

FEBRUARY 2020

Volume 35 - Issue 2

The Congregational COLUMNS

Moderator's Report

I always knew that First Church had amazing members, however this past year has been a most rewarding journey as I worked with all of our volunteers, boards and committees.

2019 began with some challenges at First Church, but we have overcome those and moved forward with many wonderful activities, programs and initiatives during the year.

We reorganized the staff with Jill Bruss moving to a new role as Financial Secretary, Marianne King joining as Office Coordinator and Mark Lund taking on additional responsibilities as Lead Custodian. My thanks to Cindy Walsh for her help in guiding the office through this transition.

Our focus this year was to implement and expand upon many of the wonderful ideas that came out of the Long Range Planning Retreats held in 2018.

The Communications Committee has implemented a robust marketing campaign with the theme *Under the Steeple*. They have installed new banners, used targeted direct mail and advertising. They have implemented an active social media program using Facebook and the Next Door and Patch platforms. They have just updated and put into place a wonderful new website that fully operates with desktops, cell phones and tablets.

Under the leadership of Pat Reddy, Peggy Griffith and Maddie Sgarlata, we now offer a worship service called *Saturday Under the Steeple*. This additional worship opportunity for the community is a casual, informal service held in the Chapel on Saturdays at 4:00 p.m..

The Community Through Understanding planning group has presented a number of programs to engage members and the community in discussions about other faiths, anti-Semitism, disability issues and the court system. Tonia Wallner, the CE Board and Jim Santelle have worked with their counterparts at St. Mark AME Church to engage the youth of each church and to work together on a community service project.

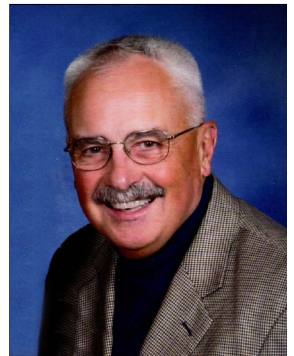
Thank you to all of our members and friends who stepped forward to commit to the Capital Campaign to replace the Elevator and renovate the Chancel. Thank you to all who responded to the recent Stewardship Campaign. Through your generosity we are able to balance the budget, support our staff and programs, reach out to those in need and maintain our beautiful building.

Thanks to past Moderator Marianne King and incoming Moderator Hank Collis.

All mainstream churches face the challenge of declining membership and increasing demands on the time of members and our children. First Church faces those challenges. However, under the spiritual guidance of Bill and Barry and the efforts of each of our dedicated members, I am confident that First Church will continue to move forward to serve the Lord.

It has been my honor to serve as your Moderator.

Blessings,
Jim Harris



THE COLUMNS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN WAUWATOSA

Service & Fellowship

Purloins of Wisdom

10^{am}-12^{noon} in the Library

We will meet the first Saturday of each month through the month of May.

Casual Worship

SATURDAY
UNDER THE STEEPLE

Saturdays at 4^{pm} in the Chapel

The Saturday service is a comfortable, "come as you are" worship time - whether it's right from running errands or before your evening plans. If you or someone you know might be looking for a new worship opportunity like this, please feel free to check it out and share with friends.

Taize-inspired Worship at FCC

We are pleased to again offer Taize-inspired worship during the 8am services in our Chapel: Feb. 16, Mar. 15, May 10, and June 14.

We invite you to join us for a time of reflection, meditation, and prayer through song and scripture.

Chancel Flowers for 2020

Floral arrangements are needed for various dates during the coming year. Consider giving flowers in honor of or in memory of someone special in your life. Please sign up on the board in the Atrium or call the Church Office at 414.258.7375 to schedule a date to provide flowers for the 10 am Worship Service.

It's the Ladies' Turn to Sing

The women of First Church are invited to join the Women's Chorus, which will sing for the 10^{am} Worship Service on Sunday, March 1st. It's an exciting opportunity for women who don't regularly sing with the choir to be a part of our music ministry.

There will be three Sunday rehearsals in the Choir Room from 9:00 - 9:30^{am}: February 9, 16 and 23. Please contact Dr. Patrick Dill at dillp@firstchurchtosa.org if you have questions. We're looking forward to seeing you in the Choir Room for our first rehearsal on February 9th.

