

# Tower Notes -August 2023

Celebrating 178 years of Community Based Ministry



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

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## Pastor's Message

<sup>37</sup> David said, "The LORD, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine Goliath." So King Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you!"... <sup>40</sup> Then David took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the wadi and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.  
*1 Samuel 17:37, 40 NRSVUE*

Greetings Members and Friends of Janesville UCC!

Against all odds, this is the theme of the LORD God, mighty indeed, who uses the humble to humiliate the strong. Our God cares about the little guy, the forgotten one, the lost child, the single mom trying to make a way out of no way. The Compassionate One is not afraid of challenges that suggest the odds are against us. It is God's unfailing love and call for justice that is best shown when the improbable and unlikely unfold before eyes. Our faith with our actions can take the worst odds and transform them into powerful good for the community. We are used to working against the odds when God is on our side, and we are on God's side. Do you believe it?

This is the heart of the story of David and Goliath! The powerful, well-funded, well-armed strong man will not prevail on the hearty faithful servant child of the One God David. Young David, who will become king against all odds, has the confidence that God is with him when he faces the giant Philistine. The odds are against him, but his faith is bigger than his fear.

You and I are facing challenges that seem to bring impossible odds. Is our faith and activism making a difference in the world? Who are the Goliaths out there that God is sending us to face with smooth stones of love and justice in our hands? A sling seems a little tool to battle against the wills of giants.

You rarely know the good that is being done behind closed doors—so let me share a few giants that the humble Davids in our church are coming to see face to face. Last week a single mom reached out to me as her last resort to find help for her trans child to seek affirming mental and medical healthcare. Behind the scenes we are working through the giant health care system to find the little advocacy group that can help this faithful family. This mom is not giving up on the love for her child, so neither will I as her new pastor! Two weeks ago, I met with another mom going through a divorce. Faced with dramatic changing circumstances in her life, I was able to sit there and listen to the giants she is facing in her life. She has faith that the giants will not win. As her pastor, I am praying for her courage and strength to face them head on! What are the giants in our lives that we fear will overwhelm us and our faith?

Communities of faithful people can stand together with the weak and voiceless and bring the Goliaths in our lives to see the little guy as a formidable foe with which to be reckoned. As a community we are stronger when we work together with one vision, one voice, one mission, and one ministry. We are answering God's call when we show extravagant holy love to our neighbors and work toward Jesus' call to justice for those whose backs are up against the walls of injustice. These are contemporary examples of God's David facing the giant Goliaths of our age. This work is not easy. The odds are against us. Yet, according to Paul, "*If God is for us, who is against us?*" (Romans 8:31)".

Keep the faith in your own calling and ministry. Join one of our small groups at church—join the choir, the Seekers reading group, the AV volunteer team, volunteer on our Christian Education ministry, host fellowship hour, welcome a stranger, or help in the office. Your church needs your support as we are working harder than ever to move through some of the most formidable challenges we have faced—your Christmas in July dollars will help us stay on track in our budget and help meet the shortfall caused by the rise in utility costs. God is using us for great things, but we need you to help us stay faithful all along the way.

Sunday August 27<sup>th</sup> join us especially for our Outdoor Service with Jazz for Jesus! We will have refreshments—you can bring them to support the Membership Ministry! On that day, we will celebrate the 19<sup>th</sup> year Music Ministry of Dr. Brian Knutson and our accompanist of two years, his wife, Jan Knutson, as they both retire from Church Music ministry! Send a card. Donate to their going away gift.

Most of all, show your appreciation. Let us know you value the hard work we put in this community of Christ's ministry for our #loveandjusticechurch. Your kind words, your helpful efforts, your love shown in little ways helps us stand strong against the Goliath's we face every day. God is with us. You matter to us. Keep showing up.

All my love,

*Pastor Tanya*

## ***Worship in August***

August 6: Summer Series #3 "You Asked"---David & Goliath

August 13: Summer Series #4 "You Asked"---Exploring the Book of Ruth

August 20: Rev. Andrew Warner-Guest from the Wisconsin UCC Conference

August 27: Outdoor Service

Thank you to our July liturgists: Nancy Stabb, Neil Deupree, Nathan Roehl and Sarah Beers.

If you would like to be a liturgist, sign-up in the Fireside Room, or logon to  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508084aaba722a0f85-fall/124247659#/>

Thank you to our July Fellowship Hour hosts: Matt & Laura Charlet, Rita Feirn, Diana Huckstep.

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 July ushers and to those who stepped up at the last minute to help out during the offering. Please sign up on the clipboard in the Fireside Room.

## August BIRTHDAYS, Happy Day to All!

1 Lois Puerner	9 Louise Elliott	24 Mary Williams
2 Faye Bidwell	18 Ethan Dieckhoff	25 Megan Condon
2 Joey Swenson	19 Sarah French	28 Carole Kettle-Gardner
3 Charlotte Hopkins	20 Janet Carlson	30 Jan Kinnaman
5 Mark Carlson	23 Gregg Kingsbury	31 Bill Fitzgerald
7 Declan Greer	24 Christine Hopkins	



## August ANNIVERSARIES, Congratulations

2 Dave & Jane Lennox	8 Chris & Kristi Law
7 Lyle & Judith Anderson	11 Nancy & Robert Restivo
7 George & Roberta Tucker	18 Steve & Denise Essen
7 Desiree & Niki Halson	25 Ed & Karen Atkins
8 Darla & Michael Dernovsek	28 Gary & Karen Teubert



*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, August 5 at 4:00 pm. Brown bag lunches will be available that include ham & cheese sandwiches, watermelon, garden veggies, chips and dessert bars.

