
“At First”
First Congregational UCC
1400 North Elliott Avenue, Glencoe, MN 55336
Church phone: 864-3855
Adam Thompson; Pastor

Church Website: firstcongochurch.org
Facebook Page: First Congregational Church, Glencoe

December 2023

Christian Ed

Join our cast of characters on **Sunday, December 17th during the 9:15 am Worship Service**, as we present **“The Christmas Story”** featuring our Sunday School students and members of the congregation. It's a Christmas Tradition you don't want to miss!

Sunday School - Classes will be held **December 3rd and 10th.**



Please Join Us!

For A Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24th @ 7:00 pm

No 9:15 am Worship on Sunday.

December 24th

Poinsettia Order

If you would like to order a poinsettia for **\$15.00** in memory or honor of someone for our altar, **please call the church office at 864-3855 by Dec 12th.** Wendy is in the office on on Tuesday or Wednesday. You may take the poinsettia home after our Christmas Eve Service.

Merry
Christmas!

Lay Leader Gathering

Join your local UCC, Associate Conference Minister Kelly Galagher, and Conference staff for collaboration and conversation in thinking about the future of our churches, ministry, and mission. **Saturday, December 2nd at New Journey Church, 31 4th Ave SW, Hutchinson.** Coffee Social begins at 9:30am, Meeting from 10:00-11:00am

“Veterans of the Cross”

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

You have blessed the Christmas Fund with your generosity for many years. Your compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you! We will be receiving “Veteran of the Cross” offering on Sunday, December 24th.

On The Job in December

Deacon of the Month: Mike Dahlke

In Charge of Altar: Ann Wangerin

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December Birthdays!

4. Jill Alsleben,
Miriam Jungclaus
7. Lily Ann Kottke
13. Howard Bulau
15. Desiree Richardson
16. Erin McNellis
Riva Schwarzrock
Remy Schwarzrock
18. Mara Gould
19. Peyton Gould
20. Tom Winn
24. Julian Hultt
29. Adam Thompson
30. McKenzie Patnaude
Sharla Defoe
31. Brenda Benson
Dylan Dahlke

A Heartfelt Thank You

to members of the First Congregational Church family for your generous support of the Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner. The amazing effort of the team doing all the prep work, cooking & set-up demonstrated commitment to serving Christ. Thanks to First Congregational and other donors, 170 meals were served and a \$1000 was donated to the McLeod Emergency Food Shelf. God bless you all! Blessings! Barb

If You Would Like To Watch!

If anyone would like to watch the laying of the cornerstone for the education building in 1961, it is available at the Church office in DVD format? Thank you! Dan Kottke

A Very Special Christmas

This time of the year should be a time of peace and joy, as we recall that special night and that baby boy who was born in a manger on that starry night. For the shepherds and wise men, can you imagine that sight! The love they shared could surely be felt. As one by one they came to the manger and knelt beside the babe all wrapped and quiet on that very, very, special Christmas night! By his birth we are given a special love, sent from the Father who reigns above. So enjoy the festivities, food and gifts, too. But remember his birth was meant especially for you. Make this Christmas special and share that peace and joy. That came about by the birth of that baby boy named Jesus.

White Christmas

Thank-You!

A big thank you to all those who gave several wonderful gifts and money to the residents at St. Peter Treatment Center. Gifts and checks were delivered by Ken and Karen Stenzel. For many of the residents, your gifts are the only gifts they receive at Christmas.

Mission/Stewardship Committee

Little Free Library

The Confirmation class is almost ready to install the Little Free Library! If you have books that you would like to donate, please feel free to bring them to church. You can drop them off in the office during Pastor Adam's or Wendy's office hours-Mon 9am-5pm, Tues-9am-3pm, Wed-9am-8pm. Or just bring them on Sunday. We will be collecting them on the pew in the connecting area. If you would like them to be picked up from your home, please let Pastor Adam know. Thank you for your support!

Journeying through Advent: A Season of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

As the crisp air settles in and the days grow shorter, our hearts are filled with anticipation and excitement. It can only mean one thing – Advent is upon us! This sacred season, marked by the four weeks leading up to Christmas, serves as a time of reflection, preparation, and joyful expectation for Christians around the world. Let us embark on this spiritual journey together, exploring the rich traditions and profound meaning that Advent brings to our lives.

