



WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 3, 2024

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902



ON THIS THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT, Pastor Shannon Smith's message is "Foolishness" from the scripture reading 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. **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.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR (PreK-5th grade) - Rehearsal on Sunday following worship: today and March 10; sing during worship on Sunday, March 17.



ADULT EDUCATION TODAY AFTER WORSHIP - 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.

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Tue	3/5	10:00 AM	Men's Group - at church
		2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
Wed	3/6	5:15 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group. In-person, will Zoom with Meet the Neighbor
Thu	3/7	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir
Fri	3/8	9-11 AM	Channel One Volunteer Day
Sat	3/9	11:00 AM	Care Team - all are invited to learn more!

OUR NEXT CARE TEAM MEETING is 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!

SPRING FORWARD! Daylight Saving Time begins **next Sunday, March 10.** Turn your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on March 9.



MARCH IS MINNESOTA FOODSHARE MONTH - As announced in Spring Church Life, it's time for our annual participation in the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign. Our congregation collects funds for Channel One Regional Food Bank and Food Shelf, and MN FoodShare raises money for a FoodFund to distribute to food shelves statewide. **The more money that Channel One receives, the larger the share of the FoodFund it will receive.**

Food insecurity continues to rise. In the 14 counties served by Channel One. There are more than 40,000 people needing assistance, 11,500 of whom are children. The Food Bank distributed a record 13.9 million pounds of food in 2023. The onsite Food Shelf is also serving a record number of households, with 8,700 total visits in January.

Donations are crucial right now to help Channel One mobilize in its fight against hunger. 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!



CHANNEL ONE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY -Please join us for meaningful outreach ministry at our congregation's next monthly group volunteer session at Channel One Regional Food Bank on **Friday, March 8 from 9:00 – 11:00 AM.** 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, accessible at 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!

ADULT EDUCATION NEXT SUNDAY – What is Autism & Best Practices for Welcome. Following worship on **March 10**, 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.



OUR 2024 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL - This Lenten season, we will participate in Jesus' 40 days of being "tested in the wilderness" by walking with C.S. Lewis, leaning into the power of literature to provoke thought and inspire action. With humor, wit, and imagination, Lewis explores an array of familiar, everyday struggles – and thereby helps us chart a way forward, into the delight and renewal of Easter morning and beyond.

Copies of the Lenten Devotional and the book "The Screwtape Letters" are available to pick up in the Narthex. Pastors Andrew and Shannon will be sharing reflections on the week's devotion in weekly emails throughout the season of Lent. Grab yourself a copy and join our congregation on this Lenten journey!

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. After the Easter service they will be delivered to our members who are not able to worship with us in church. **Final date to order is Friday, March 15.**



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 - An intimate service remembering Jesus' last meal with his disciples with foot washing and 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.

EASTER BUNNY A YARD FUNDRAISER on 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



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 **10 AM Easter Sunday Service** celebrating 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.

MONTHLY OFFERING REPORT		<u>2023 Actual</u>	<u>2024 Actual</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>
February	Estimate of Giving	\$18,516	\$17,631	\$22,051
	Non-Estim. Giving	\$2,045	\$2,895	\$2,083
	TOTAL	\$20,561	\$20,526	\$24,134
Y-T-D	TOTAL	\$62,532	\$99,277	\$48,268



MASKS AVAILABLE - As Covid and flu season is upon us, masks will be available in the Narthex. We ask that if you feel sick, please worship from home. Whatever makes you most comfortable, please do so.

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.



BOOK GROUP meets on the 3rd Tuesday at 10:30 AM at church, plus a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. Book selection for **March 19** is "Rochester" by Wright-Peterson and is available in the church office.



YOUTH LOCK-IN on Friday, March 22 - 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.

SERVE A MEAL TO OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE LANDING - Available dates to serve at the Landing are April 4, 11, and 19 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.

