

# WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 5, 2023

## THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902



**Matthew 5:13-20 – You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world...** These words of Jesus speak of the value that the church can bring to the world. By the grace of God, we can be the salt that brings flavor to the world, the light that casts out darkness. As true as this may be, it is also the case that the church can and does err. Any honest account of the church’s history must acknowledge the many ways that the church has failed to live up to its own standards- failure to adequately resist the Holocaust, Christian support for chattel slavery and segregation, and the horrific child abuse crisis are more than enough evidence to illustrate the point.

As terrible as many of these moments have been in the history of the church, the fact that the church errs, that it is capable of sin, should not come as a surprise to us. The church is made up of people after all, and people can and often do act terribly to one another. Just as we behave deplorably as individuals, as communities, as nations, so too can we behave terribly in our life as the church. Acknowledging this fact is the vital first step towards addressing our historical wrongs and working to prevent the errors of the past from recurring in our future.

However, the church is not the same as all other social organizations. The church is not composed only of people, it is also the dwelling place of God, the home of the Holy Spirit, and the Body of Christ. It is this divine presence that enables the church to truly be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Through the grace of God, we can genuinely love one another, we can show kindness to strangers, welcome foreigners, serve the poor, set free the oppressed- we can embody the very love and grace of God. As important as it is to acknowledge our historic and present failures, it is even more important that we hold on to the truth that the church can be the light of the world. What brings us to the church, what binds us to Christ and the mission of God in the world, is not the memory of its failures, but our trust in its goodness- in its ability to be a blessing in a world of darkness. May God help us to hold fast to the calling of the church, to embody ever more the love of God, and to authentically share the good news of the gospel with the world.

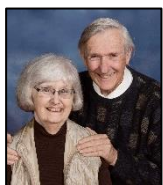
Pastor Andrew Greenhaw

**On Sunday, Communion** will be served by passing of the plate. If you prefer prepackaged Communion elements, they are available in the Narthex or from an usher. **The Care Fund** is collected on the first Sunday of the month and is used for emergency relief for our members. Please consider making a contribution so that we may continue to respond to the emergency needs of our members during difficult times.

### CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Sun	2/5	10:15 AM	Sunday School
		11:00 AM	Adult Education – “Praying the Psalms”
		11:15 AM	Youth Bell Choir rehearsal
Tue	2/7	2:00 PM	Bible Study – Zoom
		7:00 PM	Stewardship & Benevolence Team
Wed	2/8	9:45 AM	Nurture Ministry Team
		5:30 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group – Bliss home
Thu	2/9	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir

**Following worship, join us in the Parlor/Library for “Praying the Psalms” Week 3** - One of the most challenging aspects of praying the Psalms is encountering those that focus attention on “enemies.” How are we to understand these enemies and how should we understand ourselves when we pray against them? We’ll read another section of Deitrich Bonhoeffer’s book, “The Psalms: The Prayerbook of the Bible,” and then study and pray **Psalms 71** together trying to apply Bonhoeffer’s insights.



**It is with sadness that we share the passing of Tom Lawrence**, who was born into eternal life on February 1, 2023. We will keep you informed when a service has been planned. Prayers of comfort and God’s presence with his wife, Sherry Lawrence, who is currently at Pine Haven Community in Pine Island for rehabilitation care.

**Spring Church Life Deadline** - Articles and upcoming events for Spring Church Life (March-May) are due to Sarah at church@congorocho.org by **February 15**.

**Book Group** meets on the 3rd Thursday at 11 AM at church, plus offers a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. The book selection for **February 16** is “The Big Finish” by Brooke Fossey and is available in the church office.

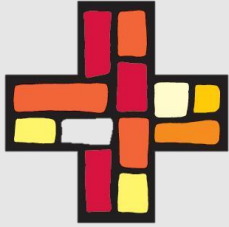
**Looking Ahead to Lent...**

- **Mardi Gras Sunday, February 19 at 10 AM** – A time to celebrate and rejoice before entering the penitential season of Lent, this service will include a jazz combo and beautiful spirituals sung by the choir. Let us express our joy with great music and worship!
- **Ash Wednesday, February 22 at 6 PM** - This service that begins the Lenten Season will include the imposition of ashes which acknowledges our mortality, along with the celebration of Holy Communion in which we share in the presence of the risen Christ, our hope for eternal life.

