

# The Tower

First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Madison, Wisconsin

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LXVIII

November 27, 2011

No. 40

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## Advent

Thursday of this week is Thanksgiving, and the following Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent is my favorite season of the church year. Partly that is because, like a child, I love Christmas and I love looking forward to Christmas – planning, decorating, wrapping, etc. (I think I'm almost as excited to find out "what's in the box" as the children who come forward for Time with Children.) But the other part of the reason I love Advent is its mood of mysterious, awesome, unpredictable hope. The Old Testament lessons for each of the Sundays are all over the place; but the one thing they have in common is the realization that the present-time, which humankind has created, is not according to God's will, and further, that God will act in history to make things better. The various New Testament and Gospel lessons also often have that same feel. I am going to share with you the texts we will be using on the Sundays of Advent this year and a little bit about how we feel they are leading us. We will also be lighting an Advent Candle each Sunday.

Sunday, November 27. Isaiah 64:1-9 and Mark 13:24-37. The Isaiah text is a plea to God and it begins this way: *O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence ...* The writer admits that the people have denied God and brought their suffering on themselves: *You have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.* Yet the writer believes – probably against all the evidence – that God still cares and will act on behalf of the people: *Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.* Even in the face of despair, the writer continues to believe and to hope.

Sunday, December 4. Isaiah 40:1-11 and Mark 1:1-8. The Isaiah text is quoted in the Mark reading, and the author of Mark applies it to John the Baptist: *The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah: "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.* The author of the Gospel of Mark is quite sure that the one to whom John the Baptist points is the Messiah, the one for whom the people have been waiting. Communion will be celebrated in worship. Hanging of the Greens and the Advent Workshop follow worship this day.

Sunday, December 11. On this day, we will celebrate all the work that has gone into the Reach and Renew capital campaign. Two or three of the leaders will speak. We will also look at the work of the campaign in light of our two scripture readings for the day, Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, and Luke 2:8-10, 15. The Isaiah text is the one Jesus uses in Luke 4 to begin his ministry. The verses in Luke 2 describe an appearance of an angel to shepherds in a field outside Bethlehem, announcing good news of great joy. There will be special refreshments served after the service.

Sunday, December 18. Our reading this day will be the story of Mary, Luke 1:26-56. This reading includes what is called the Annunciation, when the angel Gabriel is sent to Mary to tell her that she will conceive and give birth to the Son of God, and that she will name him Jesus. Rather than questioning this incredible announcement, Mary simply says: *Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.* The reading also includes the Magnificat (so-named because of the first word of the Latin translation of the Greek text). It is here that Mary, having met her kinswoman Elizabeth, pregnant with the one who will be called John the Baptist, speaks those fantastic words of hope: *God has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts, brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly, filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.* How much do we need to hear, believe, and hold on to those words, to that promise, in our world today?!



## JOIN US FOR MORNING SERVICE

**Sunday, November 27, 2011**  
**First Sunday in Advent**  
**Worship at 10am in the Sanctuary**  
**Scripture Readings: Isaiah 64:1-9,**  
**Mark 13:24-37**

The reading from Isaiah is an unusual one for Advent. It is a plea to God and it begins this way: *O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence – as when fire kindles brushwood and causes water to burn.* The people are in distress and the writer admits that it is their own fault: *We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.... You have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.* Yet the writer still prays and pleads and believes that God will help: *Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.* Despite hardship brought on by their own actions, the people pray to God, plead for God's help, and still believe that God cares.

The Mark text is a series of metaphors by Jesus about strange occurrences in the natural world which signals God's appearance in human history and life. While it is all too easy to literalize parts of this reading, the main lesson for us is in his last words: *What I say to you I say to all: keep awake.*

## FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

**The Children of the Sunday School** will be working during class on songs for the Christmas Pageant. Lyrics will be sent home. **ONE FULL REHEARSAL** (putting the whole thing together) will be on Saturday, December 17 from 9 - 11am. All children of the Sunday School participate in the pageant.



