

FELLOWSHIP WORKSHOP ON DECEMBER 3 Make & Take Door Swags Plus Cookie Exchange!

Join the Fellowship Team on Sunday, December 3, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for a Christmas cookie exchange and make-your-own holiday door swag! Beckie Perez will show you how to make a swag using using fresh Christmas tree boughs. All supplies will be provided. The team will also host a Cookie Exchange. Simply bring three dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies. What a perfect way to get in the holiday spirit!



ADVENT VESPER COMMUNION SERVICES



Join us in Fellowship Hall on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 in Advent for a candlelit 30-minute service of reflection and communion. The midweek services, December 6, 13, and 20, use scripture, prayer, and a Christmas carol to create a peaceful space amidst the hurry and busy-ness of the season. Pastor Scott will be telling the story behind the writing of a different carol each week and the services will conclude with a simple sharing of Communion. Come and enjoy a respite from the December rush in the beauty of our church; refill your spirit as we allow God's Spirit to bring the light of Christ into our lives.



38th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

Our 38th Annual Christmas Tree Sale is underway! Please help spread the word! Thank you to all those who have already worked a shift. We need help to fill the rest of the sign-up. Please take a look at your calendar and sign up to help. [Click here](#) to be directed to the SignUpGenius page. Thank you!



RAISERIGHT GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Consider using Raise Right for gift cards for Christmas shopping and/or Christmas gifts. First Congregational Church will place a RaiseRight order on Sunday, December 10. Complete a **paper order form** and bring a check to church (payable to FCC) by December 10 and your gift cards will be available the following Sunday, December 17. Or you can enroll and place an order by December 10 by visiting RaiseRight.com/enroll, our enrollment code is P8I47VHNX56H. By using RaiseRight, you can Christmas shop AND raise some money for church! So far this year, eight families have utilized RaiseRight and together have raised \$737 for our church.

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125 YEARS OF CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS - SHARE YOUR PHOTOS!

There is still time to contribute to the Christmas Pageant Bulletin Board highlighting our congregation's past pageants. Send your digital pics to Jane Spalding at jvrspalding@gmail.com. You may scan old photos (color or b&w) or just take a picture of your old photo with your phone. Actual photos may be left in 125th Anniversary mailbox near the church office. Photos will be handled with care, scanned and returned to you. Remember to note the year and identify folks as you are able. Thank you!

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THE SPIRIT OF GIVING ALIVE AND WELL HERE AT CHURCH!

We'd like to thank everyone who donated to our Gift-A-Child collection this year. As a congregation, we provided gifts to ten children from three families with the categories of items they Want/Need/Wear/Read. Our church signed up to turn in 40 gifts, but instead collected 135 gifts in total! In addition, ten rolls of wrapping paper, assorted tissue paper, gift bags, and bows were collected. All gifts and supplies were delivered to The Food Pantry here in Port Washington for wrapping and distribution.



Family 1



Family 2



Family 3



CHRISTMAS GIVING AND POINSETTIA ORDERS

In celebration of Christmas, it is one of our traditions to invite members and friends to order a poinsettia and/or donate to one of the six community organizations that our church supports on an ongoing basis: Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity, The Food Pantry, Ozaukee Family Services, Balance, and Advocates. Your poinsettia will help decorate our church for Christmas (you may take your poinsettia home anytime after the Christmas Eve services). Your gift of money will help lift the spirits of those who are in need within our own community. You may give in honor or in memory of loved ones. Names will appear in our Christmas Eve bulletins. [Click here](#) for the form. Please submit the information to the Church Office by Monday, December 18. You may contribute using a check or submitting a payment through our church [PayPal](#).



THE CHRISTMAS FUND - VETERANS OF THE CROSS OFFERING

We will be receiving financial gifts for the UCC Christmas Fund offering on December 17 and 24. The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years. This offering provides important financial help for lower-income retirees. Last year, the Christmas Fund provided over \$1.3 million in pension and health benefits supplementation, emergency grants, and thank you checks to retired servants of the church and their families. Every cent of that money came from the pockets of people just like us. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need.



DECORATING ORNAMENTS FOR TREE SALE CUSTOMERS

We are, once again, decorating ornaments to give to customers as a thank you' at our Christmas Tree Sale. Both kids and adults are invited to decorate wooden ornaments. Our Church School kids already decorated a bunch, but we can use more help! The wooden ornaments are available in the church's Little Free Library off the parking lot. Simply grab a pack, paint/decorate them, and return to church or the Little Free Library.

You may be interested to know that the ornament is adhered to an [Advent pamphlet](#) inviting one and all to join us this season and includes information about our special services.

Thanks for helping to complete the many ornaments needed for distribution!



THEMES FOR WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

The scripture texts from which our worship themes originate, in a new liturgical calendar year, have a heavy emphasis on the Prophet Isaiah and a variety of Advent readings from the Gospels of Mark, Luke and John. We tend to focus on remembering the coming of the baby Jesus, the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem and the Nativity. But Advent also is a season of preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus, which we tend not to reflect on too much in our tradition. Our Advent texts are filled with a tension of “already, not yet” - that is, a God who is already with us in Jesus our Savior, but a God who is not yet known to the world in all Divine glory.

December 3: Isaiah 64:1-9 Mark 13:24-37

First Sunday of Advent: Hope, Communion Sunday

The scripture text from the Gospel of Mark on this First Sunday of Advent doesn't seem to have a lot of “hope” in it. It is filled with ominous signs in the heavens and the warning to “Keep awake!” However, we can begin to discern the symbolic images of Christ's victory and the coming of God's Reign - this is our hope even amidst troubling times.

December 10: Isaiah 40:1-11 Mark 1:1-8

Second Sunday of Advent: Peace, Chancel Choir Sings

On this Second Sunday of Advent we hear from John the Baptist as he calls the people who hear his words to change their ways - he is making a way in the wilderness for the coming of the Messiah. Our theme for the day is “Peace”. Perhaps we will know peace when we recognize that God is with us - comforting, strengthening, and helping.

December 17: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 John 1:6-8, 19-28

Third Sunday of Advent: Joy, Handbell Choir Performs

We are not finished with the words of John the Baptist yet this Advent! Today we hear from John's Gospel about the Baptist's challenge to “...make straight the way of the Lord.” The words from the prophet, Isaiah, foreshadow the mission of the one who is coming, “...to bring good news to the oppressed.” Joyful news we continue to share every day!

Christmas Eve, December 24: Luke 1:46b-55 Luke 1:26-38

Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love

Right in time for Christmas Eve we get the scripture texts that we associate with the story of the nativity. The angel Gabriel invites Mary to be the mother of God and we hear Mary's song of joy, known as “the Magnificat,” when she visits her cousin, Elizabeth, and receives confirmation that Gabriel's words to her were true. One service on Sunday morning at 10:00, our Christmas Pageant, and two evening services at 7:00 and 9:00.

December 31: Isaiah 61:10-62:3 Luke 2:22-40

First Sunday after Christmas

Ken Matthews leads our one worship service this morning at 10:00. Our scripture passages for this New Year's Eve are filled with joy as the long-awaited promise of the Messiah is fulfilled. There is great joy in Isaiah's message of God's glory and in the text of Jesus' dedication in the Temple, Simeon and Anna rejoice for they had been waiting for Christ's coming into the world.