Week 1: Hope - The Candle of Prophecy

Advent begins with the lighting of the first candle, the Candle of Hope. This candle symbolizes the anticipation of the Messiah's arrival, echoing the prophecies of old. In a world often marred by darkness, Advent calls us to be a people of hope, eagerly awaiting the fulfillment of God's promises. As we light this candle, let us reflect on the hope that Christ brings – a hope that transcends our circumstances and anchors our souls in the promises of God.

Week 2: Peace - The Candle of Bethlehem

The second week of Advent introduces the Candle of Peace. As we light this candle, we are reminded of the journey Mary and Joseph undertook to Bethlehem. It serves as a poignant metaphor for our own spiritual journeys, urging us to prepare our hearts to receive the newborn King. Let us take this time to examine our lives, seeking restoration and renewal as we make room for the Christ child in our hearts.

Week 3: Joy - The Candle of Shepherds

The third week heralds the lighting of the Candle of Joy, symbolizing the joy the shepherds experienced upon hearing the good news of Christ's birth. Amidst the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, Advent invites us to pause and find joy in the simple yet profound truth of God with us. Let the joy of the shepherds inspire us to share the good news with those around us, spreading love and kindness as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Week 4: Love - The Candle of Angels

As we approach Christmas Day, the fourth candle, the Candle of Love, takes center stage. This candle represents the boundless love of God as expressed through the angels' proclamation of peace on earth. In a world longing for love and understanding, Advent encourages us to be vessels of God's love, extending compassion and grace to all. Let the light of this candle illuminate our hearts, guiding us to embody the love of Christ in our interactions with others.

Engaging Advent

Throughout Advent, our community will gather each week to share in the meaningful tradition of lighting the Advent candles. Let us unite in prayer, reflection, and song, drawing closer to the true meaning of Christmas as we Engage Advent together.

May this Advent season be a time of profound spiritual growth, as we journey together in hope, peace, joy, and love. Let us carry the light of Christ into the world, sharing the transformative message of the Gospel with a world in need. May our hearts be filled with the true spirit of Christmas as we eagerly await the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

With hope, peace, joy, and love,

Pastor Adam

ENGAGING ADVENT



Each Sundays of Advent, we will not only be lighting candles, but we will take a moment to engage with the theme of the Day by creating an "Advent Word Cloud" in real time. In case you are wondering what a word cloud is, it is a shared collection of responses to a particular prompt. For example, the 1st Sunday's theme is **Hope** and the prompt is **"In 1 or 2 words, share what brings you Hope?"**. Responses will anonymously and automatically appear on the screen, sharing what brings everyone hope as one big "Advent Cloud of Hope"! Check out the example below.

So, how does it work? Simply scan the QR Code in the bulletin or on the screen or go to wooclap.com and enter the code **1STCONGO** then just type your answer and hit "Submit". If you don't have a phone, ask someone next to you to share. Viewers on Facebook Live can play too, just follow the same instructions or type your answer in the comments.



1 Go to wooclap.com

2 Enter the event code in the top banner

Event code
1STCONGO

Example Word Cloud:

In a word or 2, What is Advent to you?



Team Operating Principles

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

Before we begin this shift from a committee structure to a Team model, it is important to consider, or maybe remind yourself of, your gifts, abilities and talents. The most effective team is one made up of a wide variety of people sharing their unique gifts and talents for the benefit of the Team and thus the church, community, and ultimately, God.

The very first thing for us to do is get familiar with the Team or Team's descriptions and duties that, because you served on the former committee, are part of. Before you panic, keep in mind that just because you served on a former committee doesn't necessarily mean you are automatically on that Team now. For this reason, it is important that **every person** from the former committees that make up the Team shows up to the first meeting. This, in most cases, will be more people than are needed to serve on the Team, and that's a good thing. Team members will be decided at the first Team meeting as each Team functions as an independent group that manages their own schedule, tasks, and members.

