can work together to build on that. I look forward to getting to know all of you even better. And I Am especially interested in hearing all ideas that you have for sparking interest in Christian Education for all ages and for strengthening and supporting families. You can email me at debi@janesvilleucc.org.

Jamie has prepared the usual packets for your kids to pick up for use during service this summer. I am working on some summer activities and will be announcing details soon. Have a happy summer!



Consistory Minutes from May 23rd

Consistory expressed appreciation to Barbara Bendlin for stepping in for Pastor Tanya and sharing her faith story at the May 21 service, to Becky Kingsbury for organizing the volunteers for the Southwest Association meeting, and to all the volunteers who helped on that day.

A team of volunteers will organize fundraising events for the church. Currently members may make a special donation to the church's music program so that we can continue to enjoy guest musicians.

Upcoming volunteer opportunities include ushering on Sunday mornings, hosting coffee hour after the Sunday service, and serving at the GIFTS shelter the week of July 24. The Membership Ministry will help coffee hour hosts with treats and setup.

In her administrative role, Pastor has been meeting weekly with the web designer for the church's new website as well as with the people who will be creating and installing the two new stained-glass windows. She will soon share with the congregation sketches of the windows.

Pastor Tanya continues to provide pastoral care through visits, calls, and messages. This month she has made hospital visits as well as supporting grieving families and officiating at two funerals.

On June 4, the congregation will honor Jamie Dieckhoff for her seventeen years of service as Director of Christian Education. Jamie will continue her service to the UCC as a member of the Committee on Ministry, which oversees new ministers and clergy who enter the Southwest Association.

A new Director of Christian Education has been hired and will soon be introduced to the congregation.

The church welcomed fifty-five clergy and lay leaders to the Southwest Association meeting on May 6. Volunteers from the church staffed a welcome table, set up breakfast, and set up for a catered luncheon.

On June 6, Pastor Tanya will attend the Wisconsin UCC Annual Meeting, and during the week of June 29 through July 5 she will be in Indianapolis participating in the General Synod of the UCC. Also attending General Synod will be Ken Forbeck and Nandini Sadagopan.

Year-to-date pledge income remains above the budgeted amount, though year-to-date expenses are higher than both the budgeted amount and the year-to-date income. The church will see additional income this summer from renting space to the YMCA for a summer camp.

Submitted by Linda Stehura

Correction to April Consistory minutes: Pam Maxson is not on Consistory.

OUTREACH MONTHLY MISSION

June has arrived! Not only does this mean that sunny weather and summer vacation are on the way, but also that LGBTQ+ Pride Month is here!

A sense of community, belonging, and welcome are important for everyone, but it is especially vital for those in the LGBTQ+ Community to have a place to go where they know they are safe to be their full, authentic selves. One way to help ensure the availability of such spaces is by supporting Yellow Brick Road of Beloit, which is the Outreach's giving opportunity this month.

Yellow Brick Road's main focus is to create LGBTQ+ friendly spaces in the community in addition to educating the broader community about the Community and current issues affecting it. Some of the events that Yellow Brick Road hosts include "gayme" nights, dinners, movie nights, queer prom, and more.

So, if you would like to support a huge community while putting your resources to local use, the Outreach Ministry would greatly appreciate any and all offerings toward Yellow Brick Road, whether they be through Easytithes or in the designated envelopes available in the pews. Thank you so much for your help and consideration!

Respectfully,

Kira C Myers (Outreach Ministry)

from OUTREACH:

Our congregation is responsible for meals and overnight supervision at **GIFTS Men's Shelter** the week of July 23rd-30th. We have all of the dinners covered but if you want to join a group that is doing dinner please get a hold of John Mansur. We are still in need of breakfast food being donated for the week (milk, cereal, pancake mix, bacon, etc).

Overnight supervision consists of getting to the shelter by 8:00pm and checking in any men that haven't arrived yet and being available to answer the phone and door if anyone calls or shows up. It is a pretty simple job and usually a quiet night. There is a couch and a cot available for volunteers to sleep on. The shelter's policy is that overnight volunteers be men or a man and woman pair. Thank you for your help in this important church initiative.

Contact John Mansur to volunteer or with any questions at 608-322-2325.

SEEKERS BOOK CLUB NEWS

Seekers book discussion group meets on Thursdays from 4:00-5:30 pm on the second floor of the church. Starting June 15th, our next book will be "Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation" by Kristin Kobes du Mez. We will not meet on June 1 or 8. You can attend even if you haven't read the book.

For further information, contact Barbara Bendlin at bbendlin@centurytel.net.



2022-2023 Music Scholars were honored on Sunday, May 21st.

front: Abby Troia, Melina Williams
Sophie Andersen, Lucy Natale,
Lily Gibney

back: Luke Schmaling, Rylan
Pagel, Jacob Schmaling, Dr. Brian
Knutson

Not pictured Bella Bibro and Ivy
Williams

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
JANESVILLE UCC

George Tucker

MAY 2023

VOLUNTEER
OF
THE
MONTH

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

175th

ANNIVERSARY

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

We hosted the **Southwest Association Annual Meeting** at our church on May 6th. Fifty-five clergy and lay leaders from around southern Wisconsin met for the entire day attending worship, a business meeting, attending workshops, and joining together to share communion and a wonderful catered luncheon. A special note of gratitude goes to Becky Kingsbury who organized the volunteers for the day. We had about 10 volunteers who staffed the welcome table, set up breakfast, and set up for the luncheon. It was a ton of work, but we have heard nothing but great reports from the event. This was the first SWA Annual meeting held in person in five years due to Synod in 2019 and 2020-2022 COVID emergency. It was a proud day for our church too! Jamie Dieckhoff was installed to serve on the Committee on Ministry that will oversee the new ministers and clergy who enter our Association. Keynote speaker Dr. Meredith Hite Estevez was a gifted musician and speaker for the day. Her book "The Artist's Joy: A Guide to Getting Unstuck, Embracing Imperfection, and Loving Your Creative Life" is available for preorder in bookstores in a couple of months with preordering available in June. A moving part of our day is when we shared communion together. It was so special seeing all the chalices and patens lined up ready for our community to partake. Everyone loved the gallery, the rooms, the stained-glass windows and our hospitality. Thank you for helping to make it so special.





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: Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday mornings 9:00 - 1:00 or by appointment.

Ministers	All Members of First Congregational UCC
Pastor	Rev. Dr. Tanya Sadagopan
Christian Ed. Director	Debi Cox
Music Director	Dr. Brian Knutson
Pianist/Organist	Jan Knutson
Digital Communications	Stephanie Natale
Secretary	Becky Kingsbury
Bookkeeper	Denise Caldwell
Nursery Coordinator	Gwen Charlet
Custodian	Matthew Charlet

Church Leadership & Volunteers

President	Tom Clippert
Treasurer	Nancy Stabb
Finance Chair	Mike Rundle
Volunteer Coordinator	Diane Holtz
Gardeners	Nancy Stabb, Barbara Bendlin, Jeanine Fry, Tani Abendroth, Tabitha Ebert & Josh Streeter
Lawn Mowers:	Mark Carlson, Dave Schollmeier, Mike Rundle, Josh Streeter, Doug Newton, David Arndt