

Monthly E-Newsletter of First Congregational Church, UCC | Port Washington, Wisconsin | January 2024

REFLECTING ON 2023: LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024

With a new year beginning, we are inclined to make New Year's Resolutions. Yet, how often do we review the year that was, in order to learn how we can improve ourselves for the coming year? Better yet, how often do we review the year in order to learn where God was and what God was up to in the midst of it all?

The leaders of the Examen(ed) Church program through Marquette University are inviting everyone to make a "Yearly Examen". This practice is simply an extension of the "Daily Examen" that is central to Ignatian spirituality and The Examen(ed) Church. The Daily Examen is a practice where an individual takes time during the day to look for signs of God's presence in the day and to pay attention to one's emotions for clues to moments where we are drawn toward or away from Christ. While 2023 is still fresh in your mind, consider the following prompts to help guide your prayerful reflection of 2023. If a full year is overwhelming, try just one aspect of life over the course of the past year.

- 1. Pray for light. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding as you review your year.
- 2. Review the year in thanksgiving. Give thanks to God for all the many blessings received over the past year. Go through each month, dwelling upon the good and thanking God for it.
- 3. Review the feelings of each month. Review your year again, month-by-month, and recognize your feelings, thoughts, and movements of the heart. There will be certain people and events that strike a chord (for good or for ill).
- 4. Consider common threads and attend to them. Ask God to direct you to pay attention to any common threads, themes, new insights, or awareness. Consider what rises to the surface. Pray about it as you attend to the source of the feeling.
- 5. Look toward the future. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Anticipate God's presence in the days to come, and plan to live in accordance with God's guidance.

Hope you find this spiritual exercise useful this month!

Peace,

CELEBRATING COMMUNION IN OUR SANCTUARY AT 8:00 ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

A reminder that we will hold our 8:00 Communion worship service in the Sanctuary on Sunday morning, January 7. All other services will continue to be held in Fellowship Hall until the elevator is repaired.



NEW YEAR, NEW MEMBERS!

All those who are considering joining the church are invited to an informational class on Sunday, January 14, following the 10:00 service. The class will be held in the Dennett Room for an hour and several church leaders will join us. We will discuss our church history as well as our ongoing ministry. Those who would like to join the church can do so during the 10:00 worship service on January 21. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Scott, pastorscott@portucc.org or (262) 903-0449.

"MEDICS IN OUR MIDST" - CPR/AED TRAINING

We now have a small team of "Medics in our Midst" with training and knowledge of life-saving skills here at church. Bill Bond is financially supporting one last CPR/AED training on Sunday, January 14, after the 10:00 service. Participants can attend free of charge. Please contact Bill at bbond@freightwatch.com to RSVP by January 10.

WINTER CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

All members of the church are encouraged to attend the Winter Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 28, in Fellowship Hall, immediately following an abbreviated 10:00 worship service. The main item of business is to vote on a proposed Church Budget for 2024. The Church Council is planning to provide the proposed budget for review following their monthly Council meeting on January 11.

WORSHIP WITH US

We celebrate two Sunday morning worship services at 8:00 and 10:00. Nursery care is available at the 10:00 service.

HOLY COMMUNION

The first Sunday morning of each month we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
Communion is open to all who seek to follow in the way of Christ, both children and adults.

LINKED UP

Be on the lookout for orange text - it's linked up to documents and web pages that you might find helpful or interesting.

SUBMIT INFO TO THE NEWSLETTER

If you have a celebration, prayer request, or other contribution for the newsletter, please email us 7-10 days before the first day of the month.

HIRING A FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR

Please help spread the word that we are continuing our search to hire a new Financial

Administrator. Thanks!



PLEDGED GIVING FOR 2024 FALLS SHORT

Thank you to all our members and friends who pledged their financial support for 2024. At this time, our Stewardship Campaign, "Because of YOU, Our Church Changes Lives" has wrapped up. While we have experienced a remarkable increase in the amount of money per pledge, unfortunately, the number of pledges turned in has fallen short of last year's total. This means our hope of meeting our "Status Quo" budget in which we tried to keep expenses at the same level as previous years, and hoped for increased income, will leave us with an unmanageable deficit. The Church Council is working hard to make financially responsible decisions about the budget that will be presented at the January 28 Congregational Meeting. If you have not returned your pledge form yet, please return it, or consider giving a one-time gift. Every bit helps! Pledge forms can be printed from the Stewardship webpage. While we have fallen short of our goal, we are grateful for everyone's generosity.

Your Stewardship Team Jodi Cowen, Bev Mueller, Jason Jacque, Tyfani Ulicki and Pastor Scott

ELEVATOR REVIEW & UPDATE

In late September 2023 our elevator was found to be unsafe to operate during an annual inspection and was shut down. A closer examination determined that the hydraulic cylinder had sprung a leak underground and would need to be replaced. During October and November the Property Team sought out three competitive bids to cover the basic removal and installation of a new hydraulic cylinder. At the Fall Congregational Meeting on November 26 the Property Team's proposal to contract MEI Elevator to do the work was approved by vote of the members present. The total costs for the elevator repairs are still unknown because the hydraulic cylinder is underground and the channel, which is 20 feet deep, will have to be inspected once the cylinder is removed. The range of cost for the project is between a probable \$87,779 and a worst case \$111,205. The church has been aided in this project by a generous, anonymous gift of \$32,000 given by one of our families. The remainder of the cost will be paid for by taking a loan from the UCC Cornerstone Fund.

