

TOWER NOTES

First Congregational United Church of Christ

54 South Jackson Street, Janesville, Wisconsin 53548-3837
(608) 752-8716 firstcon@tds.net www.janesvilleucc.org



WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY 2012

*You are invited to read the Bible passage prior to coming to church each Sunday. Please remember, we do post an audio version of **BOTH** the entire worship service and sermon to the website each week.*

February 5, 2012: Theme: **Tension**
 Liturgist: Gee Gee Jannene
 Scripture: Mark 6:1-29
 Greeters: *Your Name Here*
 Fellowship: Chocolate Extravaganza!!

Okay, really bad title of a sermon for Annual Meeting Sunday. But, the truth is that life in community is not always easy. There are times we say and do things that hurt each other. In moments when things are going well, it is faithful to think about and pray about rocky roads we encounter in life. So, relax...things are great...but let's prayerful consider how our faith calls us to act when we hit a bump in the road. Since chocolate is one way to get through a tough spot, ***please bring some to share for Annual Meeting.***

February 12, 2012: Theme: **How Others See Us**
 Liturgist: *Your Name Here*
 Scripture: Mark 8:27-9:13
 Greeters: Wayne Steinhoff
 Fellowship: Carrie Williams

It is difficult to not get caught up in what others say about us or how others describe us. We see ourselves sometimes through other people's eyes. Jesus, too, asked the question about what others were saying. How does this passage help us live our life in this time and place?

February 19, 2012: Theme: **Faith Formation Celebration**
 Liturgist: *Your Name Here*
 Scripture: Mark 9:30-50
 Greeters: *Your Name Here*
 Fellowship: Faith Formation Sunday

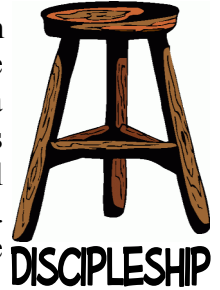
Join us as we celebrate and welcome Haley Budrow and Nate Merz into the church. We will ground ourselves in the grace of God that is part of all our faith journeys. Cake will be served after Worship today.

February 26, 2012: Theme: **Stuffed with Stuff**
 Liturgist: *Your Name Here*
 Scripture: Mark 10:17-31
 Greeters: *Your Name Here*
 Fellowship: Lent Event Potluck

Throughout Lent, we will seek to make concrete connections between Sunday and Monday morning. I believe that what we do at church matters in how we live our life every day. On the first Sunday of Lent we will pause to consider what the blessings and the concerns the physical stuff of our life bring. We will celebrate Holy Communion to give us strength for the forty days of Lent.

Thank you to our Ushers in February: Tim and Jo Green; Warren Myers; Blake and Julie Budrow

1) I continue to encourage you to read the passage from Mark **BEFORE** coming to church on Sunday. This will help you have your own ideas and thoughts on the passage before you hear me read it and preach on it. I firmly believe the collaboration of your thoughts and mine are what a *homily* (which means ‘conversation’) is all about. I also encourage you to also read the passages in Mark that fall in-between what I will be reading and preaching on Sunday morning. I will comment on these in-between passages on my blog, www.gracetraces.blogspot.com if that helps. The thought is by the time you arrive at Easter Sunday you will have read or re-read the whole gospel of Mark.



2) Our Wednesday morning Bible study class is continuing to go through a course called *The Greatest Story*. This is an overview of Scripture. This is a great chance to see the forest for the trees. Bible study starts at 10:00 am and ends by 11:30 am each Wednesday. All are welcome and invited.

3) Beginning on **Saturday March 10th** there will be a NEW class called: **Breakfast and the Bible**. I realize not everyone can make it on Wednesday morning and want to provide an opportunity for others to engage in conversation about scripture, ask questions, and sense God’s spirit moving. Breakfast will be served, coffee will be hot, and we all need something to get us through the last weeks of winter! This class will nourish you and connect you to others. ***We will be studying the Gospel of Mark.***

Lent 2012 – From the Pew to the Cubical–

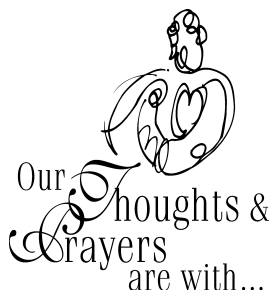
How Sunday has ***EVERYTHING*** to do Monday

Lent this year will ponder the question, how our faith impacts our life Monday through Saturday? We will gather for worship with our friends from 1st Presbyterian, 1st Christian, and Faith Lutheran. Below is the schedule for the end of February through March. We are still planning Holy Week and as soon as decisions are made, we will publish them for you.