**What's in the Box?** Starts Sunday, November 27!!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SAVE THE DATE!** Yes, it's coming! After Thanksgiving we have---the Advent Workshop! This year's event will be held Sunday, December 4 in the dining room following worship. As usual we'll have a delicious lunch provided by the Board of Christian Education, followed immediately by the Workshop, brought to you under the auspices of the Board of Community Life. There will be good things to eat and fun crafts to make for everyone, so mark your calendar now and plan to attend!

If you're interested in helping with a craft table, please contact Anne Karch, [apkarch@charter.net](mailto:apkarch@charter.net); Joanne Lenburg, [lenburgs@yahoo.com](mailto:lenburgs@yahoo.com); or Liz Ringle, [elizabthringle@gmail.com](mailto:elizabthringle@gmail.com).

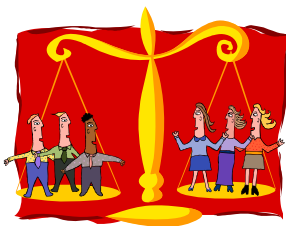
**Hanging of the Greens** will also take place after worship on December 4. After a light lunch downstairs, anyone who wishes may come upstairs and help decorate the Sanctuary by putting wreaths on doors, hanging greenery on the balcony, and putting up Christmas trees!

### COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILA-

**BLE** Members of First Congregational UCC are invited to apply for college scholarships for 2012-2013 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 and service to church and community, as well as demonstrated financial need. The application deadline is Feb. 15, 2012; contact [scholarships@firstcongmadison.org](mailto:scholarships@firstcongmadison.org) for an electronic application.

### Racial Disparity in the Criminal Justice system and Communities of Faith,

a panel discussion and call to action, will be held Monday, December 5, from 5:30-7pm at Fountain of Life Church on Badger Road. For more information contact Jerry Hancock at 608 658-6630.



**Men's Fellowship** The Board of Community Life invites all men to an hour of fellowship. We will meet with no agenda, although we may discuss what Men's Fellowship might be and do. Sunday, Dec.11 at 8:30am. Gallup Coffee and Bakeshop, 1859 Monroe St, Madison. No RSVP necessary. Contact: Tom Syring, [tjsyring@tds.net](mailto:tjsyring@tds.net), 843-2234.



### Poinsettias for Christmas

It's already time to order poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. The deadline is **Tuesday, December 6.**  
Cost: \$13 per plant

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Your plant may be ordered:

In loving memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

*Or*

In loving honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: First Congregational UCC; 1609 University Avenue; Madison, WI 53726

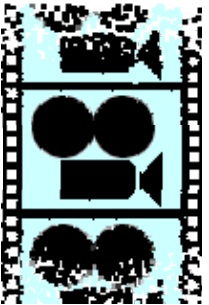
## WAYS TO SERVE

**SCARVES AND JEWELRY** Each year we assemble Christmas gifts for guests at the Salvation Army Single Women's Homeless Shelter. In addition to practical items such as socks, lip balm, combs, and gloves, we like to include colorful scarves and jewelry. If you can spare some from your own collection, please bring them to church marked "shelter gifts" by December 4. And don't forget: the shelter is ALWAYS grateful for donations of bed linens, towels and washcloths, duffel bags, tote bags, suitcases, clothing, and small toiletries. If you have questions, or need to arrange for pickup, call Mari McCarty, 238 -8837.

## FIRST CONG YOUTH

### All Youth Advent Movie Meditation

All Youth, (grades 7-12) are invited to a viewing and discussion of *Escanaba In Da Moonlight* on Sunday, November 27 from 11:30am – 2:00pm in the Youth Room. Pizza will be ordered, bring a movie snack to share. *Escanaba* is the spiritual journey of Reuben Soady who, at 43, is about to become the oldest member of the Soady family never to bag a buck. How is the story of about a family deer camp in Upper Michigan related to Advent? Well, you will just have to show up and see.... cuz, "All good tings come to dos who shoot straight."