**Job Opening: A nursery assistant** is needed to work with our Nursery Lead to care for children six months through elementary school age on Sunday mornings from 9 AM - Noon. Possibility of additional hours on evenings and weekends. Starts at \$20 an hour. Applicants should be at least 18 and have childcare experience. Please share with family and friends who may be interested!

**Sunday Volunteers Needed** - We are always in need of greeters, ushers, lay readers, and coffee hour hosts to help with our Sunday morning services. There are three ways to sign up: at church on the Narthex bulletin board, contact Sarah in the church office, or use the Sign-Up Genius link on the church website (Home page - find link under Volunteer/raised hands graphic, or News & Events page - find link under Sign Up Quick Links).

<b><u>MONTHLY OFFERING REPORT</u></b>		<u>2022 Actual</u>	<u>2023 Actual</u>	<u>2023 Budget</u>
January	Estimate of Giving	\$48,484	\$41,096	\$21,463
	Non-Estim. Giving	\$2,420	\$875	\$2,667
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,904</b>	<b>\$41,971</b>	<b>\$24,130</b>
Y-T-D	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,904</b>	<b>\$41,971</b>	<b>\$24,130</b>



## WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 12, 2023

### THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902



Go and make peace  
with that person,  
and then come and  
offer your gift.

- Matthew 5:23-24 NCV -

*So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. ~ Matthew 5:23-24*

Relationships are hard. Not everyone thinks like we do. Not everyone lives the way we do. And honestly, sometimes we are all a little hard to love. This week, we encounter Jesus telling us how to live in right relationship with one another and ourselves.

In this time of incredible division, how can we follow Jesus' instructions to be reconciled with one another? How do we speak to one another? And exactly how far does this go? Join me on Sunday as we explore this less known portion of the sermon on the mount and consider how Jesus calls us to be oriented to a world whose brokenness often makes relationships seem impossible.

Pastor Shannon Smith

#### CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Sun	2/12	10:15 AM	Sunday School
		11:00 AM	Adult Education - "Praying the Psalms"
		11:15 AM	Youth Bell Choir rehearsal
		5:00 PM	Confirmation Refresher
Tue	2/14	2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
Wed	2/15	12:00 PM	Deadline for Spring Church Life content
		5:30 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	2/16	11:00 AM	Book Group - <i>The Big Finish</i> by Brooke Fossey
		12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir
Sat	2/18	11:00 AM	Memorial Service - Tom Lawrence

**Following worship, join us in the Parlor/Library for "Praying the Psalms" Week 4** - This week we will discuss the "holy history" contained in the psalms, specifically those that recount all the saving acts of God on behalf of Israel. Together we will discuss what it means for us to pray this history today? How does the history of Israel relate to the church and to our individual lives? After our discussion we will read and pray **Psalm 106** together.

**Confirmation Refresher Sunday Night** - For this month's confirmation refresher, we will gather from **5:00-6:30 PM** in the Narthex and Library to discuss "**Jesus Christ and Atonement.**" After sharing a meal of soup and salad, we'll share some of the ways that we have been taught to think about Jesus and Atonement. We'll then speak about how these understandings fit with the historic witness of the church on these issues- both naming difficulties they present and exploring the possibilities for greater and deeper faith that they provide.

**Spring Church Life Deadline** - Articles and upcoming events for Spring Church Life (March-May) are due to Sarah at church@congoroch.org by this **Wednesday, February 15.**

**Book Group meets Thursday, February 16 at 11 AM at church**, plus offers a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. The book selection is "The Big Finish" by Brooke Fossey and is available in the church office.



**Next Sunday, February 19 is our special Mardi Gras service!** A time to celebrate and rejoice before entering the penitential season of Lent, this service will include a jazz combo and beautiful spirituals sung by the choir. Let us express our joy with great music and worship!

