

First Congregational United Church of Christ

January 5, 2025

WE HAVE COME
TO WORSHIP HIM.



Matthew 2:2



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

January 5, 2025 9:30AM
Second Sunday after Christmas ~ Epiphany ~ Communion Sunday

PRELUDE

Dr. Nathan Birkholz, *organ*

CALL TO SILENCE & RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME

**Please Rise in Body or Spirit*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Arise, shine, for your light has come!

All: The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.

One: Let us praise the Lord together.

**All: The Lord will be our light,
And God will be our glory.**

One: Thanks be to God!

*OPENING HYMN (see bulletin page 6)

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (Jesus, the Light of the World)

ELDERKIN

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(During the Children's Message, the prayer request cards will be collected. After the Children's Message, the children leave with the director and return to partake in communion with their families.)

CHILDREN'S HYMN #160 (Sung by All as the children exit)

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

GO TELL IT

Refrain:

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: O God, our guide, you used a star to lead people to Christ.

We let ourselves become confused, distracted, and lose our way.

We fail to follow the signs you provide.

Forgive us and lead us home again. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 2:1-12

Debbie Wagner

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SERMON *"Overwhelmed with Joy"*

Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey

*HYMN (see bulletin pages 7 & 8)

I Am the Light of the World!

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Refrain introduced by cantor, then repeated by All

St. 1-3 sung by cantor, with Refrain (sung by All) after each stanza

St. 4 & Refrain sung by All

OFFERING

CALL TO THE OFFERING

(During this time, you are invited to a virtual offering. Please visit our webpage and click "Give" to make your weekly offering, or text FCUCC GIVE to 73256.)

MUSICAL REFLECTION

The Kings (from *Christmas Songs, Op. 8*)

Peter Cornelius (1824-74)

Organ accompaniment incorporates the "How Brightly Shines the Morning Star" chorale tune.

Joel Jicha, *bass*

*A CHRISTMAS DOXOLOGY

Sung to the tune of *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* (REGENT SQUARE)

All: All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son,

Evermore your voices raising to the-eternal Three in One.

Come and worship, come and worship,

Worship Christ the newborn king.

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*You are invited to eat the bread when you receive your communion elements.
Please wait to drink the cup until instructed. Communion is gluten free and alcohol free.*

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

Dr. Nathan Birkholz, *organ*

Eat This Bread #195 (Sung multiple times by All)

BERTHIER

Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and never be hungry.

Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Through this bread and this cup,

hold us as your own.

Renew us as your people

For the sake of the world you love.

*CLOSING HYMN #168

As with Gladness Men of Old

DIX

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

THANK YOU TO TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Pastor Nicholas J. Hatch, *Co-Pastor*

Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey, *Co-Pastor*

Debbie Wagner, *Lay Reader*

Dr. Nathan Birkholz, *Organist*

Joel Jicha, *cantor & bass soloist*

John M. Albrecht, *Director for Music Ministries*

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USHERS/AUDIO/VIDEO

USHERS: Sheryl DeHart, Tim DeHart, Sandra Hurm, Ron Hurm, Cheryl Spindler,
Gene Spindler

AUDIO & VIDEO: Matt Feuerhelm

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR NEXT SUNDAY

First Sunday after Epiphany: Baptism of Jesus Pastor Nick Hatch Psalm 29
Music: Sanctuary Choir

ON THE CALENDAR

Sunday, January 12	10:30-10:45AM	Quarterly Congregational Meeting to elect new council members & present budget for approval
Saturday, February 1- Sunday, February 2		High School Winter Retreat

WORSHIP NOTES (space for your personal notes/thoughts)

Joys and Concerns of Our Faith Community

Please keep these people in your prayers and greet them with a loving word when you see them.
 Please call the church office if you have a prayer request or to request a pastoral visit: 920-733-7393
In cases of a pastoral emergency, please call 920-810-2600.

