



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

31 W. MILWAUKEE AVE., FORT ATKINSON, WI 53538

December 2024 First Congregational UCC Broadcaster

Advent is upon us, and it is a time of waiting for the Christ Child to be born. In the darkened days we hasten to get ready to give light to darkness, and hope in uncertain times. We express joy in our hearts in the knowing that God's son is about to be born among us. In our prayers and contemplation, we seek this Christ Child for spiritual ways in which we become in full union with God.

Jesus came into a tumultuous world. We are aware of wars continuing to wage on. Climate change has had an effect on us having a Christmas with no snow, and a nation is divided. Where do we go from here? I recently read an excerpt taken from the Advent Devotional, the Bright Star of Bethlehem.

If Jesus were to be born today, he would most likely not be born in Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph would probably not be allowed to cross the checkpoint and come through the wall surrounding Bethlehem. Neither would the shepherds nor the Magi. Jesus would likely have been born at the checkpoint. And no one living inside the barrier around Bethlehem would have been present to greet the Messiah. Many things block us from seeing Jesus even today. Paul, a Jewish leader committed himself to making sure that a wall of separation was built between his community and the followers of Christ. He was a radical person radically transformed and after his conversion the indignant Saul became the passionate apostle, Paul. A great discovery was that if God in Christ has broken the walls of hostility between human and divine, then there is no place for walls between peoples, tribes, cultures and nations; there can only be bridges.

My prayer for your Christmas season is to engage the courage to break down the walls that separate us from the love we share with one another, and ultimately Christ, and to seek a way to build a bridge way to peace.

With peace,

Pastor Sara



Loving Christmas Service

A gentle time to remember loved ones, reflect and find the presence of God in the Darkness.

Saturday Morning December 21st 10:00 AM





Forty-five people headed to Rock River Lanes Friday night for a church wide bowling party. There were some strikes, some spares and some gutter balls, as well as a lot of fun camaraderie. Many folks donned bowling shoes and headed to the lanes, while others offered support with cheers. It was a wonderful way to end the work week!



Members of Lend-a-Hand gathered Thursday in Plymouth Hall for their monthly meeting. But the business they took care of was different than usual.

Armed with measuring cups and spoons, they assembled some 75 jars of ingredients to make Friendship Soup, Sandbar Brownies, Marry M&M Cookies and Mocha Instant Coffee.

The jars will be available for sale at the Winter Market on Saturday, Dec.7. They replace the traditional mincemeat that, through the years, has become less understood and in demand as a pie filling.

Setup started at 11 a.m., followed by lunch and then jar filling at 12:30 p.m. Work was completed by 2:45 p.m.

Thanks to Co-chairs Jane W. and Chris S, and everyone who participated in this fun project!

END-OF-YEAR GENERAL INFORMATION from the FINANCIAL SECRETARY

As in past years, I will create 2024 Contribution statements shortly after January 1, 2025. These statements will be available for pickup in the Narthex on January 12, 19 and 26. Those not picked up after January 26, 2025 will be mailed. Contributions to fulfill 2024 pledges must be received no later than December 27 to be included in the 2024 statements.

Contributions received at the Christmas Eve service for the General Fund will be considered a Christmas (Holiday) donation. If your contribution at this service is meant to be credited to your 2024 pledge, please so indicate on the MEMO line of your check (or on the envelope provided for your use).

Requests to start or alter automatic fund transfers to fulfill pledges in 2025 must be received no later than December 11. This is a deadline imposed on me by VANCO, our ACH processor. Thank you for your understanding.

Blessings, Robert "Charlie" Knapp

Holiday Market Hop

Enjoy 5 Wonderful Locations
on Sat, Dec 7th from 9AM-3PM via our
complimentary trolley running throughout
downtown Fort Atkinson!

The Municipal Building,
The Endeavor Building
Fort Atkinson Club,
First Congregational Church
and the St. Peter's Episcopal Church Bake Sale

**CRAFTS, BAKED GOODS, FOOD, LIVE MUSIC,
HOLIDAY FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!**

December Helper Schedule

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lay Reader	Tech Support
Dec. 1 1st Sunday of Advent	Amy Elvekrog	Roger & Marsha Anderson	Susan Woods	Kurt Wesemann
Dec. 8 2nd Sunday of Advent	Clarice & Pete Fernelius	Larry & Mary Narkis	Vicki York	Kevin Becker
Dec. 15 3rd Sunday of Advent	Roy & Karen Hetts	Chad Klauer and Carol Maasz	Donna Abel	Bob Buell
Dec. 22 4th Sunday of Advent	Judy Brown and Pat Jung	Paul & Sandy Hankowitz	Zach Finch	Kurt Wesemann
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve	David & Sharon Wisch	Jeff & Susan Woods and Rich Frame	Martha Firari	Kevin Becker
Dec. 29	Donna & Bob Abel	Eunice Ann & Joe Slaney	Linda Glendon	Kurt Wesemann

