Tower Notes –May 2024

Celebrating 179 years of Community Based Ministry



First Congregational United Church of Christ
An Open & Affirming and Immigrant Welcoming Church
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Website: www.janesvilleucc.org
Like us on Facebook: *Janesville UCC*
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Pastor's Last Message

I thank God for *Janesville UCC and* every *bit of joy, every march, every Pride event, every stand for immigrant justice, every art installation, every walk among the trees, every personal intimate spirit-filled conversations we have had together, I have so many rich* remembrances of you.

Philippians 1:3 edited by Pastor Tanya

Beloved Friends and Members of Janesville UCC, First Congregational Church,

Thank you for the extraordinary service and reception. It was so touching to receive that splendid gift of stained glass of our UNIQUE BLUE DOORS designed for welcome and inclusion of all people! The cake, woa, the gluten free cake was remarkable and delicious! Thank you for all the cards and long notes inside. Thank you for keeping me in supply of dark chocolate—so needed in these last days. Thank you for the gifts of your loving kindness. I pray that God gave you just what you needed this month of good-byes. I grew right along with you. I cried right along with you. I was frustrated and worried right along with you. When we sang together the hymn #4 *Glory, Glory, Hallelujah Since I Laid My Burdens Down* the Holy Spirit spoke to me directly and said, "Stop worrying about these things that you have no control over. Trust me. You'll be alright." Sing that song often during the transition. I will too.

Words fail to express all that holy joy and godly good we have had the privilege of doing together these last many years. This is why we turn to the arts, to poetry, to help us in times like these. Here is the poem I read at the end of my sermon on Sunday. It is my gift to you.

All my love,
Pastor Tanya

A GOOD-BYE POEM
by Rev. Dr. Tanya Sadagopan
on the occasion of celebrating our ministry 2015-2024.

A fruitful harvest plucked from the trees of our ministry
Fills the baskets of our lives.
We eat our fill of love and joy.
Even as our bellies are full, we hunger for justice.

Where does the love go when the sermon is over
And bells are put away
And the dishes are washed?
Love lingers in our hearts warmed by the good we did here.
Love lingers in our faith.
Love lingers in the walls, it echoes of calls for mercy and kindness.
Love stands at the highest peak in our oldest of windows and speaks to us, "God is Love."

What about the little ones?
The ones who teach us more about God and Jesus than we ever could have learned on our own.
They lead us in processions of palms and ribbons and bubbles.
Joy and curiosity is their language.
We have so much to learn from them.

And what about the music?
The tower bells moving us with majesty.
The hand bells ringing in unison of community
The voices raised in glorious songs of praise and lament.
The congregation singing together as one body lifting our voices up to God,
It is the music that moves us.

And what about our pastor?
This one and the next.
Will the Spirit still rest upon this church?
Yes, oh yes, a resounding yes!
The same Spirit that called us together will call to the world of Christ's servants,
"Come, come here.
Your people dwell here!"

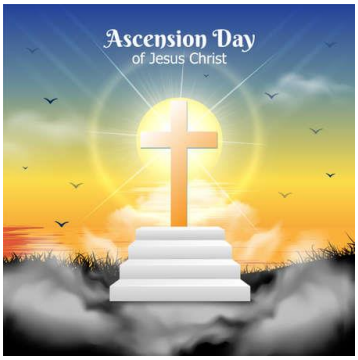
This might be our ending.
But it isn't God's ending.
Christ has so much more ground to cover here.
So much more love to share here.
So much more joy to share here.
It isn't over by a long shot.

God isn't done speaking or playing
or rejoicing or making mischief
in the way that only God can,
in this place.
Friends,
Beloved ones,
Believe that even greater things will unfold here.
Dear Ones,
You ain't seen nothing yet!