BACKPACKS FOR BEACON - To help out Beacon Academy and their students in need, we are continuing our drive for food and personal care items. They are specifically asking for food and snack items that do not require much preparation such as macaroni and cheese boxes, cans of soup, cereal items, granola bars, and crackers and cheese. Personal care items needed are deodorant, shampoo and conditioner, soap, and feminine hygiene. There is a bin in the Narthex where you can leave your donations each Sunday. Thank you for supporting Beacon Academy's students in need!



FLOWERS FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP - You are welcome to provide and bring a floral arrangement for Sunday worship 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.





WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 10, 2024

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902



“GRACE ALL THE WAY DOWN”

Ephesians 2:1-10

During the season of Lent, we sometimes fast from something, or take on some new discipline, as a means of centering ourselves in God. I have done this on several occasions, and on a very few of these occasions, I have actually been successful in my discipline or fast- I've stuck with the plan for the whole season of Lent. There is a temptation to view these rare occasions of success as a triumph of our own will- to think that we have done well and earned our reward. We are tempted to think that our own works have brought us closer to God and we may be tempted to pride, or even to boast about our achievement.

This is not to say that we shouldn't feel good about what we have done. If we've stuck with a spiritual practice and felt ourselves become closer to God that is a great thing and we should absolutely celebrate it. The problem begins when we focus a little too much on our own role in the achievement and not enough on God's. As the Apostle Paul points out in the second chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, we all were at one point separated from God by our own sins. “You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.” All of us were in need of a salvation that we could not affect ourselves, we all needed to be reconciled to God. It was when we were in this condition, when we most needed salvation and when we least deserved it, that God acted to accomplish our salvation. “But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved...” Paul wants us to remember that our salvation was a gift freely given from God and totally unmerited on our part. Our salvation was an act of pure grace.

God is no less active in our continuing sanctification, our living of a Christian life, than God was in our initial moment of salvation. When we are able to truly pray, it is God the Spirit praying within us. When we are able to successfully fast, or stick with a spiritual discipline, or genuinely be of service to others, all of these things are accomplished in, with, and through God, and not on our own. This is important to remember because it is true. It is also important to remember because it shapes our attitude towards ourselves and others. When we focus only on our role in our accomplishments, we can begin to think of ourselves more highly than those around us who are struggling; as though it was only through our own merit that we have achieved. We can, in Paul's, begin to boast. On the other hand, if we remember that all that we are and all that we have is a gift from God, then we can achieve while maintaining humility, and gratitude, and our center in God. We can also view others who struggle with compassion, knowing that we too struggled before we knew God's presence, and believing that just as God has come to our aid, so too may She come to the aid of others in time. May God grant us spiritual progress and true humility and may God ever keep us from boasting. Amen.

Rev. Andrew Greenhaw

ADULT EDUCATION THIS SUNDAY AFTER WORSHIP - What is Autism & Best Practices for Welcome. 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. 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); runs the local tag/capture-the-flag group for kids who love intense play (rochestertag.com); and also runs Across the Divide (rochestertag.com/divide), a monthly event that cultivates good conversation among people who disagree about politics.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR (PreK-5th grade) - Rehearsal today after worship and sing Sunday, March 17.

ADULT EDUCATION NEXT SUNDAY - Environmental Justice with Guest, Rev. Dr. Brooks Berndt, Minister for Environmental Justice, Education for Faithful Action Team, United Church of Christ, National Ministries. Immediately after worship in the Parlor, guest speaker 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 UCC'ers should care about the environment, how churches can address climate change and how to maintain hope.

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Tue	3/12	2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
		7:00 PM	Stewardship & Benevolence Team
Wed	3/13	5:15 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	3/14	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir
Fri	3/15	2:30 PM	Easter Lily orders due - see article for information



THERE WILL BE A BAPTISM next 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.

