



# First Congregational United Church of Christ

[eagleriverucc.org](http://eagleriverucc.org) January 2023

## **PASTOR'S REPORT**

Happy New Year!

I would like to begin my monthly *The Church Mouse* Pastor's article by thanking the staff for a wonderful job bringing Advent and Christmas worship to life. A special shoutout to the music staff for all the extra seasonal music that deeply enriched our worship services. We are indeed blessed! The services were wonderful. A special thanks to Donna DePape for preparing the Sanctuary for each service. Finally, a huge thank you to everyone who came and decorated the Sanctuary for the Season. It was truly a labor of love, a fun day for all! Bringing it all together truly put us in the Christmas spirit.

As you may have heard by now, beginning with the first Sunday in January, we will have one unity service at 9:00 am through the winter months of January, February, and March, up to and including Easter Day, April 9<sup>th</sup>. Please make note on your calendars!

Bible Study will resume on Wednesday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. I hope you will plan to attend. We were going to look at the first two creation stories from Genesis as hospitality texts. In other words, for those of you who missed my introductory material on how to read the Bible you have missed none of the actual Bible Study. Once again, this year, I am planning for Wednesday evening Lenten services beginning on March 1<sup>st</sup>. More details later! There will be an Ash Wednesday service on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at noon!

Continue to pray for Donna Adams and your Church Council as we deliberate on the Strategic Plan that continues to be tweaked. Institutional visioning processes are never simple, demanding intense conversation and attention to detail. We will continue to keep you informed and not only value your input, but strongly encourage you to participate in the process. The decisions made will have a direct impact on our being and our doing as a congregation, the goal of which is to increasingly become a more vibrant and vital, relevant and relational local missional church. Barbara Helmick has met with the Church Council and is helping us to facilitate Article Eight of the Constitution that provides an outline for carrying out local ministry and wider missional passions. We always encourage your input and ideas as to better ways to enhance the church and to impact our local community. We are also always looking for ways to better advertise who we are and what we are about as a church committed to being welcoming and inclusive, hospitable in every gospel way imaginable. It is this core theological belief, a core value, that separates us from many other churches, a practice that should never be underestimated or taken for granted. We truly desire to be empowered by the Holy Spirit as we open our doors and hearts to everyone!

I look to see you on Sundays!

Timothy W. Shirley

## **PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

Hello Congregation,

Happy 2023! As we start afresh in a new year it is a chance to reflect on goals and hopes for our future. As we begin this new year together, we are moving into the season after Epiphany, beginning on January 6<sup>th</sup>, Epiphany of the Lord. We celebrate the divine revelation experienced by the Magi when they followed the star and recognized the baby Jesus as the son of God. Traditionally, the day after Epiphany is also the time when Christmas decorations are removed. I recalled Nancy Diepenbrock's request to the congregation to bring large appliance size boxes to store our church's Christmas decorations.

A new year offers a chance for us to reflect on what might have worked or things that did not work from our previous year, a chance for hope anew as we seek to make progress into the future. I also reflected on the many changes our congregation has experienced in the last five years as we continue to struggle from a great deal of upheaval and the constraints necessitated by the pandemic. We have come far and will keep evaluating ways to restore additional elements in worship and discovering ways to gather for events and fellowship activities.

We will be sharing in new ministries led by Barb Helmick who is raising our awareness on ways in which all our members can participate or can initiate their own ministries. We are also looking to raise our profile in the wider community, and most importantly, to improve our communication with all of you.

I will go back to something Barb Helmick asked the congregation during her presidency and which still needs fine tuning – what is working, not working, or may be falling through the cracks? If any of you have ideas/suggestions for gathering, fundraising, helping with worship activities, technology, communication, musically, or you just want to check-in, please reach out to me, to Tim, or to the Church Council.

Many blessings to you all in the New Year,

Donna Adams  
Council President

## **Church Council Recap, December 2022**

Church Council met December 12<sup>th</sup>. Several guests were in attendance. Barb Helmick presented information on Ministry/Mission and discussed implementation of Article VIII of the church Constitution as adopted in 2018.

Maintenance work, including painting and carpet cleaning, has been completed and a new contract for waste removal has been signed.

