
“At First”
First Congregational UCC
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Adam Thompson; Pastor
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October 2023

Christian Education News

Special Thanks to our Deacons for stepping up to serve ice cream treats at the Sunday School Kick-off event on September 24th. We may have been lean in numbers but we sure knew how to finish off three gallons of ice cream in short order! Thanks Guys!

We'll be moving a couple of classrooms around as we accommodate our current students and pre-schoolers this fall. Due to the water issues in the current Nursery, the Older Kids Youth Lounge will swap laces with the younger ones so that bathroom facilities are at hand each week. Amy is planning to dress up the hallways with some festive designs as we greet the kids on their first classroom activity.

October 1st - The CE Board will meet on Sunday, after church. Parents and volunteers are invited to join in on plans for the upcoming months.

October 8th & 15th – Sunday School

October 15th – Pumpkin Painters are needed after church to decorate pumpkins to give away the next week at GlenField's Living with Care.

Confirmation: The confirmation year is starting off with a service project and a “Little Free Library” is in the works. More details to come as we continue the build.



Pledge Cards!

Pledge Sunday is set for **Sunday, October 15th**. Pledge letters and cards have been sent out. If you did not receive a pledge card, call the church office at 864-3855. Please return your pledge ASAP by putting in the offering plate at church or mailing back to the church office.

Trustee's would like your pledge returned ASAP to help with setting a budget for 2023-2024. Extra pledge cards are at the back of the church.

Come! Join in the Fun!

Help us share the Holy Spirit with some Halloween spirit. On October 15th, join us for some fun during coffee hour as we paint and decorate pumpkins for our friends at Glenfield's.

Then, on **October 22nd**, the **Sunday School class**, along with **Pastor Adam**, will be giving the painted pumpkins to the residents of Glenfield's after their 1pm worship service.

Our Annual Meeting

Is scheduled for October 29th. All members are encouraged to attend!

In October

Deacon of the Month: Jim Benson
Altar: Ann Wangerin

Coffee Hosts:

Oct 1st: Randy & Kari Warner
Oct 8th: Shirley Westall & Stan Hoof
Oct 15th: Carmen & Bridget
Kienenberger
Oct 22nd: Renee & Maxx Lehmann
Oct 29th: Jan Willand

Happy Birthday!

1. Kayla Salmela
5. Todd Forcier
6. Randy Schilling
7. Duane Maguire
9. Fredric Kottke
10. Jacob Popelka
13. Sharon Bruckschen
15. Joanne Biederwolf
16. Alex Forcier
18. Scott Salmela
Rod Wangerin
30. Travis Wangerin
31. Olivia Hinojosa

Bible Study

YOU'RE INVITED! Bible Study this fall at St Paul's UCC in Plato, starting **Monday, 9/25, from 6:30-8 pm**. The study is ***Luke, Gut-Level Compassion***. Author Lisa Harper, writes we will "lean in and linger in Jesus' embrace. Perfection is NOT required!" This 8-week study of the Gospel of Luke is a "masterpiece that doesn't celebrate the elite, but embraces the outlier, outcasts, and overlooked!"

Please let us know if you are interested in attending as we are preparing materials at no cost. **Contact Barb Stockman (612-618-0413 or barb.stockman@gmail.com)**. Pass the word, all are welcome!

The 2023 Annual Thanksgiving Meal

The 2023 Annual Community Thanksgiving dinner will be served at First Congregational Church on November 23rd at 12 noon.

Meal reservations are required & will be accepted Sunday, Oct. 22nd through Monday, November 14th, at 6pm. To make reservations call 320-864-3855.

For your safety, those attending are welcome to wear masks, although not required. There is no charge for the dinner, however, there will be an opportunity for a free will offering for the Local Food Shelf.

The Community Thanksgiving Meal is funded in part, by a grant from Thrivent Financial, along with Christ Lutheran, Good Shepherd, & First Congregational churches.

Neighbors In Need

We will be receiving the **Neighbor's In Need** offering on **Sunday, October 1st**.

In 2023, the Neighbors in Need "BEHOLD!" theme continues. This year's focus is on environmental justice. Plastics, electronics, and other non-compostable wastes are being shipped across, and even tossed into, our waterways, launched into space, as well as buried in landfills. As people of faith, we believe these egregious acts are sinful and unholy. We must be better stewards of our planet!