## MUSICAL NOTES

The **Chancel Choir** will meet in the Sanctuary at 9:00am this Sunday, November 27 for a short rehearsal before worship. If you have any questions, please contact Don DeBruin.



**Marques Bovre Benefit** There will be a benefit for First Cong member Marques Bovre at the High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington, on **Sunday, December 11** beginning at 5:00pm. A number of local musicians will be playing Marques Bovre & The Evil Twins music at this benefit for Marques and his family. Earlier this fall, Marques underwent surgery to remove a cancerous brain tumor, and he continues to receive chemotherapy and radiation treatment. Marques and his band, The Evil Twins, will be making an appearance with their original line-up for this special occasion. Suggested donation at the door, \$10.

### All Youth Christmas Shopping

First Cong Church Youth will head to West Towne Mall on Sunday, December 11 from 1 – 3pm for the annual Christmas Shopping event. Teams of youth will scour the stores for deals to find the perfect gift for those less fortunate. Gifts are purchased with Youth Mission funds. A mall scavenger hunt will follow shopping. Sign up in the youth room.



# Church Calendar November 27-Dec. 4, 2011

## Sunday November 27

9:00am Chancel Choir ~ S  
 10:00am Worship ~ S  
 10:15am Sunday School  
 gift making ~ DR  
 10:15am GAS ~ YR  
 11:15am Cherub Choir  
 ~ Room 301

## Monday November 28

5:30pm Table Tennis Clubs ~ DR  
 8:00pm SA ~ Room 301

## Tuesday November 29

12noon Bible Conversations ~ FR  
 5:15pm NA Women's ~ Room 301  
 6:30pm Boy Scouts ~ DR  
 7:00pm NA ~ Room 301  
 8:30pm UW Table Tennis Club ~ DR

## Wednesday November 30

9:30am Worship Planning ~ MS  
 10:00am Staff Meeting ~ MS  
 6:30pm Coventry Ringers ~ Room 301  
 7:30pm Chancel Choir ~ Chapel

## Thursday, December 1

### *Community Meals Day*

5:00pm World Aids Day Event ~ C, SL  
 7:00pm Mad Area Jugglers ~ DR  
 8:00pm AA ~ Room 301

## Friday, December 2

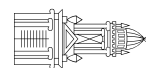
## Saturday, December 3

9:00am Advent Workshop  
 Set up ~ DR  
 1:00pm Salek Piano Recital ~ S

## Sunday, December 4

10:00am Sunday Worship ~ S  
 10:15am Wee Worship ~ C  
 11:15am Cherub Choir  
 ~ Room 301  
 11:30am Advent  
 Workshop ~ DR

BBQ ~ Mid High Bible Study  
 Big K ~ Big Kitchen  
 BOUNCE ~ Mid High Youth  
 Group  
 C ~ Chapel  
 DR ~ Dining Room  
 FIGS ~ Families Including God  
 and Stuff  
 FR ~ Fellowship Room  
 GAS ~ Sr. High Bible Study  
 LRC ~ Learning Resource Center  
 MS ~ Minister's Study  
 S ~ Sanctuary  
 SAGE ~ Sr. High Youth Group  
 SL ~ Student Lounge  
 SR ~ Salad Room  
 YR ~ Youth Room



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1609 University Avenue  
 Madison, Wisconsin 53726  
 608-233-9751 (phone)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Worship attendance on  
 Sunday, November 20, 2011 was 279.

### Staff:

Curt Anderson, Senior Minister  
 Eldonna Hazen, Associate Minister  
 Jerry Hancock, Director of Prison Ministry Project  
 Donald J. DeBruin, Director of Music Ministries  
 Jeff Rabe, Director of Christian Education for  
 Children & Youth  
 Rob Eagle, Bookkeeper  
 Jill Farnsworth, Church Secretary  
 David Krantz, Building Manager