EASTER LILY ORDERS DUE Friday, March 15 - 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. After the Easter service they will be delivered to our members who are not able to worship with us in church. **Final date to order is Friday, March 15; while payments and dedications are due by Sunday, March 24.**



MARCH IS MINNESOTA FOODSHARE MONTH - We are continuing to collect monetary donations for Channel One Regional Food Bank and Food Shelf during Minnesota FoodShare's March Campaign. The more money that Channel One receives, the larger the share of the money from the FoodShare FoodFund it will receive.

During this Sunday's service, we will be watching a video produced by Channel One. One program mentioned is Kitchen Coalition. Approximately 15% of people with food insecurity don't have the home, health or ability to make meals on their own, even with donated food. To help meet that need, Channel One gives food bank ingredients to local restaurants in its service area, and they create nutritious and freshly prepared meals. Then other non-profit organizations get those meals to neighbors on a predictable schedule. The program is currently creating and distributing 5,800 meals a month.

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!

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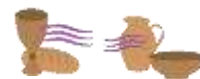
OUR 2024 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL - This Lenten season, we will participate in Jesus' 40 days of being "tested in the wilderness" by walking with C.S. Lewis, leaning into the power of literature to provoke thought and inspire action. With humor, wit, and imagination, Lewis explores an array of familiar, everyday struggles - and thereby helps us chart a way forward, into the delight and renewal of Easter morning and beyond.

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WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 17, 2024

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902



ON THIS FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT, Pastor Shannon Smith's message is "Chosen" from the scripture reading Jeremiah 31:31-34. Communion will be served by intinction. If you prefer, prepackaged Communion elements are available in the Narthex or from an usher. **THERE WILL ALSO BE A BAPTISM as part of the worship service. Please 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.



ADULT EDUCATION WITH MN350 TODAY AFTER WORSHIP - Our originally scheduled speaker is not able to join us so we are very excited about the opportunity for our Guest Andy Pearson, Senior Pipeline Resistance Organizer, with MN 350. MN 350 works to secure a safe climate through a just transition from an economy based on extraction and consumption to a sustainable and life-affirming economy. This means that benefits must flow first to marginalized communities that bear the worst effects of climate change. All voices — Black, Indigenous, and people of color; immigrant; white; rural and urban — must be heard in this transition. Using a full range of peaceful methods, they are building a powerful mass movement to end systems of oppression and realize our vision of climate justice. Andy Pearson is a lifelong Minnesotan, joined MN350's staff in 2013 and has been instrumental in building the movement against Enbridge and the tar sands industry across the Midwest. Andy will be joining us virtually.

THE PICTORIAL DIRECTORIES HAVE ARRIVED! For those who have your picture in the directory, you can pick up your copy after Sunday worship from Pat Espeset, or contact the church office (289-4581) to stop by during office hours.



NEXT WEEK ON PALM SUNDAY, March 24, join us as we 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.



MARCH IS MINNESOTA FOODSHARE MONTH - We are continuing to collect monetary donations for Channel One Regional Food Bank and Food Shelf during Minnesota FoodShare's March Campaign. Channel One started 44 years ago in Rochester as a small food shelf, but has expanded to be a part of the Feeding America network as a food bank too. Channel One now serves 14 counties — 13 in Minnesota plus La Crosse County in Wisconsin — and supports 163 different food shelves and programs. If you missed (or want to see again) the impactful Channel One video shown in last Sunday's service, here is the link: <https://youtu.be/JrL--BwaBBA>.

Food insecurity continues to rise month to month. There were 8,875 household visits at Channel One's on-site food shelf in February (up from January's 8,700), including 426 first-time users (up from 411).

Donations are crucial to help Channel One continue its ministry. Please prayerfully consider giving. 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!

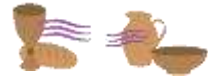
CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Tue	3/19	7:30 AM	Men's Group - Denny's North
		10:30 AM	Book Group - Hybrid: "Rochester" by Wright-Peterson
		2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
		6:30 PM	Cabinet - Hybrid
Wed	3/20	5:15 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	3/21	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir
Fri	3/22	7:00 PM	Youth Lock-In



OUR 2024 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL and the book "The Screwtape Letters" are available to pick up in the Narthex. Pastors Andrew and Shannon will be sharing reflections on the week's devotion in weekly emails throughout the season of Lent. Grab yourself a copy and join our congregation on this Lenten journey!

