



JANUARY 2023



Brad Brookins
Interim Pastor

Dear members of First UCC,

As we are all aware, our Church has been going through a lot of changes in recent years. Some of these changes have been unwelcome. Like most churches, we have seen a decrease in active members as the congregation has continued aging. And, like most churches, three years of the Covid pandemic have taken a real toll. Many people who left their churches during those years are not coming back.

These developments have had two immediate effects. We have lost friends who used to worship with us, and that is a difficult loss. And we are receiving fewer donations to the church, which makes continuing as we have in past years very complicated.

We aren't the first church to face these difficulties and we certainly are not the only congregation facing them today. But we are facing them now and we will have to find a way to handle the situation we find ourselves in.

Our church finance committee presented consistory with a preliminary report, a more finalized report will be available soon, but the summary of what we know so far looks like this:

If our donations and expenses continue at the level of this current year (2022), and we have no more exceptional expenses—no major repairs on the building, that is, we will be able to meet our regular obligations for another 11 months or so from the general fund. After that we are in what is, for this congregation, uncharted territory.

The world is changing around us. The generations of people who were shaped by church as it was in decades past are themselves passing and most of us who remain, and much of the larger culture around us, simply don't have the relationship to the church our parents and grandparents knew. This doesn't mean, at all, that the church is going away. It does, however, mean that this church, in the future, will likely look a lot different than it has in the past.

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It's becoming clear that we are no longer a large church with lots of resources. But what we are now is this: a faithful, vital, talented, and determined *smaller* church that must learn to live within its means. That will probably be difficult, but it is certainly not impossible.

Here's what we need to know and trust today: being a faithful, vital, talented and determined *smaller* church is perfectly OK. We are still the church. We are still loved by God, still blessed with God's Spirit, still looking forward to a bright future.

Now, together, we will look to how God is calling us to live into this future.

On Sunday, January 15th we will have an important congregational meeting immediately following the worship service. We need you to be there so we can pray and think and talk together and, with the guidance of God's Spirit, begin to discern together the path by which First United Church of Christ will walk into God's future.

We just gathered for our Christmas Eve celebration where we heard the story of a baby born in a barn to poor parents who brings the presence and power of God into our lives and our world. We would consider this a very unlikely story had not Gabriel earlier told Mary, and reminded us, that "Nothing will be impossible for God!"

Now we are creating the story of the "re-birthing" of a church. This may seem to us equally unlikely. So, we have to remember—if, starting with nothing more than a manger, God can make Christmas happen, God can bring something new to life in us and in Sauk City.

In great hope,

Your 2022 consistory members & Pastor Brad





Christian Education News

What Has Been Happening

- We had a great turn out for decorating Christmas cards and having a gift drive for the H.E.L.P Program on December 4th.



- Wow! What an amazing job our youth did with the Christmas program December 11th. Thanks for all those that participated and encouraged our youth to get up there and share the story of Christmas.
- Happy Birthday Jesus was celebrated again this year during Sunday School and Confirmation Classes. It is always nice to keep that tradition going!

Coming up

- Classes resume January 8th for Christian Education.
- February 6th** we will be having our Church wide activity again but during January we need help **collecting: Cake Mixes, frosting, balloons, birthday candles, oil and applesauce.**
- During the months of **January and February** we will be collecting books for Hope House of Sauk County. Sam Logterman, a member of our church, is looking for help from our church for as his National Honor Society (NHS) project. **Bring in new and gently used books for young adults and under** to He is also challenging a few other churches in our area to try to see who can raise the most number of books. Look for the collection area across from the elevator in the entrance to the church.
- We will have Youth Group on **February 15th from 5:30-6:30.** Bring a flashlight to the church because we are going to be playing flashlight hide and seek in the church with the lights off! Bring a friend!
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- Check out Youth Group and Education Class Photos on our Church Connect Site
Christian Education Questions or Ideas please send to: firstuccsaukce@gmail.com



Members in Ministry – Outreach Ministry

Debbie Tschudy, Sherri Roberts, Liz Bongard, Peggy Ganser, Emily Fuchs, Carol and Rod Hehenberger, and Marcy Thurwachter

We have been busy visiting and making calls. It is such a joy to connect and stay in relationship with other members. In our holiday season and as past tradition, we delivered Christmas cookies to members in community nursing homes, assisted living residences, and homes. This group ministers, or attends, to the needs of others by visiting, making phone calls, or sending a note to those folks who may not be able to get here on a Sunday morning. Anyone with an interest is welcome to join in ministering to fellow members. It is fulfilling to reach out and serve others with a warm and loving heart as Jesus taught us.

