

THE
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
Rochester, MN

CHURCH LIFE



2024 SPRING EDITION

SUNDAY WORSHIP 10:00 AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:15 AM
KIND - 5TH



Daylight Saving begins March 10. Turn your clocks **ahead** one hour before bed on March 9!

OUT OF THE OFFICE:

Pastors Shannon and Andrew on vacation **April 1-7**

Sarah Struwe on vacation **April 15-19**

Children's Choir
PreK - 5th Grade
Rehearsal on Sunday after worship on March 3 & 10; sing during worship on March 17.

Sunday, March 17
Baptism of Norah Witte

HOLY WEEK March 24-31



Special Guest, Sunday, May 5
Rev. Kelly Gallagher, MN UCC Assoc. Conference Minister

Confirmation Sunday, May 12

Sunday, May 19
Receive New Members,
Graduate Recognition & Potluck
See Adult Ed page for class info
Offering: Strengthen the Church



PALM SUNDAY, March 24 at 10:00 AM – Celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem by waving palms and praising God. Stick around after worship for a **pancake breakfast fundraiser** for those going to the Border this summer.



MAUNDY THURSDAY, March 28 at 6:00 PM - In an intimate service we will remember Jesus' last meal with his disciples with ritual foot washing and Holy Communion.



GOOD FRIDAY, March 29 at 6:00 PM - We will commemorate the crucifixion of Christ at our Tenebrae service featuring a reading of the Passion narrative and the extinguishing of candles in steadily increasing darkness.



2 SERVICES ON EASTER SUNDAY, March 31 – Our Easter celebration begins with a **Sunrise Service at 6:50 AM in the Memorial Garden**. Join us for a celebration of the resurrection in the midst of God's creation and stick around for donuts and coffee.

The culmination of our Lenten Season and Holy Week is our **Easter Sunday Service at 10 AM!** We'll celebrate the Risen Christ with beautiful music and the preached Word. **A special Easter Offering** will be collected for Bear Creek Services and Community Food Response – see inside for more information.



EASTER LILIES will grace the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday, March 31. If you'd like to order a plant at a pre-paid cost of **\$14**, you can include your payment with dedication in Sunday's offering plate OR contact Sarah Struwe at church@congoroch.org or call 289-4581. Your dedication may be in memory of, in celebration of, or in honor of someone. **Final date to order is Friday, March 15.**

After the Easter service they will be delivered to our members who are not able to worship with us in church. **If you can help deliver one or more lilies** to our members, see Jodi Williamson near the pulpit area. Many hands will help to spread joy and will be greatly appreciated.



THERE WILL BE A BAPTISM on Sunday, March 17. Bring water from **home** in any container you wish to help us welcome **Norah Taylor Witte**, daughter of Owen and Shannon Witte, into our family of faith.

Prayers of blessing are with **Kaylee Ann Tarr**, daughter of Mickey and Travis Tarr, who was baptized on February 11 (picture on back page).

EASTER BUNNY A YARD FUNDRAISER

Saturday, March 30

Don't want to hide eggs from your children or grandchildren this Easter? Consider hiring our youth to stuff and hide eggs in your lawn the night before Easter. This offering is a fundraiser for the summer trip to the border. For details, contact pastorshannon@congoroch.org



PARENT'S NIGHT OUT

Saturday, April 20 from 6-9 PM

As a fundraiser for this summer's Tucson service-learning trip, we will be hosting a parent's night out. For a donation, we will feed the children, play with them and have a video game party. To help us plan, please **RSVP by using the SignUp Genius link** on our events page: www.congoroch.org/news-events.

LET'S GET READY OUTSIDE FOR SUMMER PLAYGROUP

Saturday, May 4 from 12 to 2 PM

To prepare for our summer playgroup we will be sprucing up the playground! There will be a number of jobs for all skill levels from hanging a sun sail to refilling the sandbox. Help us prepare our grounds to offer the best welcome to our friends this summer.

YOUTH GROUP

Wednesdays from 6:30 – 8 PM
6th-12th Grade in Chapel

PLUS, these special events:

Lock-in - Friday, March 22
7 PM to 7 AM

Pastor Andrew and Tammy Williams will be hosting. There will be games and movies as well as cooking for a bake sale after worship on Sunday.

May Baskets Fundraiser

Wednesday, May 1 from 6 – 8 PM

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING - Before and after worship on Sunday, April 21, we will be accepting electronics for recycling in honor of Earth Day 2024. Bring them to church and help keep electronic items out of our landfills! **Items accepted:** Anything with a cord or a battery. (Donations not required however, freewill donations accepted for any monitors).