MAUNDY THURSDAY, March 28 at 6:00 PM - An intimate service remembering Jesus' last meal with his disciples with foot washing and 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.

EASTER BUNNY A YARD FUNDRAISER on 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



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 **10 AM Easter Sunday Service** celebrating 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.



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March 24, 2024

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902



“THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CROSS”

Mark 11:1-11

On the day when Jesus entered Jerusalem for the final time riding on a donkey's colt, the crowds welcomed him as God's Messiah, shouting, "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" We sing these very same words as part of our communion liturgy. We too sing in celebration at the presence of Jesus Christ, the Messiah of God.

It's likely that many of those present at the first Palm Sunday harbored hopes that Jesus would inaugurate a new kingdom of Israel in this world. A kingdom like other worldly kingdoms, marked by wealth, power, and status. These people were disappointed when Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem led to his death on a cross. There was not going to be a worldly kingdom, there would be no wealth and power to be shared as spoils of his conquest. In Jesus' words in John's Gospel, his kingdom is not of this world.

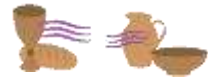
Unlike those people in Jerusalem two thousand years ago, we already know how the story ends. We know that Jesus is going to the cross. So why do we still follow? What makes us celebrate Jesus as the Messiah when we know that following him doesn't lead to wealth, or power, or status? I think it's because we know, sometimes better than others, that there is a hollowness to worldly wealth, power, and status. We know that these things don't really fulfill us, they don't really give us life. We follow Jesus to the cross because we believe that our destiny, true, eternal life and fulfillment, lie on the other side of the cross. It is when we have put to death our selfishness, our worldly ambition, our pride, and our shame, that we can begin to truly live. It is on the other side of the cross that we find our true identity in union with God. May we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry this Palm Sunday knowing that his journey to the cross is also our journey to eternal life.

Recognized as God's chosen king, but following him doesn't lead to a worldly kingdom, power, and riches... it leads to a cross... Why do we still follow... because we recognize that worldly power, wealth, and status, are empty and hollow, real true life, eternal life, comes in our union with God, with our putting to death our worldly ambitions and living for God alone...

Rev. Andrew Greenhaw

FOLLOWING WORSHIP, stick around for a pancake breakfast fundraiser in Fellowship Hall to support those going to the Border this summer.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, March 28 at 6:00 PM - An intimate service remembering Jesus' last meal with his disciples with foot washing and Communion.



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Tue	3/26	2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
Wed	3/27	5:15 PM	Bell Choir
		-----	NO Youth Group
Thu	3/28	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:00 PM	Maundy Thursday Service
		-----	NO Chancel Choir
Fri	3/29	6:00 PM	Good Friday Service

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SHARING IN MINISTRY - Many Hands Make Light Work

Jodi Williamson

We all have unique talents that can be used to serve God, our church and the community. Starting on Palm Sunday and continuing through the month of April, we are asking everyone to fill out the **Sharing in Ministry survey**. Pick one, two or more areas that use your talents, or maybe you want to try something new! Drop the survey in the box in the Narthex or in the church office. You can also access the survey on our church website, under Outreach. Any questions, please let me know.



LAST CALL FOR MINNESOTA FOODSHARE! This is the final reminder for contributions to Channel One Regional Food Bank and Food Shelf during Minnesota FoodShare's March Campaign. Channel One serves 14 counties — 13 in Minnesota plus La Crosse County in Wisconsin — and supplies food to 163 different food shelves and programs. If you missed (or want to see again) the impactful Channel One video shown during the March 10 Sunday service, here is the link: <https://youtu.be/JrL--BwaBBA>.