Following the Fall Congregational Meeting on November 26, a contract was signed with MEI on December 1, and an initial downpayment was made using part of the anonymous gift. MEI sent a small team of four workers to begin preparation work on December 5. They suspended the elevator car, secured it, took measurements, and ordered a new cylinder. After disconnecting the old cylinder from the car, they noticed about two gallons of hydraulic fluid had leaked into the pit area and they cleaned up that area. The workers stated that their work was done for now, until they receive word from the cylinder manufacturer that it is ready to ship. Estimated time of delivery for the new cylinder is 10-12 weeks.

38th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE SALE - THANKS!

Thank you to all those who helped make this year's Christmas Tree Sale successful. We especially appreciate the efforts of the Tree Sale Team - they ordered the trees, set up the lot, made bank deposits, filled in open shifts, opened the lot daily, took down the lot, and much more! We are so thankful to Don and Connie Cross for joining the team. We thank all of our church members and friends who volunteered to sell trees, including our friends with the Knellsville 4-H Club. The customers really enjoyed the ornaments we gave with a brochure about our December church activities. A special thanks to Church School who decorated the ornaments!



SUMMER YOUTH MISSION TRIP - TIME TO SURVEY INTEREST

For the third summer in a row our church has been invited to participate with the Pilgrim UCC in Grafton on a High School Youth Mission Trip. The group will be traveling to Ohio to work on Hiram Farm July 7-14. Hiram Farm is a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) non-profit, community project born out of the desire to provide inspiration and meaningful work... (continued on page 9)

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Season's Greetings from the Church School Team,

We had a fun December, creating the centerpieces for the tables at the Breakfast with Santa event. Using tree branches, ribbon, pinecones, and holly, each child filled glass vases. On the top, they chose either a candy cane, a Santa gnome, a sprig of ribbon, or ornaments to create a unique masterpiece. See *page 13* for photos. A big thank you to Jane Spalding who donated the vases, which we will now keep for use at our next Christmas themed event!

At Kids Club, the children created nativity themed door hangers and colored pictures depicting scenes from the season. Children's Choir Director Sherri Melichar stopped by to help us sing a few Christmas Carols as well. Thank you, Sherri!

This month we will be reading the scripture of Matthew 2:1-23, the story of the Wise Men from the Far East. The children will be decorating Thank You cards for the Stewardship Team to send for the annual campaign and creating small gifts of their own to share with the congregation.

We had a few new faces join us in November and December, which made our holiday season even brighter. As a reminder, all children ages 4K through 7th grade are welcome to stop by for Church School and/or Kids Club whenever it best fits their schedule. All are welcome! We meet next on January 14 for Church School, and January 21 for Kids Club.

Happy New Year! Shandy Roehrig





KIDS CLUB

Kids Club, also open to all 4K through 7th graders, meets on the third Sunday of each month. The next Kids Club is January 21 during the 10:00 service. All children will join their families in worship, and following a performance by the Handbell Choir, will gather in the classrooms for an activity.

FAMILY SUNDAYS

On the fourth Sunday of every month at 10:00, the church hosts a Family Service which includes the participation of our youth, specifically the 8th grade Confirmation Class. The next Family Sunday is on January 28.

NURSERY CARE

Every Sunday morning during the 10:00 service, we provide Nursery Care for children newborn through elementary. Care is mostly provided by our 8th grade Confirmation students and their families. Our Nursery is located in the Gilomen Room, across from the restrooms.

REVIEW OF MAKING ALL THINGS NEW: PHASE ONE CAMPAIGN

During Listening Sessions in November, there were questions about how the Making All Things New: Phase One Capital Campaign fit in with ongoing financial challenges to fund the annual budget as well as the new challenge of an elevator in need of repair.

So, let's review: during two months of an Awareness Campaign back in the fall of 2022 church members were made aware of several issues with our church building that the Property Team was very concerned about. The stained glass windows in the Sanctuary were their top priority. The windows were visibly shifting in their frames due to rotting wood in the sill supporting them. Other concerns discussed were the exterior doors to Fellowship Hall which leak when there is rain blowing from the south, a broken air conditioning unit for the upper narthex, the exterior of many windows in the newer addition are in need of attention, the wood siding in several sections of the building are in need of repair and we need to prepare for the roof to be replaced since it is closing in on its 25 year life expectancy.

The total cost for all of these projects was estimated to be between \$377,776 and \$421,908. This significant price tag was considered by all those who attended the Awareness Campaign meetings to be far too much for the congregation to take on at that time. The general opinion was that it would be better to take on smaller portions of the overall building needs, build momentum with success, until we had met the multiple challenges before us.

On May 21, 2023 the congregation voted to proceed with a financial campaign to raise \$32,000 to repair and maintain the stained glass windows in the Sanctuary. Campaign materials went out to our members and friends seeking one-time gifts or pledges toward the Making All Things New: Phase One campaign which would pay for the Property Team's top repair priority. Thanks to a generous, matching gift donation of \$5,000 and many smaller gifts and pledges the campaign was successful and the stained glass windows will be repaired in the spring/summer of 2024.