If you know of any other members, or yourself, who are in need of a contact, whether it be permanent or temporary, please notify the church office (608) 643-8387. There are many reasons a person can become disconnected from our faith community. These are situations where relationships are so important for sustaining a sense of security and well-being. We want to make sure no one is left unattended or disconnected from the support and love and faith our church provides.



HELP US KEEP OUR CHURCH DIRECTORY UP TO DATE!

Please let us know if your mailing address, phone number or email address has changed or will change so we do not miss you in any church mailings.

We can send The Scoop and other informational mailings through the Post Office or by email. But using email saves a considerable amount of money for the church by using less paper, postage and secretarial time. Please let us know if you are willing and able to be on our email list for future mailings. If you want to receive paper copies through the US Mail we are happy to accommodate you on that, too.

Thank You For Making H.E.L.P. A Success!

Margaret McFarlane

The H.E.L.P. (Help Excite Little People) Project was a success! Families filled out wish lists and we fulfilled their wishes as best as we were able with the gently used toys and items for teens that we collected from our church and the community. We had a wonderful variety of good, used toys, and many brand new things. As in the past, the monetary donations were appreciated and were used to buy items that we were in need of and items for teens. On the day of the distribution, we provided 49 families (approximately 125 children and teens) with Christmas gifts! Heartfelt thanks for making the holidays brighter for our Sauk Prairie families!

Special thanks to...

- * Church and 4K staff who helped carry in the donated items from the collection bins
- * Cathleen Wilkinson for typing, taking phone messages, etc....
- * Pastor Brad for all his support and kind words
- * Kris Ballweg and the Sauk Prairie Food Pantry for distributing wish lists
- * Prairie Sampler Quilt Club for the beautiful blankets
- * Churches, schools, and organizations that collected items; First U.C.C. Sunday School, St. John's Lutheran Church of Prairie du Sac, SPNC 4K, SP Earthlings 4-H Club, Prairie Busy Badgers 4-H Club, students at Grand Avenue School and Bridges, and the Sauk Prairie Lions Club
- * Generous support from area businesses; Tools Of Marketing, McFarlanes' Retail Center, Bank Of Prairie du Sac
- * Mission Possible (Tim and Susan Herbrand) for their donations
- * Those who read our list of needed items on Facebook and searched for gently used items or went shopping to purchase them; Stephanie Sprecher and friends, Sue Herbrand, Kari Larsen, Marcy Thurwachter, Sharon Diehl, and the many people who dropped things off anonymously
- * Members that gave monetary donations, so we could fulfill wishes
- * The "elves" who diligently washed, repaired or organized items; Marcy and Steve Thurwachter, Gary and Sandy Schlender, Shirlee Lendved, Rod and Carol Hehenberger, Fred Kamps, Paul Jesberger, Jack and Judy Accola, Nadene Litscher, Dianna Woerpel, Taylor and Jeanann Breininger, Katie and Henry Homar, Dale and Becky Kowalski, Traci Schutt and family, Debbie Tschudy, Rose Kleinert, Carrie Finley, Tamara Straub, the Doug Larsen family, volunteers from Culver's Franchising, Kassie Gavol and friends, Amanda Moseman, Ally Moore, Misty Schmidt, Sharon Diehl, Tammie Huerth, Kathy Johnson, Peggy Ganser, Gavin Sprecher, Tom McFarlane, and the SPNC 4K Program
- * Individuals that helped pack the items in boxes and bags and carry all the organized boxes and bags upstairs on December 16
- Those who helped on the day of the distribution; Sandy Schlender, Jenny and Jesse Brickl, Rose Kleinert, Amanda Moseman, the Homar family, Sharon Diehl, Nadene Litscher, Tamara Straub, Tammie Huerth, and the Doug Larsen family.



- *Terry & Cindy Steuber
celebrating 40 years on
January 2nd*
- *George & Julie Perry celebrating
54 years on January 6th*
- *Jennifer & Bruce Pape cele-
brating 24 years on January 16th*

*Congratulations on your many years
together!*

Sauk Prairie

STOCK THE SCHOOLS

*Stock the Schools program suggested
donations for January:*

Granola and/or protein bars

Personal items:

**Mechanical pencils, markers, folders
and glue sticks**

**Radio
Ministry**



Sunday 9 am Worship Broadcast

**WRPQ Radio, AM 740, FM 99.7 or Live
Stream Audio from the WRPQ.com web-
site**

**Thank you to our January radio
sponsors:**

January 1st

**Brad & Lorna Brookins in gratitude for
the kindness and generosity of this
congregation**

**If you would like to remember or honor a
family member, group or friend by spon-
soring a Sunday morning worship service
radio broadcast or our monthly newslet-
ter, please contact the Church office for
available dates.**