Worship & Discovery

Adult Learning Hour

Sundays, 8:45 am in Room 107

We continue to follow Jesus through the four Gospels as he approaches the cross and resurrection. All are welcome and can come join us whenever your schedule permits. For more info, contact Pat at 414-771-8292.

Women's Ministry

Tuesday's 7:00 am in the Parlor

The group is working through the Book of Psalms and discussing how these ancient writings are still applicable in our modern world. Please bring your Bible and join us.

Men's Bible Study

February 5 & 19 in Room 107

Wednesdays, 6:30 am

Led by Bruce Milne, the group is currently studying the Book of Romans. Men's Bible Study meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. They do not meet on the 5th Wednesday of the month when it occurs.

Men's Ministry

February 12 & 26 in Room 107

Wednesdays, 6:30 am

The group is continuing with The History of Christianity: From the Disciples to the Dawn of the Reformation, featuring Luke Timothy Johnson, Ph.D. at Emory University -- one of The Great Courses DVD Series.

Operating Statement Summary

Year to Date as of December 2019

	Current Year	Prior Year
Pledge base received	99.0%	79.9%
Pledge Income	\$481,912	\$556,101
Total Income	\$676,513	\$727,665
Total Expense	\$631,071	\$672,157
Net Income	\$45,441	\$55,508

Detailed financials available at office.

CONGREGATIONAL COLUMNS

A monthly newsletter produced by the First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa to keep members and the community up to date on activities at the church.

www.FirstChurchTosa.org

Office Telephone
414-258-7375

On-Call Minister
414-258-7378

Rev. William S. Trump
Senior Minister

Rev. Dr. Barry W. Szymanski,
Minister of Pastoral Care

Tonia Wallner
Director of Christian Education

Dr. Patrick Dill
Director of Music

Rhonda Kwiecien
Keyboard Musician

Roxanne Trump-Miles
Dir. of Jr. & Cherub Choirs

Jillian Bruss
Financial Secretary

Marianne King
Office Coordinator

Cindy Walsh - Staff Support

Mark Lund - Custodian

Mark Saeger - Part-Time Custodian

Kale Lund - Sunday Custodian

Kari Leon - Nursery Supervisor

Cathy Denny - Columns Coordinator
sdenny1-cathy@wi.rr.com

First Congregational Church
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Like us on Facebook!

Off the Top of My Head

By Rev. William S. Trump, *Senior Minister*

The year ahead will be one thoroughly saturated in political rhetoric as we approach another major election in this nation. Throughout my career I have done my best to keep politics out of the pulpit. And yet, each time I step into that voting booth I wonder, how does my faith feed my political decision-making?

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion nor prohibit the free exercise thereof." What the First Amendment is saying is that government should stay out of religion, but religious people can exercise their faith in the influence of public policy.

Over the past fifty years, society has misinterpreted the Constitution. We've majored in the first part of the amendment while abandoning the second part, and in doing so, we have disenfranchised the gospel – politically, socially,



judicially, and culturally. One commentator wrote in these politically correct times, of a school essay turned in at Thanksgiving time. It read, "The Pilgrims came to these shores seeking freedom of you-know-what, so they could give thanks to you-know-who, so we, their descendants, could worship each Sunday, you-know-where."*

As Christians our decisions and relationships are guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is ridiculous to set these guiding principles aside when voting. I believe we live in a time and a society that desperately needs morals and guidance from people of faith. I pray that God will guide our nation in the year that lies ahead.

- Bill

*based on article by Stephen M. Crotts



The Board of Stewardship and Benevolences is gratified by the many appreciative thank you notes from organizations and individuals that we support. Please read a sampling of the thoughtful notes we received.

Milwaukee Rescue Mission

Because of your faithful support, hundreds of men, women and children who are hungry and homeless have been able to find nutritious meals, safe shelter and warm clothing at the Milwaukee Rescue Mission. And not just that – our education and recovery programs have helped those who come through our doors gain a fresh start.

Thank you for helping our neighbors who are struggling! God's best to all your families in 2020!