**Office Hours:** 8am-12:30pm, 1:00pm-4:00pm,  
 Monday -Thursday; 8am-noon Friday.

**Phone:** 608-233-9751

**Fax:** 608-233-7180

**E-mail:** office@firstcongmadison.org

**Web Page:** www.firstcongmadison.org  
 Facebook.com/firstcongo

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES:** Curt Anderson's  
 phone is 836-1321, Eldonna Hazen's phone number is  
 241-8117 and Jerry Hancock's phone is 658-6630.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
 MADISON, WI  
 PERMIT NO. 1395

# DECEMBER 2011

## Thursday, December 1

*Community Meals Day*

5:00pm World Aids Day Event ~ C, SL

7:00pm Mad Area Jugglers ~ DR

8:00pm AA ~ Room 301

## Friday, December 2

## Saturday, December 3

9:00am Advent Workshop Set up ~ DR

1:00pm Salek Piano Recital ~ S

## Sunday, December 4

10:00am Sunday Worship ~ Sanctuary

10:15am Wee Worship ~ C

11:15am Cherub Choir ~ Room 301

11:30am Advent Workshop ~ DR

## Monday, December 5

5:15pm Stewardship Board ~ FR

5:30pm Table Tennis Clubs ~ DR

7:00pm All Boards ~ C

## Tuesday, December 6

5:15pm NA Women's ~ Room 301

7:00pm NA ~ Room 301

7:00pm Boy Scouts ~ DR, YR

8:30pm UW Table Tennis Club ~ DR

## Wednesday, December 7

9:30am Worship Planning ~ MS

10:30am Staff Meeting ~ MS

6:30pm Coventry Ringers ~ Room 301

7:30pm Chancel Choir ~ C

## Thursday, December 8

7:00pm Madison Area Jugglers ~ DR

8:00pm AA ~ Room 301

## Friday, December 9

5:30pm Madison Table Tennis Club ~ DR

## Saturday, December 10

## Sunday, December 11

10:00am Sunday Worship ~ Sanctuary

10:15am Sunday School

11:00am Capital Campaign celebration

## Monday, December 12

5:30pm Table Tennis Clubs ~ DR

8:00pm SA ~ Room 301

## Tuesday, December 13

12noon Bible Conversations ~ SL

5:15pm NA Women's ~ Room 301

7:00pm Boy Scouts ~ DR, YR

7:00pm NA ~ Room 301

7-9:30pm Piano Tech Guild ~ FR

8:30pm UW Table Tennis Club ~ DR

## Wednesday, December 14

9:30am Worship Planning ~ MS

10:30am Staff Meeting ~ MS

6:30pm Coventry Ringers ~ Room 301

7:30pm Chancel Choir ~ C

## Thursday, December 15

5:00pm Bach Musicians Rehearsal

7:00pm Madison Area Jugglers ~ DR

8:00pm AA ~ Room 301

## Friday, December 16

5:30pm Madison Table Tennis Club ~ DR

8:00pm Bach Musicians Concert ~ S

## Saturday, December 17

9:00am Pageant Rehearsal ~ S

## Sunday, December 18

10:00am Sunday Worship ~ Sanctuary

10:15am Sunday School

11:15am Cherub Choir ~ Room 301

6:00pm Christmas Pageant ~ Sanctuary

## Monday, December 19

5:30pm Table Tennis Clubs ~ DR

6:00pm Executive Council ~ FR

8:00pm SA ~ Room 301

## Tuesday, December 20

12noon Bible Conversations ~ SL

1:30pm Service at Oakwood

5:15pm NA Women's ~ Room 301

7:00pm Boy Scouts ~ DR, YR

7:00pm NA ~ Room 301

## Wednesday, December 21

9:30am Worship Planning ~ MS

10:30am Staff Meeting ~ MS

7:30pm Christmas Eve Choir ~ C

## Thursday, December 22

7:00pm Madison Area Jugglers ~ DR

8:00pm AA ~ Room 301

## Friday, December 23

5:30pm Madison Table Tennis Club ~ DR

## Saturday, December 24

5:00pm Family Oriented Christmas Eve Service ~ S

9:00pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service ~ S

## Sunday, December 25

10:00am Sunday Worship ~ Sanctuary

## Monday December 26

**Church Office Closed**

## Tuesday December 27

**Church Office Closed**

## Wednesday December 28

9:30am Worship Planning ~ MS

10:30am Staff Meeting ~ MS

## Thursday December 29

8:00pm AA ~ Room 301

## Friday December 30

## Saturday, December 31

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## GREETERS

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**First Sunday Team:** Dana Chabot (even-numbered months), Hub and Todd Pinkerton, Amy Smith