Lyndee Aleman	Helen McKean's daughter, Larri Jacquart
Amanda, who has terminal cancer	Elizabeth McNally
Jill Anthony, her sister & her nephew	Holly Mueller
Katie Behl and her sister, Barbara	Olivia, who has been re-diagnosed with cancer
Don Brittnacher	
Chris Brittnacher's brother, Steve Reinkober	Our friends in Kerio Valley, Kenya
Cheryl Currier	Anika Quillman
Donna, who is in recovery from West Nile	Larry Schiedermayer
Erstad's family friend, Silas, and his family	Frank and Pat Severin
David Galow	Mike Seymour's mom, Debbie
The family of Paul Gohdes	Stacey, friend of Kathy and Dick DeVries
Margaret Hankwitz	Kinsley Tarr
JoAnn Helms	Gloria Tate
Cynthia Hempel, daughter of Pat Streur	Jack Thiel
Shirley Hoft	Peter Thiel
Sandi Hurm	James Totzke
Jenny, who has been diagnosed with cancer	Those living with mental unwellness
Jean Jepson	Larry Vaubel
Larry Konz, father of Leigh Grube	Karen Waters
Kathy Lannoye	

Please call or email the church office if someone's name should be removed from the list.
 Thank you!

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

(Jesus, the Light of the World)

John 8:12; 9:5

Charles Wesley, 1739; alt.; adapt. George D. Elderkin; alt.

1 Hark! the her-ald an-gels sing, Je-sus, the light of the world;
 2 Joy-ful, all you saints a-rise, Je-sus, the light of the world;
 3 Christ, by high-est heaven a-dored, Je-sus, the light of the world;
 4 Hail the Bear-er of God's peace! Je-sus, the light of the world;

Glo-ry to the Christ-child bring, Je-sus, the light of the world.
 Join the tri-umph of the skies, Je-sus, the light of the world.
 Christ, the ev-er-last-ing Word, Je-sus, the light of the world.
 Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness! Je-sus, the light of the world.

Refrain
 We will fol-low the light, beau-ti-ful light, come where the
 dew-drops of mer-cy are bright, Shine all a-round us by
 day and by night, Je-sus, the light of the world.

The original version of Charles Wesley's hymn has received various alterations throughout the years. This adaptation by George Elderkin utilizes a repeated ascription, "Jesus, the light of the world," and a refrain to create a rousing carol of praise.

Tune: ELDERKIN 7.7.7.7. with refrain
 George D. Elderkin
 Arr. Jeffrey Radford, 1993

I Am the Light of the World!

Unison F B \flat C F

"I am the light of the world!

B \flat C F

You peo - ple come and fol - low me!" If you

Gm Dm C F B \flat

fol - low and love you'll learn the mys - ter - y of

Gm C F Fine

what you were meant to do and be.

WORDS: Jim Strathdee, 1969, in response to a Christmas poem
by Howard Thurman
MUSIC: Jim Strathdee, 1969

LIGHT OF THE WORLD
Irr.

♩=92-100

F B \flat C F

1. When the song of the an-gels is stilled, when the
 2. To find the lost and lone-ly one, to
 3. To free the pris-'ner from all chains, to
 4. To bring hope to ev-'ry task you do, to

Gm Dm C

star in the sky is gone, when the
 heal the bro-ken soul with love, to
 make the pow-er-ful care, to
 dance at a ba-by's new birth, to

F B \flat C F

ma-gi and the shep-herds have found their way home, the
 feed the hun-gry chil-dren with warmth and good food, to
 re-build the na-tions with strength of good will, to
 make mu-sic in an old per-son's heart, and

Gm B \flat C

work of Christ-mas is be-gun:
 feel the earth be-low, the sky a-bove!
 see God's chil-dren ev-'ry-where!
 sing to the col-ors of the earth!

The Open Door Announcements

For more information on these announcements and other events, please visit our website, weekly e-newsletters, and social media.

Introducing The Isaiah Corner: You've seen the banners and heard about all-church meetings and Task Forces, but many people are asking "What is The Isaiah Project?"



Here is our "elevator speech," a description of our work in a nutshell. Of course, there are a lot more details and efforts the elevator speech doesn't cover, but this gives everyone a basic idea.

When you hear "The Isaiah Project," think "infrastructure." The Steering Committee and four Task Forces are prayerfully engaged in research, community partnership development, and discernment to provide recommendations to Church Council about our buildings, grounds, and neighborhood presence. These recommendations will address our current and future needs and support our mission and priorities.