Thank you for the card with most gracious words of sympathy upon the death of my brother-in-law, Gary Vetter, and especially thanks to Darla for writing the card. —Paul Finger

Worship in May



May 5: Guest Rev. Shelby Perez

May 12: Guest Rev. Shelby Perez; Mother's Day

May 19: Scholarship Recognition Sunday; Pentecost (wear red)

May 26: Memorial Day

Thank you to our April liturgists: Neil Deupree, Mike Rundle, Nathan Roehl.

If you would like to be a liturgist, sign-up in the Fireside Room, or logon to https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508084AABA722A0F85-fall/124247659#/

Thank you to our April Fellowship Hour hosts: Diana Huckstep, Outreach Ministry, Membership Ministry.

We would love to have you host Fellowship/Coffee Hour, sign up on the clip-board in the Fireside Room, or use this link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508084AABA722A0F85-fellowship

May *BIRTHDAYS*, Happy Day to All!



5 Marlene Gilmore
6 Ann Hyzer
6 Larry Maxson
10 Sonja Bagley
10 Dan Metzler
14 Sally Albers
14 Logan Slack
17 David Bagley
17 Tabitha Ebert
17 Jazlyn Murwin
19 Whitney Cioni
19 Andrea Slack
19 Tim Hopkins
21 Joy Prom
22 Rita Feirn
23 Lyle Anderson
25 Blake Budrow
26 Larry Barton
26 Keegan Spooner
29 Mike Rundle
31 Jim Briggs

If your name ever gets missed from the birthday or anniversary list, please let Becky know.

May ANNIVERSARIES, Congratulations



3 Tim & Jo Green
17 Barbara & David Bendlin
22 Norm & Joy Prom
29 Larry & Pam Maxson
31 John & Joellyn Merz

Thought for the month: Don't encourage false positivity. Be sad when you're sad. Cry if you must. Be angry if you are. Let it out. Then let it go. Honor your emotions, but always choose to dwell on the positive ones.

We no longer collect for Grocery Bag Sundays each month, but ECHO is always in need of food and non-perishables, which you can drop off during their business hours. Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

Life is an echo…
what you send out,
you get back!

ECHO May Needs:

Breakfast bars	Diapers (sz 4-6)	Toothbrushes	Spaghettios
Shampoo	Peanut butter & jelly	Feminine products	Tuna Helper
Paper bags	Spaghetti & sauce	Deodorant	Toilet paper
Hamburger Halper	Diced tomatoes	Canned Tuna	Laundry soap



The next Community Meal will be on Saturday, May 4th at 4:00 pm. Brown bag lunches will be available that include ham & cheese sandwiches, carrots, bananas, rice krispie bars.

Guests can drive up or walk up to the back parking lot door and meals will be delivered to them. Contact Bonnie Stalker or Nancy Stabb for more information or to volunteer for food prep or meal delivery.

SEEKERS BOOK CLUB NEWS



Seekers book discussion group meets on Thursdays from 4:00-5:30 pm on the 2nd floor of the church. They are reading the book, "Poverty, by America" by Matthew Desmond. You can attend even if you haven't read the book.

For further information, contact Barbara Bendlin at Barbara.bendlin@gmail.com

Again we're asking you to return your church key if you aren't on a committee and don't need it anymore.





On Sunday, May 19th we will honor graduates and scholarship recipients. If you know of someone who is graduating, please call or email the office with the information so they can be recognized in the bulletin.

Consistory Highlights from April 23rd

Consistory expressed appreciation for a great Easter service, especially the music; to Pastor Tanya for her years of service to this church; to Jean Schollmeier, Neil Deupree, and Darla Dernovsek for their work on the interim pastor search committee; to those who are facing personal challenges in their lives but continue to participate as active church leaders and members; and to Pastor Tanya for emphasizing on Sunday mornings that this church will remain a strong love and justice, LGBTQ and Immigrant Welcoming, progressive congregation.

Debi Cox, Director of Christian Education, has been accepted as a new UCC Member in Discernment. The church is honored to be supporting her in her path toward ordination.