**Second Sunday Team:** Jane Deyo, Fannie Hicklin, Austen Wygocki

**Third Sunday Team:** Kathy Gansner, Steve Lerdahl, Betta Owens

**Fourth Sunday Team:** Mary Ellen Gerloff, Karen Gussert, Irene Ilgen, Judy Whipple

**Substitutes & Fifth Sunday:** Beth Cannestra, Robin Craig, Annette Ellstrom, David Ewing, Sarah Kissel, Audrey Marquardt, Mark Rzechowski, Jackye Thomas, Mark Thomas, Jody Varney, John Ehlke

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## OFFICE HOSTS

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**First Sunday:** Fannie Hicklin

**Second Sunday:** Barb Williams

**Third Sunday:** Barb Williams

**Fourth Sunday:** Fannie Hicklin

**Fifth Sunday & Sub:** Janet Schrieber

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## SOUND SYSTEM

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**First Sunday:** Rob Hetzel

**Second Sunday:** Mark Rzechowski

**Third Sunday :** Gary Pine

**Fourth Sunday:** Bob Burns

**Fifth Sunday:** Tom Pugh

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## USHERS

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**First Sunday Team:** Jane Deyo, Cathy Easter, Vicki Lovely, Janet Pugh, Kathy Gansner

**Second Sunday Team:** Bob Burns, Jeanne Marshall, Janet Schrieber, Elizabeth Armstrong

**Third Sunday Team:** Dorothy Brown, Ellsworth Brown, Ed Hasselkus, Tom Rickner, Samantha Rickner, Carol Toussaint

**Fourth Sunday Team:** Katrina Dwinell, Kathy Gansner, Lance & Cheryl Bentley, Fred Wileman

**Fifth Sunday Team:** Katrina Dwinell, George Elder, Josh Feyen

**Subs:** Robin Craig, John Ehlke, David Ewing, Mark Rzechowski, Greg Ullstrom

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## BIRTHDAYS

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- 1 Ellen Arnold, **Patricia Thomas**, Susan Veit
- 2 Gloria Green, Judith Whipple
- 4 Sara K. Beachy, Tamra Devlin, Stephen Ward, **Lucy Stampfli**, Norah Taft
- 5 Joe Tupta, Helen Vukelich, Maggie Whitehead,
- 6 John Mazzello,
- 7 Kristin Davis, Cornelia Hempe, James Henry Tishler
- 8 Charles Thomas
- 9 Jason Devlin, Scott Hackel, Cherie Miller
- 10 Ruth Benedict
- 11 Matt Flowers, Ollie Friou
- 12 Samuel Magli, E. Alison Rice, Margaret Kuhn
- 13 Mark Hancock, Jamie Jessup
- 14 Patricia Wheeler
- 15 Sandra Arnn, Dave Ewing, William Kuhn
- 16 Henry Whitehead
- 17 Elena Cunningham, Katrina Dwinell, Vicki Lovely, Jessica Lynn Sbonik, Dashiell McAleese
- 18 Levi Tupta
- 19 Annette Ellstrom, **Judith Thomas**, Dean Weesner
- 20 Diane E. McKenzie, Noah Oswald, Mark Thomas
- 21 Jennifer Schroeder, Bill Tishler
- 22 Mari McCarty
- 23 Drew Corderman
- 24 Kelly Haslam
- 25 Isabel Conner
- 26 Carol Randall
- 27 Jeanne Heindel, Angie Newman
- 28 Elizabeth Van Ness
- 29 Samantha Rickner, William Sanders, Joan Shands
- 30 Jennifer Coleman, Claire McKinney
- 31 Ian Ellstrom