GUEST REV. KELLY GALLAGHER, MN ASSOC. CONF. MINISTER

On Sunday, May 5, Minnesota Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Kelly Gallagher, will be preaching in worship. Kelly is our pastoral contact at the conference and serves as a great resource for Pastors Andrew and Shannon. Let's welcome her into our worshipping life and deepen those relationships with the wider Church.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY, MAY 12 - Currently, two young people are attending weekly confirmation classes learning about the Christian faith and deciding if they will choose to join the Church. On this morning in worship, we will hear those who chose to confirm share a statement of faith and confirm the vows made on their behalf at their baptism. Please attend this important worship service as we welcome them into this new phase of their faith journey.



NEW MEMBERS JOIN, GRADUATE RECOGNITION AND POTLUCK – MAY 19.

Mark your calendars for a celebration! During worship we will welcome new members into the life of the congregation and recognize the accomplishments of our graduating seniors. To celebrate these milestones, we will share a potluck meal in Fellowship Hall following worship. Use the SignUp Genius link at www.congoroch.org/news-events to let us know what you are bringing or to pitch in that morning.

WORSHIP & CARE ASSOCIATE – Jodi Williamson

worshipcare@congoroch.org and (507)-269-4177

I am honored to be serving as the new Worship & Care Associate for our Church. I will be assisting Pastor Andrew and Pastor Shannon with worship planning and the ministry of fellowship and care. Within the next month or so, we will be conducting a Talent and Time Survey to ask each of you how you can share your talents with the church, as much or as little as you like.



As we gather this information, some of your members need some helping hands. There is a need for prepared meals. We are also looking for folks that can help with rides to church and various appointments. If you can help with meals or rides, please let me know.

Our next Care Team meeting will be Saturday, March 9 at 11 AM.

We have members who would enjoy your companionship and conversation. If interested to learn more, please join us. There will be coffee and donuts!

I look forward to working with everyone as we bring our own unique gifts to serve God and our Church Community.

ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, March 3 - How to Talk to Kids About God. How do we inspire a passion in our children about God and their own spiritual lives? It can often feel like the “old” way of talking about God constructs a divine that is male, punishing, and angry rather than a loving God who is beyond human categories and is always seeking us out. Join Pastor Shannon as we talk about how to talk to kids about God in a way that encourages wonder and awe and to consider the importance of spiritual formation in our youngest.

Sunday, March 10 - What is Autism & Best Practices for Welcome. Following worship, join our guest speaker, Brandon Hendrickson, to learn more about Autism Spectrum Disorder and how we as a church can become a welcoming place for those with autism and their families. This is our first educational opportunity to prepare for welcoming folks with different disabilities into the life of the church. A Zoom link will be sent to those who want to attend virtually. **About our speaker:** Brandon Hendrickson has a master’s in educational leadership from the University of Washington. He also has a 13-year-old with ASD, and has years of experience teaching science and philosophy to kids on the spectrum. He’s the founder of Science is WEIRD (scienceisWEIRD.com), and runs the local tag/capture-the-flag group for kids who love intense play (rochestertag.com). He also runs Across the Divide (rochestertag.com/divide), a monthly event that cultivates good conversation among people who disagree about politics.

Sunday, March 17 - Adult Education on Environmental Justice with Guest Rev. Dr. Brooks Berndt. Join us immediately after worship in the Parlor for our guest speaker Rev. Dr. Brooks Berndt, Minister for Environmental Justice, Education for Faithful Action Team, United Church of Christ, National Ministries who will join us virtually to speak on environmental justice issues, UCC environmental justice history, what it means to be a prophetic church in addressing climate justice issues, the UCC creation justice churches program and why Christians and UCCers should care about the environment, how churches can address climate change and how to maintain hope.

Sunday, April 21 - Being Environmentally Responsible and Our Urban Forest. Join us immediately after worship in the Parlor for a discussion of our Urban Forest and all that it has to offer for our environmental outreach as well as for our spiritual development. This will mirror the Sunday School students’ visit to the Urban Forest during Sunday School. More information to follow.



ROCHESTER PRIDE and JUNETEENTH 2024

Rochester PRIDE is **Saturday, May 18 at Soldier’s Field**. We will host a booth again at this amazing community celebration. The event is **Noon to 5 PM** with time for set up and take down before and after. We are looking for volunteers to staff the booth. It is a rewarding outreach to our LGBTQIA+ brothers and sisters. More information to follow. Sign up using the SignUp Genius link on the church website Events page.

JUNETEENTH - We will again participate in the celebration this year. More information to follow after the date is announced. We hope you will join us by volunteering for a shift at the booth.

MEN’S GROUP

1st Tuesday at 10 AM – Church
3rd Tuesday at 7:30 AM – Denny’s N.

BIBLE STUDY ZOOM

Tuesdays at 2:00 PM
(no meeting April 2)

Led by Co-pastors Andrew and Shannon, we will continue reading of the book of **Acts**. We do a brief personal check-in, read a portion of scripture and follow-up with lively discussion. It’s a great way to spend an hour if your calendar allows.