We used "Phase One" in our Making All Things New campaign title because we knew, even in May that there was much more work that needs to be done to keep our beautiful facility in good shape. We did not, of course, anticipate that in September we would be faced with a different, costly building issue - the elevator breaking down. The congregation voted to use a loan to pay for the repair of the elevator. This loan may be folded into the anticipated costs of a "Phase Two" portion of a proposed Making All Things New campaign in the future, but that will need to be voted on by the membership.

Many of our families have already made one-time donations to the Making All Things New: Phase One campaign. Individuals and families that made pledges are welcome to begin or continue making their donations to the campaign as they had indicated on their capital campaign pledge form. If you would like to be reminded or updated on the status of your donation, please email our Financial Administrator, Phil Stepanski at phil@portucc.org.

SUNDAY WORSHIP THEMES FOR JANUARY

January 7: Genesis 1:1-5 Mark 1:4-11

Baptism of the Lord, Communion Sunday

We begin the year by approaching the Lord's Table. Our scripture texts this morning highlight the presence of God's Spirit over the face of the waters of creation and also at Jesus' baptism by John. As we begin a new year, where do we see the Spirit of God at work in our lives?

January 14: 1 Samuel 3:1-20 John 1:43-51

Second Sunday after Epiphany, Chancel Choir, Church School The prophet Samuel is called by God to deliver a harsh word to his mentor, and in the Gospel an early disciple recognizes the prophetic gift in Jesus's words. Reminds me of a UCC poster that asked, "God is still speaking; are we listening?".

January 21: Jonah 3:1-5, 10 Mark 1:14-20

Third Sunday after Epiphany, Handbell Choir, Kid's Club

The reluctant prophet Jonah has to be swallowed by a great fish before he will do as God commands. The early disciples depart from their lives as fishermen without question to become "fishers of men". Reluctant or enthusiastic messengers - God's word is fulfilled in both stories.

January 28: Deuteronomy 18:15-20 Mark 1:21-28

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, Family Sunday

Jesus teaches and heals on the Sabbath in the Gospel of Mark. In the Epiphany Season the stories of Jesus often help to describe who Jesus is and what Jesus's significance is to those who follow him. Jesus teaches with authority; compassion for those who are suffering is of primary importance.



SUNDAY SERVERS - ONLINE SIGN-UP SignUpGenius



We utilize SignUpGenius for Sunday Servers sign ups. If you have any questions, please reach out to Beckie in the church office.

USHERS

Greet congregants, hand out service bulletins, and collect the offering at the 8:00 or 10:00 Sunday morning worship service.

WORSHIP LEADERS Help Pastor Scott lead the congregation in responsive readings, unison prayers, and scriptures during the 8:00 or 10:00 worship service.

NURSERY CAREGIVERS Watch over children newborn through elementary in our nursery during the 10:00 service. The 8th grade Confirmation Class will be helping out, but we need some additional help. 8th graders and high schoolers must be accompanied by a parent.

CONFIRMATION CLASS FALL ACTIVITIES

Our Confirmation Class had a full couple of months. The class has been engaged in the life of Jesus through watching and discussing a DVD, "Jesus: The Complete Story", during November and December. Part one focuses on the birth narrative and stories of Jesus' childhood and baptism. Part two explores the political/social/economic/religious world of the First Century as it discusses Jesus' teachings and healing stories. We will revisit the DVD closer to Easter for the final part of exploring Jesus' last days.

In November, the class worked for an evening at the Port Washington Food Pantry putting together Thanksgiving baskets for families. They helped lead worship on Thanksgiving weekend. In December, they helped with our Breakfast with Santa event and put on a joyous Christmas Pageant on Sunday morning, December 24 (see *page 13*). Thanks to the kids and their parents for a busy, but productive time together. Coming up this month, the group will be studying prayer and the Holy Spirit in class on January 8, helping to lead worship on January 28, and touring Congregation Beth Israel Ner Tamid in Milwaukee on January 30.









Confirmation Class helping with a craft: ↑

I-r bottom Kylee Olson, Simon Gilhooly, Addison Wellenstein,
top Sydney White, Chloe Rychtik, Sawyer Crain, Ruby Hoffmann

OUR FELLOWSHIP TEAM

The Fellowship team has organized a number of events this fall and winter and we are having fun! In the fall, the team hosted a BBQ Lunch with pulled pork and all the fixings. We transitioned smoothly hosting the meal and other events events in the space previously occupied by Port Pre-School. In November, the team hosted a bow-making workshop to make bows for the wreaths sold at the Christmas Tree Sale. In December, we invited members and friends to bake Christmas cookies for a cookie exchange. That same day, we also created Christmas swags. We gathered the boughs and added ribbon and an ornament. Everyone had fun and created lovely swags. A handful were sold at the Tree Sale.

This month, on Sunday, January 21, we will be having a Potluck Lunch of hot beef sandwiches. You are welcome to bring a side or a dessert and stay after the 10:00 service for fellowship and a meal. Don't have time to prepare something? There is always plenty of food. Come and join us! On February 18, we will host a Soup and Salad Lunch after the 10:00 service.