Time for the first meeting! Take some time to talk before getting down to business. Ask questions, complain, share pictures of your dog, pray. Once you're ready, here are some suggestions to get things off and running: (See Team Form)

1. Determine a Team Manager – Team Manager will be responsible for the overall management, organization and reporting of team activities. The Team Manager will be the team's liaison to the Leadership Team and attend Leadership Team meetings.
2. Determine Leaders for each of the Team's components found within the Team's "circle" on diagram on page 9.
 - a. For example, under the Discipleship Team, the category of Christian Education will have one "Leader" representing that aspect of the team's duties. The CE Leader is responsible for the tasks corresponding to CE but will also be supported by the remaining Discipleship Team members.
 - b. Teams, managers, and Leaders are encouraged to gather others from the Team and congregation to assist, manage and/or perform the short and long-term goals and needs of CE.
3. Discuss goals, tasks, and schedules.

No doubt, this is a big change, but there have been even bigger changes in the world around us. Innovation, adaptation, and imagination are a necessary part of being able to continue the long heritage of loving ministry First Congregation has and continues to experience.

Thank you,

Leadership Team and Pastor Adam

Worship and Welcome Team

(Currently on Deacon, Deaconess, and Tech Committees - Dan K, Jim B, Jim C, Robbie, Duane, Scott, Mike, Nathan, Troy, Bruce, Randy, Barb, Miriam, Jan, Ann)

Team Manager –

Worship Prep and Presentation –

Altar and Sanctuary – Ann

Music and Technology – Randy

Communications –

Fellowship and Welcoming –

Deacons

Team Manager -

(Current Deacons - Dan K, Jim B, Jim C, Robble, Duane, Scott, Mike, Nathan, Troy, Bruce, Randy)

Discipleship Team

(Currently on CE, Missions, Stewardship, Memorial Committees - Amy, Bridget, Barb, Miriam, Vicki, Jim B, Paula, Ann, Ken, Bruce, Sue B)

Team Manager –

CE – Amy

Service and Mission –

Stewardship –

Cong Generosity –

Resource Team

(Currently on Trustees, B&G, Financial Sec, Treasurer Committees -

Carmen, Kelly, Joanne, Bruce, Randy, Mike, Rick, Dan

Team Manager – Carmen

Weekly Finances –

Budgeting –

Investments – Kelly

Church Use –

Buildings and Grounds –

Secretary –

Treasurer –

Leadership Team

Moderator - Stan

Vice-Moderator – Jim C.

Member-at-Large -

Worship & Welcome –

Discipleship –

Resource-

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Church Council Minutes – October 4, 2023

Attending:

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

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 September 20th were approved as written.
4. **Pastor's Report**
 - Pastor Adam will work with the confirmation students, over the next few weeks, to construct the Little Lending Library.
5. **Committee Reports**
 - **Trustees**

Karr Tuckpointing provided a proposal for the work to be done at church. The bid is \$39,573, with work proposed to begin in the spring of 2024. It was noted that this work has not been done for 7 to 8 years. Carmen asked that this item be placed on the Agenda at the Annual Meeting for action. In addition – Brian Nagel has repaired the urinal leak in the 1st floor men's bathroom and repaired the outside faucet leak.
 - **Christlan Education -**

Bridget reported on the results of the October 1st meeting to gain more volunteers to help with Sunday School. A schedule has been set up that will incorporate the leadership of Amy Smith taking over the day-to-day operations and leading classes as she is able. Parents of the other students will take over in her absence. Supplies have been moved to the "new" pre-school room and are ready to have the furniture brought in with the help of the Deacons.
 - **Deacons –**

Jim, speaking for the Deacons, expressed concern over losing their autonomy as a group within the Worship and Welcome Team as well as a reduction in their participation numbers. After discussion it was agreed that the group to which they are assigned will be named the Deacons Worship and Welcome Team and be comprised of 9 – 12 members. They will share in the duties of the other groups already named to fulfill the duties of this team.