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DISABILITY MINISTRY UPDATE - We have started the work to become more welcoming to people with disabilities! Our first educational opportunity taught us about autism, ADHD, and ways the church has been challenging for people with those diagnoses. There is so much to learn and we will have more disability education events in the summer and fall. Colleen Hofer is working to transform the CE into a nursing parents' room/sensory calm down space for Sunday mornings. To make worship more accessible, we now have noise-cancelling headphones in the Narthex. We are blessed to have Colleen Hofer, Katie Lawrence, and Kit Jester providing input and planning for increased welcome and accessibility. This month we hope to update the website with a social narrative and update bulletins with images for those needing a visual calendar. If you are interested in helping with the disability ministry, please contact Pastor Shannon.

THANK YOU TO CHANNEL ONE VOLUNTEERS! Many thanks to the 9-person crew for our Food Bank group volunteer session on **March 8**: Janet Bartz; Ellen Bolterman; Annie Kramer; John and LuAnn Nicholson; Bob and Cheryl Roediger; Cathy Swessel; and David Walters.



Annie and Cathy put labels on bags. The others put two 7-inch round frozen Belgian waffles in each bag, and then put 18 bags in a box; for a total of **2,592 waffles in 72 Boxes**. The waffles have been added to the Food Bank's inventory for use throughout Channel One's 14 county service area.

Our next group session is **Friday, April 12 from 9:00 - 11:00 AM**. You must use our unique page on the Channel One volunteer site to sign up, accessible at <https://www.congoroch.org/news-events>. Come join us!

MN350 RECAP FROM MARCH 17: For those of you who joined us and for those of you who were not able to, below are the links for some of the actions for MN350 and some of their environmental justice and water protector partners. Andy Pearson shared about their Tar Sand Pipeline initiatives for which they monitor water breached of the Line 3 pipeline across our lake areas and tribal reservations in Northern Minnesota. Mia Farinas, Food Systems Coordinator, shared about their work building a food system and creating the Fresh Box- a program at food shelves and targeting grocery stores to provide fresh fruits and vegetables in places where they may not be as readily available in food vulnerable communities and low-income communities. They also have a transit justice team, an Anti-displacement team, and support the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women organizations. A possibility for future engagement and guided discussion is to show their Water is Life 16-minute video event.

<https://mn350.org/pledge>
<https://www.mncenter.org/mcea-pushing-progress-nitrate-pollution-legislature> -
(especially affecting us in our area with karst)
<https://waadookawaadamikwag.org/> (the wisdom and ways of the beaver)

LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

As many of you know, the shortage of affordable housing in Rochester has resulted in an increasing population of unsheltered people in our city. Pastors Shannon and Andrew are part of a local group of clergy working with ISAI AH- a group that organizes faith communities- that chose to focus on the issues of affordable housing and homelessness for the coming year. We are seeking ways to ensure all of our neighbors have access to adequate emergency shelter and viable pathways to securing affordable housing.

In response to an overwhelming number of complaints about unsheltered people camping in parks, the City Council has implemented a camping ban. This policy allows the police to jail or fine people seeking shelter in our parks. While we understand the cause of the complaints, we believe the ban itself is not a reasonable solution- as it does nothing to help people find the shelter they need. Our hope is to demonstrate to the Mayor and City Council that there is broad support for solutions that create more emergency shelter space and better access to affordable housing.

Our first effort to demonstrate this support is a letter campaign. The ISAI AH Clergy group has drafted a letter stating that we support a compassionate response to the issue of homelessness in Rochester. The letter specifically encourages the Mayor and City Council to work with the County to reduce homelessness to "Functional Zero", to make a financial commitment be made by the council to end homelessness in Rochester, and to make public annual reviews of the enforcement of the camping ban. Other congregations in Rochester are having their members sign and send in these letters and we hope you will join us in this letter writing campaign.

Copies of the letter are available to sign in the Narthex this Sunday and can also be viewed on our church website, under Outreach. Thank you for considering supporting the faith community of Rochester in our efforts to form a compassionate and comprehensive response to homelessness!

