



First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Madison, WI

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The Tower

December 30, 2018

Vol. LXXIV No. 52



**Merry Christmas from the staff at First Congregational
Ann, Katie, Don, Jenn, Jerry, Eldonna, Jeff, and Bob**



If you are pledging to First Congregational for the first time, we have matching funds available so that whatever amount you pledge will be doubled! Just check "this is a new pledge" on the pledge card.

PLEDGE CAMPAIGN UPDATE 12/19/18



	Now	Goal
# Pledges	149	185
Matching Fund	\$9620	\$25,000
Grand Total	\$608,889	\$710,000

Thank you to everyone who has already turned in their pledge card! If you haven't yet returned your pledge card, it's not too late! It's as easy as emailing Jenn, the church bookkeeper. [Click here](#). Also, NEW pledges will be matched, thanks to our great matching fund! Help us reach our goal of \$710,000 and 185 pledging units. EVERY pledge counts! Thank you for your generosity!

Save the Date: Prison Ministry Anniversary Celebration

On Sunday January 6, we will celebrate the 13th anniversary of the Prison Ministry Project. Reverend Bonnie Van Overbeeke, a longtime prison ministry volunteer, will be preaching. Following worship we will have lunch in the dining room featuring a video highlighting the stories of three extraordinary people who make our work possible. Honor our volunteers while learning about ways to participate in this important work, both inside and outside prison walls. The suggested donation for the lunch is \$10. We hope to see you there!

Children, Youth, and Families

What Was in the Box?

"What's In The Box?" is an Advent tradition at First Cong where the children (and adults) of the congregation wait the four weeks of the season to learn what symbol of God's love is in the Box.



2018: The Pineapple

*And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, **because there was no place for them in the inn.** Luke 2:7*

Forced to travel to Bethlehem to be counted, Mary and Joseph had no place to stay. The city was packed, and there just was no room for them. No one welcomed them in.

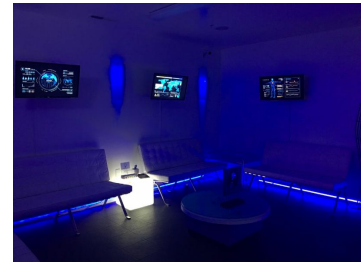
The PINEAPPLE has long been used as a symbol of HOSPITALITY or WELCOME. A fruit only grown in tropic climates did not keep well on long sailing voyages, meaning the expensive fruit was limited to those with power and money. Offering the rare and sweet delicacy to a guest upon arrival was the ultimate expression of WELCOME. You can find symbols of pineapples in older hotels and homes.

Just as the pineapple was a rare and special treat, Jesus was a unique gift from God. And, just as the pineapple was formerly limited to the powerful and rich, but now enjoyed by all, Jesus was sent as a gift for EVERYONE. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to ALL people."

May we use the pineapple as a reminder to open our hearts and minds in a WELCOME to ALL

Youth Trip to the Escape Room: January 13

All youth are invited to be a part of the team-building trip to an Escape Room on Sunday, January 13. The group will head out after worship to test their combined skills to free themselves from a locked room. A "processing" lunch will follow the experience. The group should be back at church around 3:30. Sign up in the youth room by **January 6!**



Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Event for Children Grades 1-8

SIGN-UP DEADLINE EXTENDED TO DECEMBER 30!

First Congregational UCC, in conjunction with Beth Israel Center, Madinah Academy of Madison (a Muslim day school), and Madison Christian Community, is excited to invite your first- through eighth-graders to a day of FAITH, SERVICE, EDUCATION, and CELEBRATION to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Monday, January 21 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Plans for the day include cooperative games, expressions in art, service projects, social justice activities, and drumming with Elmore Lawson! Kids will gather at First Congregational Church (on the corner of Old University and Breese Terr.) and move through a day of workshops designed to celebrate the life and work of Dr. King.

Cost: \$10/child (\$20/family)

[**REGISTER HERE**](#)

The registration deadline has been extended to December 30.

ADULT VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED for this event! Adults are needed for group shepherds, registration, set ups, lunch helpers, etc. Sign up in the back of the Sanctuary or contact [Jeff Rabe](#).

Please note there will be no Sunday School classes on December 30 or January 6.

Sunday Scripture

John 1:1-14



All Church Skating Party January 20

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

Tenney Park

Sunday, January 20

1-3 p.m.

Community Meals Day is Thursday, January 3

Please have your donated items in the new kitchen by 10:00 a.m. that day. The Community Meal Program brings together people across races, religions, and social spheres to share a table, some time, and a meal. To learn more about Community Meals and how you can help, contact [Kathy Wiggins](#).



Sign up to Sponsor Sunday Flowers!

A new flower chart is available in the back of the Sanctuary. Sign up on the chart to sponsor the Sunday flowers. The price is \$50.

College Scholarships Available

Members of First Congregational UCC are invited to apply for 2019-2020 college scholarships of \$1,000 to \$2,000 from the Frank E. Page Scholarship Fund. Applicants should be planning to begin or continue education at any accredited 2- or 4-year college or university, and should have a record of academic achievement, service to church and community, and demonstrated financial need. The application deadline is February 15, 2019; [Click here](#) to request an electronic application.



Member News

If you have member news you would like to share, contact the office at office@firstcongmadison.org.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, December 25

Church office closed

Wednesday, December 26

Thursday, December 27

7:00pm Madison Area Jugglers ~DR

7:30pm AA ~ Room 302

Friday, December 28

2:00pm Reformation Reading Group ~SL

Saturday, December 29

Sunday, December 30

10:00am Worship ~S

No Sunday School

5:00pm Open Door Zen ~Rm 302

Monday, December 31

Tuesday, January 1
Church office closed

Worship Attendance Advent Vespers, Wednesday, December 19, was 22.
Sunday Worship, December 23, was 202.
Blue Christmas, Sunday, December 23 was 9.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

First Congregational Church

office@firstcongmadison.org
<http://www.firstcongmadison.org>