The Fellowship Team continues to help fundraise for the church with the RaiseRight gift card program. By purchasing gift cards for your own shopping or gifts, a small percentage is returned to the church. In 2023, the nine families who participated raised approximately \$900 for our church! This is an ongoing program and orders for gift cards are placed every month. With a little bit of pre-planning, you can also help fundraise for the church and do your shopping with gift cards. You can order online or drop off your order form with payment. Orders need to be placed by the second Sunday of each month.

Please contact me if you would like more information about the Fellowship Team and ways to get involved. We invite you to join us!

Thank you for your support,
Jennifer Dimmer
Fellowship Team Representative on Church Council

FELLOWSHIP POTLUCKS: • January 21 • February 18

SUMMER YOUTH MISSION TRIP continued...

...for the growth of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and developmental disabilities. It is an organic farm located on 120 acres in Hiram, OH. They have developed their land with respect for the environment and the health of all individuals working on the farm and model organic sustainable agricultural techniques. There will be an informational meeting on January 28 at 11:45 at Pilgrim UCC, located at 1621 2nd Avenue in Grafton. If you are planning to participate, head to the Mission Trip Interest Sign-Up. If you would like to know more, you may use this google form.



LUNCH AND STUDY ON WEDNESDAYS

Our weekly Lunch Group meets **Wednesdays at Noon**. Bring your own lunch and join this fun and friendly group for interesting conversation! The group reads and discusses the Bible passages that will be used in worship the next Sunday. You don't need to be a Bible expert to participate. Pastor Scott provides background information about the scripture and the conversation naturally moves on from there. The group shares opinions, stories, insights, and perspectives. Plan to join us for Wednesday Lunch Group - you'll be glad you did!

YOGA OFFERED ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

Everyone is welcome to participate in a yoga class held **Wednesday evenings at 6:00** at church, led by Dawn Stacey, a licensed yoga instructor and PTA. The group meets in the open classroom space across from the Music Room. Each class costs \$12, payable to Dawn via check, cash, or Venmo.

THURSDAY MORNING MEN'S BREAKFAST

Every Thursday morning at 8:00 a group of members and friends of our church meet for coffee, breakfast, and conversation. This delightful group of men meet at The Beacon restaurant, located downtown on the first floor of the Harborview hotel. The FCC Men's Breakfast Group is open to all the men of the church. Everyone places their own order and pays their own bill. It is a great way to spend the morning and jumpstart your day!

OUR CHURCH MUSIC PROGRAM

We currently offer two dynamic choirs – Chancel Choir and Handbell Choir. Our Children's Choir is on hiatus at the moment. Our Chancel Choir rehearses **6:30-7:30 on Monday evenings**, and performs on the second and fifth Sunday of every month. Our Handbell Choir rehearses **7:00-8:00 on Wednesday evenings**, and performs on the third Sunday of every month. Please know that you, your family, and friends are invited to join at any time!



FELLOWSHIP HOUR - A CHANCE TO CONNECT WITH CHURCH FRIENDS

We host a Fellowship Hour following our 8:00 service on the first Sunday of each month, and following our 10:00 services on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit with other families and friends in the church. Please make an effort to introduce yourself to people you haven't met. This month there will be coffee served on each Sunday morning, hosted by various teams of the church!

CHRISTMAS COOKIE EXCHANGE & CHRISTMAS SWAGS



Thank you to those who took part in our Christmas Cookie Exchange and Swag Making Workshop on December 3: Kitchie Allen, Roberta Blumenberg, Shereen Callen, Jodi Cowen, Jennifer Dimmer, Mary Downing, Lorraine Halls, Carolyn Heatwole, Nancy Hinneberg, Jean Hoffmann, Jeanne Mantsch, Vicki McManus, Margaret Niederfrank, Beckie Perez, Lois Roth, Alice Ruffin, Pastor Scott, Jane Spalding, Tyfani Ulicki, and Nancy Walle.

























TABLE DECORATIONS FOR BREAKFAST EVENT















to Journey Becker, Lily Dimmer, Noah Roehrig, Claire Rychtik, Emma Riemer, Theo Riemer, Jack Becker, and Allyson Schlehlein for making festive table decorations for our Breakfast with Santa event!

CONFIRMATION CLASS CHRISTMAS EVE PAGEANT







Confirmation Class Cast

Worship Leader/Shepherd: Sydney White

Zechariah/Shepherd: Sawyer Crain

Elizabeth/Shepherd: Ruby Hoffmann

Joseph: Simon Gilhooly

Mary: Kylee Olson

Gabriel: Chloe Rychtik

Shepherd: Addison Wellenstein

LIGHTHOUSE PLANS FOR THE NEW YEAR



Our church partners with four other churches, Grand Avenue United Methodist Church, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Living Hope Lutheran Church, and Parkside Community United Church of Christ, all located in Port Washington and Saukville, to support our joint ecumenical initiative, Lighthouse Youth Ministry.