Join us by promoting this year's NIN "Behold!" campaign at your church. As you may recall, one-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

Pastor's Report

Ecclesiastes 3:1 *For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.*

These words have offered comfort to those who are mourning loss and brought joy to those experiencing life's miracles. They have even caught the attention of the "classic rock" band, the Byrd's, which I imagine is playing in your head as you read this, it is in mine. What draws us towards these words, and the reason I chose them here is their connection between what was and what is to come. In poetic rhythm, they spur reflection, memory, and contemplation. They remind us that the past is to be cherished and the future is in God's hands. They speak to God's persistent presence, not only in what has come to pass but right now in our daily lives, and in what is yet to be. When I look to the words of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and reflect on my own life, I can see God at work each contrasting season or time. In the same way, we can see God at work throughout the seasons of this church. So, what season, what time do we find ourselves in at First Congregational?

With that question in mind, I'd like to invite you to pause for a moment, ask for the Holy Spirit to guide you, and read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, I'll wait. The overarching theme I hear when reading this is liminality. Being stuck between the "glory days" and new possibilities. I hear the pain and frustration, not only from not being the church it used to be but also from not knowing what the future holds, wedged between not wanting to let go and at the same time reaching towards what God has in store. Here, the word transition comes to mind, however, God doesn't really do transition, God transforms. God takes what was and makes it new. This is both a time to be born and a time to die (metaphorically speaking); it's both a time to break down and build up; it's both a time to mourn and to dance. What a great time to be church, God does amazing things in seasons of liminality.

So here we are, in truth, we cannot really be anywhere else but here...in this season, in this time. It's unlike anything the church, or society for that matter, has faced or is likely to face again. Exciting? Yes! Worrisome? Of course! So, what's a church to do? Well, sometimes the only thing we can do is show up, show up, and see where the Holy Spirit takes us. If you have been attending regularly, thank you and I encourage you to keep showing up, and if it's been a while, I'd like to invite you to start showing up again.

I look forward in faith that the Holy Spirit will lead us on our journey through this liminal season so that, together, we can discern what God has in store for us in this unique season and time at First Congregational.

Peace and Blessings,
Pastor Adam

PASTOR ADAM'S OFFICE HOURS at church are Mondays 9am-5pm, Wednesdays 12pm-5pm and Sundays after worship till 4pm. Thursdays at home from 9am-3pm. Contact Pastor Adam at church at 320-864-3855 during office hours, at his cell at 952-239-5893 or by email at pastor@firstcongochurch.org

Stay In Touch

In our fast-paced society, good communication is a necessity. In order to make our communication with you more effective and cost-efficient, we need to update our church directory from time to time. Here's where you can be of assistance!

*** If your E-mail changes, please let us know. To save money, we are e-mailing our**

church newsletter and other correspondence to as many members as we can.

*** If your home or cell phone number changes.**

*** If you or your family member has moved recently?**

*** If you have changed churches, please let us know.**

Please take a few minutes to call us at 864-3855 or e-mail us at congoucc@gmail.com with the above information.

Thanks!

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Common Cup News

- Warm Coats Drive – There is still time to rummage through your heavy coats from last winter and bring in those gently used ones that no longer fit you! We'll be collecting through October 15th. Coat distribution is taking place at the Hutch Armory this year on Thursday, Oct. 19th from 9am – 2:30pm. Don't forget to look for snow-pants, boots, and waterproof mittens, these are needed, too.
- Coming Together in Song, Common Cup's largest fundraiser, will be held on **Sunday, November 19th, 2pm at Christ the King in Hutchinson**. Call your friends and make it an afternoon experience that you'll all enjoy. Two churches are inviting individuals to join their choir for the day and practice with the choirs is just beginning. **Call the Common Cup Office at 320 587-2213 for details.**
- Coming Up: Watch for more details about NAPS, a nutritional Assistance Program for Seniors.

*Give Thanks to the Lord
for He is good.
Psalm 107:1*



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Church Council Minutes – September 20, 2023
DRAFT COPY

Attending:

Members Present: , Kari Warner, Carmen Kienenberger, Stan Hoof, Troy Lehmann, Bridget Kienenberger, Jim Cox, Pastor Adam Thompson Members Absent: - Jan Willand

1. **Call To Order** – The meeting was called to order by Stan at 7:00pm.
2. **Opening Prayer** - Our opening prayer was given by Pastor Adam.
3. **Approval of Minutes** —The Minutes from August were approved as written.

4. Pastor's Report

- There will be a visit of the Unity ministerial community for the first time this fall, where they will discuss business and who will have what roles. The UCC Cooperative is next week as well. A text study is being done at Christ Lutheran. The Community Thanksgiving meal will be discussed, asking others if they would like to help and promote the dinner.
- Common Cup Warm Coats drive is up next. Bev Bonte is attending this Sunday to give a talk in church.
- The new sign at 13th and Elliott is up. Some work on the framing still needs to be done.
- Pastor is working on finding coverage for both the organ and AV jobs. He has Maxxwell L. and Emily F. lined up to start training.
- A confirmation project will begin soon – a little free library. Funding for the wood & materials to get the project off the ground will come from Christian Ed.
- Confirmation curriculum has been changed to alleviate some of the “bounciness”.