Ash Wednesday – February 22nd: 12:15 pm at 1st Presbyterian – Pastor Anne Andert preaching
6:30 pm at Faith Lutheran

For the services below there are two similar services. One is at **12:15 pm** at 1st Presbyterian Church (17 North Jackson Street) with soup served following the service. The other service is at **6:30 pm** at Faith Lutheran Church (2116 Mineral Point Rd). Soup is served before the service starting at 5:30 pm. Due to coordinating with the other pastors, Wes will be at the evening service only once on February 29th and otherwise at the noon service only. God grant you a holy Lent.

Wednesday, February 29th: “Just Doing My Job” - Pastor Wes preaching
Wednesday, March 7: “Being There for Somebody” - Pastor Dee Ann Woods preaching
Wednesday, March 14: “Decisions, Decisions” - Pastor David Andert preaching
Wednesday, March 21: “Courage to Change” - Pastor Bruce Jones preaching
Wednesday, March 28: “Where the Rubber Hits the Road” - Laity sharing experiences



CHURCH FAMILY JOYS & CONCERNS: *Diana Pike, Max Mueller, Gloria Walker, Judy Vollrath, the People of Haiti, Rick Hartung, Cindy Showers, Angela Dravus' Aunt Wendy Meier, the Phoulavan Family, the family of Patty Piek-Groth, the Family of Dorothy Babcock, the family of Ruth Mittness, Marshall Purdy and the family of Doris Purdy, the Family of Mary Louise Corey, Mike Rundle, all those recovering from recent health procedures and all those with upcoming surgeries.*

Lent 2012 – From the Pew to the Cubical–

How Sunday has **EVERYTHING** to do Monday **Devotional** Coming soon to your email in box or pick up a paper copy

During Lent this year you will have the opportunity to receive a daily devotional thought from the church through email or you can pick up a copy of the devotional each week at church. The devotional will be a “work in progress” to help you as you live your life as “faith in progress”. The devotional is meant to help you center your thoughts as you work, volunteer, clean your house, run errands, and all the other items on your to-do list. It will be written each morning of Lent and sent to you through email. If you do not have email, you can request a paper copy be printed each week and it will be waiting for you the following Sunday in church. This is a great way each day to center yourself in God’s presence every day. Please sign up and give the information below to Pastor Wes or you can email him at firstconpastor@tds.net God bless you and grant you a holy Lent.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Check if you want a printed copy _____

Check here if you would like a copy mailed to you and include your address:



Our church is blessed with four scholarship funds for members of our congregation who are pursuing higher education. Active membership in First Congregational Church is a common requirement. Some funds may be used by anyone regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, type of education being pursued. One has an age limit, one limits the total number of grants any one individual, and one is restricted to seminary education. In short, there are funds available for most any kind of additional education thanks to the generous forethought and generosity of past and present members of this congregation. Below is a brief summary of each of our scholarship funds.

BIDWELL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS - The eligibility requirement for a scholarship is that the applicant must be a member of this congregation. Beyond membership, having a demonstrative history of active participation in the life of this church and having achieved high scholastic marks in high school are subsequent criteria. A recipient may receive a total of two awards from this scholarship fund, and must be under the age of 27.

SAENGER, FRICK, McBLAIR, LEE SCHOLARSHIPS - First Congregational membership, financial need, application quality, and educational goals are some of the criteria for consideration and awards.

GRISWOLD SCHOLARSHIP FUND - This fund is designated for support of students seeking theological seminary education.

GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND - One must be a member of this congregation to be eligible for a scholarship. There are no restrictions to age, frequency of grants, education sought. This is our most open and flexible fund.

Scholarships are available to any eligible First Congregational Church member. Contact Carrie Kolanda in the church office for an application. Depending on the scholarship, grants are available for high school seniors, continuing education students, and any adult pursuing additional education and training for colleges or technical colleges. Completed scholarships applications with the most recent grade transcript are due into the church office by March 12th.



