

Tower Notes - November 2024

Celebrating 179 years of Community Based Ministry



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



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#Love&JusticeChurch

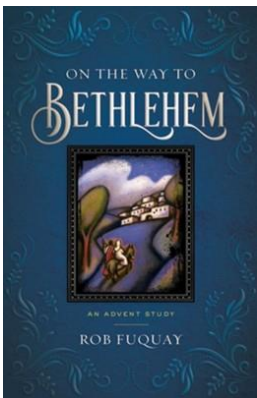
Rev. Dr. Bob Gross



Pastor's Message

As I sit to write this, I'm aware that the seasons are changing, even if it feels like summer outside. It's less than a week until Election Day. (Maybe then the emails, texts, and ads will give us all a break for a while!?) All the leaves are brown, and the sky is on its way to gray. While it seems the natural world is settling in for hibernation, ministry at First Congregational is in full swing and I'm grateful. We're gathering in groups large and small as the Body of Christ engaging with the Spirit of God in mission to the world.

I've begun conducting **Cottage Meetings** with church members. Have you signed up for one? I've also been busy making preparations for our Advent and Christmas worship. It's those preparations that I want to address here.



I'm planning a worship series, beginning December 1, based on the book, *On the Way to Bethlehem*. The series will follow the chapters of the book which chronicle the long journey to Christmas. In addition to Sunday worship there are two other ways to engage the series. First, you are invited to read along in the book. You may purchase the book wherever you buy books or order it from the church by either signing up on the sheet in the Fireside Room or placing your order with Becky in the office. The books will cost the church \$10. I ask that you contribute whatever you can, and if you are able, a bit more to cover the cost of others who may not be able to pay.

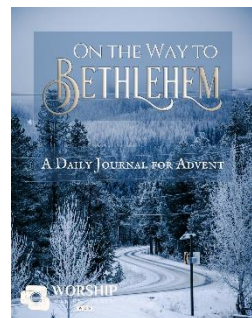
Another option is a daily devotional journal that will be available at the church for free. You may choose to read the book, use the journal, or both. If people express an interest, I am also willing to convene a weekly conversation for those reading the

book or using the journal to share what we're learning. We each will be enriched by what others learned and we might have missed on our own. Most importantly, I pray that you will join us for worship each Sunday.

Finally, about Election Day, no matter who wins the election I am sure of one thing – God is still God. As Christians our hope, faith, trust is ultimately not with earthly powers. Our souls are restless until they rest in Divine Love.

May it be so,

Bob





Home Communion - If you would like Pastor Bob to bring Communion to your home, don't hesitate to contact the church and let him know.

Worship in November

November 3: All Saints Sunday *Looking Out* 1 Timothy 6:17-19

November 10: Stewardship/Veterans Sunday *Looking with Gratitude* Acts 4:32-35

November 17: If in this City Mark 13:1-8

November 24: Reign of Christ Sunday *The Coming Reign* Revelation 1:4-8

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

If you would like to be a liturgist, sign up in the Fireside Room on the clipboard.

Thank you to our October Fellowship Hour hosts: Diana Huckstep and Pam Maxson.

We would love to have you host Fellowship/Coffee Hour. Sign-up on the clipboard in the Fireside Room.



The sign-up links have been disabled for liturgist and Fellowship Hour. We are going back to signing up on the clipboards in the Fireside Room.

The Pastoral Search committee had their Orientation with Rachel Baumen, Associate Conference Minister for the Southern Region, on Oct. 23, and they have begun meeting weekly as they prepare our Local Church Profile. The Profile is what candidates receive to learn about us. The members at-large are Neil Deupree, Desiree Halston, David Schollmeier and Mary Williams. The ministry member reps are Bonnie Stalker (Finance), Barbara Bendlin (Education), Tabitha Ebert (Membership), Rich Harper (Outreach) and Joan Kalweit, alternate. Please pray for this committee as they begin the process of selecting a settled minister for our church. Appreciation goes out to all for their hard work in this selection process.

November *BIRTHDAYS*, Happy Day to All!

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 2 Betty Dunwiddie | 18 Nathan Merz | 29 Quinn McCabe |
| 6 Alex Clark | 19 Lucy Hyzer | 29 Jan Willeford |
| 11 David Arndt | 21 Logan Bagley | 30 Marie Hartung |
| 13 Sarah Gehri | 21 MaryAnn Harris | |
| 14 Janet Soddy | 23 Tony Dieckhoff | |



November *ANNIVERSARIES*, Congratulations

23 Rob & Gina Swenson



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

Thought for the month: We tend to welcome change, as long as nothing is altered or different than before.