Gift of Adoption

Your organization's donation to support the Wisconsin Chapter gives hope to parentless children waiting to be united with a family to call their own. Gift of Adoption grants remove the financial barriers that often prevent or delay a child's adoption, giving an otherwise at-risk child the loving family he or she needs to thrive.

Thank you for joining us in our mission.

National Association of Congregational Christian Churches
– *Happy Life Children's Home, Kenya; Mission School of Hope, Cameroon; Asociacion Civil Cristiana, Argentina; Mission Mazahua, Mexico*

Thank you for your recent gift to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC). We appreciate your support, and want you to know that your contribution helps to sustain programs and projects, and fulfill dreams in the ministries of our missions. We are grateful for your commitment and your expression of fellowship represented by your gift. Blessings in Christ and in All the Good Work that you do.

NACCC Shared Ministries Fund

Your support and dedication is deeply appreciated, and we want you to know it helps our Association of Christian Churches promote the love of Jesus Christ and advance the Kingdom of God.

The National Association remains focused on making a difference in the lives of our member churches, by providing services, programs, financial support and fellowship opportunities. However, all this can only be made possible through contributions such as yours.

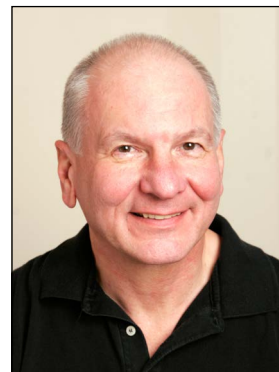
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A Note From Pastor Barry

By Rev. Barry W. Szymanski, *Minister of Pastoral Care*

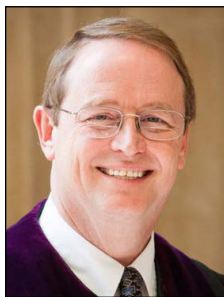
We are adept at putting up barriers when we don't want to communicate with others or are required to do something we feel to be unpleasant. We set up obstacles to anything we have to do which we don't perceive to be fun. It doesn't make any difference whether the task is at work or at home. So we, like Dilbert, are creative in sidestepping what we need to do. Even in communication at home, family members erect barriers to avoid serious conversations. Therefore we have to ask ourselves whether, in the spiritual world, we place impediments to God. Perhaps one excuse we make is that we don't have time. When we look at Jesus at his baptism, we see that Jesus accepted his role of what God the Father wanted of him. Then he spent forty days in the desert for his final preparation before his public ministry. After he chose his apostles, he preached, taught, healed, and then undertook his cross. Jesus did not seek out excuses to impede what his Father asked of him. What about us? Most of us have an idea of what gifts we have been given by birth, family, education, and culture – and we have an idea of how better we can love those around us – and what good we can accomplish. On the other hand, how does our anger push others away from us and from God? How does our coveting our neighbors' goods, stuff, cars, and homes push us away from God? We know that pride and greed and anger cause people to become more and more selfish and insular. Therefore, whether we set up barriers such as a lack of time, or just let our lack of virtue control us, creating excuses and obstacles so we don't have to have a serious conversation with God in prayer can tell us a lot about ourselves.

- Pastor Barry



FCC Lenten 2020 Program

Deacons is pleased to announce a very special 2020 Lenten Program. On three consecutive Sundays – March 15, 22 and 29 – we will present a three-part video presentation featuring the Reverend Brett Younger, Ph.D., noted writer, speaker and humorist. The program will begin at 11:15 a.m. following the worship service and will include lunch.



Rev. Younger was Bible Lecturer for the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference in Cleveland this past June. He based his lecture on the conference theme: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:21)." Using humor and insight, he guided the audience to the many treasures found in the Gospel of Mark. He encouraged Christians to discover how much more the Bible reveals to us when we read with an open heart and inquisitive mind.

Rev. Younger is senior minister at the historic Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York, founded in 1847. Its first minister was famous Congregational preacher Henry Ward Beecher. Prior to that Rev. Younger was associate professor of preaching at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology.

Please sign up at the Gathering Table in the Atrium.