In December ECHO representatives Gary Teubert and Mary Hunt delivered 37 pounds of food donations to ECHO - The ECHO Board and Clients would like to thank everyone who continues to donate, it is greatly appreciated.

First Congregational Church also raised \$1,324.00 for ECHO



By the time you read this there will be only one more Sunday left to participate in the Adam and Eve competition. At the printing of *Tower Notes*, it is not looking good for the guys. The ladies have a hefty lead at **\$97.64**, while the guys sit at **\$48.94**. Gentleman, it is now the fourth quarter. We need a hail mary pass to the end zone, a last second shot from mid-court, insert whatever sport's analogy works for you... basically, we need a miracle.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to make this such an amazing and fun competition. Thank you to everyone for your contributions to Youth Group.

The Youth Group will be making handmade subs on February 5th for you to enjoy even though the Packers are not playing, it is a great way to still have a warm feeling on that day. We look forward in the coming weeks to a sledding outing, participating in CROP walk this April, and other fun events.



Our nursery attendant Karra Killoy will be taking some maternity leave in mid-March through April and we need some help caring for and living out our baptismal promises to our youngest children. If you would be willing to help in the nursery for one or two Sundays, please see Pastor Wes soon. Thank you for your help. God's blessings to Karra and Ben on the upcoming birth of their child.

The 2012 Annual Meeting of First Congregational UCC will be on Sunday, February 5, 2012 at 11:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary. Please note... The Annual Report is available in it's entirety on the church website.



The Worst Hard Time
(978.03) by
Timothy Egan

With journalistic skill, Egan uses eyewitnesses of the 1930's events in the part of the grassy plains that were most affected by the Dust Bowl phenomenon. He makes the period of the early settlement and the years leading up to the 1930's both entertaining as well as informative. Hindsight allows us to look back at the events that led to the destruction of the natural ecosystem of the plains, with an advantage the farmers did not have. What began as free homestead lands, encouraged by the government to be used for farming, became tragedy in the late 1920's and throughout the 1930's. The author helps the reader to feel concern for the people who settled the land, and their descendants, whom he interviewed. One of several things leading to the cause of the destruction of the ecosystem was the great wheat bubble. More land was plowed to harvest more and more wheat when the bottom dropped out of the market in the late 1920's. The author details the process that turned the grassy plains into a wasteland. Nature had a great part in the story, with drought and winds doing what they can do to cover the territory with vast dunes that blew against buildings, partially burying homes, barns and livestock. This book is well worth reading, whether or not you are concerned for the future of the planet. This story is a warning against disrupting nature. I heartily recommend it!

Mary Hunt, Church librarian

From the Desk of the Christian Education Coordinator

Greetings to all! I would like to thank everyone who helped to make the New Year's potluck on January 15th so much fun! We were blessed with a great turnout, a bounty of food, and wonderful volunteers helping from set up to clean up (and everywhere in between)! If you missed out on all the fun, don't fret, just plan to come to the Lent Event following worship on February 26th! ☺

As many of you know, the children of the church have started a new mission for the children's offering. They have a goal to collect \$250.00 throughout the year to donate to the *Blankets +* program through Church World Service. Please visit www.churchworldservice.org or contact Jamie Dieckhoff for more information about this worthwhile cause. If you would like to contribute, feel free to use the offering envelopes located by the children's welcoming area in the sanctuary, and be sure to look for updates as we work towards our goal.



Happy Valentine's Day!

~ Jamie Dieckhoff
Christina Education Coordinator



Please mark your calendars as all are invited to a special



LENT EVENT

following worship on February 26th
in Fellowship Hall.

Join us for food, fun, and fellowship as we celebrate



Can you lend a helping hand in the 2 year old class?

We are in need of volunteers to offer one Sunday per month in our new classroom. If you feel a calling to help with this important ministry, please contact Jamie Dieckhoff at 466-4696 (h), 752-8716 x206 (w), or jamdkoff1@yahoo.com.

Thanks for prayerfully considering this wonderful opportunity to live out your baptismal promises to the children of our church family.