Dec. 1st Communion Team

Joe Slaney & Eunice Ann Slaney,
and Bob & Sue Buell

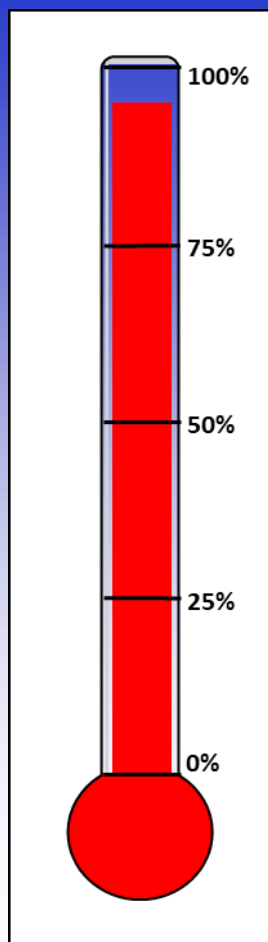
Holiday Market

The Fort Holiday Winter Market is being held **December 7, 2024**. We are working in partnership with the Fort Atkinson Farmers Market, and along with our offerings we will be a venue for other market participants. As in years past, we will offer our famous Congregational Peanuts, cheese, bakery, lunch, Lend a Hand soup and a great selection of Raffle Baskets!

Again, we are asking for donations for the raffle baskets. These can be dropped off at the church by **December 2nd**. You can bring your completed themed basket, or you can bring the contents to be put together in a basket. There will be a few volunteers who will be the “basket makers”. Baskets will be displayed at the Winter Market, then on **December 8 and 15th**. The drawing will be on December 15th after worship.

There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex after worship. Thank you for your generosity!

Please contact Nancy Onufer or Sandy Czech with any questions.



2025 Stewardship Campaign progress!!

Goal: \$200,000

93 pledges received

Total pledged as of Nov 18,
2024: \$190,492

Percent of goal achieved:
95%



Tid Bit—Creation Care Team

With the holiday season comes the season of gift giving and receiving. This year, consider making your gift exchange events more sustainable by recycling wrapping paper and packaging materials. Most non-glitter, non-foil wrapping paper can be recycled with everyday paper products (if in doubt, check with your local recycling company). Ribbons, bows, and tissue paper can be reused for gifts next year. Packing foam and peanuts can be used for shipping items later in the year, or are usually accepted at your local shipping center for re-use. And when purchasing new wrapping paper and supplies, consider selecting items that are reusable or recyclable.



Nurture Needs Baked Goods

For the Holiday Market Bake Sale on Sat., Dec 7. Please bring baked items to the church on Friday, Dec. 6th by 8 AM. Any Questions, please call Judy Brown at (920) 568-1915

The Food Pantry items needed:

Canned Carrots
Pasta
Peas
Tomato soup
Vegetable soup
Mac and Cheese
Rice
Sweet cereal



Bench Project Announcement

Everywhere you look in our culture you will find plastic. It surrounds our food, it makes up our technology, and it is a standard element in our household items. Unfortunately, it also overflows from our landfills, floating in our waters, and polluting our soil. You may even find it in our own bodies and other living creatures.

The Trex Company is making it easier to be “green” with their alternative composite decking and ecofriendly outdoor products. The Fort Atkinson Lions Club is participating in their recycling program to provide composite benches in the community. The Fort Lions offered to provide a bench for our church and Church Council approved.

So how does it work?

CLEAN plastic as noted on the flyer is collected in the bin (thanks Chad) located in the Narthex. (a few samples are grocery bags, bread bags, bubble wrap, plastic shipping envelopes, ice bags, salt bags, cereal box liners)

The plastic will be transported to a trailer that Yerges has donated to the Fort Lions Club.

The plastic is transferred to clear 55-gallon bags and weighed.

The plastic bags are deposited at Festival Foods after pictures are taken.

The pictures with the weights are logged into the Trex Recycling site.

At 1000 pounds, a bench is awarded!

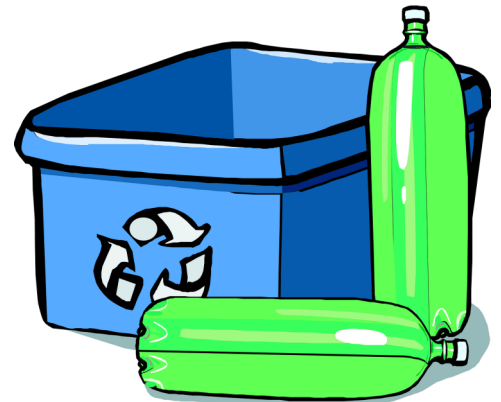
The newly formed Creation Care Team is excited to assist with this project. We are grateful for the Fort Atkinson Lions Club and the community services they provide.