BOOK GROUP

3rd Thursday at 10:30 AM

Church Parlor/Library & Zoom

Books are distributed at each meeting and also available in the church office. Spring selections are:

March 19

“Rochester” by Wright-Peterson

April 16

“Good Eggs” by Hardman

May 21

“Dear Edward” by Napolitano



NEW MEMBER CLASSES

We are inviting all friends and visitors to learn more about: The Congregational Church UCC, the UCC as a denomination, and how we approach church, theology, and the Bible.

3 classes will be held **after Sunday worship on April 21, 28 and May 5**. Childcare will be provided.

We will welcome new members into the life of The Congregational Church **on Sunday, May 19 during worship and have a Potluck during Fellowship Time**. If you are interested in joining or know someone who might be, contact pastorandrew@congoroch.org.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS



MARCH IS MINNESOTA FOODSHARE MONTH - It's time for the annual Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign, which raises money to help 300 food shelves statewide, including Channel One Regional Food Bank and Food Shelf. The food shelves also collect money during the campaign, and the share of the FoodShare monies that any food shelf receives is apportioned based partly on the money it collects. Our congregation supports Channel One in this effort by donating money to it.

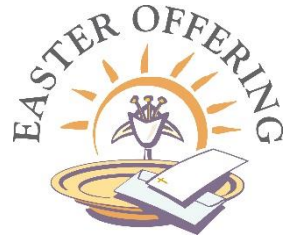
Donations are crucial to help Channel One continue its ministry, which distributed 12.4 million pounds of food last year throughout the 14-county region served. Approximately one in six people in that region is food insecure. Channel One's Food Shelf alone saw a record 8,506 household visits last November, double the amount during the height of the pandemic. Funds are also used for other Channel One programs, such as creative delivery services to those who are unable to get to the Food Shelf and delivering prepared meals through the Kitchen Coalition program.



Please prayerfully consider giving to this organization that is doing such vital work. Please put **"Channel One"** in the **memo/note line** of your check (payable to church) or PayPal donation and have your donations **received at church by Monday, March 25**. Thank you!

OUR SPECIAL EASTER OFFERING on Sunday, March 31 be supporting and shared between two local organizations: Bear Creek Services and Community Food Response (CFR).

- **Bear Creek Services** provides support to individuals with developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injuries. Their staff form a partnership with the enrolled individuals with the goal of maximizing their potential and enjoying all that life has to offer. They provide this support through person-centered programs that respect everyone's dignity and desires.
- **Community Food Response** is a non-profit, volunteer-led organization serving hungry adults and children in the Rochester area since 1993. Volunteer drivers collect food donations from hospitals, restaurants, cafeterias, businesses, and grocery stores and bring it to CFR's food distribution site. There it is sorted and made available to anyone facing food insecurity.



These programs will benefit a diverse group of people representing a cross section of the residents of our community in need of assistance. Please consider these needs and contribute generously by giving on Easter, mailing a check to church OR via the "Online Giving" icon on the church website. Remember to specify "Easter" in the memo/notes line.



THE STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH (STC) SPECIAL OFFERING will be collected on Sunday, May 19.

This special offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth in UCC congregations. Of the STC funds collected, 50% stays in Minnesota to help fund various ministries across our state's churches. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, the funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, faith formation, and innovation in existing congregations. **By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.** To contribute, you can use the offering plate at church, mail a check to the church, OR donate via the "Online Giving" icon on the church website. Remember to specify "Strengthen the Church" or "STC" in the "Add a note" input field.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



SERVE A PROVIDED MEAL TO OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE LANDING – Available dates to serve are **March 5, 14, 21, April 4, 11, 19 and 25 from 4:30–7:00 PM**. Pastor Shannon or Andrew will be there, and 3 more people can sign up for each evening. Please use the SignUp Genius link on our events page: www.congoroch.org/news-events.



CHANNEL ONE – Please join us for meaningful outreach ministry at Channel One Regional Food Bank. Our congregation's monthly group volunteer sessions occur on the **second Friday of each month from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM**. Spring dates are **March 8, April 12 and May 10**. We usually re-pack bulk foods into smaller packages for distribution throughout the Channel One network or pack food boxes for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program or the high-rise delivery program. Signing up to volunteer must be done via our unique page on the Channel One volunteer site, available on our church website event page: www.congoroch.org/news-events. Every volunteer needs to have a sign-in account, which can be created the first time you volunteer. We work hard but have fun too! 14,148 volunteer hours were recorded in 2023 in the Food Bank and onsite Food Shelf. Channel One couldn't provide the food and services to the 14 counties it serves without that help. Please consider giving some of your time to alleviate food insecurity!

TALENT AND TIME SURVEY COMING SOON, or talk to Jodi Williamson anytime on ways to volunteer for our church!

MARDI GRAS

A festive worship service on February 11 included a jazz combo, spirituals, and baptism!