We no longer collect for Grocery Bag Sundays each month, but ECHO is always in need of food and non-perishables, which you can drop off during their business hours, or at church. Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

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

ECHO November Needs:

- | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Breakfast bars | Diapers (sz 4-6) | Toothbrushes | Spaghettios |
| Shampoo | Peanut butter & jelly | Feminine products | Tuna Helper |
| Paper bags | Spaghetti & sauce | Deodorant | Toilet paper |
| Hamburger Helper | Diced tomatoes | Canned Tuna | Laundry soap |

Free Community Dinner



Community Meal is an outreach that our church has participated in for over 15 years. We serve a healthy, balanced free meal to those in our community who need or desire a freshly prepared meal. It is served the first Saturday of each month. We began serving it as an indoor sit-down meal but has transformed into a to-go style meal. We currently serve over 100 meals each month.

The next Community Meal will be on Saturday, November 2 at 4:00 pm. A warm to-go meal of Tator Tot casserole, fresh fruit, roll w/butter and pumpkin bars. Guests can drive up or walk up to the back parking lot door and meals will be brought out to them.

Want to volunteer for Community Meal? You can donate pumpkin bars, food prep and assist serving meals on the day of the meal. Desserts can be dropped off during office hours or a pick-up can be arranged. Volunteer by contacting Nancy Stabb, Jeanine Fry or Bonnie Stalker, directly, email bonniebrewer17@hotmail.com, or sign up in the Fireside Room on the clipboard.

SEEKERS BOOK CLUB NEWS

Seekers book discussion group meets on Thursdays from 4:00-5:30 pm in the Atrium of the church. They are reading the book, "We Should Not Be Friends", the story of friendship by Will Schwabe.



You can attend even if you haven't read the book.

For further information, contact Barbara Bendlin at Barbara.bendlin@gmail.com

A message from the Stewardship Committee:

Your 2024 stewardship packet should have arrived in your mailbox. We ask you to thoughtfully imagine how your volunteer time and financial resources can make a difference. Please return your pledge card and your time and talents card by mail or in person no later than **Nov. 10**.

This year, we're asking you to fill out the pledge card even if you intend to leave the amount of your pledge blank, so we know that your imagination is still at work on our behalf.

Thanks for all you do to support your church and your community!

Stewardship Committee members: Darla Dernovsek, Diana Huckstep, Nancy Stabb, Dave Schollmeier and Pastor Bob Gross



WELCOME QUILT *Migration Art & Hope Exhibit*

November 10 – 17, 2024

Sundays 12 – 3 pm

Tues/Wed/Thurs 2 – 5 pm

Saturday 11 – 3 pm

Or by appointment

Call church office 608-752-8716

Displayed in Spiritual Arts Center
Free Admission

You are invited to create a quilt square there for inclusion by local Janesville area quilters.

CONSISTORY MEETING October 29

Consistory shared appreciations: Everyone who has agreed to be on the Search Committee; the Bell Choir; Jean's talk on their church and community involvement, and why they tithe to our church. Thank you to Linda Stehura for all her work on a myriad of committees she participated with, and Clerk of Consistory for many years; Nancy, Pam, and Neil who prayed for Linda Stehura; appreciate cash donations of \$280 in the jars during the month, and Nancy Stabb for all her work on managing and understanding the finances and making it all transparent. And to Becky, who has returned to the office and is much appreciated.

The treasurer's report was by Nancy Stabb. reported that our expenses outweigh our income, however, individual members have contributed to recent repairs. Snow removal will cost approximately \$6000 this year. Foundation balance continues to grow. Endowment interest is available to spend, if needed, and approved by Consistory.

Pastor Search Committee had an orientation by Rachael Bauman, Associate Conference minister, the committee will begin to meet every Wednesday at 3:15p at the church to discuss the Local Church Profile. Pastor Bob will assist with the initial steps in the process. Regular reports will be made to the membership in terms of the number of candidates. The first Cottage Meeting will be held October 30th led by Pastor Bob.

A discussion and vote to allow Patti York to fill the vacant Consistory Clerk position while remaining on the Outreach Ministry. It requires a vote from Consistory to allow someone to hold both a Consistory and Ministry position. Nancy Stabb moved; Joan Kalweit seconded; Patti left the room during the discussion and vote; vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

The Migration Art & Hope Welcome Quilt Exhibit is currently upstairs in our Arts & Spirituality Room; the public is welcome from November 10-17: Sundays 12p-3p; Tues, Wed, Thurs 2p – 5p or by appointment, and Saturday November 16, 11a – 3p. Questions can be directed to Nancy Stabb. Please come up to see the artwork!