Lighthouse Youth Director, Christin Flucke, welcomes all middle school and high school youth to join the group at any time. Events are held at Lighthouse Headquarters, 513 West Grand Avenue in Port Washington, unless indicated otherwise. Here are their plans for this month:

Sunday, January 7, 6:00-8:30 p.m. - Rollerskating at Skateland

Join as Lighthouse "rolls" into 2024 with a skate party at Ozaukee Skateland! The group will meet at Lighthouse at 6:00 and carpool to Cedarburg. Admission and skate rental is included, you are welcome to bring a few bucks for snacks if you would like.





Sunday, January 21, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Video Game Tournament and Birthday Kits

Show off your skills and enjoy some friendly competition with a variety of group-friendly video games such as Mario Kart, Wii Sports, or Jackbox Games. Plus, while you're waiting for your turn to play, the group will be assembling birthday kits to donate to our local food pantries.

HELP LIGHTHOUSE COLLECT ITEMS FOR BIRTHDAY KITS



To kick off the new year, Lighthouse will once again be putting together "birthday kits" and they need our help. They will be collecting items such as cake mix, frosting, candles, etc., which the group will assemble and donate to Port Washington and Saukville food pantries. These kits will ensure that food pantry guests can enjoy a birthday celebration on their special day.

Check out the birthday cake poster outside of Fellowship Hall. Take one or more candles off the cake, and shop for those items. As always, if it is helpful, you may contact the Church Office and we can take tags off for you. Please drop off the items in the marked container in our church entryway by Wednesday, **January 17**.

Let's see if we can "blow out all the candles" on the cake as a congregation and collect all the items needed. Thank you for helping Lighthouse spread some birthday cheer to our neighbors!

MORE LIGHTHOUSE EVENTS THIS WINTER/SPRING:

Sunday, February 4, 1:00-5:00 p.m. - Skiing/Snow Tubing at Sunburst

Come enjoy an afternoon of winter fun with friends as Lighthouse hits the slopes! The group will carpool from Lighthouse and travel to Sunburst in Kewaskum. Students can choose between snow tubing, skiing, or snowboarding and Lighthouse will cover the rental/lift costs. Please come dressed for the weather and bring along some money for snacks if you would like.

Friday, February 16 through Sunday, February 18 - Quake Retreat in Wisconsin Dells

Lighthouse will be attending a weekend retreat called Quake, hosted at the Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Live music, speakers, workshops, games, and of course some time to enjoy the waterpark are all included. The cost for this event is \$150 and students MUST pre-register. If you have not registered and would like to go, please contact Christin as soon as possible!

Sunday, March 3, 6:30-8:00 p.m. - "Chopped" Style Food Competition

Your teamwork and culinary creativity will be put to the test in this fun and fast-paced competition based off the hit cooking show "Chopped". Students will be divided into teams and given a "mystery basket" of ingredients. You will then have to work together to create the best dish you can using those items in a designated amount of time before presenting your culinary creations to a panel of judges. This will be a fun evening you won't want to miss!

Sunday, March 17, 7:00-8:00 p.m. - Easter Basket Service Project

Lighthouse will once again be assembling Easter baskets for children served by Family Promise of Ozaukee County. Stay tuned for more details.

Sunday, March 24, 6:30-8:00 p.m. - "Egg My Yard" Part 1

Lighthouse is hosting their 2nd Annual "Egg My Yard" Fundraiser. It was a big hit last year! Families sign up to have Lighthouse youth hide plastic Easter eggs filled with candy and toys in their yards the night before Easter and then wake up to an at-home Easter egg hunt on Easter morning! Meet at Lighthouse Headquarters to fill the dozens of eggs that were ordered. All supplies will be provided.

Saturday, March 30, 6:30-8:30 p.m. - "Egg My Yard" Part 2

Meet at Lighthouse and divide up into teams to go and deliver all the egg orders to peoples' homes.

Have questions or want to RSVP to any of these events?
Please contact Lighthouse Director Christin Flucke at (262) 483-9582
or email christin.flucke@lighthouseyouth.org

Also, stay up to date on any schedule changes as well as event reminders by joining the Lighthouse message group on the Remind app.

Simply text "pwseym" to 81010 and follow the directions to join.

SPECIAL THANKS

To Ric Probst, Jeanne Mantsch, Phil Stepanski, Carolyn Heatwole, and Gary Tackes for serving as Worship Leaders in December.

To Claude Zimmerman and Joe and Bev Mueller for serving as Ushers in December.

To the Riemer and Gilhooly families for serving in the Nursery in December.

To the Chancel Choir and Mike and Sherrie Dimmer for hosting Fellowship Hours.

To our Christmas Tree Sale Team: David Franks and Louise Mollinger, Joe Rychtik, Scott Symes, Don and Connie Cross, along with the help of our office staff, for executing yet another successful Christmas Tree Sale. Their time and commitment to our church's largest fundraiser is greatly appreciated!

To all those who signed up for a shift to help sell Christmas Trees.

To everyone who decorated Christmas ornaments for our customers at the Tree Sale.

To Phil Stepanski and Tracy Bretl for providing special music on December 3.

To Beckie Perez for leading a Christmas Swag Workshop on December 3 and to all those who participated in our Christmas Cookie exchange.

To Don Niederfrank for conducting the Advent Vesper Service on December 6.