Now that our study and research and interviews are gelling into tangible updates, we are going to use a corner of the Open Door to communicate with you. Look for the logo. There will be a short update or announcement every week. Nancy Brown-Koeller, Isaiah Steering Committee.

Library News: Our theme for January is Peace and Reconciliation. Maybe you need some peace in your home or are stressed about the political environment. Come see the offerings in the library on the topic. Here are a couple titles: *"Peace Is Every Step"* by Nhat Hanh and *"The Different Drum: Community-Making and Peace"* by M. Scott Peck.

Dry January: Alcohol can be part of a joyful, balanced life. Whether it's sharing laughter with friends over a craft beer or savoring a glass of fine wine with dinner, these moments can bring pleasure and connection. However, our culture doesn't always encourage reflection or moderation when it comes to alcohol. Heavy drinking surged by about 20% during the pandemic and has not fallen. Dry January is a month-long break from consuming alcohol designed to offer physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits — benefits that are supported by medical research. If you feel that Dry January could be a positive reset for you this year, sign up to receive weekly emails from Pastor Katherine with encouragement, links, and prayers. *Please note: Dry January is not intended for those who are struggling with alcohol abuse disorder. If you're concerned about your alcohol or drug use, we encourage you to seek support as you begin your journey toward sobriety. Your pastors are always available to provide pastoral care and professional referrals.* Sign up link: [Dry January](#)

2025 High School Winter Retreat - Chicago, IL: Saturday, February 1 (7:00AM) to Sunday, February 2 (6:00PM), 2025. This trip is FREE for all current confirmands in the 2024-2025 confirmation group, and there is a \$50 fee for all other participants. All High School students are welcome to attend. We need adult chaperones! Please contact Pastor Nick directly. You are welcome to invite a friend! Just have their adult fill out the Registration/Medical Consent sheet and hand in their fee (again, free for confirmands) and you are ready to go. [Sign up on Realm](#); registration deadline is January 26.

Join Us for a Six-Session Study of the Gospel of Luke! Discover the richness and depth of the Gospel of Luke in a six-session series beginning January 8. This study will take place 6:30-7:30PM in the Upper Lounge. Each session will offer thoughtful reflection, discussion, and community connection. Schedule: **January 8, 15, 22; February 5, 12, 19** (with January 29 and February 26 reserved as weather-related makeup days.) We'll follow a rhythm of three weeks on, one week off, with makeup days available to accommodate Wisconsin's unpredictable winter weather.

Join Wednesday Prayer Chapel! Join Pastor Nick on Facebook Live for Prayer Chapel, live streamed from the church on Wednesdays for around 20 minutes. Gather to enjoy spoken prayer, devotions, music, and an opportunity to share your prayer concerns with our online community. We look forward to seeing you for this personal mid-week touchpoint.


NOAHH Requests: A 22-year-old lived with his mom until a couple of weeks ago, as the home had become unsafe. He has no belongings and will be starting from complete scratch. He needs a bed, dresser, side table, hamper, and clothes (men's 2XL tops and XL bottoms.) Contact Barb Mincheff at 920-832-5515 for pickup or drop-off.

Mental Health Spotlight: Next Sunday, January 12, our church will hold a congregational vote to accept our WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged) covenant, to demonstrate our commitment to mental health for all. Our Mental Health Task Force has spent the past two years exploring how to invite our church community to become WISE. We have offered educational presentations, suggested books on issues of mental health for the church library, organized teams for the local NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Walk and surveyed church members on wants and needs regarding mental health. We are excited to use the results of the survey in the coming year to offer more opportunities to support the congregation and provide further education about mental health issues. Please read the covenant and prayerfully consider voting to confirm our status as a WISE church on January 12 at the all-church meeting. If you have questions, please ask one of the co-pastors or Mary Sullivan (msullivan623@yahoo.com). Becoming a WISE congregation is just the next step in our journey.