Something for Everybody at the Chili & Dessert Cook-off & Bake-off

Nothing beats a bowl of chili on a cold winter day! On Sunday, February 16th, you can eat chili until you radiate more heat than asphalt in August. Once again, Fellowship will host the ever-popular Chili Cook-off / Dessert Bake-off in the Social Hall immediately following the 10 am worship service. The top three winners in both the chili and dessert categories will be chosen by the diners. In addition to taste-testing the competing chilis, you are invited to enjoy a bowl of chili and all the fixings provided by The Fellowship Board.

Watch for the sign-up sheet on the Gathering Table in the Atrium. Whether you eat or compete, you won't want to miss this tasty event!

Contest Procedures - February 16th

- Bring entries to the Social Hall between 7:45^{am} - 10:00^{am}
- Provide a name or description for your entry, and it will be assigned a number for voting.

Chili entries - you provide a crockpot to keep it warm.

Dessert entries - should be cut into small 1" x 1" pieces.

- After finishing taste-testing, each individual may cast one vote for best chili and one vote for best dessert.
- At the end of the meal, the chilis and desserts with the most votes will be announced and first, second, and third place prizes will be awarded.

What's Going On With The Organ?

In 1966, First Church installed the Möller organ, with a total 2300 pipes in 41 ranks. As with any instrument of this magnitude and complexity, there are multiple components that must work together to ensure the instrument functions optimally.



In December, the electrical system of the organ was compromised during a power surge in the church. Problems with the electrical components made the organ unusable for a time. David Beyer and John Meyer from Riedel and Associates, our organ service provider, have been working to assess the situation and resolve the issues caused by the power surge. At the time this was written, they had restored some function to the instrument and, on Sunday, Jan. 5th, I was once again able to play the organ for our 10 am service.

We are blessed at First Church to have this beautiful instrument as part of our worship. I will continue to share updates on the situation as they are available.

Most respectfully,
Rhonda Kwiecien

Thank You's

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We are grateful for your commitment and your expression of fellowship represented by your gift.

FCC Scholarship Program

I find myself in the midst of my final year of college at U.W. Green Bay. My grades have been keeping up, and I have high hopes as my final semester approaches. All of your support has made my college time that much easier. As I pursue a biology major with Environmental Science minor, I hope the New Year treats all of you well.

Many thanks, *Russell Mason*

Thank you for your continued support of my college education. I'm extremely grateful and have been putting your gift to good work. This past term, I received good grades in my four classes, and I am looking forward to my new term, planning to major in both Computer Science and English. Thank you for your help in my ongoing dream of attending college.

- *Jeff Mason*

In 2019, First Church donated a total of 149 gift cards to the **Milwaukee Rescue Mission**. And, once, more we were the largest single support of the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Giving Tree program.

These thank you notes are a reminder of how blessed we are as a congregation and how appreciated we are by those we support.

- *Board of Stewardship & Benevolence*

This season's 4 O'clocks Concert Series continues the First Church tradition of bringing unparalleled musical performances to Wauwatosa.

Discover what devoted audiences from our congregation and the community already know – First Church is a center for musical excellence.

4 O'clocks CONCERT SERIES — 2019-2020 —

You'll want to put the season's upcoming concerts on your calendar:

FEBRUARY 16, 2020 Molinari and Yarmel Duo

The Romance of the Flute and Harp

The duo of Kelsey Molinari and Heather Yarmel, members of Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, celebrate Valentine's Day with an afternoon of intimate serenades for flute and harp by Mozart, Rossini, Saint-Saens, and more.



MARCH 15, 2020 Elina Chekan, Guitar

From Rock to Baroque

Enjoy the expressive, delicate, versatile sounds of a classical guitar. Born in Minsk, Belarus, and educated at Yale, UWM instructor Elina Chekan will amaze you with her prowess.



APRIL 5, 2020 Palm Sunday Concert at FCC

Dr. Patrick Dill, Music Director

The FCC Choir and Soloists of First Congregational Church present Mozart's three-movement offertory, Benedictus sit Deus, KV117, and the sublime Requiem of Fauré to commemorate the observance of Holy Week.



