

# First Congregational United Church of Christ - Rhinelander – December 2025

## Hello Christmas!

Have you made your Christmas list and mailed it to Santa yet? I imagine in houses all around Rhinelander this morning there are lists being made that include all sorts of things from iPad to Lexus cars with big red bows! I delight in my kids making their lists. They talk on and on about what they want with huge, beaming smiles on their faces. I sure hope Santa pulls through for them! But then there is the last request, kind of like an umbrella insurance policy, “Surprise me.”

I love the surprise gift way more than just giving the expected gift from a list. The sense of awe and wonder for what is under the wrapping paper is a core part of our Christmas preparations of Advent. We try once again this year to connect with the feelings of arriving, anticipation, and expectation for Jesus’ birth. But as much as Jesus’ birth was a surprise...we also have to remember that the advent of Christ was not meant to be a surprise!

When Jesus began his 3 years of ministry, notice what Philip who would become one of the 12 disciples said, “We have found him of whom Moses...and also the prophets wrote” (John 1:45). He didn’t say, “Surprise! God sent a Savior!” They knew the Messiah was coming, they were expecting him, and finding Jesus was confirmation of God’s faithfulness. And that is the story of Christmas for us too. The advent of Christ is a vivid reminder that God does what He says He will do.

And this faithfulness is our hope too! Just as God promised to send Jesus, he promises to be with us now through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus came the first time, he promises to come again. We look forward with hope, confidently anticipating Christ’s second coming and fulfillment of His promises to dwell with us forever! (Rev 21:3). Now, I don’t know what is on your Christmas wish list this year...and God may not give you everything on your list, but we can be confident God will fulfill all the promises He made on His list.

I hope you find once again this Advent the delight of anticipation, wonder, and expectation.

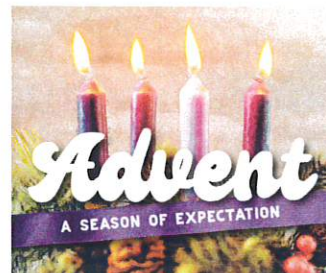
**-Submitted by Rev. Tim Grade**



## CareNotes:

A few months ago, members of the former Lay Pastoral Care Team put up 2 display racks of CareNotes in the hall by the name tags. There are different topics having to do with difficult times in our lives and we hope they can be of comfort and help for you. The topics include Aging Care, Grief and Loss, Healthcare, Mental Health, Spirit Care and Holidays/Christmas. You are welcome to take whatever CareNotes you wish.

We'd like you to know that for the Christmas holidays we will have 4 new CareNotes in the display racks. They are: Waiting for God: The Grace of Advent, Finding Hope in the Holidays, Feeling Depressed at Christmastime, and Getting Through the Holidays When You've Lost a Loved One. We hope you will find them helpful during this season when the loss of a loved one or other experienced loss may be especially difficult.



- Pat Juday, Nancy Wilson, Lisa Johnson, and Carla Chropkowski

**Hi All!** We are pretty well settled in our new duplex in New Richmond. We do miss our friends and surroundings in Rhinelander. Happy to be within ten miles of two sons and their families. In fact they have become our personal drivers. Two west coast daughters will visit during the Thanksgiving/Christmas time. As with any move we spend a lot of time looking for things—did we move it or get rid of it? Would love to have visitors if any one comes this way. Best wishes to all.

**Sharon and Bill Schroeder**

### December Birthdays:

Sharon Schroeder	12/02
Ann Wahlers	12/07
Shelby Flory	12/09
Dave Havel	12/11
Heidi Buntrock	12/15
Sue Tessendorf	12/19
William Schroeder	12/22
Nancy Watry	12/28
Victoria Scheuermann	12/28