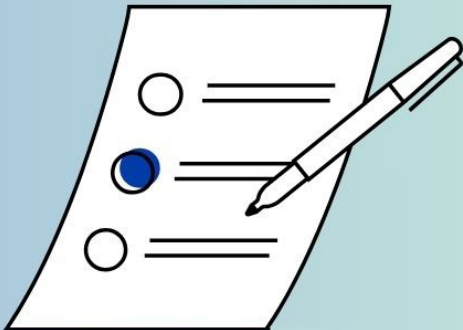
Quarterly Congregational Meeting, January 12, 2025: Join us after worship in the sanctuary from 10:30-10:45AM to elect new council members, present the budget for approval and vote for us to become certified for WISE.

VOTE

FOR US TO BECOME CERTIFIED FOR WISE



UCC Mental Health Network
Welcoming • Inclusive • Supportive • Engaged



JANUARY 12, 2025

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

WITH GOD'S GUIDANCE, WE ARE ANSWERING THE
2015 UCC GENERAL SYNOD'S CALL TO BECOME A
WISE CONGREGATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH.

.....

READ OUR COVENANT AT:
WWW.UCCAPPLETON.ORG/POST/BECOMING-MENTAL-HEALTH-WISE

Stewardship Update

As of 12:00 PM, December 19, 2024:

80%


We've raised \$840,000 of our \$1,037,600 goal.

In 2024, we received 279 pledges; to date we have received 222 pledges for 2025.



There's still time to submit your pledge!

Extra Women's Craft Circle Days: Avoid cabin fever this winter and join us for Women's Craft Circle! We have added extra dates, so come craft with us for one day or all. Bring whatever project you're working on and a snack if you like. No need to register – just come on out! (Please note, these events are child free.) Dates include Saturday, **January 4** (1-5PM), Saturday, **January 18** (1-5PM), Saturday, **February 1** (1-5PM), and Thursday, **February 13** (2-6PM). For more information, email Debra at dawest@centurytel.net.

KWIK TRIP CARD SALES TODAY AFTER WORSHIP IN THE NARTHEX!



Order Form

Member Name _____

Special notes _____

Date _____

QTY	Car Wash (5ct)	Total
	\$36.00	

QTY	Fuel Only	Total
	\$20.00	
	\$50.00	
	\$100.00	
	\$200.00	
	\$500.00	

Total:

QTY	Grocery Only	Total
	\$5.00	
	\$10.00	
	\$20.00	

Office use Only

Payment Type:

____ Cash

____ Check

____ Credit Card

____ Online

Card Number _____

____ / ____

Expiration MM/YY

CVV

Initial here if you would like to pay the 2% processing fee

Member Signature _____

I authorize First Congregational UCC, Appleton and their payment processor to charge the above card. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to adjust or terminate the authorization.

How Much Comes Back to Our Church Youth?

Car Wash Cards – 44%!

Grocery Cards – 15%

Gas Gift Cards – 10%

This Week's Schedule

Monday, January 6

5:30-7:00PM Grounds Task Force Meeting – *Isaiah Room*
6:30-8:30PM Fox Valley Flute Choir – *Sanctuary*

Tuesday, January 7

9:00-10:00AM Strong Bodies – *Fellowship Hall*
1:00-2:30PM Chrysalis – *Upper Lounge*
6:30-7:30PM Living Sober AA Group – *Common Grounds*
7:00-8:30PM Boy Scouts – *Fellowship Hall*
7:00-9:00PM Worship and Music Ministry Team – *Upper Lounge*
7:45-8:45PM Fireside AA – *Common Grounds*

Wednesday, January 8

10:00-11:45AM Isaiah Project Meeting – *Isaiah Room*
12:00-1:00PM Prayer Chapel – *Chapel*
12:15-1:00PM Loving Acceptance Meditation Group – *Upper Lounge*
5:45-6:25PM Youth Handbells – *Amistad Room*
6:30-7:30PM Bible Study – *Upper Lounge*
6:30-7:30PM MS Youth Group – *MS Room/HS Youth Group – HS Room*
7:00-8:30PM Sanctuary Choir – *Choir Room, Sanctuary*

Thursday, January 9

9:00-10:00AM Strong Bodies – *Fellowship Hall*
12:00-1:00PM AA Search for Serenity Group – *Common Grounds*
7:00-8:00PM Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Friday, January 10

