


Tower Notes - October 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

Your Voice is Important!

During any time of change, especially during the transition from one pastor to another, conversation is crucial. That's why I'm inviting you to participate in a Cottage Meeting.

This series of get-togethers offer a chance to gather with a small group:

- to reflect on your experience at First Congregational Church,
- hear the experiences of others,
- and offer your vision of what can be.

My hope is to gather small groups of 6-8, preferably at your home, or anywhere we can have a conversation. I will offer a few questions as conversation starters. I will be joined by a member of the Pastoral Search Team to help record your responses. We're not concerned about remembering who said what. We are concerned about the threads and themes that are consistent across the Cottage meetings. These common experiences or impressions will help inform the Search Committee as they discern the right candidate for Pastor.

These roughly 90-minute conversations will have an additional benefit. They will help us get to know each other. I will leave some time at the end of each meeting for you to ask me any questions that you may wish to ask.

There will be sign-up sheets on Sunday. If you're interested in attending one, please let me know by placing your name on one of those sheets. Please also indicate preferred day and time. Finally, there will be a box to check if you would like to open your home, or anywhere we can have a conversation, to host a Cottage Meeting.

The Cottage Meetings will help us remember who First Congregational United Church of Christ is, why we're here, and what God is calling us to become. I encourage you to join the conversation. Your voice is important.

Blessings,

Pastor Bob Gross



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 October

October 6: Malice Toward None: Love

October 13: Looking Back

October 20: Looking In

October 27: Looking Out

Thank you to our September liturgists: Nathan Roehl, Nancy Stabb, Neil Deupree.

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

Thank you to our September Fellowship Hour hosts: Diana Huckstep and the Search Committee

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.

“Empty Bowls To Go” is a fundraiser to support ECHO, fighting to end hunger in Janesville with handmade soups from local restaurants



- Pre-order your soups starting October 1st at Noon until sold out
- Soups will be pre-sold in quart freezer safe containers, \$10/Qt
- You can order at www.echojanesville.org
- Pick up on Oct 19th, 11 am until Noon

Paul Finger's recital at Luther Memorial

On Wednesday, October 23, at noon Paul will perform a 30-minute organ recital at Luther Memorial, 1021 University Avenue. This recital is part of a series of Wednesday noon recitals by local organists. Parking is a little less than ideal. The most realistic option is to park in the Grainger ramp on Brooks St. between University Ave. and Johnson St. There is a fee for this. After parking in the Grainger ramp, walk part of a block to University Ave., turn left and the church will be at your left, just past the St. Francis Student Center.



October BIRTHDAYS, Happy Day to All!

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 2 Carter Dieckhoff | 16 Matthew Knutson | 28 Debi Cox |
| 7 Rob Swenson | 18 Jeanine Fry | 29 Judith Anderson |
| 8 Jim Cripe | 19 Jeannine Fitzgerald | 30 Dawn Endl |
| 15 Neil Deupree | 22 Roxanne Murwin | 31 Dr Katsumi Neeno |
| 15 Jo Green | 23 Diana Kjendle | |



October ANNIVERSARIES, Congratulations

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 18 Tony & Jamie Dieckhoff |  | 26 Mark & Marlene Gilmore |
| 21 Mark & Janet Carlson | | 27 Ben & Emily Arndt-Rein |
| 24 Richard & Colleen Eddings | | 28 Andrea & David McCabe |

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

Humor for the month: Age sixty might be the new forty, but 9 pm is the new midnight.



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.

ECHO October 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 |

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

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, October 5th at 4:00 pm. Brown bag lunches will be available that include pulled pork sandwiches, chips, fresh fruit, carrots and an apple dessert. Guests can drive up or walk up to the back parking lot door and meals will be delivered to them.

Want to volunteer for Community Meal? You can donate desserts when requested, food prep and assist serving meals on the day of the meal. Volunteer by contacting Nancy Stabb, Jeanine Fry or Bonnie Stalker, directly, email bonniebrewer17@hotmail.com, or sign up in the Fireside Room.

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, “Rebels, Despots, and Saints” by Sandhya Rani Jha.



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:

Good things happen when you use your imagination.

The 2024 Stewardship Campaign asks members to “imagine together” how their resources can make a difference in their church and their community.

Your 2024 stewardship packet will arrive in your mailbox in early October. 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. It's time to imagine what's ahead for us in 2025.

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



CONSISTORY MEETING September 24th

Consistory shared appreciations: Daily Facebook posts on our church's page; Children's moments in church; Jill Gant for the picnic table in the Gardens by the Wilson School; Becky and her doctor; Bonnie for helping be secretary for Becky; Darla for Stewardship and her leadership; Tom's leadership in transition of pastors; and Nancy for saving us expenses by reducing bank fees and finally positive efforts to complete a Pastoral Search Committee.