To Jodi Cowen, Jennifer Dimmer, and Tyfani Ulicki for coordinating our first Breakfast with Santa event, and to everyone who supported the event with donations and time!

To Joe Rychtik for serving as the parent helper at the December 18 Confirmation Class.

Ongoing thanks to Bill Bond, Joe Mueller, Claude Zimmerman, and Gary Tackes for conducting weekly walk-throughs and coordinating maintenance projects.

To Jodi Cowen and Rhonda Thompson for setting up and decorating the church Christmas tree in Fellowship Hall.

To Jane Spalding and Tracy Greymont for decorating Fellowship Hall for Christmas and to Jane for decorating Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary with Christmas Eve poinsettias.

To everyone who supported our Lighthouse Youth Ministry fundraiser in December.

Ongoing thanks to Dawn Guschl and Bill Bond for preparing communion each month.

To Bev Mueller for sending birthday and anniversary cards in December.

To the anonymous donor for placing two ads in the Ozaukee Press promoting our Tree Sale.



SPECIAL THANKS continued...

To our Christmas Eve Worship Leaders: members of the Confirmation Class at 10:00, Ric Probst and Phil Stepanski at 7:00, and Kitchie Allen and Jane Spalding at 9:00.

To our Christmas Brass for accompanying hymns at the 7:00 Christmas Eve service: Lydia Linendoll, Brett and Jennifer Dimmer, and Jamie Karrels.

To our Choral Quartet for singing at the 9:00 Christmas Eve service: Brett and Jennifer Dimmer, Tracy Greymont, and Mike Spalding.

To those who donated to our Christmas Giving, supporting six local service organizations that we support on a regular basis. And to those who purchased a poinsettia to help decorate the our church for Christmas!

To Ken Matthews for leading the service (his 34th consecutive year!) on December 31 and to Don Niederfrank for assisting Ken. Thanks to Pru Palecek and Glenyss Gilliam for their special music.

To Gary Tackes and Brett Dimmer for connecting Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary with an ethernet cable. This allows audio/video signal for watching services in sanctuary while the elevator is under repair and for allowing overflow seating to watch and hear services in Fellowship Hall in the future.

To Roberta Blumenberg, Jeanne Mansch, Alice Ruffin, Jane Schwacher, and Meg Tackes for accompanying Pastor Scott to bring Advent Communion and Christmas Cookies to some of our senior members.

To our Confirmation Class for a wonderful Christmas Pageant on Sunday morning, December 24 - Sawyer Crain, Simon Gilhooly, Ruby Hoffmann, Kylee Olson, Chloe Rychtik, Addison Wellenstein, and Sydney White.

To Jane Spalding for creating the Christmas Pageant bulletin board showing our pageants through the years.

To the Roehrig Family for facilitating the Gift-A-Child and Eric Olson for delivering the gifts.

To those who helped to take down and put away the Tree Sale Lot on December 30: Don Cross, Scott McLeod, Mark Pasten, Ralph Perez, Tom and Noah Roehrig, Joe Rychtik, Matt Schlehlein, Scott Symes, Chris Wach, and Claude Zimmerman.

IN MEMORIAM

Constance "Connie" Cottrell passed away on Saturday, December 9, at Lasata Care Center Hospice in Cedarburg. She was 94 years old. A Celebration of her Life/95th birthday will be held on April 20 here at church.

Carl Anderson, 60 years old (father of Savannah) passed away on Saturday, December 16, at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Mequon. A memorial service is being planned at church this month.

OUR CHURCH COUNCIL

Executive Team

Moderator: Jason Jacque (2024)

Associate Moderator: Jodi Cowen (2024)

Clerk: Rhonda Thompson (2025) Treasurer: *currently vacant* (2025)

Team Representatives

Christian Education: Shandy Roehrig (2024)

Fellowship: Jennifer Dimmer (2025)

Staff Support and Review: Ken Matthews (2024)

Property: Bill Bond (2025)

Community Outreach: Eric Olson (2024)

Liturgy: Tracy Greymont (2025)

Stewardship: currently vacant (2025)

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

The November minutes were approved at the December 14, 2023 Church Council meeting.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH Church Council Minutes November 9, 2023

Call to Order by Jodi Cowen, Associate Moderator, @ 6:36 pm. Pastor Scott, Bill Bond, Jodi Cowen, Tracy Greymont, Phil Stepanski, Jason Jacque, Shandy Roehrig and Rhonda Thompson.

Opening Meditation - (provided by Ken) - A daily devotional from "Quiet Times with God" November 9, We Win in the End, with a verse from 1 John 4:4, "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world".

<u>Approval of the Minutes - October 2023</u> Bill motions to approve the October minutes and Jodi seconds the motion. The minutes are approved.

Financial Administrator Updates - (Phil Stepanski)

- Monthly Budget Review In the Budget vs Actual Report through November of 2023, there is a Gross Profit total of \$163,572 (2023 Budget is \$202,186), Total Expenditures come to \$193,425 (2023 Budget is \$255,926) for a \$29,853 deficit (2023 Budget is estimated to end with \$53,740 deficit). Phil did not have an account balance report. Phil made a transfer of \$9,000.00 as the main account was overdrawn and payroll needed to be covered. Pastor Scott is asking if there is a need to access some funds from the Cornerstone Account. Phil is thinking that the last of the pledge money will be coming in to cover expenses and we won't need to use the Cornerstone funds. Phil will look into an automatic transfer between accounts to keep from overdrawing again.
- All Teams and Committees are on a spending freeze.