*The cost of a radio broadcast sponsorship
is \$90.*

Scoop sponsorship is \$50

**Thank you for your support with
our Stock the Schools program.
Items may be dropped off during
Sunday worship on the bench
across from the elevator or outside
in the red bin located outside the
educational doors during office
hours.**



***Radio broadcast
sponsorship
reservations
are being
accepted for
2023!***

If you would like to sponsor a radio broadcast for a loved one or for any other special reason, please contact the church office via email, U.S. mail, phone call or check out the newest feature on our CHURCH CONNECT link on the First United Church of Christ website and reserve your date through the Church Connect link. There are many open dates to reserve. Sponsorship payments of ***\$90*** can be sent to the church office, dropped in the offering box, the U.S. mail, dropped off at the office during office hours or in the mailbox at the Education doors. (don't forget to add "radio sponsorship" to your memo line)



***End of Year Giving
Reminder!***

If you are 70 1/2 years old and are taking a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your retirement account, you can make a contribution directly to your church and avoid paying income taxes on the distribution.

Check with your tax adviser!



***Calling All Members
with Smart Phones!***

Help us get our New Church Software System in as many member's hands as possible. Scan the QR code below. Install the ***ChurchTrac Connect*** application and create a log-in for yourself. Be sure to use a great password only you will know. You will get a text message back when your account is granted. Many wonderful features; Bulletins, News, Church Calendars, online sign-ups for events, etc. will be coming your way on ***Connect!***



***S.P. Area Food Pantry
needs your help on
January 21, 2023.***

***Third Saturday of the month
9:30am-10:30am***

Sign up sheet and information will be in the Narthex.

New Year's Word Search

C	F	B	E	G	I	N	N	I	N	G	F	G	Y	O	P	R	X	C	X
C	E	R	X	Y	R	A	U	N	A	J	O	H	N	A	H	X	B	V	L
C	L	L	A	B	T	O	O	F	M	E	O	J	O	Y	O	P	Z	X	I
G	A	M	E	S	C	Y	L	I	P	K	D	K	E	S	Q	Y	L	I	K
N	I	A	I	B	C	D	D	O	F	H	F	A	Z	P	S	N	U	C	Z
E	I	T	D	C	R	N	H	P	P	A	R	T	I	E	S	A	V	C	I
W	X	J	L	R	I	A	O	D	L	Z	I	C	I	P	I	W	M	O	O
T	N	T	T	G	P	J	T	T	D	A	E	D	N	M	X	N	R	M	O
Z	U	Z	H	P	F	A	M	I	L	Y	N	W	C	F	E	C	Y	B	L
C	U	T	Y	Y	A	D	I	L	O	H	D	S	R	H	L	I	I	X	S
E	X	P	E	C	T	A	T	I	O	N	S	E	C	V	G	H	D	A	O
P	A	R	A	D	E	S	Y	E	N	G	S	V	F	P	A	T	D	B	U
V	P	R	S	V	M	O	A	E	O	O	E	H	G	U	R	F	G	B	K
Z	P	M	T	U	T	U	Z	S	L	G	Q	P	B	R	Q	M	O	O	Q
W	P	J	Q	E	H	O	U	U	C	J	Z	N	J	V	S	Y	B	O	Q
T	P	B	I	L	K	M	T	Y	U	G	N	G	H	D	C	H	L	V	I
C	L	Q	P	C	Y	I	C	Z	D	N	E	H	J	V	X	P	L	C	L
I	E	O	K	K	O	Q	J	V	E	L	J	J	C	V	K	V	C	W	S
O	B	E	N	N	U	B	K	L	J	X	X	O	I	X	K	L	L	X	X
K	U	U	S	C	X	Z	X	K	Z	V	U	I	W	S	W	V	Q	V	Q

Words to Find!

BEGINNING
FRIENDS
MIDNIGHT
TIME

CELEBRATIONS
GAMES
NEW
YEAR

EXPECTATIONS
HAPPY
PARADES
JOY

FAMILY
HOLIDAY
PARTIES

FOOD
HOPE
PLANS

FOOTBALL
JANUARY
RESOLUTIONS



January 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Ron Polacek Logan Diehl Brandon Kryzanowski	2 Todd Litscher	3	4 George Perry Gillian Luchsinger	5 Lynn Luchsinger	6 Dean Dahnert Dianna Woerpel	7 Jackson Rasmussen
8	9	10	11 Andrea Gaval Morgan Larsen	12	13 Georgia Selden	14 Suzanne Litscher
15	16 Macee Gulden	17	18	19	20 Henry Homar Marilyn O'Donnell	21
22	23	24	25 Robin Meier Kelly Riley	26 Marlene Larsen	27	28
29	30 Doug Larsen	31				