Pastor's report included Advent and Christmas worship ideas to invite the congregation to read along in the book [On the Way to Bethlehem](#) by [Rob Fuquay](#). Details are in these November Tower Notes. He is busy meeting with ministries, committees, the worship team, and one-on-one conversations. He participated in Seekers, Coloring with Friends, met with Debi to discuss inter-generational activities. He is also participating in an Animating Anti-Racism course with the Wisconsin Conference and serves on their Board of Directors and on the Church and Ministry Team of SE Association.

Each ministry reported. Outreach: Patti York reported our November mission is HealthNet. HealthNet is celebrating their 30th year with a huge birthday bash on Thursday, November 7 from 6p – 8p. Outreach is also planning for our ECHO Gift Card drive for December. Education was absent. Nancy Stabb, finance, says our boiler is working just fine, per David Arndt. Our website needs improvement. Pastor Bob is researching interesting, existing church websites for us to consider. Diana Huckstep, membership, talked about fundraising ideas. On December 8, after the Christmas Pageant, a craft / bake sale will take place in our Arts & Spirituality room. Silent auction items are welcome.

Consistory's next meeting will be November 26 at 6:30pm at the church.

Submitted by Patti York

**FREE Thanksgiving meal, Thursday November 28, 11:00-1:00
at Salvation Army, 614 Sutherland Ave.**



SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH NEWS

Christmas Play



It is that time of year again! Our play will be on the Second Sunday of Advent, which is December 8 this year. I have started contacting families about available parts in the play. If you and/or your kids would like to be a part of the play, please contact Debi or sign up on the list in the Fireside Room. We need actors and stage help.

JUST FOR TEENS & YOUNG ADULTS

Join Pastor Bob for a weekend of relaxation with other youth from around Wisconsin, on January 24-26, 2025. Live music and winter camp fun will recharge your spirits. Scholarships are available for everyone.

Want to know more? Talk to Debi or Pastor Bob.



COLORING WITH FRIENDS

We will have coloring in the Sanctuary during all Advent Services!



Debi Cox
Director of Christian Education
debi@janesvilleucc.org
Church: 608-752-8716
Mobile: 651-387-4552

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
OPEN & AFFIRMING
IMMIGRANT WELCOMING



54 S. JACKSON STREET, JANESVILLE, WI 53548
JANESVILLEUCC.ORG

Outreach November Mission is HealthNet

HealthNet of Rock County, Inc., stands as the sole free and charitable clinic providing vital services at either no charge or reduced costs to uninsured and under-insured residents of Rock County.

Established as a 501(c)3 non-profit in 1994, it originated from a Salvation Army needs assessment, which shed light on the insufficient access to affordable healthcare in Rock County.

Through its provision of medical, dental, and behavioral health services at affordable rates, HealthNet prioritizes preventive care and management of chronic health conditions, thereby fostering the holistic health and well-being of Rock County's populace.

Clinic at:
113 S. Franklin Street
Janesville, WI 53548

Please consider donating to this worthwhile mission either through Easytithe online at <https://app.easytithe.com/app/giving/janesvilleucc> or during the Sunday offering.

To: All members, family, friends, and visitors

Art/Craft/Bake Sale

You are all invited to be a part of this upcoming church event. We would love everyone to be a part of it. Whether you are able to donate a craft or baked item to sell, come by and buy an item, or bring a friend and advertise by word of mouth to those you know. This event will be happening on Sunday **December 8th** before and after service.

Items to be donated for the sale can be dropped off at the church on Saturday December 7th between 1:00 pm -5:00 pm or before church Sunday morning. All money raised will go to the general fund. This is a very nice event for all who are so busy during the Christmas season. Stocking stuffers and baking can be crossed off your list.

Also, we will have a silent auction for historic pictures from a storage closet in our church.

Questions? Contact: Joan Kalweit, Diana Huckstep, or Rita Feirn

Thank you,
UCC Crafters





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
Interim Pastor	Rev. Dr. Bob Gross
Christian Ed. Director	Debi Cox
Music Director	Robyn Doege-Brennan
Pianist/Organist	Paul Finger
AV Technician	Kaydence Troia
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
Gardeners	Nancy Stabb, Barbara Bendlin, Jeanine Fry, Tani Abendroth, Tabitha Ebert & Sybil Streeter
Lawn Mowers:	Mike Rundle, Sybil Streeter, Doug Newton, Martin Huckstep, Warren Myers