Sunday School Schedule



- 5th: WPOG* - *Invited to God's Banquet*
- 12th: WPOG - *Expectations*
- 19th: WPOG - *Divine Illumination*
- 26th: Kids sing in worship - meet at 9:30
Communion Sunday - 6th-8th in worship
WPOG - Unit 5: People of the Covenant
Sign of God's Promise
LENT EVENT - following worship

- 4th: WPOG - *Keeping the Faith*
- 11th: Camp Sunday (in worship)
WPOG - *A Passionate Way*
- 18th: WPOG - *God So Loved...*
- 25th: WPOG - *The Heart of the Matter*

**Whole People of God*: Pre-K through 5th grade classes

Friday, February 10, 2012 - 6:00 P.M.
First Congregational United Church of Christ
54 South Jackson Street
Janesville, Wisconsin

PASTA, POETRY,



*Bring a poem
to share, if
you desire*



& PIANO XXI

Menu

Homemade Lasagna

Fettuccini & Linguine
with sauces

Herb Garlic Bread

Mediterranean Salad

Wine with dinner

Spumoni & Pazzelles

Decaffucino

Featuring:

Musicians: Joanne Bauman

Brian & Jan Knutson



Hosted by:

Gee Gee & Dean Jannene

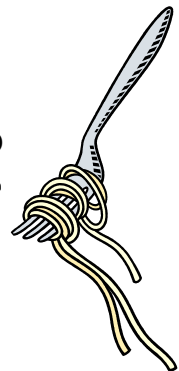
Joellyn & John Merz

Kimberly & Nancy Restivo

Jean & David Schollmeier

Linda Stehura

Mary & Bill Williams



Reservations Required - Call 752-8716

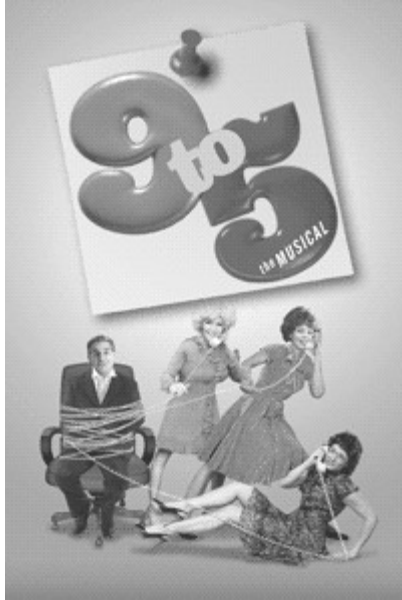
ALL PROCEEDS to benefit **Habitat for Humanity**

Limited Space Available

One Night Only

\$15.00 minimum donation





**You are invited to an afternoon
of food and fun.
Join us at the Fireside
for dinner and
“9 to 5” The Musical
on Sunday, April 15, 2012**

Take a hit movie comedy. Add the wonderful music of the one and only Dolly Parton and you have a musical comedy to delight and thrill audiences young and old. Direct from Broadway and the 1st National Tour, The Fireside is proud to be the first professional theatre in the state to produce the smash hit musical 9 TO 5. It's a madcap tale about three talented and resourceful women who declare war on their tyrannical boss. What ensues is a fast moving, hilarious romp filled with great songs, lively dances, and nonstop fun. Be among the first to see this Broadway blockbuster at The Fireside.

Thirty spots have been reserved. Cost per person is \$66.00. Reservations and payment deadlines are Monday, March 12th. Make your check payable to First Congregational Church.

Seating for dinner begins at 2:30 p.m. and show time is 5:00 p.m.



Name: _____ Number of Tickets _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Mail to First Congregational Church, 54 South Jackson Street, Janesville, WI 53548, or
drop off your slip and check at the church office -
Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. & Friday 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Spotlight on Consistory

The January Consistory Meeting focused on discussing and approving the proposed budget for 2012. Consistory is recommending a balanced budget for 2012 which includes several reductions in line items to match the actual costs. The 2012 budget includes a reduction in the youth group mission trip line item to reflect that reality that the youth group will now take trips *every other year*. The youth group will take focus on local or Wisconsin based mission in the alternative years. Overall the congregation will still offer \$1500.00 of support which can now be spread out over two years helping our budget. The proposed budget includes a 1% raise for all staff, 1% raise for Our Church's Wider Mission, and increase for repairs/maintenance around the church. The budget is on the agenda for discussion/amendments/approval at our Annual Meeting on **February 5, 2012**.