(continued on the next page)

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES continued...

Old Business

<u>Property Team/Building Maintenance - (Bill)</u> The Property Team is willing to take on insurance matters like investigating building insurance quotes and renewals.

- Smoke Detectors Guetzke has not submitted a quote yet for the new reflective smoke system.
- Solar Panels Quote has not arrived yet and probably won't be taken care of before the end of the year.
- Tree Trimming Jon Crain was working on clearing the trees. Jodi knows him and will reach out to him about clearing the rest of the trees.

Rental Space Update - (Pastor Scott)

- Harbor Village Infants Program- Pastor Scott has not gotten any response back to the emails he sent.
- YMCA Child Care The director and several staff toured the facility. It will not work
 with the current layout and lack of features like sprinkler. Renting to a licensed child
 care is not looking like an option for rental income. They are passing along a
 connection for adult care. A church-run child center may have different regulations
 and could be an option to look into.
- Advertising of Space- if money remains from the Financial Administrator role advertising budget item. With lack of cash in the accounts no paid advertising will be pursued. Tracy will do some brainstorming. Thank you to Doug McManus for connecting us with the YMCA.

<u>Council Updates from Pastor Parish Relations</u> - (Shandy) - More responses did come in with the last email blast. The committee will meet to look over the data and then meet with Pastor Scott. It will be shared with the Council after that.

<u>Council Positions- Stewardship/Financial Administrator -</u> Pastor Scott- It's time for role descriptions to change as new faces take on new positions. The Financial Administrator will be primarily writing checks, paying bills, making reports, and helping to create the budget. The Treasurer will take pledges, track income and gifts. This will implement better practices and safety measures. On Sunday November 12th a team (Pastor Scott, Ken Matthews, Phil Stephanski, Sherrie Dimmer and Jim Schmit) will interview a candidate for the Financial Administrator position. Otherwise a previous candidate, Kathy Bilski, could be contacted to see if she has interest.

<u>Brunch with Santa - December 16</u> (Jodi) -Tickets are created and available in the office as well at Port Washington State Bank. Amy created wonderful posters. Tiffany has posted flyers and posters around the area. Jodi has a marketing plan to email area businesses and has created a sign-up for volunteers. Jodi and Jennifer will talk to Santa about what activities he will do with the children.

<u>Christmas Tree Sales</u> (Pastor Scott)- The lot will be set up Saturday, November 11, at 8am. Scott Symes donated new stand-alone signs and one for the trailer. Trees will arrive the Tuesday before Thanksgiving and high school students are all set to help unload.

Additional Team Updates (Shandy, Eric, Jennifer, Tracy, Ken)

 Church School - The Gift-A-Child Giving Tree has the ornaments on the tree. Gifts need to be returned by November 25. The children will be making the tree ornaments. Kids Club will be starting this month.

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES continued...

- Community Outreach- Once again they teamed up with Church School for the Giving Tree donations.
- Staff Support and Review- Has nothing new to report.
- Fellowship will be making bows for wreaths for the Christmas Tree Sale on Sunday.
 Next month will be a Make and Take Christmas Swags.
- Liturgy will meet Monday to discuss holiday decorations. Stained glass windows will be moved to Fellowship Hall.

<u>Elevator Repair - Update -</u>(Jason/Bill) - The MEI quote that was presented is what we can expect. Holding off on the repairs will be a 2-3% or more increase in cost.

 Fall Congregational Meeting - The meeting will be held on November 26. An agenda item will be to announce that Window pledges can be turned in at any point now through July 2024.

2024 Budget (Jason) - Listening Session Feedback (Jason)- The group in attendance tended to be more comfortable with slowing down on making the repair to the elevator and gathering all facts and making sure we could afford it. The elevator repair was presented as affordable with a budget expense line. Several attendees seemed to think about all the monetary needs of the church, like stewardship, elevator repair, and the budget and needed more information on the strategy of the current capital campaign. Most of the focus was on the elevator repair and little on the budget. The budget was presented with the six options of ways to get closer to a balanced budget. Pledges and the number of giving units was also a focus of the discussion. Jason feels graphing the pledge units to reflect the increase in pledge amount despite the decrease in overall pledges may be helpful in the next Listening Session. It was suggested to share an average per person pledge amount per week that members could contribute to support the budget and keep the church from a deficit. Increasing the revenue was a favorable budget option, however no suggestions were given as to how to get the increase. It was mentioned that the current options are prioritizing the building over the people. It's important to look at the church ministry. It might help to share the five year capital campaign plan regularly. What would a vote (weighted) look like to gather data for the Council to consider. It would be good to keep the members informed and continue to share all feedback. Listening Sessions:

- Sunday, November 5: 9am in the Dennett Room
- Sunday, November 12: 11am in the Dennett Room
- Thursday November 16: 7pm via Zoom