### Contact Information:

**Mailing Address:** 135 E Larch Street,  
Rhinelander, WI 54501

**Church Office Hours:** Tuesday thru Friday,  
8 a.m. to Noon

**Call Us:** 715-365-1535

**Prayer Chain:** 715-360-5306

**Visit Us Online:** [rhinelanderucc.org](http://rhinelanderucc.org)

**E-mail Us:** [rhiucc@newnorth.net](mailto:rhiucc@newnorth.net)

**Like Us/Watch Us on Facebook:**

**1st Congregational UCC Rhinelander**



### December Lay Readers:

12/07	Beth Studer
12/14	Mary Dork
12/21	Beth Studer
12/28	Mary Dork

### December Greeters:

12/07	Ted and Judy Fisher
12/14	open
12/21	Jackie Schneider, Everlie & Jackson
12/28	Des Dahlquist

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES FINANCIAL CORNER

The Board of Trustees met on November 10 to bring us up to date on the financial working of the church. We are pleased that our Schwab Investment account continues to show accumulating dividends. As of October 31 our income year to date is \$114,029.00. Our budgeted annual income is \$133,775.00. Our expenses are as expected at this point in the year. We will continue to monitor all of our accounts as the year progresses. Our meeting time was a work day for assembling the mailing for the 2026 Stewardship program. Our Stewardship Committee, Pat and Jane, along with Wendy has prepared the letters, pledge cards and other materials to mail to the entire congregation explaining our operational needs for the church for 2026 plus an additional letter from Susie and Tim explaining plans for additional estimates of expenditures for several projects designed to expand our church presence, etc. This letter was mailed on November 10. We ask that you read carefully the materials in this mailing and consider how you can be a part of these projects, as well as prepare to return your pledge cards to the church in the envelope provided. We will be hoping to receive your pledges during November so that we can prepare a finalized budget request for our Congregational Meeting in January.

As always, we are now monitoring our income and expenditure as well as considering several suggestions from Tim and Susie that will advance our ministry in 2026. We will report on these as they are finalized and dates of implementation are determined. As always, we are planning funding sources on various projects, and will let you know how you can help.

**Your Board of Trustees:**  
**Dave Havel, Investments**  
**Pat Juday, Secretary**  
**and Stewardship**  
**Jane McEldowney, Stewardship**

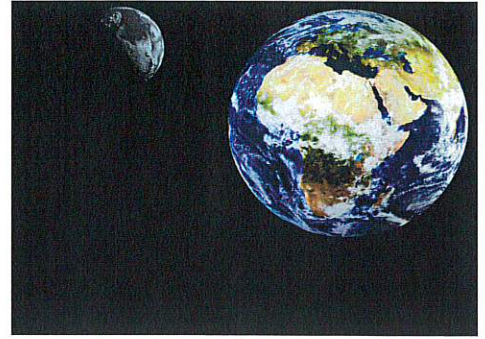
	October 2025	Jan-Oct. 2025	Budget 2025
Income	\$ 7,517.00	\$114,029.00	\$133,775.00
Expenses			
Ministerial	\$7,803.56	\$42,142.97	\$63,086.00
Temporary	0.00	\$4,532.79	\$9,500.00
Staff	\$3,083.73	\$31,959.40	\$35,640.00
Music	0.00	\$913.86	\$200.00
Education	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$800.00
Mission	\$1,166.67	\$12,666.70	\$15,000.00
Maintenance	\$1,600.76	\$40,021.58	\$51,300.00
Office	\$566.25	\$7,785.64	\$12,300.00
Boards	\$823.20	\$3,552.38	\$6,900.00
Total Expenses	\$14,303.17	\$143,575.32	\$194,726.00

## You're Invited to the Annual Christmas Candlelight Dinner!

Mark your calendars now for the Christmas Candlelight Dinner, which will be held on Saturday, December 13, 2025. Come at 5:00 pm for hors d'oeuvres and punch and to admire the beautifully decorated tables. Our favorite chef, Adam Dewing, will be providing a delicious meal, and we will follow with a time to sing your favorite Christmas carols to get you in the holiday mood. This is the event that is sure to put you in the Christmas spirit! You will need to make a reservation to attend, so be sure to sign up on the sign-up sheets which are available in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall. Come join us for one of the highlights of the holiday season!