A pledging shortfall of 50% was noted due to the late start of the Stewardship campaign with some confusion regarding online giving and the need to complete a Pledge Card. It has been scheduled on the annual calendar to start earlier next year. (Information on current status has been given at services and a reminder letter was mailed.)

The Council discussed recording funds from special projects and fundraising events and how to expand publicity of community fundraising activities.

Continued review of the Strategic Plan will be held at a special meeting of Council following the holidays, hopefully at the end of January.

Donna Adams  
Council President

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**Just a reminder that the Church Council meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month at 6:00 pm  
in the Conference Room. Church members are always welcome to attend.**

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## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP WILL BE MEETING ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 10<sup>TH</sup> AT 9:00 AM. EVERYONE IS WELCOME.

## THE BOOK CLUB

We are hoping to gather on January 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm for movie night. The movie we selected is "Where the Crawdads Sing". This plan depends on having the technology available to show it. So, keep your fingers crossed and let Donna De Pape ([spindle257@gmail.com](mailto:spindle257@gmail.com)) know if you are planning to attend. That way if there is a change, she can inform everyone.

January 26<sup>th</sup> is the date for our next book discussion, this time we are discussing two books, The Giver, by Lois Lowery and The Measure by Nikki Erick. Both books present some very interesting ideas, so we are anticipating a rousing discussion.

The remaining dates and books are:

February 23.	West with Giraffes	By Lynda Rutledge	Susan Krivichi
	Sand County Almanac	By Aldo Leopold	Kristin Anchor
March 23.	Caste	By Isabel Wilkerson	Marion Arndt
April 27.	The Great Alone	By Kristin Hannah	Kristin Anchor
	The Spanish Daughter	By Lorena Hughes	Tobi Johannsen
May 25.	The Girl on the Cliff	By Lucinda Riley	Norma Yaeger

Hope to see you there. Everyone is welcome.

Donna De Pape

Pseudo facilitator

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## FLOCK

Our first Flock Meeting of 2023 will be at the church on Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> in the conference room at 6:00 pm. If you wish to bring a dish that is delish, please do so. Also, BYOB (Bring Your Own Beverage)!

Hope to see ewe there!

Your Shepherdess,



Linda Brainard



## **LET'S TALK: Pursuing your PASSION and using your GIFTS at First UCC**

By Barbara Helmick

Four years ago, First Congregational United Church of Christ of Eagle River chose to take an extremely bold step, one that empowers every member of our church to pursue their passions and use their gifts to share God's love with others in our congregation and in the world outside our doors.

What's more, that step allows congregants to do so WITHOUT having to commit to serving on a board or committee for three years, attend monthly meetings – and quite likely – get involved in things they are NOT interested in doing.

What am I talking about? **ARTICLE VIII of our CHURCH CONSTITUTION.**

Article VIII previously outlined the responsibilities of all the church boards. The congregation adopted changes that eliminated most of the previous boards and created a means for people to “use their God-given gifts and interests to which they feel called” to contribute to the mission and vision of the church.

Oddly, the concept is so simple and easy, but is often difficult for many of us to understand. And for a variety of reasons (COVID, changes in pastoral leadership, etc.) little has occurred to help move us forward in this critically important area.

I believe Article VIII, with its ability to empower all of us, is the heart and soul of our Constitution and our congregation.

So, with the Church Council's blessing, I am pursuing one of my passions: Helping others to understand Article VIII and how it can empower us to share our gifts and passions with our church family and beyond our doors.

Are you interested in learning more? Do you have questions? Ideas? Thoughts in general? If so, please join me for one of two discussion sessions: **Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, at noon** and/or **Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 pm**. We will meet in the church parlor. If you are unable to attend either of these sessions, but are interested in learning more, please reach out to me (Barbara Helmick) and we will figure out how to make that happen.

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### **Weekend Backpack Collection set for January**

With the start of 2023, First Congregational United Church of Christ is restarting the previously popular monthly collections of items for area non-profits. Many of you participated when we did this three or four years ago, making a difference in the lives of many in our community. Some of you also said you missed having this opportunity to easily give to others through our church.

Starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, we kick things off with a collection for the Weekend Backpack project. Our community, in partnership with Eagle River Elementary, Land O'Lakes Elementary, St. Germain Elementary, and Phelps Elementary, provides meals to children who otherwise might not receive them. Backpacks are sent home on Friday with child-friendly, easy-to-prepare food items providing the necessary calories to help eliminate their hunger. Many of the parents are struggling to keep their children fed so the program's goal is to provide food support on weekends.

The Backpack Program started in March 2015 with one hungry 3<sup>rd</sup> grader and with the heart of a school volunteer. Since then, it has grown to more than 135 elementary school students, 4K-6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Following is a list of needed items. If you choose to contribute, please bring items to the church. A table for donations has been set up just outside the sanctuary near the elevator/steps.

#### **Needed Items include:**

- Oatmeal (individual packets)
- Cereal (individual cups or boxes)
- Pop Tarts

- Applesauce (individual cups)
- Fruit Cups (individual size, no Jell-O)
- Juice Boxes (individual size)
- Pudding (individual cups – vanilla or chocolate preferred)
- Complete Meals (microwavable)
- Macaroni 'N' Cheese (individual cups or Easy Mac – no boxes)
- Ramen Noodles (Beef or Chicken)
- Soups (canned, microwavable)
- Microwavable meal cups (Chef Boyardee, Hormel Chili, Dinty Moore Beef Stew, etc.)
- Microwavable Popcorn
- Granola Bars
- Breakfast Bars
- Individual pre-packaged mini-muffins
- Tuna or chicken (packets only, no cans)

**Snack items (must be individual size):**

- Goldfish
- Popcorn
- Pretzels
- Cheez-Its
- Trail Mix
- Peanuts
- Fruit Snacks
- Cheese or peanut butter crackers (individual)
- other similar items
- *No chips please*

*When donating food, please select items that are appropriate for a 4-5 year old's taste preferences. Expired food or food past the sell by date cannot be used. Thank you.*

As a church family, we are ready, willing, and able to share with you in your prayers of sadness and celebration. Please feel free to share your prayer requests with us on the church website located under the Ministries heading, or by calling the church office at 715-802-8501. To protect the privacy of all individuals please only share prayers for those, you have received direct permission to share on their behalf. We ask that any prayer requests mentioned from the pulpit have the permission of the one desiring prayer. Thank you for your understanding. Prayer Concerns: Our thoughts are with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters.

Scripture readers, ushers, and camcorder operators are always needed as well as readers for the Concerns of the Church. You may sign up by visiting our website; or you may also contact Joy Turpin at: [joyfaithchapinturpin@gmail.com](mailto:joyfaithchapinturpin@gmail.com) or the Church office.

## **MELODY OF COMPASSION**

Many of us have missed the sound of coins dropping onto the metal rings of the offering plates during these past several years of COVID. Ushers will be passing the offering plates among us as they used to. The time for our offerings will be printed in the bulletin and the Doxology will be sung as we sang it in the past. The Melody of Compassion has been our way of helping the Eagle River area needy for many years. Please bring your coins to keep the Melody singing for others. These gifts are collected during the Offertory.

**Please check the lost and found in the office as we have accumulated several items.**

### **COFFEE HOUR**

*we are resuming coffee hour after the 9:00 am service. There is a sign-up sheet in the back of the church if you would like to provide a treat!*

### **Can you help the residents of Frederick Place? Please help us make this a church-wide mission.**

Frederick Place is a 16-bed temporary emergency housing shelter for families run by the Northwoods Alliance for Temporary Housing (NATH). Admission is on a first come, first-serve basis. Applicants must meet the federal and state definitions of homelessness including income limits. Residents receive services to help them draft and execute a plan for obtaining permanent housing. There is a zero-tolerance policy for violence, drug use, or alcohol use in the home. Residents must be able to care for themselves without assistance. While the initial admission is for 30 days, stays may be extended for up to 90 days. There are guidelines for reapplying after 90 days to prevent additional bouts of homelessness.

Some of the ways that First Congregational United Church of Christ can assist the residence are:

- \* Help prepare or shop for ingredients for the monthly meals we are currently providing.
- \* Donate sides, such as bread, butter, dessert, and milk or juice.
- \* Drive the meals to Rhinelander on the meal day.
- \* Donate cash to help offset the cost of the meals.
- \* Donate needed items for the Wish List published monthly on the Frederick Place website; items can be purchased on Amazon and shipped directly to Frederick Place. (These items are given to the residents when they obtain housing to help them set up housekeeping.)