The Consistory did set the agenda for the Annual Meeting on **February 5, 2012**.

The Consistory received the notification that the YWCA gave 30 days notice for the Laurel House (the home that sits in-between the church's education wing and ECHO). The YWCA will move out officially by January 31, 2012. As of the end of December no women were living in the home or adversely affected. *No formal decisions were made about the future of the house*. All options are currently being prayerfully considered including: renting to another non-profit or the possibility of razing the house. A balance between listening for God's Spirit, being a good neighbor and the liabilities of a vacant home is being sought. We appreciate the Congregation's prayers for the YWCA and for our church as we make a decision in the coming months. You may talk to Pastor Wes or John Merz if you have thoughts about the Laurel House's future.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Income and Expense Statement - December 2011

| | <u>Current Period</u> | <u>Year to Date</u> | <u>Annual Budget</u> | <u>YTD Prior Year</u> |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Pledges & Offerings | 33,389.22 | 245,575.50 | 232,000.00 | 249,828.69 |
| Missions | 125.00 | 8,680.13 | 0.00 | 10,268.50 |
| Property - Rent | 1,321.46 | 18,159.60 | 14,280.00 | 15,548.00 |
| <i>Total Income</i> | \$44,125.51 | \$300,513.00 | \$250,280.00 | \$308,917.84 |
| Denominational Expenses | 2,825.01 | 18,244.41 | 19,140.00 | 19,356.54 |
| Membership Expenses | 80.25 | 936.09 | 950.00 | 857.07 |
| Program Expenses | 215.36 | 5,925.40 | 3,600.00 | 8,423.40 |
| Education Expenses | 75.05 | 14,287.59 | 4,850.00 | 22,728.35 |
| Personnel Expenses | 11,484.07 | 153,033.32 | 156,053.00 | 149,317.49 |
| Administrative Expenses | 1,336.44 | 7,356.01 | 6,650.00 | 6,872.47 |
| Church Facility Expenses | 6,532.17 | 56,135.19 | 60,050.00 | 60,185.69 |
| <i>Total Expenses</i> | \$26,100.70 | \$267,623.59 | \$254,693.00 | \$280,789.90 |
| <i>Excess Income/Expenses</i> | \$18,024.51 | \$-498.62 | \$-4,413.00 | \$28,127.94 |

FEBRUARY 2012

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 29 9:00 AM Budget Listening Session 9:50 AM Worship 11:30 AM Faith Formation Meeting | 30 Wilson Breakfast Club | 31 Wilson Breakfast Club | 1 Wilson Breakfast Club 10:00 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM All Ministry Night | 2 Wilson Breakfast Club | 3 Wilson Breakfast Club | 4 4:00 PM Community Meal |
| 5 Annual Meeting (Following Worship) 8:45 AM Youth Group Sub Making 9:50 AM Worship | 6 6:30 PM Finance Ministry | 7 | 8 10:00 AM Bible Study | 9 | 10 6:00 PM Pasta, Poetry & Piano | 11 11:00 AM Doris Purdy Memorial Service |
| 12 9:50 AM Worship 11:00 AM Parish Response Group 11:30 AM Faith Formation Meeting | 13 7:00 PM Outreach Ministry | 14 7:00 PM Consistory | 15 10:00 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Green/Rock Audubon Society Meeting | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 9:50 AM Worship | 20 | 21 | 22 10:00 AM Bible Study 12:15 PM Ash Wednesday Service 6:30 PM Ash Wednesday Service | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 9:50 AM Worship (Children's Choir Sings) 11:15 AM Lent Event | 27 4:00 PM Membership Ministry | 28 1:00 PM Linus Blanket "Tie-In" (Janet Hay's Home -- 1801 Royal Oaks) 5:30 PM Janesville Presents! Meeting 7:00 PM Christian Education Ministry | 29 10:00 AM Bible Study 12:15 PM Lent Service 6:30 PM Lent Service | 1 | 2 | 3 4:00 PM Community Meal |

NewsLetter **DEADLINE**

February Tower Notes Articles Due
on February 22, 2012
Assembly on February 29, 2012
Volunteers are always welcome and appreciated!!!



Return Service Requested

First Congregational Church
54 South Jackson Street
Janesville, WI 53548-3837

Deliver No Later Than February 1, 2012

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