

A Service in Thanksgiving for the Life of
Rebecca M. Blank

SEPTEMBER 19, 1955 – FEBRUARY 17, 2023



Saturday, March 4, 2023
2:00 p.m.

First Congregational United Church of Christ
1609 University Avenue, Madison, WI



Order of Service

Welcome! We are glad you are here today.

*Please rise in body, mind, or spirit, at places marked with an asterisk.

PRELUDE

Johann Sebastian Bach
from the Cello Suites, BWV 1007–1012

James Waldo, Cellist

Day is Done, verse 1

Soloist

WELCOME

Eldonna Hazen

*HYMN

#92 in *New Century Hymnal*

Day is Done, all verses

Day is done, but love unfailing dwells ever here;
Shadows fall, but hope, prevailing, calms every fear.
God, our Maker, none forsaking, take our hearts, of Love's own making,
Watch our sleeping, guard our waking, be always near.

Dusk descends, but light unending shines through our night;
You are with us, ever lending new strength to sight:
One in love, your truth confessing, one in hope of heaven's blessing,
May we see, in love's possessing, love's endless light!

Eyes will close, but you unsleeping watch by our side;
Death may come, in love's safekeeping still we abide.
God of love, all evil quelling, sin forgiving, fear dispelling,
Stay with us, our hearts indwelling, this eventide.

Tune: Ar Hyd Y Nos (Traditional Welsh melody)

PRAYER

Eldonna Hazen

EULOGIES

Eulogy: from Greek words meaning "true" and "words"

John R. Chamberlin

Professor Emeritus of Public Policy and Political Science, University of Michigan

Mark Doms

Chief Economist, Congressional Budget Office

Michael M. Knetter

Chief Executive Officer of the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association

Becky requested speakers from each of three parts of her career: her deanship at the University of Michigan, her public service, and her tenure as Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Emily Kuttner

***HYMN**

#89 in *New Century Hymnal*

Awake, Awake to Love and Work, all verses

This hymn was sung at Hanns and Becky's wedding in 1994. Becky wrote: "This was my favorite hymn. It might seem inappropriate for a funeral, but it expresses my view of how I wanted to live my life."

The cellist will give out the tune and the congregation will join in singing.

Awake, awake to love and work!
The lark is in the sky;
The fields are wet with diamond dew;
The worlds awake to cry
their praises to the Fount of Life; Christ Jesus passes by.

Come, let your voice be one with theirs, shout with their shout of praise;
See how the giant sun soars up, God's gift for all your days!
So let the love of Jesus come and set your soul ablaze,

To give and give, and give again, as God's own grace is free;
To spend yourself nor count the cost;
To serve most gloriously
The God who gave all worlds that are,
And all that are to be.

Tune: Morning Song

READINGS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Eldonna Hazen

Hebrews 12:1-2a

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

Romans 12:3-13

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.

John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

HOMILY

Bliss Browne

Bliss Browne preached at Becky and Hanns's wedding. Today she reflects on a life well lived.

INTERLUDE

Ave Verum Corpus, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Chamber Choir
Greg Zelek, Organ

*Ave verum Corpus
Natum de maria virgine.
Vere passum immolatum
In Cruce pro homine.
Cujus latus perforatum unda fluxit sanguine,
Sanguine.
Esto nobis praegustatum in mortis examine.
O dulcis.
O Pie.
O Jesu Fili Mariae,
Miserere mei.
Miserere mei, mei.
O dulcis.
O Pie.
O Jesu Fili Mariae,
Miserere mei.
Miserere mei, mei.
Amen*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CLOSING PRAYER

Eldonna Hazen

***HYMN**

#25 in *New Century Hymnal*

O God, Our Help in Ages Past, all verses

Oh God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come.
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:

Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood or earth received its frame,
From everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever rolling stream, soon bears us all away;
We fly forgotten, as a dream fades at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Still be our God while troubles last, and our eternal home!

POSTLUDE

Toccata from Symphony for Organ No. 5, Charles-Marie Widor

Greg Zelek, Organ

One of the greats of the organ literature, the Widor Toccata concluded Hanns and Becky's wedding ceremony. They heard it again, on the same instrument, watching the memorial service for Rev. Tom Henry, the officiant at their wedding. That inspired its appearance here today.

BENEDICTION

Eldonna Hazen



Reception

Following this service, everyone is invited to a reception at Varsity Hall in Union South to greet Becky's family. Two of Becky's favorites, Diet Coke and German chocolate cake, will be available.