5. Committee Reports

• <u>Trustees</u>	<u>Pledges Received</u>	<u>Pledges Received YTD</u>	<u>Year-end Total</u>
	August , 2023 \$ 10,628	August, 2023 \$ 84,275	\$ 87,620
	August, 2022 \$ 3,477	August, 2022 \$104,600	\$108,500

Other Business:

1. Ok's outdoor leaky faucet repair to Brian Nagel
 2. Ok'd the purchase of a SmartWash Carpet Cleaner for approx. \$225 - \$250.
 3. Discussed job performance of SLS
 4. Voted to fund the Benevolence Account \$2,000 each year for five years from the General Fund. When the Bruckschen interest is available the General Fund will be reimbursed.
 5. Is still looking for a firm to perform an annual audit of the church books. The Church Council asked Carmen to contact a CPA firm in Hutchinson (Schantzen & Schantzen) for a bid. Church Council will reach out to the congregation for two volunteers who could do this job, as directed in the current church bylaws.
 6. Buildings and Grounds:
 7. Furnace Report – Mike Dahlke has been working with Foster Mechanical and expect to have a quotation on this job within the next month.
 8. Tuck Point Inspection – Carmen met with Carr Tuckpointing. They will provide a quote for services by mid-October.
- **Christian Education** - Bridget reported that Amy Smith is taking over the day-to-day operations of Christian Education with the assistance of other Christian Education family support. Amy has:
 - Selected an educational program available on line and will be focusing this year's teachings on the Bible, beginning in Genesis. Student and leader materials are provided as well as craft and

videos. CE classes begin September 24th with an Ice Cream Social hosted by the Deacons and funded by CE. Upcoming activities include:

- October 1st – CE Family Planning meeting after church, to spread out jobs
- October 15th – Pumpkin Painting in the Fellowship Hall after church
- October 22nd – Sunday School and Confirmands will distribute pumpkins to residents at GlenField Manor, after Pastor Adam's service that day. Troy is checking on small pumpkins.
- Fall Festival Treats Give-Away – Pastor Adam and Amy are investigating the possibility of a special event on or near Halloween.
- CE will order two learning bibles for the Confirmation students and pay for the Little Library materials & construction.
- **Deacons** –The Deacons are serving ice cream for Sunday School Kick-Off and are getting a checkbook for their group/
- **Deaconesses** – If present, Jan would have expressed thanks to those who have been helping with the alter upkeep.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Update on Heating System Repairs** – Mike Dahlke is waiting on some numbers from Foster Mechanical and should have them before mid-October.
- **Proposed Changes In Church Committee Structures** – There will be a constitutional question at the annual meeting. Pastor and Kari will meet on 9/27 to put together a constitution that will coincide with the provided changes.
- **Discussion concerning SLS Services** – This discussion was tabled as Jan Willand would like to be at that meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Nominations report for Wendy** – Stan will inform Wendy that, under our new guidelines there will be no nominations required for the Annual Report
- **Other Committee Reports for Wendy** – Wendy has contacted all Boards and Committees of the deadline to submit reports for the Annual Budget.
- **Decision Needed for the Play Structure** – After a lively discussion on the condition and fate of the play structure, a sub committee investigated the current condition of the unit. A decision was made to take pictures and put it up for sale on FaceBook ASAP. \$150 or best offer. Carmen will handle the sale.
 - **MOTION TO ADJOURN:** Carmen motioned to adjourn which Troy seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm. Motion carried unanimously. Pastor Adam provided a closing prayer.

Next Meeting
Wednesday, October 4, 7pm, Fellowship Hall

Minutes provided by Bridget Kienenberger & Kari Warner

October 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:15 am Communion Worship Service NIN Offering Confirmation CE Board Meeting w/parents/volunteers	2	3	4 7:00 pm Church Council Meeting	5	6	7
8 9:15 am Worship Service Sunday School Confirmation	9	10 Noon-Trustee's Meeting	11	12	13	14
15 9:15 am Worship Service Coffee Hour - Painting Pumpkins PLEDGE SUNDAY Sunday School Confirmation	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 9:15 am Worship Service Sunday School Class accompanying Pastor to Glenfield's w/pumpkins No Confirmation Deacon's Meeting	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 9:15 am Worship Service ANNUAL MEETING	30	31				
		Deacon: Jim Benson Altar: Ann Wangerin	Coffee Hour: Oct 1st: Randy & Kari Warner Oct 8th: Shirley Westall & Stan Hoof Oct 15th: Carmen & Bridget Kienenberger	Oct 22nd: Renee & Maxx Lehmann Oct 29th: Jan Willand		