Pastor Andrew Greenhaw and Pastor Shannon Smith



WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 31, 2024

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902



“OUR TEACHER AND LORD”

John 20: 1-18

In John’s Gospel, Mary Magdalene does not recognize the risen Christ until he says her name, “Mary.” In the moment that she recognizes her Lord, she says to him, “Rabbouni”- meaning teacher. The relationship between a rabbi and student was an intimate one in which the student learned to be as the rabbi was- learned to join in the rabbi’s way of life and to continue his teaching.

The good news of Easter morning is that our rabbi, our teacher, is the risen Christ. We have a teacher who is not only rabbi but also Lord. A teacher fully united to God, fully able to lead us into the wisdom and power of God. We have a teacher so committed to our growth and development that he willingly dies for us; willingly takes the consequences for sins he has not committed. We have a teacher who defeats sin and death so that we might be free of them. A teacher ever ready and willing to forgive our trespasses and once more welcome us into eternal life with him. Finally, we have a teacher who comes to each and every one of us, who calls us by name, and invites us to join him in everlasting life and union with God.

Mary’s experience that first Easter morning is the experience that God wishes for each and every one of us. God wants us to know that we are forgiven, even us, even for all the ways we’ve failed. God wants us to know that it is not condemnation, and violence, and death that have the last word in our lives. God wants us to know that grace, and love, and eternal life are ultimately triumphant. God wants us to know that above and beyond all things we are loved, accepted, and welcomed into the very life of God. It is for this reason that God in the risen Christ called out Mary’s name, and it is for this reason that God in Jesus Christ calls to each of us by name today. Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen, indeed!

FOLLOWING WORSHIP, please consider helping to deliver an Easter lily to our homebound members today or Monday. Please see Jodi Williamson by the lilies after today’s service. Many hands make this a joy to do.



TODAY’S SPECIAL EASTER OFFERING will support two local charities this year: Bear Creek Services and Community Food Response (CFR). Donations we will be shared between these programs:

- **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.



SHARING IN MINISTRY - Many Hands Make Light Work

Jodi Williamson

We all have unique talents that can be used to serve God, our church and the community. Continuing Sunday and through the month of April, we are asking everyone to fill out the **Sharing in Ministry survey**. Pick one, two or more areas that use your talents, or maybe you want to try something new! Drop the survey in the box in the Narthex or in the church office. You can also access the survey on our church website, under Outreach. Any questions, please let me know.

PICTORIAL DIRECTORIES HAVE ARRIVED! For those who have your picture in the directory, you can pick up your copy after Sunday worship from Pat Espeset, or contact the church office (289-4581) to stop by during office hours.

PASTORS SHANNON AND ANDREW WILL BE ON VACATION APRIL 1-7. In case of pastoral emergency during this time, please call **Jodi Williamson** at 507-269-4177. **Join us next Sunday, April 7, as Rev. Kitty Burbo** will lead us in worship.

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Mon	4/1	-----	Staff Holiday
Tue	4/2	10:00 AM	Men's Group - at church
		-----	NO Bible Study - Zoom
Wed	4/3	-----	NO Bell Choir
		-----	NO Youth Group
Thu	4/4	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcements due
		-----	NO Chancel Choir

PRAYERS OF COMFORT and God's presence are with the family of our former minister, **Rev. Ronald Meyer**, who was born into eternal life on March 20, 2024 in Indio, California. Full notice to follow with a Memorial Service on June 15, 2024 at Washburn-McReavy, Edina Chapel.

BOOK GROUP meets on the 3rd Tuesday at 10:30 AM at church, plus a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. Book selection for **April 16** is "Good Eggs" by Hardiman and is available in the church office.

SERVE A MEAL TO OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE LANDING - 2 slots are available to serve at the Landing on **April 19 from 4:30-7:00 PM.** Please use the SignUp Genius link on our events page: www.congoroch.org/news-events.



PARENT'S NIGHT OUT on 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.

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)



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, April 28 and May 5.** Childcare will be provided.

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



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