Union South is a walkable two blocks south of the church. The address is:
1308 W. Dayton St., Madison, WI 53715



Participating Today

Worship Leader & Liturgist: **Eldonna Hazen**, Senior Minister, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Madison WI

Preacher: **Bliss Browne**

Chamber Choir: **Mariana Farah** (conductor), **Minseon Lee** and **Sachie Ueshima** (soprano), **Molly Hennig** and **Elizabeth Olson** (alto), **Jonathan Henreckson** and **Ryan Nash** (tenor), **Samuel Speer** and **Andrew Voth** (bass)

Cellist: **James H. Waldo**

Organist: **Greg Zelek**

Livestream Tech: **Lukas Weinhold**

EULOGISTS

John R. Chamberlin is a professor emeritus of political science and public policy at the University of Michigan. He was associate dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy from 1999 to 2001, the beginning of Becky's time as Ford School dean. He was interim dean of the school before Becky arrived.

His research interests include ethics and public policy, professional ethics, and methods of election and representation. He has taught a wide variety of courses at the Ford School, including courses on statistics, ethics and public policy, and nonprofit management.

He was the founding director of the Ford School's BA in public policy program from 2007–2011, one of the key steps forward for the Ford School during Becky's deanship. He was director of UM's Center for Ethics in Public Life from 2008–2011. John has a BS in industrial engineering from Lehigh University and a PhD in decision sciences from the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University.

Mark Doms is the chief economist of the Congressional Budget Office. Becky recruited him to be the chief economist of the Economics and Statistics Administration, the component of the Department of Commerce that is the home to the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Economic Affairs, the agency responsible for measures of the economy such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He succeeded Becky as the Commerce Department's Under Secretary for Economic Affairs.

Prior to the Department of Commerce, he had been at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, the Research and Statistics Division of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

He received a PhD in economics from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1992.

Michael M. Knetter is the chief executive officer of the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association. He was the only member of the University of Wisconsin–Madison executive team who was there both when Becky began her time as UW–Madison Chancellor and when she left. That fact made Becky think he could well reflect on her Wisconsin years.

Like Becky, Mike is a former dean. He joined the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association in 2010 after eight years as dean of the Wisconsin School of Business. Becky and Mike traveled tens of thousands of miles together, shared many stages, and shook many of the same hands in endless pursuit of the Badger nation.

Mike completed his undergraduate studies in economics and mathematics at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire and his PhD in economics at Stanford University.

WORSHIP LEADER AND LITURGIST

Eldonna Hazen was called as the Senior Minister of First Congregational UCC in 2013. She is passionate about the intersection of faith and justice, and advocates for dignity and respect on behalf of ALL of God's children. Eldonna met Becky after Becky moved to Madison to start her position as Chancellor, having read about Becky's strong faith and commitment to justice. No one ever wants a life to be cut short as in this case, but Eldonna was honored to be able to accompany Becky on this faith-filled journey.

HOMILIST

Bliss Williams Browne first met Becky in the early 1990s when she was gathering people for conversations that gave birth to Imagine Chicago, an organization that works to cultivate hope and civic engagement in a variety of cross cultural and inter-generational initiatives, projects, and programs. Becky served on Imagine Chicago's founding board.

Bliss was ordained to the priesthood in 1977, among the first women ordained in the Episcopal church. She concurrently pursued a career in banking, serving as a corporate banker at First National Bank of Chicago from 1975 to 1991. She shared with Becky a strong interest in linking Christian faith and modern economic life.

Bliss graduated from Yale University in 1971 in the first undergraduate class to include women. She received an M.Div. degree from Harvard Divinity School in 1974 and a MM degree from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management in 1978. Today she lives in Florida. A mother of three grown children, she is an eager playmate for her six young granddaughters.

MUSICIANS

Mariana Farah is Director of Choral Activities in the Mead Witter School of Music, where she conducts the UW–Madison Concert Choir, Advanced Treble Choir, and Choral Union.

James H. Waldo is lecturer in cello, Mead Witter School of Music, UW–Madison.

Greg Zelek is the Principal Organist of the Madison Symphony Orchestra and Curator of the Overture Concert Organ. Some European cities have a municipal organist. He is as close as it comes to that role in Madison.

Participants in the Chamber Choir are singers from the University of Wisconsin Concert Choir.

FLOWERS

Amanda Frankewicz and Alluring Blooms, long-time source of flowers used at Olin House events, provided flowers today.

ON THE SCREEN

Emily Kuttner gathered pictures from Becky's life into the video that appears on the screen before and after the service. Sources include family pictures and University of Wisconsin–Madison photography staff.



“Give thanks in all circumstances ...”

1 Thessalonians

Hanns and Emily have many people to thank.

Related to today’s events, Eldonna Hazen brought together all the resources of First Congregational United Church of Christ.

Jennifer L. Mnookin and Jennifer Noyes made sure that the capacity of the University of Wisconsin–Madison was available in all ways needed. Carrie Olson’s experience organizing commencement equipped her for an additional unexpected event.