7:00-8:00PM Al-Anon – *Upper Lounge*
7:00-8:30PM N.A – *Common Grounds*

Saturday, January 11

7:00-8:00PM Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Sunday, January 12

9:25AM-12:00PM Childcare – *Childcare Room*
9:30-10:30AM Sunday Worship – *Sanctuary, Upper Lounge, Chapel*
10:30-10:45AM Quarterly Congregational Meeting – *Sanctuary*
10:30-11:30AM Children's Choir – *Choir Room*
10:45-11:45AM Parents Book Study: White Picket Fences – *Common Grounds*
5:00-6:00PM LU Music Scholars Rehearsal – *Sanctuary*
6:00-8:00PM First Things First AA Meeting – *Fellowship Hall, Common Grounds*
7:00-8:00PM AL ANON – *Chapel / Alateen – Upper Lounge*

Welcome to The Church of the Open Door.

Our door is open to you at whatever point you are in your journey of faith.

Baptisms are held on the third Sunday of each month. To schedule a baptism, contact the church office six weeks before your desired baptism date.

Childcare is available for ALL infants and toddlers every Sunday. Kindergarten and first graders may enjoy a communion mini-lesson on the 1st Sunday of the month and may go to childcare the 2nd-5th Sundays of each month. Please see an usher for directions to the Childcare Room.

Communion: The sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. Communion elements are gluten and alcohol free. All are welcome to join us!

Flowers: Today's flowers were arranged by Cindi Ritcey Fox.

Hearing Loop: Need help hearing our service? Ask an usher. They can help get you in the loop!



Online Streaming and Podcasting are available on [Facebook: FCUCCAppleton](#) or [Youtube: First Congregational UCC Appleton](#).

Open Door Announcements can be shared by emailing opendoor@uccappleton.org or calling the office.

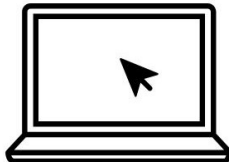
References to God in our worship may at times be gender specific. You are invited to substitute terms that reflect your understanding of the inclusiveness of God.

Sunday School: Our PreK - 5th graders begin in worship. After the children's message, they walk together to the CYF wing for our Children's Ministry Program. Kindergarten - fifth graders may enjoy a communion mini-lesson on the 1st Sunday of the month. Children begin in worship, leave with the director, and return to partake in communion with their families. Youth gather on Wednesday evenings.

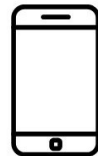
Ways to Donate to First Congregational UCC, Appleton ~ Thank you for your support.



Giving envelopes and checks can be dropped in the offering plate or mailed to the church



Visit our website at uccappleton.org and click "Give Now" for a one time gift or to sign up for automatic giving



Text FCUCC GIVE to 73256

*Messages and data rates may apply.
Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256
for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel.

We are glad you are here today! You are welcome to worship in person with us in the sanctuary or watch it livestreamed in the upper lounge, narthex or chapel. The nursery also has livestreaming, on the other end of the building.

TODAY AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC, APPLETON

9:25AM-12:00PM	Childcare – <i>Childcare Room</i>
9:30-10:30AM	Sunday Worship/Epiphany – <i>Sanctuary, Upper Lounge, Chapel</i>
9:30-10:30AM	Children’s Ministry: Chat in Chapel – <i>Chapel</i>
10:30-11:00AM	Kwik Trip Fundraising – <i>Narthex</i>
10:30-11:00AM	CYF Hosting Coffee Hour – <i>Narthex</i>
10:45-11:45AM	Confirmation Class – <i>HS Youth Room</i>
10:45-11:45AM	Parents Book Study: White Picket Fences – <i>Common Grounds</i>
6:00-8:00PM	First Things First AA Meeting – <i>Fellowship Hall, Common Grounds</i>
7:00-8:00PM	AL ANON – <i>Chapel / Alateen – Upper Lounge</i>

CHILDREN’S MINISTRY LOCATIONS FOR TODAY

Upstairs, to the left		Downstairs
Childcare Room Infants & Toddlers		Little Angel’s Room Preschoolers
K - 5th graders will return to partake in Communion with their families.		

We are “The Church of the Open Door,” a welcoming and inclusive Christian community.
No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.