New Business

Any Other New Business to Come Before the Council? Bill is asking for any ideas on dates for the last AED/CPR training class. Council members suggest waiting till the new year, maybe January 21.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment at 9:06 pm Submitted by, Rhonda Thompson - Clerk

PROPERTY TEAM MEETING MINUTES

Our Property Team is an active church team comprised of a handful of folks from our church. The team keeps a close eye on our church and works to maintain all aspects of our church building and grounds. The team would like to share their recent monthly meeting minutes - December 2023 Property Team Minutes

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JANUARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

1 -	Donna Yellen	15 -	Carolyn Heatwole	
2 -	Mark Pasten	16 -	Matthew Dimmer	
3 -	Bruce Laabs, Jr.	24 -	Susan Niederfrank	
5 -	Ned Huwatschek	25 -	Claire Chmielewski	
6 -	Julie Eslinger	28 -	Elaina Perez	
7 -	Christa Karrels		Ben Andrey	X
8 -	Chris Fraser	29 -	Peyton Rychtik	ATK.
9 -	Emil Schneider		Collette Olson	
	Brayden Thompson	30 -	Austin Lemke	
12 -	Dick Webb	31 -	Cheri Farnsworth	
	Simon Gilhooly			

JANUARY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

- 17- Jim and Dawn Clements
- 19- Jeff and Holly Ternes



Please contact Beckie Perez, at office@portucc.org, if you would like to add a Birthday or Anniversary.

RAISERIGHT GIFT CARD FUNDRAISING PROGRAM



Jennifer Dimmer and Rhonda Thompson, our church RaiseRight Coordinators, will be placing an order on Sunday, January 14. The gift cards will be available at the church for pick up starting on Sunday, January 21. You can enroll and place an order on the company website, RaiseRight.com/enroll. Our church enrollment code is P8147VHNX56H. Or, you can complete the paper form and write out a check to the church. Thank you!





JANUARY 2024 CALENDAR

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
Juli.	1 Happy New Year!	2 9:30 am Staff Meeting	3 12 pm Lunch Group 6 pm Yoga 6:30 pm Cub Scouts 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	4 8 am Men's Breakfast- The Beacon 7 pm Executive Team	5	6
7 Epiphany Sunday 8 am Communion Service 9 am Fellowship Hour 10 am Communion Service Nursery Care 6 - 8:30 pm Lighthouse Youth Group - Skateland	6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6:30 pm Confirmation Class	9 9:30 am Staff Meeting	10 12 pm Lunch Group 6 pm Yoga 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	11 8 am Men's Breakfast- The Beacon 6 pm Knellsville 4-H Club 7 pm Church Council	12	13 1 pm PW Pride Group
14 Second Sunday after Epiphany 8 am Worship Service 10 am Worship Service Church School Chancel Choir Nursery Care 11 am New Member Class Medics in our Midst AED Training	6 pm Thrive Team 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	16 9:30 am Staff Meeting	17 12 pm Lunch Group 6 pm Yoga 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	18 8 am Men's Breakfast- The Beacon	19 11 am Property Team	20 8:30 am Thrive Team/ Examen(ed) Church at Marquette University
21 Third Sunday after Epiphany 8 am Worship Service 10 am Worship Service Receive New Members Handbell Choir Kids Club and Nursery Care 11 am Hot Beef Sandwiches Luncheon - Hosted by Fellowship Team 6:30 - 8 pm Lighthouse Youth Group- Making Birthday Kits	22 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	9:30 am Staff Meeting	24 12 pm Lunch Group 6 pm Yoga 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	25 8 am Men's Breakfast- The Beacon	26	27
28 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany 8 am Worship Service 10 am Family Worship Service- Confirmation Class Leads the Service Nursery Care 10:45 am Winter Congregational Meeting	29 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	30 9:30 am Staff Meeting 6:30 pm Confirmation Class Mission Experience- Cong. Beth Israel Ner Tamid	31 12 pm Lunch Group 6 pm Yoga 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal		HAPALIN AEA	PAGE 22



First Congregational Church - United Church of Christ 131 North Webster Street Port Washington, WI 53074 (262) 284-2022 website - portucc.org, email - office@portucc.org

Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday mornings from 8:30 - Noon

Pastor Scott's Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays, and by appointment

Office Staff

Rev. Dr. Scott McLeod, Pastor - pastorscott@portucc.org cell phone - (262) 903-0449, home phone - (262) 723-1100 Amy Gilhooly, Communications Director - amyg@portucc.org Beckie Perez, Office Manager - office@portucc.org Phil Stepanski, Outgoing Financial Administrator - phil@portucc.org

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Like us on Facebook

"First Congregational Church, Port Washington, WI"

Receive our E-Blasts (emails)

Please let us know if you would like to be added or have a new email address

Check out the church website - portucc.org

RECORDINGS OF WORSHIP SERVICES

We record our Sunday worship services each week. Be sure to subscribe to our YouTube channel ("First Congregational Church of Port Washington"). This allows you to receive immediate notification when a service is uploaded.

ONLINE GIVING WITH PAYPAL

PayPal is an easy way to give to the church to pay your pledge and/or make an extra financial gift. You can find the PayPal button on the home page of the church website (portucc.org) or use this QR code. Thank you!



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