**Thanks to everyone that helped with the Frederick's Place December Meal.  
Please check the bulletin board outside the sanctuary to see if you could provide something for our January meal.**

Contact Mary Lou Congdon or Susan Krivichi for more information or sign up on the volunteer sheet attached to the poster in the church lobby on the church level.

### **Church Notes**

**Worship service** is Sunday at 9:00 am. through the winter months of January, February, and March, up to and including Easter Day, April 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Offering Envelopes** are now available in the back of the church. Please take a box and write your name next to the number of the box on the list provided.

**Scripture readers (Lectors) and ushers** are always needed as well as readers for the Concerns of the Church. You may sign up by visiting our website or you may also contact Joy Turpin at joyfaithchapinturpin@gmail.com or 715-479-6560.

In accordance with CDC guidelines, wearing of masks is now optional. We will continue to sign in for worship. If we have cases of COVID within our congregation brought to our attention, we will notify everyone as soon as possible.

Online Giving is now available on the church website. With online giving, you can set up recurring or one-time gifts to be made automatically from your checking account or by debit or credit card. Online giving allows you to make gifts more conveniently and easier, especially when not physically attending worship.

Designated offering envelopes are not necessary to make a gift and to receive a yearly contribution statement. With our new accounting software, we will be recording contributions based on name and not by envelope number. Any cash offering that is placed in any envelope with a name on it, or a personal check will be recorded. If you would like to donate to a specific ministry, please indicate on the envelope or on the check memo line.

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## ***"What Shall We Bring?"***

**We have received 39 pledges totaling \$107,680 of our 2023 goal of \$150,000.  
Your pledges are VERY IMPORTANT and MUCH NEEDED for 2023.  
Misplaced your pledge card? We have more!  
It is never too late to pledge!**

*Just a reminder that we continue to receive and accept pledges throughout the year.*

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**F.Y.I. The ushers have access to an emergency button should a crisis develop. Please let them know if there is an emergency and they will activate it.**

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### **Flower Calendar** *(to reserve a Sunday please add your name to the calendar on the bulletin board)*

Pick a Sunday and put your name on the Flower Calendar that is in the hall next to the elevator. If you want the office to order flowers, put "order" after your name and they will be ordered from Vintage Garden with the cost of \$35. You are welcome to take them home after the service. It is also helpful if you bring the vase back to return to Vintage Gardens as we then get more flowers for the money. You may also bring flowers from another source and place them on the flower stand next to the piano. Put your name on the calendar and let the office know if you want additional information in the bulletin. Weather permitting, you are also welcome to bring garden flowers or even an arrangement of wildflowers. Again, put your name on the flower calendar and let the office know if there is a special person or event involved. What better way to honor anyone or anything than to share flowers with your church family on Sunday!

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### **Happy January Birthday to:**

David Adler  
Sharon Breit  
Gary Gilbert  
Carl Gromoll  
Paula Hendrickson  
Kathy Holperin

Phil Jensen  
Barbara Mather  
Barbara Mattes  
Mike Mettler  
Joe Panci  
Jim Steiner

# First Congregational United Church of Christ

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## **Church Office Hours**

Monday – Thursday - 8:00 am to 1:00 pm – CLOSED ON FRIDAYS

## **CHURCH COUNCIL**

President, Donna Adams  
Vice President, Mark Johannsen  
Trisha Moore  
Cathy Palmer  
Luke Aschbrenner  
Deb Stolze  
Steve Burrill  
Clerk, Norma Yaeger  
Pastor Parish Relations, Tobi Johannsen  
Women's Fellowship, Sharon Breit  
Sanctuary Arts Group, Patti Roberts  
Facilities, Donna Adams  
Finance, Paula Hendrickson  
Gifts and Endowments, Bill Marshall  
Safety and Security, Carlton Schroeder  
Scholarship, Ursula Charaf

## **CHURCH STAFF**

Timothy W. Shirley, Pastor  
Debbie Brown, Church Administrator  
Sharon Breit, Director of Christian Education  
Lori Lee Hunter, Director of Music  
Linda Brainard, Pianist  
Norma Yaeger, Pianist  
Christine Clough, Cleaning Services

## **Worship Service**

*Sunday at 9:00 a.m.*





*From the Director of Music, Lori Hunter*

I would like to thank all who have contributed to the music ministry this past year and update everyone on moving forward into 2023.