MAY 17, 2020 Milwaukee Handbell Ensemble

Lights, Camera, Handbells!

Kaethe Grabenhofer, Director

The Milwaukee Handbell Ensemble takes you to the movies for a star-studded musical trip to Hollywood!



*All concerts are at 4:00pm followed by a reception.
There is no charge; however,
free-will donations are gladly accepted.*

JUST FOR YOUTH

February 2020



Sunday School

*Sunday, February 2, 9, 16, and 23
for ages 3 – 5th grade*

Children will begin in church with their families during 10^{am} worship. They will be dismissed to Sunday School during the service.

Discovery Kids

*Sunday, February 2, 9, 16, and 23
for kids of all ages in LL5*

Kids enjoy this special time of additional activities led by volunteers at 9^{am}, before their traditional Sunday School at 10^{am}. Those who rehearse with the choir will join them after practice. Older youth are invited to help lead.

Junior Choir

*Sunday, February 2, 9, 16, and 23
for grades 2-8*

Meet at 9:00^{am} in LL4

Sing on Sunday, February 23.

Faith Finders

*Monday, February 10
for grades 1 – 5*

This group meets on the second Monday of the month for singing, fellowship, games, and program time. They begin with an optional dinner at 5^{pm}, followed by programming from 5:30 - 6:30^{pm}. Friends are welcome! Come and enjoy tacos and a Valentine's Day celebration. No cost, but donations for the meal are appreciated.

Covenant Class

Sunday, February 2 and 16
Group meets at 8:30^{am}
in the Conference Room.

Pilgrim Fellowship (PF)

*Sunday, February 2, 9, 16, and 23
for grades 6 – 12*

Teens will begin in church with their families during 10^{am} worship and will be dismissed to PF during the service. Next PF Outing TBD.

Be a Secret Buddy!

Six years ago, we started the Secret Buddy program with the intent to connect the generations of our church. It has been an incredible success! During the upcoming Lenten season, our children in 1st-5th grades will again be 'pen pals' with our interested adult members. Then, they will meet their Secret Buddy after worship on April 19th.

More details will follow, but we are seeking adult volunteers to be a Buddy to one of our First Church children as soon as possible. This way, we can get our children and adults paired up and ready to start the program in early March. We know that, as in past years, this will be a rewarding experience for the children and adults alike.

Please let Tonia know if you are interested in participating, either in person, via e-mail (tonia@firstchurchtosa.org), or via phone (414-258-7375, ext.230).



Youth Mission Trip Italian Dinner and Silent Auction

Save this date, April 4th, 2020 -

For a wonderful evening of fellowship and fantastic food prepared by Chef John Sgarlata!



The members of the Youth Mission Team of FCC are excited to be preparing for the physical and caring support we will be offering Pittsburgh's surrounding communities during the week of June 20-26, 2020.

To make this opportunity possible, FCC is holding a fundraising Italian Dinner/Auction. Your support will go directly to offset the costs for the Youth to participate in this life-changing event. Watch for more information and ticket sales in mid-March.



Would you, your place of work, or someone you know have something to contribute to the Silent Auction? Now is a great time to start planning or coordinating for donation items. No donation is too small! Put together a themed basket, donate an item/tickets and we'll pair them, or make a monetary donation and we'll do the shopping to complete a "basket".

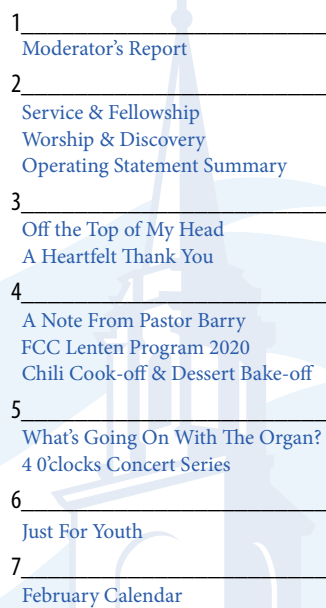
If you have a question, please call the church office at 414-258-7375 or email Cathy Denny at sdenny1-cathy@wi.rr.com.

The First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa
1511 Church Street
Wauwatosa, WI 53213-2593

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