The private and public nature of today required considerable support from the University Communications team. John Lucas was at the coordination hub. Amy Gunderson and Danielle Lamberson Philipp made the print components happen. Peter Kleppin supplied many visual elements.

The Wisconsin Union gladly took on the reception. Meg Cerny, Mark Guthier, and Matt Olson led the Union’s efforts.

Susan Cook, the director of the UW Mead Witter School of Music, made sure musical requests were realized. Mariana Farah coordinated singers.

Going back further, the staff of Agrace Hospice and its inpatient facility, including Nikki Perkins and Linda Blust, MD, demonstrated great kindness.

Many complexities of Becky’s medical care were resolved through the work of Mary Beth Henry, lead nurse navigator and patient experience pilot at the UW Health Carbone Cancer Center. Her oncologist, Sam Lubner, MD, announced the milestones along the way. Howard Bailey, MD, director of the Carbone Cancer Center, provided encouragement at key moments.



Honoring Becky

Those who want to honor Becky may consider a gift to the Chancellor Rebecca Blank Great People Scholarship Fund. This scholarship fund was originally established with gifts from Becky Blank and Hanns Kuttner as their contribution to the UW’s All Ways Forward campaign. It provides tuition assistance for University of Wisconsin–Madison students with financial need. Endowment distributions from all the funds created during the campaign have made it possible to make more than 5,000 additional undergraduate and graduate support awards each year.

Chancellor Rebecca Blank Great People Scholarship Fund

go.wisc.edu/chancellorblank

or by check to:

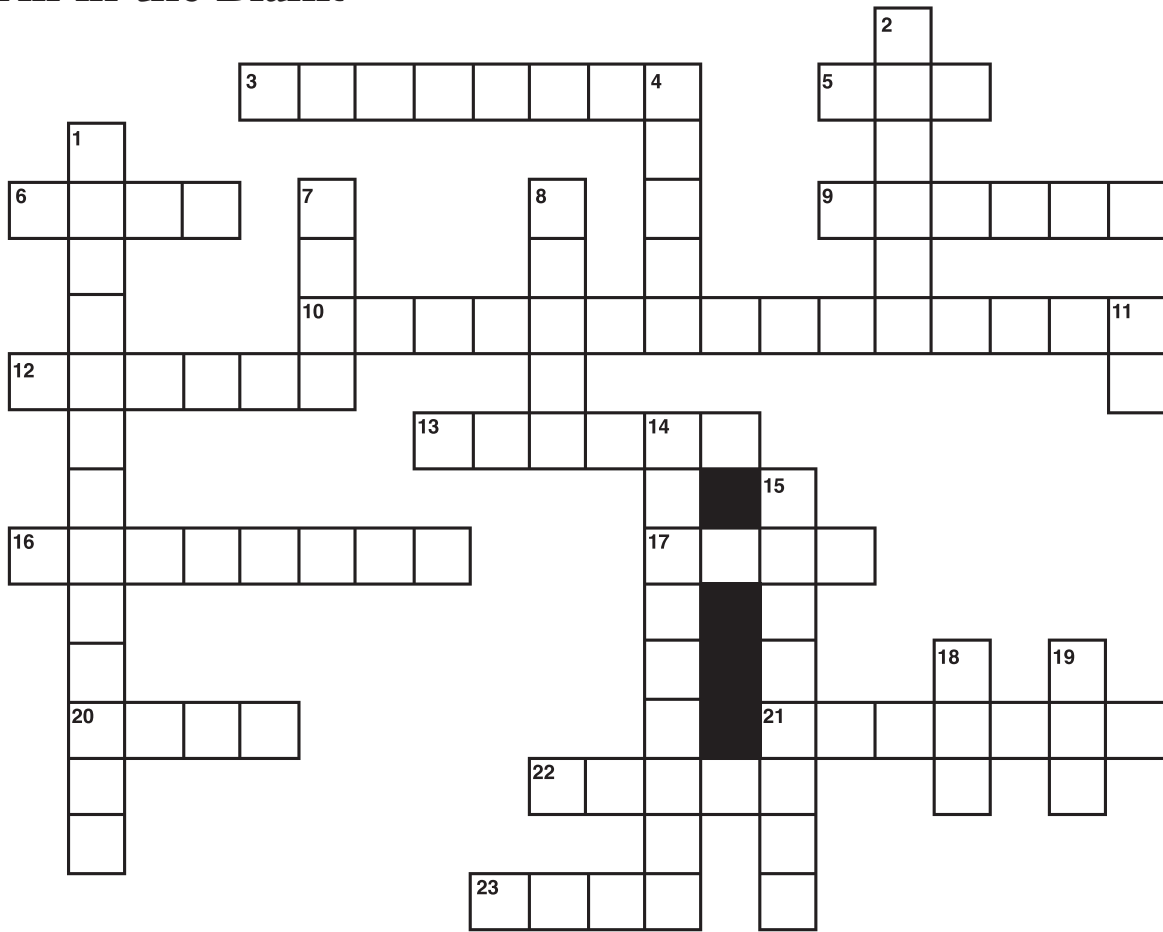
University of Wisconsin Foundation

US Bank Lockbox 78807

Milwaukee, WI 53278

Email any questions to giftservices@supportuw.org

Fill in the Blank



ACROSS

- 3. Department across from the Ellipse on 15th St.
- 5. Authors of the “Economic Report of the President”
- 6. School in Weill Hall
- 9. Blank, Rebecca. *It Takes A ____: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty*, Princeton University Press, 1998.
- 10. An academic career devoted to...; a UW institute (2 words)
- 12. Decennial knock on your door
- 13. Becky’s favorite flowers
- 16. Birthplace of an econ diva
- 17. House fit for a chancellor
- 20. Department where you might find Professor Blank (abbr.)
- 21. Where Obama keeps his spices
- 22. Becky never forgot these keys; can be grand
- 23. Becky’s favorite Bowl

DOWN

- 1. Becky cheered for them as an undergrad (2 words)
- 2. 1973 National Champion of...
- 4. She’s here, and she’s not a Blank
- 7. Where Becky and Hanns went on their honeymoon
- 8. Blank, Rebecca and William McGurn, *Is the Market ____? A Dialogue on Religion, Economics and Justice*, Brookings Institution Press, 2003.
- 11. Bush administration where you might find a husband
- 14. Preferred in cake and ice cream
- 15. Beverage that goes well with lunch; one a day for Becky
- 18. Best econ dept. in the U.S.
- 19. Vernie’s husband

Created by Emily Kuttner and Mitchell Trachtenberg



Becky dictated this life sketch to Emily to assist in the preparation of an obituary. A longer version, with more stories and details, along with tributes from colleagues and friends, is available at <https://rebeccablank.wisc.edu>

Rebecca Margaret Blank was born on September 19, 1955, in Columbia, Missouri. She was the daughter of Uel and Vernie Blank and Grant's younger sister. As a child she lived in Missouri, Michigan, and Minnesota. She graduated from the University of Minnesota summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Economics. After working in Chicago, she completed her PhD in Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1983. She held faculty appointments at Princeton University, Northwestern University, University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and published close to one hundred articles, including several books. Best known are *It Takes A Nation: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty* (Princeton University Press) and *Is the Market Moral?* (Brookings Institution Press). Her economics work focused on the interactions between low income labor markets, macroeconomics, and government policy. Some of her best-known work was around improvements in the measurement of poverty. In 2021, the American Economic Association gave her the Distinguished Economist award.

At the University of Michigan she became dean of the newly created School of Public Policy, and was instrumental in renaming it the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. She substantially expanded the size of the school and its programs and raised funds to build an iconic building for the Ford School. In 2022, she was given an Honorary Degree by the University of Michigan for her work in higher education and public policy. After serving as dean, she worked at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., before entering the Obama administration.

She interspersed her academic work with government service and was dedicated to improving public policy and its implementation. While working as a senior staff member on the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) for the George H.W. Bush administration she met the man she would marry, her beloved husband, Hanns Kuttner. His support was instrumental in making her career possible. She returned to the CEA in the Clinton administration in 1997, serving as one of three Senate confirmed members under Janet Yellen's chairmanship.

In 2009, she accepted the role of Under Secretary for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Department of Commerce, where, among other things, she oversaw the Census Bureau during the 2010 Census. She then moved into the role of Deputy Secretary at Commerce and served more than a year as Acting Secretary. She left in June 2013 for the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

She served as Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin–Madison from 2013 to 2022. At Madison she created new programs to fund low income students, expanded faculty and student diversity, led a record breaking fundraising campaign, increased the number of undergraduate students, created a School of Computer, Data and Information Sciences, and successfully navigated the university through the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the highlights

of her time as Chancellor was attendance at multiple college football bowl games, including the Rose Bowl, and two NCAA Final Four men's basketball tournaments. She also worked to improve the administrative functioning of the university and put the university on a sound financial footing. During her years as Chancellor she served on the boards of multiple organizations, including chair of the Big Ten Board and serving on the Board of Directors of the NCAA. She also served on the Board of Governors of TIAA and several higher education and public policy organizations.

Blank was an avid crossword and jigsaw puzzle enthusiast, who also played piano and organ. Her family took frequent hikes and bicycle trips. She was a great fruit pie maker and never lost her love of doughnuts.



First Congregational
United Church of Christ

1609 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726 | (608) 233-9751 | firstcongmadison.org

First Congregational United Church of Christ (FCUCC) in Madison, Wisconsin, seeks to be a radically inclusive and welcoming Christian community, nurturing and affirming God's creation and dedicated to serving all!