The choir has said goodbye to some long familiar faces and said hello to some new ones. Although we are smaller, we are able to bring meaningful music to

worship. You are likely to see more smaller ensembles and instrumental selections as we move forward into the first part of the new year. We are always looking for people to join us, as we not only sing together, we also have a lot of fun while learning the songs we bring to worship. Please reach out to me or any other choir person if you would like to join us. The best part about our choir is that you don't need to read music or be a solo singer. We truly complement each other and are stronger together! If you have a musical talent, other than singing, please let me know and we can add that to our choices for worship music. Also don't forget the chime choir! Susan Krivichi is one of the most patient and kind teachers as she builds up this group of people, just ask anyone who has joined the chime choir.

I would also like to update you on the first Christmas Carol Sing and mini concert. It was very well received and those that attended were very pleased with the variety of musical selections and the opportunity to just sing some beloved carols. The pianists and choir did an excellent job with their selections and a special shout out to Iland Sheperdson for working so diligently to prepare his special piano piece. The Women's Fellowship did an awesome job of putting together a wonderful spread of treats for the reception after the concert. Our donations were given to NATH-Frederick Place through the Co-Vantage Cares Foundation which doubled the amount collected. I am very happy to report that we collected \$399 which allowed NATH to receive \$798.

On a personal note, I would like to thank everyone for working together to bring Christmas Eve music to worship! Norma Yaeger, the choir, the guitarists, and Donna Adams for coordinating everything as I dealt with Chuck's medical emergency. Thank you for all the prayers and well wishes for both Chuck and my family. I am happy to report he is recuperating at home and should be back to all his normal activities in about six weeks.





# NATH - Frederick Place

## 12th Anniversary Benefit

Saturday February 4th, 2023

Doors open @ 5:00 PM

**Gold  
Package  
\$500**

- \* 8 dinner tickets
- \* Reserved table
- \* 16 chances in "Sponsor Raffle"
- \* Full page recognition in program

**Red  
Package  
\$300**

- \* 4 dinner tickets
- \* Reserved seats
- \* 8 chances in "Sponsor Raffle"
- \* Half page recognition in program

**Beverage  
Package  
\$200**

- \* 2 dinner tickets
- \* Reserved seats
- \* 100 promotional business cards
- \* Listed in program

**Event  
Package  
\$100**

- \* Listed in program

**Individual Tickets  
\$50**

**Stop by Frederick Place**

**Order online at  
[nathnorthwoods.com](http://nathnorthwoods.com)**

**See a board/committee  
member to purchase  
tickets**

**Tickets on sale now**

**Creamy Pork Tenderloin  
&  
Beef Tips**

**Raffles and more**

**Cabaret Cove**

**1540 Pueblo Drive - Rhinelander**



**For information call  
715-482-7727 or 715-360-6745  
[www.nathnorthwoods.com](http://www.nathnorthwoods.com)**



**Proceeds benefit: NATH - Frederick Place**



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 4:30pm - Chime choir @ First 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	3 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	4 11am - Many Ways of Peace 6pm - Bible Study	5 11:30am - Bridge Group	6 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	7
8 9am - Worship @ First	9 4:30pm - Chime choir @ First 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	10 9am - Women's Fellowship 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	11 11am - Many Ways of Peace 6pm - Bible Study	12 11:30am - Bridge Group	13 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	14
15 9am - Worship @ First	16 4:30pm - Chime choir @ First 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	17 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	18 11am - Many Ways of Peace 6pm - Bible Study	19 9:15am - Backpack Packing 11:30am - Bridge Group	20 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	21
22 9am - Worship @ First	23 4:30pm - Chime choir @ First 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	24 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	25 11am - Many Ways of Peace 6pm - Bible Study	26 11:30am - Bridge Group	27 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	28
29 9am - worship @ First	30 4:30pm - Chime choir @ First 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	31 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	1 11am - Many Ways of Peace 6pm - Bible Study	2 11:30am - Bridge Group	3 7pm - AA Meeting @ First	4