Guests can drive up to the back door and meals will be delivered to their vehicle. Contact Bonnie Stalker or Nancy Stabb for more information.



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.

## ECHO August Needs:

Diapers (sz 4-6)	Toothbrushes	Spaghettios
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

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



CONSISTORY DID NOT MEET IN JULY.





Spencer LaJoye Concert on  
Saturday, October 7th.

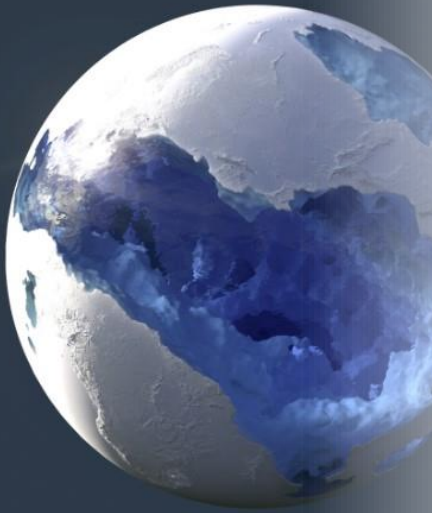


Sunday, August 27<sup>th</sup> is Brian and Jan Knutson's last day. Brian has been choir director for over 19 years. Jan has been organist/pianist for about 2 years. We will honor them at our Outdoor Service that day.



# SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH NEWS

How can it be August already? The entire church will be having our annual **Outdoor Church Service on Sunday August 27<sup>th</sup>**. It is always so much fun, and the kids will be doing outdoor activities. We will be inviting the adults to join the kids when service is over. We all need to play sometimes!



## FALL SUNDAY SCHOOL!!!

I am so excited that Sunday School is starting again. This Fall we are going to be learning about caring for **Planet Earth**! We will have lots of art, activities and stories about how and why we should take care of our home.

- Registration for Fall Sunday School will be on August 27.



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**If you have talked to me lately, you know that I am excited for Sunday School this Fall. You are too. I need your help to create the amazing experience our kids deserve. I have all the plans. I will do all the prep. I just need some of you that could help me out. Maybe 1 Sunday a month? Or just for a special event? Come in and read us the book for that day? Help with art? Pop in and do 1 thing and then go back to service? You tell me.**

**Talk to Debi Cox. 651-387-4552 [debi@janesvilleucc.org](mailto:debi@janesvilleucc.org)**



## From OUTREACH:

On Saturday, August 12, there is a screening of a film called "White Like Me" from 10a to 12p at the Hedberg Public Library. Tim Wise is an anti-racism educator, author and speaker. Here is his YouTube link if you cannot make the Saturday viewing.

Another event on this day, Saturday August 12, 1p to 4p, at Library Park (the green space between JPAC and the library) is a Diversity Action Team's Summer Cultural Fest. This community event is FREE and family-friendly with games, face painting, music, dance, storytelling, and food trucks!



Also on Sat, August 12 from 12-8 pm is the 2023 Rock the Pride at Telfer Park in Beloit. Pastor Tanya and other church members will be participating. Please join them!

Pass the word! See you there!

Patti York

DAT Member and UCC Outreach Ministry

## AUGUST MISSION FROM OUTREACH

Schools will be opening soon! Student supplies are an expensive item for families. First Congregational UCC has a history of helping students in the Fourth Ward Neighborhood. This year we will be collecting school supplies and accepting financial donations for Wilson, Rock River Charter School, and Project 16:49. Here are ways you can help:



**School Supplies:** School supply lists: Wilson School—pencils, markers, scissors, tissues, crayons, glue sticks, expo markers & cleaner. Rock River Charter School—college ruled loose leaf notebooks, pencils, pink pearl erasers, single subject notebooks, pens and tissues. You can purchase school supplies and drop them off in the Fireside Room and they will be delivered to the schools.

**Financial Donations:** If you pay by check, make the check out to UCC and indicate for school supplies on the memo line, or through Easytithe, <https://app.easytithe.com/App/Giving/janesvilleucc>. They will be shared equally between Wilson School & Rock River Charter School.

**Diapers:** Some of the students at Rock River Charter School and Project 16:49 have small children and are in need of diapers. These may be brought and dropped off in the sanctuary. They will be equally shared.

## SEEKERS BOOK CLUB NEWS

Seekers book discussion group meets on Thursdays from 4:00-5:30 pm on the second floor of the church. They are reading "Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation" by Kristin Kobes du Mez. You can attend even if you haven't read the book.

For further information, contact Barbara Bendlin at [bbendlin@centurytel.net](mailto:bbendlin@centurytel.net).



Thank you to Jean Schollmeier, Patti York, Mike Rundle and everyone who helped clean up the church yard on Saturday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>.



Thought for the month: Don't limit your challenges. Challenge your limits.



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

Pastor  
Christian Ed. Director  
Music Director  
Pianist/Organist  
Secretary  
Bookkeeper  
Nursery Coordinator  
Custodian

### All Members of First Congregational UCC

Rev. Dr. Tanya Sadagopan  
Debi Cox  
Dr. Brian Knutson  
Jan Knutson  
Becky Kingsbury & Bonnie Stalker  
Denise Caldwell  
Gwen Charlet  
Matthew Charlet

### Church Leadership & Volunteers

President  
Treasurer  
Finance Chair  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Gardeners

Lawn Mowers:

Tom Clippert  
Nancy Stabb  
Mike Rundle  
Diane Holtz  
Nancy Stabb, Barbara Bendlin, Jeanine Fry, Tani Abendroth,  
Tabitha Ebert & Josh Streeter  
Mark Carlson, Dave Schollmeier, Mike Rundle, Josh Streeter,  
Doug Newton, David Arndt