The church's quarter 1 income is about $5,500 ahead of the budgeted amount. However, expenses are about $14,000 over the quarter 1 budgeted amount. The facilities line item is responsible for almost all this overage. The church has its regular expenses: pest control, Charter, water, and insurance, which has increased by almost $1,000. In addition, unexpected expenses have been incurred: installation of carpet in the office area, a $3,000 electric bill that was just received for work done two or three years ago, and boiler repairs.

The church will soon have two major bills from the city: one for bringing outside faucets up to code and the other for replacing a section of sidewalk on Dodge Street. A $1,200 donation has already been received toward the $3,000 cost of fixing the sidewalk. The remaining $1,800 will be covered by donations to a sidewalk fund. A church member will match future gifts to the sidewalk fund.

The sermon series "Learning to Say Goodbye" has been completed in preparation for Pastor Tanya's final Sunday on April 28. Rev. Shelby Perez will be the pulpit supply pastor for the first two Sundays in May.

In preparing for her departure, Pastor Tanya has arranged for a smooth transition of administrative duties as well as preparing a manual for the next pastor to use. The email to contact for pastoral requests for visits or for pastoral care or in the event of active dying or funeral preparations is pastor@janesvilleucc.org. Church secretary Becky Kingsbury is currently monitoring these messages.

The Janesville Gazette featured an article with pictures of the new stained-glass windows in the March 31 edition of the paper. The windows were dedicated in a special service on March 24.

<u>Ministry Updates</u>
Outreach—The CROP Walk is set for April 28, May's mission is Strengthen the Church, and plans are underway for a table at June's Pride celebration. Outreach is also considering a special worship service for the LGBTQ community during Pride month.
Finance—The ministry will soon have more accurate data regarding the endowment consolidation, items stored in fellowship hall will be sold in a rummage sale, and Mike Rundle is the contact for the YMCA's summer program.
Membership—People are donating to coffee hour expenses, plans have begun for a fundraiser, hospitality baskets will be placed in the restrooms, and welcome bags are being readied for Sunday visitors.

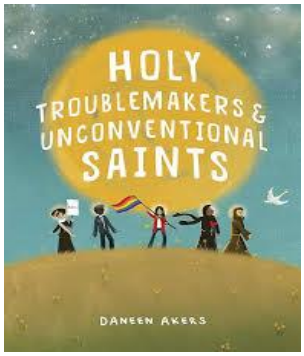
Submitted by Linda Stehura



SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH NEWS

MAY SUNDAY SCHOOL

We are excited to continue our Heroes series called "Feed My Sheep". I am using this book



to talk about people who live out this important Social Justice work.
May 5 & 12 we will talk about Kaitlin Curtice. https://www.kaitlincurtice.com/

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May 19 is PENTECOST SUNDAY. The kids will be doing something special in Service during the Children's Moment time. And we will have a Sunday School Lesson on Pentecost and the birth of the Church. DON'T FORGET TO **WEAR RED!**

NOTE: As usual, there will be no Sunday School in the Summer.

SUMMER CAMPS FOR EVERYONE!

Camps at Daycholah Check it out! There are camps for all ages.

https://ucci.org/daycholah-center/.

There are scholarships available to help cover the cost, but these are first come, first served and require you to apply for them online.

SEE DEBI FOR MORE INFO OR FOR HELP ACCESSING THE WEBSITE!



MAY 11 1:00 – 3:00 PM (second Saturday!)

There will be no "Coloring" in June, but look for an announcement for July!

DID YOU SEE OUR FRAMED POSTER IN THE FIRESIDE ROOM?

As always, Coloring with Friends is **intergenerational** and inclusive. EVERYONE is welcome. Invite strangers, friends and neighbors.

Would you like a reminder? Send Debi your text or email address!