Troy reported that Jim Cox has been selected to be the Chair of the Deacons beginning with the 2023-24 season, already underway.
 - **Deaconesses** – Nothing new to report, as per Jan.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. **Update on Heating System Repairs** – Mike Dahlke provided blueprints to Foster Mechanical who will present a proposal on the work. An estimate is not expected till winter.
- B. **Constitution Changes** – Pastor Adam and Stan lead us through the proposed changes to the Church's Constitution. Adjustments will be made and sent out to church members along with the Annual Report.
- C. **Discussion Concerning SLS Services** – Stan read a list of the pros and cons for continuing business with SLS, at Jan's request. Carmen reported on issues the Trustees have been having and current problems reconciling the books in advance of the Annual Budget report. On a 7 to 1 vote, it was approved to drop SLS as our accounting service at the end of the annual year.

- D. **Auditing the Church Books** - Carmen reported that he had made an announcement two weeks ago, in church, asking for two volunteers to audit the church books as per our current constitutional guidelines. No one had come forward. The Council discussed the timeframe needed and cost for a private CPA firm to do the work and the timetable required to complete the job for inclusion in the Annual Report. Deciding this was not achievable, it was suggested that the more practical time for this report to be done would be after the decision is made with regard to our continued relationship with SLS.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Changing the church's fiscal year** - It was decided to add another item to the Annual Report Agenda, asking members their thoughts about keeping the church budget year to September 1 – August 31 or moving it to January 1 – December 31.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Troy motioned to adjourn the meeting and Carmen seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting
Wednesday, November 15, 7pm, Fellowship Hall

Minutes provided by Bridget Kienenberger

(Church Council Minutes Oct 4, 23)

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Church Council Minutes – November 15, 2023

Attending:

DRAFT

Members Present: Stan Hoof, Karl Warner, Jan Willand, Carmen Klennenberger, Jim Cox, and Bridget Klennenberger Members Absent: Troy Lehmann Pastor Adam attending

1. **Call To Order** – The meeting was called to order by Stan at 7:05pm.
2. **Opening Prayer** - Our opening prayer was given by Pastor Adam.
3. **Approval of Minutes** –The Minutes from October 4th were approved as corrected.

4. Pastor's Report

New Church Constitution - Pastor Adam distributed a finished copy of the amended Church Constitution (Oct. 29, 2023) which was reviewed... On Page 5 a decision was made to reword the last line under General Rules and Responsibilities. "All Teams will have a quorum of 51% or more (In person) to conduct a meeting" has been replaced by the wording from Article VII: Business Meetings, Section 3, (page 8) that says "An affirmative majority vote of members present will constitute a Quorum at any regular or specials meeting of the church".

Team Meetings – Pastor Adam distributed a handout titled Team Operating Principles for review which identifies the various new Teams and how each team will be filled with representatives. A Team Manager will be selected and this person will be the representative who will attend the Leadership Team Church Council) meetings.

The general duties of the Team Members within their teams are explained under Article VI including being asked to serve a two year term and meet monthly as a Team. Pastor Adam and Stan expressed interest in each Church Council member reaching out now to the team/s they currently represent and gather for their first meeting.

Trunk-N-Treat- A very successful event took place October 31st with seven cars providing creative stops for trick-or-treating in front of the church. Over 100 children attended our first event at the church. Cold weather may have influenced people to attend with carfuls of kids.

GlenFields Painted Pumpkins Give-Away- The 20 people who attended the Chapel service received their pumpkins in person by our Sunday School kids and the remainder were distributed to those napping, at the time. Many people expressed their pleasure in being remembered.

Little Library Update – Ethan Lehmann was instrumental in the roof installation for the Little Library. Next is paint and outdoor installation.

UCC Co-Op Meeting – The next meeting will be held Dec 2nd at New Journey. This meeting, available on Zoom, will be to discuss the future of the churches in our area and what we can do. Expected participants include Pastors Penny, Scott, Brian, Al, Pastor Adam +/- others.

5. TEAM REPORTS

Resource Team (Trustees)

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
October Pledges	\$16,305	\$ 8,060
Total Pledges	\$20,721	\$12,205

- **Tuckpointing Job** - Trustees accepted the bid by Karr Tuckpointing for \$39,573.00 at their November meeting. Work will begin in the spring of 2024.
- **Church Heating/Air Systems** - A bid for the church's heating system was received by Foster Mechanical in the amount of \$108,000. A meeting has been scheduled for December 20th to review the bid details.