**There will also be a special offering for disaster relief collected next Sunday.** We have all seen coverage of the disastrous earthquake in Turkey and Syria. The United Church of Christ has issued an urgent appeal to help those affected in the region. We will be collecting an emergency special offering on Mardi Gras Sunday, directing the received offering to this relief effort.



**A Memorial Service for Tom Lawrence** will be at The Congregational Church on **Saturday, February 18 at 11 AM**, with a luncheon immediately following in Fellowship Hall. To view the [obituary](https://www.ranfranzandvinefh.com/obituary/653382/Thomas-Virgil-Lawrence/), visit <https://www.ranfranzandvinefh.com/obituary/653382/Thomas-Virgil-Lawrence/>.

**Several volunteers will be needed** that day to assist with the set-up, meal service and clean-up for the luncheon following the memorial service. Please use the [SignUp Genius link](#) on the [church website](#) or contact the church office to indicate your availability and the task you would like to do. Some activities need only an hour of your time and many are suitable for older youth wishing to accumulate the volunteer hours so helpful when listed on employment and school applications. The luncheon is a mostly catered affair. Cindy Swessel-Hofer and Janet Bartz will be available throughout the day to coordinate the work, answer questions and solve problems.

The church's luncheon ministry is an important way for us to honor and remember the lives of our members and friends of the church who have died. It also means a great deal to their families and friends as the luncheon provides a supportive venue to exchange stories of their loved one. Please plan to set aside some of your time on February 18 to assist. Direct questions to [j.bartz848@gmail.com](mailto:j.bartz848@gmail.com).

**Altar Flowers** – Cindy Sawyer has retired as flower coordinator after 30+ years! You can still provide and bring flowers for the altar to highlight a special occasion or "just because." If you order through Flowers by Jerry, they can be delivered to the church on Saturday. Contact the church office with your bulletin dedication and inquire about liturgical colors if desired. Following Sunday worship, you may choose to keep the flowers or deliver them to someone special.



**Thank You** – It is with a grateful heart that we would like to express our thanks to the congregation for contributing to our RBA food drive for our students. This has had such a positive impact on our students' lives. They are so appreciative and are genuinely moved by all the food choices. Thank you for helping those who truly need it.

Sincerely, Julie Halferty & the Rochester Beacon Academy Staff

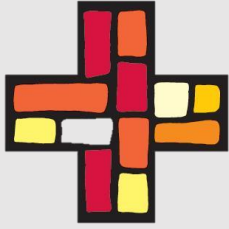


**Ash Wednesday, February 22 at 6 PM** - This service that begins the Lenten Season will include the imposition of ashes which acknowledges our mortality, along with the celebration of Holy Communion in which we share in the presence of the risen Christ, our hope for eternal life.

**Job Opening: A Nursery Assistant** is needed to work with our Nursery Lead to care for children six months through elementary school age on Sunday mornings from 9 AM - Noon. Possibility of additional hours on evenings and weekends. Starts at \$20 an hour. Applicants should be at least 18 and have childcare experience. Please share with family and friends who may be interested!







## WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 19, 2023

### THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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### THE LIGHT AND LOVE OF GOD

Matthew 17:1-9

The story of Jesus' transfiguration is often used on the final Sunday of Epiphany. This is fitting because the sudden realization, the epiphany that we celebrate during this season is the recognition of God in Jesus Christ. Though there have been subtle hints of Jesus' divine identity all throughout the gospel, in the story of the transfiguration all subtlety is gone. With his disciples on top of a mountain Jesus is revealed as God the Son with a rather spectacular show. His face shines like the sun and his clothes become dazzling white. He is joined by Moses and Elijah. Finally, a cloud settles over him and a voice from above proclaims, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

The transfiguration reminds us of the beauty and majesty of God's presence with us in the world. Even as he heads towards his execution, Jesus reflects to his disciples this fantastic vision of the light and love of God. When we go through difficult times, the light and life of God remain near us as well. As bad as things may get, we may find comfort in our faith that we are loved by God with the very same love that unites Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are loved by God in Jesus Christ and there is nothing that can separate us from that love.