Debi Cox
Director of Christian Education
debi@janesvilleucc.org
Church: 608-752-8716
Mobile: 651-387-4552
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
OPEN & AFFIRMING
IMMIGRANT WELCOMING
54 S. JACKSON STREET, JANESVILLE, WI 53548
JANESVILLEUCC.ORG

This is the glass plaque that was dedicated on March 24th.

Welcome to the

Spiritual Arts Center

This beautiful multipurpose space was first imagined in 2015 by our pastor Rev. Dr. Tanya Sadagopan with David Vollrath to create a lasting gift in memory of his parents. We are grateful for the Historic Renovation Committee and the Construction Team for their hard work over six years to bring this idea to completion. This is a space intended to host gallery shows, labyrinth walks, and a variety of classes. It is available for use by the church and community for weddings, receptions, and other special events.

Dedication celebrated on Sunday March 24, 2024.

The Spiritual Arts Center was made possible by the generous gifts from:

David, Dennis, and Douglas Vollrath in memory of their parents Verne and Laverne Vollrath
The Estate of Darlene McWilliams
The Estate of Maurice Montgomery
Richard and Joan Skyles
Richard Leyes & Lori Jones in memory of Elnora Leyes
Elizabeth and Alan Dunwiddie Fund
The Estate of Garnet Nobiensky
Barb Mork Cullen
The Endowment of First Congregational Church

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
United Church of Christ



Pastor Tanya, Dave Vollrath, Karel Cripe at reception.



From OUTREACH:

The Outreach Ministry May Mission is the Strengthen the Church Offering. The offering date is on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 2024. There will also be a video.

The funds raised by the Strengthen the Church offering are used to support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations.

The funds donated by our UCC members help to build up the Body of Christ in our world.



Hello to the members and friends of First Congregational UCC Janesville,

Some of you may remember me from my pulpit supply service in November and at an earlier date some eight years ago. I have gotten to know Pastor Tanya through our contact in arranging pulpit supply and for the past two years in our Community of Practice pastor's group.

I am a graduate of the Wisconsin Conference Lay Academy and have been providing pulpit supply almost from the start of Lay Academy in 2014. For the past four years I have been the part time pastor at Dane Immanuel UCC in Dane Wisconsin.

Rev Tanya has asked me to be the emergency on-call pastor for May which I am privileged to do. If anyone has any emergency concerns please contact the church office or the parish care team. My prayers are with you as you go through this time of change.

Blessings and Peace,
Alan Timm



May 5



Pastor Tanya's last day with us was April 28th, and we released her from her duties here. After the service there was a reception in the Spiritual Arts Center. Here are some pictures from that event:







Pam Maxson presenting gift to Pastor Tanya





Pastor Tanya presenting President Tom Clippert with one of her art pieces



Music Scholars



Rev. Rachel Bauman and Jamie Dieckhoff performing the Liturgy of Release



First Congregational Church
54 South Jackson Street
Janesville, WI 53548

This page was attached to the Tower Notes that were mailed.



First Congregational United Church of Christ

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday mornings 9:00 - 1:00 or by appointment.

Ministers	**All** Members of First Congregational UCC
Pastor	
Christian Ed. Director	Debi Cox
Music Director	Robyn Droege-Brennan
Pianist/Organist	Paul Finger
AV Technician	Kaydence Troia
Secretary	Becky Kingsbury
Bookkeeper	Denise Caldwell
Nursery Coordinator	Gwen Charlet
Custodian	Matthew Charlet

Church Leadership & Volunteers

President	Tom Clippert
Treasurer	Nancy Stabb
Finance Chair	Mike Rundle
Volunteer Coordinator	Diane Holtz
Gardeners	Nancy Stabb, Barbara Bendlin, Jeanine Fry, Tani Abendroth, Tabitha Ebert & Josh Streeter
Lawn Mowers:	Mark Carlson, Dave Schollmeier, Mike Rundle, Josh Streeter, Doug Newton, David Arndt