Miscellaneous

- Winter Snow Removal -Neubarth Landscape Co. has not provided a bid for snow removal services after repeated calls by Carmen to their office. Carmen will pursue other vendors if they do not provide a bid in the next week.
- Sunday School Room Plumbing – Brian Nagel has declined to provide a bid for the plumbing repairs citing the difficulty and magnitude of the project.
- Bat Update -Our contract with the Bat Company has expired and they have said we should look for another company in the future as they were not pleased working with members of our Buildings and Grounds committee.
- Winter Heat Update - Roger Landon visited the church and turned on the furnace before checking with our current Buildings and Ground staff, causing confusion and concern for making these changes without any notification.
- Boulevard Handrail -Ann Wangerin has volunteered her husband to build and install a handrail next to the boulevard on the west side of the church to assist in the slippery sidewalk issue there. Gopher One will be called along with Century Link for wires and the City of Glencoe to determine if a permit is necessary.
- Internet Problems - Pastor Adam noted the internet service has been horrible causing him to leave work early on Monday. He put a service call in to Century Link.
- RTZ Value Inspection – Wendy and Mike D. were notified of an inspection necessary. Mike has contacted Foster Mechanical who will handle this.
- Mike Dahlke has announced that he is stepping down from the Buildings and Grounds Committee April 1st.

Discipleship Team - (Christen Education, Missions & Benevolence, Stewardship, Memorial)

- Bridget reported that plans are underway for The Christmas Story presentation by Sunday School students and other church members on December 17th. Several folks have already signed up. Sunday School is proceeding as planned.

Deacons – No new business

Worship Team and Welcome Team (Worship Prep and Presentation, Alter and Sanctuary, Music and Technology, Communications, Fellowship and Welcoming) (Deaconesses) Communion for December will be held on the 3rd of the month.

- A candlelit Christmas Service will be held December 24th. (A Sunday Christmas Eve morning service will not be held this year.)

6. OLD BUSINESS

- Review of motions passed at the Annual Meeting – It was approved to move the fiscal church year to January – December.
- Constitution Final Draft – See Pastor's Report, Page One, "New Church Constitution"
- SLS Discussion – Members discussed the timeline for the cancellation of our business with SLS. On December 29th, SLS will be notified of our cancellation of business, effective January 31, 2024.
- Auditing the church books – The congregation will be asked for two volunteers to audit the books in January, 2024 as per our Constitution.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Results of Office Manager Meeting with Wendy Graff** – Stan and Jim met with Wendy and laid out the parameters of the revised job description titled Office Manager/ Treasurer and the duties and hours now required of the position. Wendy said she was somewhat interested and wanted to think about it. She was asked to make a decision by mid-December, prior to our next Church Council Meeting.

- B. Review of Heating System Bid** – A meeting has been scheduled, (See Resource Report, 2hd bullet.)

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Jim motioned to adjourn the meeting and Carmen seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm. Motion carried unanimously.

**Next Meeting
Wednesday, December 20, 7pm, Fellowship Hall**

Minutes provided by Bridget Kienenberger

(Church Council Minutes Nov 15 23)

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Deacon of the Month: Mike Dahlke Altar: Ann Wangerin					1	2 9:30-11:00 am Lay Leader Gathering @ New Journey Church, Hutchinson
First Sunday of Advent 3 9:15 am Communion Worship Service Sunday School Confirmation Christmas Program Practice	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 9:15 am Worship Service Confirmation Sunday School Christmas Program Costume Selections	11	12 Poinsettia Ordering Deadline	13	14	15	16
17 9:15 am Worship Service w/Christmas Program Confirmation Deacon's Meeting	18	19	20 Noon -Trustee's Meeting at the Church 7:00 pm Church Council Meeting	21	22	23
24 No 9:15 am Worship 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service No Confirmation	25 Merry Christmas!!	26	27	28	29	30
31 9:15 am Worship Service No Confirmation						