A treasurer's report was by Nancy Stabb. Her goal is to continually attempt to balance the budget throughout the year when funds get low, like in the summer. Cash reserve funds will be transferred in September for this purpose. She and Pastor Bob met virtually with Easytithes to learn about the program in more detail. There were several unexpected events and repairs. Some members have contributed directly to these repair expenses.

Consistory voted and accepted all four ministry nominees and one alternate for the Pastor Scope of Call committee. The other members at-large were approved by the congregation at the recent September 22 special meeting. The completed committee will meet soon led by President Tom Clippert, Pastor Bob, and Associate Conference minister Rachael Bauman. She will prepare this group moving forward. The complete list of this committee members is listed in the next article.

There was a lengthy discussion about future leadership positions, such as president and adding a VP position. Tom's term ends in Feb, 2025. We are looking for a replacement for Clerk of Consistory due to Linda Stehura's resignation. Please contact the church office if interested. We thank Linda for her years of dedicated service to our Consistory.

Pastor's report included Stewardship plans in October, followed by an Advent series. Pastor Bob will be directly involved with the Pastoral Search committee as they move forward. He is getting to know our church and its members as he continues to be involved in our activities and events. He looks forward to his Cottage meetings and discussions with all of you.

Each ministry reported. Outreach was absent. Education's focus is on the fall and winter, working with Debi, educational director, on her intergenerational plans. She is very energetic.

Finance shared their plans to transfer Memorial funds to a money market to earn decent interest. The funds will still be designated as directed. Several extra expenses were discussed, including replacing the stolen downspouts and the repair of the back electronic doors. Janet Hay from Endowment presented a brochure that was developed to help members think about bequeathing funds in various ways. This brochure will be revised and presented to the congregation in the near future.

Diana Huckstep, membership, discussed their support for the Pastoral Care committee and assisting this group in some of their duties. They are learning about the church grounds and how to give tours in the future. They have a few fundraisers planned in the next couple of months.

Consistory's next meeting is rescheduled for October 22, 6:30 pm at the church.

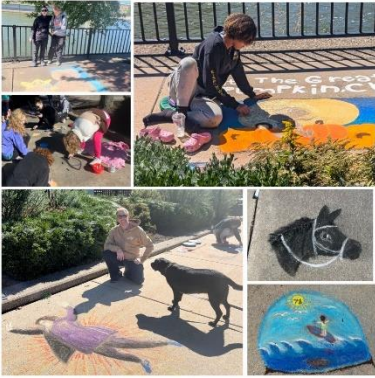
Submitted by Bonnie Stalker



The Pastoral Search committee consisting of eight members, plus an alternate, has been selected by the congregation and Consistory over this past week. 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 Nominating, ministries, Consistory and Pastor Bob for their hard work in this selection process.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH NEWS

Fall Sunday School is off to a great start! We are rotating through 4 different curriculums to create our own unique look at contemporary faith leaders and heroes, Jesus' teachings, the book of Psalms and how science and faith are completely compatible. This series is called WE ARE MADE OF STORIES AND STARDUST. There is a Tuesday morning email each week that goes out to all parents and anyone else interested. Let me know if you would like to be added to the list.



JANESVILLE ART INFUSION

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the sidewalk chalk fun on Janesville's beautiful riverwalk. In case you missed them, these and many more photos are on Facebook. It was a great opportunity for us to be "seen" in the community.



Thanks to everyone who made our summer program such a success! 11 children and 27 adults took part!

Debi will be representing First Congregational Church UCC, Janesville at the annual GLAUCE conference again this year. GLAUCE is the Great Lakes Area United Church Educators. This year's conference is October 15-17 in Rochester, Indiana. Debi will have no office hours that week. Thanks for your support.

- **COLORING WITH FRIENDS**
- **Saturday October 12**
- **1:00 – 3:00**
- **EVERYONE WELCOME!!!**
(bring a friend or 2)
- **COME AND JOIN US !!!!!!!**
(all materials provided)



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Mobile: 651-387-4552

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
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IMMIGRANT WELCOMING



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

Outreach October Mission is Neighbors in Need (NIN)

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States.

Our 2024 theme is “Mental Health Justice for All!” In 2015, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health.

Everyone deserves respect, no matter who you are or where you are in life’s mental health journey.

One-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM), and two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries. They provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

In the recent past, grants have been awarded to promote An Anti-Racism Children’s Camp, a Dyslexia Clinic for students, grades K-12, in Green Bay, WI, and Combatting Food Insecurity.

Please consider donating to this worthwhile mission either through Easytithe online at <https://app.easytithe.com/app/giving/janesvilleucc> or in the Neighbors in Need giving envelopes in the pews.

On September 8 we had a welcome reception for Pastor Bob Gross and his family in the Spiritual Arts Center. Here are a few photos of that event.





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