Questions about the plastics or process: Nancy Onufer

Interested in the Creation Care Team? Please let one of us know.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE!

Thank you!



Coffee Fellowship Volunteers:

Please check the bulletin board in the narthex and sign up for a date in January, February or March. Thank you for your participation in this rewarding and fun ministry of hospitality for your fellow congregants and visitors! Coffee Fellowship is coordinated by the Church Relations Ministry.



Council Highlights – November 2024

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Safe Church Committee: Carol Maasz joined Council as a member of the committee to discuss Injury/Incident Reports that have been put together as recommended by the church's insurance company. This is for employees, members or visitors to the church to report an injury while in the building. The updated and approved report will become part of our church's policies.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Sara reports Legacy Planning Part 2 will be held on 1/14/25 from 10:00-11:30 AM. The speakers will be Julie Nachtigal, Financial Advisor of Edward Jones and Nate Dunlap, Funeral Director from Dunlap Memorial Home.

Plastic Recycling: The Care Creation Team will be encouraging plastic recycling by teaming with the Fort Lions Club to recycle plastic and be awarded a composite bench from Trex. Chad Klauer will bring in a barrel for the plastic collection. Specific plastics to be collected will be placed on the barrel. This project will begin on 11/25/24.

Holiday Winter Market-December 7th: Preparations are being made for the Holiday Market. Look for volunteer sign-up sheets which will include the basket raffle, baking, lunch helpers and more. We will host 14-16 vendors in Plymouth Hall along with music.

Annual Reports: The year is coming to an end quickly! Annual Reports from all Ministries and Committees are due to Nancy Onufer, Clerk, by January 3, 2025. Please email your one-page report to clerk.fortucc@gmail.com.

Council & Ministry Members 2025: If you would like to become a member of Council or a specific Ministry...we need you! Please contact Rich Frame, Vice Moderator if you are interested.

Complete Council Minutes are available in the church office.



Legacy Planning Part 2

January 14, 2025

10:00-11:30am



Join us for Part 2 of planning for end-of-life planning.

Julie Nachtigal- Financial Advisor from Edward Jones to lead us through Financial planning.

Nate Dunlap- Funeral Director from Dunlap Funeral Home will present options for funeral planning.

SAVE THE DATES

December

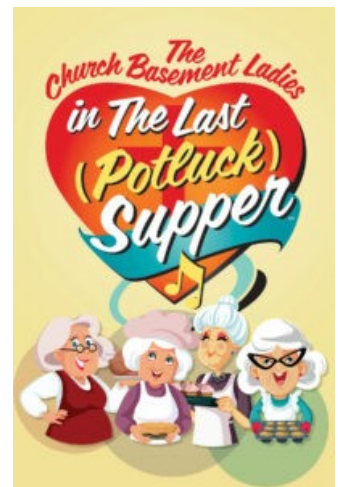
- 1st**—First Sunday in Advent
- 7th**—Winter Market 9 AM—3 PM
- 11th**—Choir Christmas Party
- 12th**—Lend-A-Hand Cookie Exchange
- 18th**—Quilts 9-11 AM
- 21st**—Loving Christmas Service 10:00 AM
- 22nd**—“Ugly” sweater Sunday
- 24th**—Christmas Eve 5 PM Worship
- 24th—26th**—Church Office Closed

JANUARY

- 1st—2nd**—Church Office Closed
- 12th**—Soup Luncheon, Bingo & Games
- 26th**—Annual Meeting

The Nurture Ministry has reserved a block of seats for the Fireside’s production of The Church Basement Ladies in The Last Potluck Supper on July 10. The cost for the matinee show (main floor seats) meal, and gratuity will be \$85.95 per person.

For now, we need to do a **preliminary signup in the narthex** to be sure we have an adequate number of seats reserved for the show. There will be a final signup in May when final payment and menu choices will be required. The Fireside will accommodate dietary requirements such as gluten free, if the need is indicated on the final signup sheet.



Volunteers are needed at the Food Pantry for the month of January! Sign up sheet is on the Outreach Bulletin Board in the Narthex for anyone who can volunteer or you can call Tom Sehnert (920) 397-0089. The time you give is helpful to so many. Thank you!



If you would like to have an event or announcement added to the list

Please let Henry know at
officefortucc@gmail.com

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

31 W. Milwaukee Ave.
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

Church Office: (920) 563-4802

Church Email: officefortucc@gmail.com

Moderator(Sandy Czech): 2czechs.sc@gmail.com

Rev.Dr. Sara Rabe: revsarafortucc@gmail.com

Church’s Website: www.fortfcc.org

First Congregational Church United Church of Christ