This Sunday we celebrate our **Mardi Gras Sunday** with a worship service filled with beautiful music drawn from the tradition of the Negro Spirituals. These songs were composed by Christians held in slavery in the United States. As brutal as their lives could be, as cruelly as they were treated, these enslaved Christians never stopped believing that they were loved and valued by God. Their faith in God's love for them in Jesus Christ helped to sustain them, it gave them hope that the world could be different, and it led them to freedom- both spiritual and physical freedom. When we sing these spirituals on Sunday, let's do it in thanksgiving for the incredible Christian witness of these enslaved Christians and with a renewed dedication to proclaiming that God's love and light shine on us all.



Pastor Andrew Greenhaw

**During worship on Sunday, Communion** will be served by intinction. If you prefer prepackaged Communion elements, they are available in the Narthex or from an usher.



**TURKEY AND SYRIA EARTHQUAKE APPEAL** - The news continues to unfold about the devastating earthquake on the border of Turkey and Syria. The death toll and the number of injured continues to rise, already surpassing the numbers from Japan's Fukushima disaster of 2011, according to news sources. The World Health Organization states that the survivors, many of whom are homeless, are facing a secondary disaster as the cold and snow lead to worsening horrific conditions.

The United Church of Christ has issued an emergency appeal to assist in the disaster relief effort. Please give generously as you are able. Make your checks payable to the Congregational Church, and be sure to put "Turkey and Syria" on the memo line of your check or your PayPal contribution.

**Following worship, join us in the Parlor/Library for “Praying the Psalms” Week 5** - On our last session of Praying the Psalms we are going to focus on “the classics!” Together we will read a brief passage by Old Testament scholar Walter Bruggeman on metaphor and imagination in the psalms. Then we will apply these insights to **three classic psalms: 23, 86 and 126.**

**CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK**

Sun	2/19	10:15 AM	Sunday School
		11:00 AM	Adult Education - “Praying the Psalms”
		11:15 AM	Youth Bell Choir rehearsal
Tue	2/21	2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
		7:15 PM	Cabinet - Hybrid. Please review packet before meeting.
Wed	2/22	-----	NO Bell Choir
		6:00 PM	Ash Wednesday Service
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	2/23	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		2:00 PM	Christian Education Ministry Team - Zoom
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir



**Ash Wednesday, February 22 at 6 PM** - This service that begins the Lenten Season will include the imposition of ashes which acknowledges our mortality, along with the celebration of Holy Communion in which we share in the presence of the risen Christ, our hope for eternal life.

**Adult Education Lenten Series following worship on Sunday, February 26 and March 5 –  
“The Seven Last Words from the Cross” by Fleming Rutledge**

We will be reading and discussing a collection of reflections on Jesus’ last words from the cross by Fleming Rutledge who has been a parish priest of the Episcopal Church in New York for two decades and has a reputation as an excellent preacher. She is the author of several books and regularly preaches and teaches around the United States. We will review one of her reflections on Jesus’ last words to shed new light on how we think of the cross as we approach Good Friday and Easter. Each of her reflections ends with the words of famous hymns which we will use as a prompt for our closing prayer each week.

**Book Group** meets on the 3rd Thursday at 11 AM at church, plus offers a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. The book selection for **March 16** is “The Spirit Catches You” by Anne Fadiman and is available in the church office.

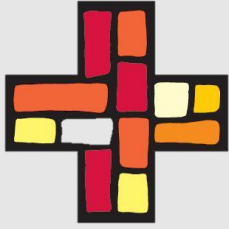


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Following Sunday worship, you may choose to keep the flowers or deliver them to someone special.

**Job Opening: A Nursery Assistant** is needed to work with our Nursery Lead to care for children six months through elementary school age on Sunday mornings from 9 AM - Noon. Possibility of additional hours on evenings and weekends. Starts at \$20 an hour. Applicants should be at least 18 and have childcare experience. Please share with family and friends who may be interested!





## WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 26, 2023

### THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902

#### CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Sun	2/26	10:15 AM	Sunday School
		11:00 AM	Adult Education – “The Seven Last Words from the Cross”
Tue	2/28	2:00 PM	Bible Study – Zoom
Wed	3/1	5:30 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	3/2	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		2:00 PM	Worship Ministry Team - Zoom
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir
Fri	3/3	8:00 PM	Youth Lock In

**Adult Education Lenten Series following worship on Sunday, February 26 and March 5 – “The Seven Last Words from the Cross” by Fleming Rutledge** - We will be reading and discussing a collection of reflections on Jesus’ last words from the cross by Fleming Rutledge who has been a parish priest of the Episcopal Church in New York for two decades and has a reputation as an excellent preacher. She is the author of several books and regularly preaches and teaches around the United States. We will review one of her reflections on Jesus’ last words to shed new light on how we think of the cross as we approach Good Friday and Easter. Each of her reflections ends with the words of famous hymns which we will use as a prompt for our closing prayer each week.



**Good Samaritan Offering** - Our Stewardship and Benevolence Ministry Team has approved a new offering at the request of our Pastors. The Good Samaritan Offering will be collected for a neighbor in need who has requested assistance from the church and for whom a moderate amount of money could make a big difference.

**Our first Good Samaritan Offering will be collected this Sunday for our neighbor Richard I.** Richard lives in an apartment in Rochester for which he pays \$635 a month. He had a full-time job at a carwash until pain in his foot forced him to stay at home. He had surgery three weeks ago to fix the issue but has to stay off his feet for 6 weeks to recover. Richard has done a good job accessing all county, state, and federal benefits and is hoping to find a call center job to help him get by during his recovery. Even with this help he is behind on February rent and most likely won't have a paycheck to cover March either.

Pastor Andrew has met with Richard several times to offer help, prayer, and talk over his situation. Richard is quite independent and able. If he can make rent for February and March, a total of \$1,270, he can stay housed, keep an eviction off his record, and return to independence as soon as possible. This is an opportunity for us to show mercy and love to a neighbor in need. Please consider giving to our Good Samaritan offering for Richard.

**Spring Church Life Retraction** - There will NOT be a Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast or Easter Egg Hunt following worship due to events falling over Spring Break. Please note this in the paper copy you receive in the mail. A revised version is available online and at church.

**Roof: Leaks and Repairs!** With the sudden change in temperatures the week before last, much of the ice and snow on our flat roof melted and, unfortunately, some of this water started leaking through the roof into our church office! Sarah acted quickly to ensure none of the water dripped on books or equipment, and our Building and Grounds Team set up buckets and trash cans to collect all the dripping water. Schwickert's roofing came out the following morning to address the issue. With the change in temperature and humidity, several fasteners had popped out and water was able to enter between the layers of roofing material. Schwickert's has replaced all of the fasteners and believes the issue has been resolved.

Buildings and Grounds is now working to replace the damaged ceiling tiles and clean the small carpet stain left from the leaks. At present we are anticipating replacing this flat roof in 2026, and our team at Schwickert's does not believe that this issue indicates a need to replace the flat roof sooner than expected.



**We Are Going Skating!** EVERYONE is invited to come skate or just spend some time in fellowship together on **Saturday, March 11 from 10 - Noon at the Rec Center** (21 Elton Hills Drive NW). Please bring friends and children of all ages are welcome. Skate rentals and rink costs have been paid by the church. You are invited to bring snacks or drinks to share. When you enter the main entrance check in at the front desk and they will point you to the proper rink.

**Book Group** meets on the 3rd Thursday at 11 AM at church, plus offers a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. The book selection for **March 16** is "The Spirit Catches You" by Anne Fadiman and is available in the church office.

**Altar Flowers** – You can still provide and bring flowers for the altar to highlight a special occasion or "just because." If you order through Flowers by Jerry, they can be delivered to the church on Saturday. Contact the church office with your bulletin dedication and inquire about liturgical colors if desired. Following Sunday worship, you may choose to keep the flowers or deliver them to someone special.



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