## CREATION CARE CORNER



This month our climate article was written by Nyombi Morris, a climate activist in Uganda. It appeared in a 2022 issue of Time magazine. It illustrates how poorer nations and people are having to deal with climate change which is mostly caused by wealthy nations. It also points out that wealthy nations have a role to play in helping poorer nations deal with the consequences of climate change.

### I am a Climate Migrant

I was 10 when flooding displaced my family from the Butaleja District of eastern Uganda in 2008 – illegal sand mining along the riverbanks exacerbated flooding already made worse by climate change. We lost our farm and home, so we moved over 130 miles away to Kampala, Uganda’s capital city, where we lived with my maternal grandma. But her home quickly became crowded, so we moved to a one-room rental – much smaller and less beautiful than our old home. It was too much for my father. My mother raised my siblings and me after he left. She often struggled to find enough food or money. I can’t count how many times we went to sleep hungry because we couldn’t afford food. Back on our farm, we had plenty to eat.

And we still couldn’t escape the impacts of climate change. I’ll never forget one night in November 2014. It began to rain, the power went out, and water flooded our room. We stood outside all night. The next morning, we moved back into our grandmother’s house for four months until my mom could afford to rent a new home.

Living through endless flooding made me realize I had to protect the environment. In 2020, I founded Earth Volunteers, a climate-justice nonprofit supporting youth climate education. That knowledge is essential: I believe my father wouldn’t have abandoned us if he had known why those floods hit in 2008, or how to respond. We had no help or compensation for losing our home. To this day my family still lives in a single room. I’ve wanted to go back to my old village many times, but people there are now living in a swamp. This doesn’t need to be the story for the rest of the Global South.

**Sandy McKitrick, Climate Care Team**

This year's bazaar was a big success and a lot of fun, thanks to the willing hands and hearts of the many volunteers, each of whom spent numerous hours making sure their part was expertly accomplished. About \$3,400 was netted and will be given to the chancel railing project. Many thanks to all involved!

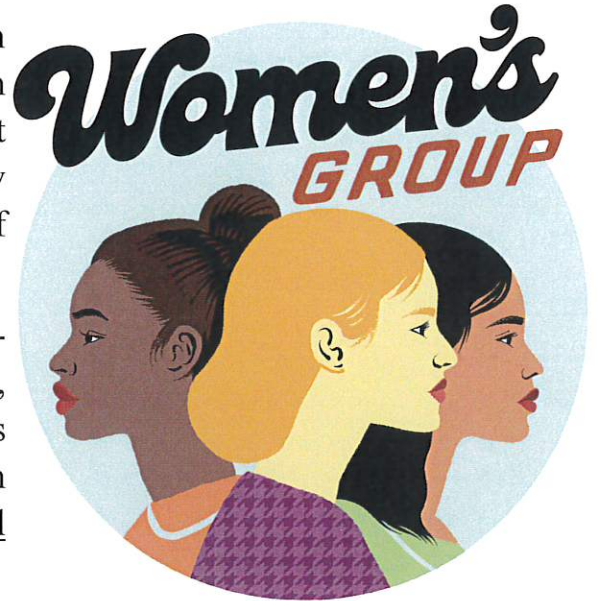
**- Mary Dork and Gale Willcox**



## United Women in Faith

I remember Darlene and Sue inviting women from our congregation to join them in a United Women in Faith group at the Rhinelander United Methodist Church this past spring. It was something I was very interested in particularly for the ecumenical aspect of programs in Rhinelander.

I am currently one for thirteen women who now belong to this wonderful group united in faith. Darlene, Sue and myself represent our congregation. This group was originally the United Methodist Women in Faith group but the focus now is its inclusivity of all women of any faith.



I'd like to take this opportunity to invite you to experience a meeting. We meet the first Thursday of the month at 11:00 a.m. except for February and March when many members are away from the Northwoods. The program consists of a business meeting, program and lunch. Right now, the meetings are held at the UMC, however in the future we might want to have some meetings at our church.

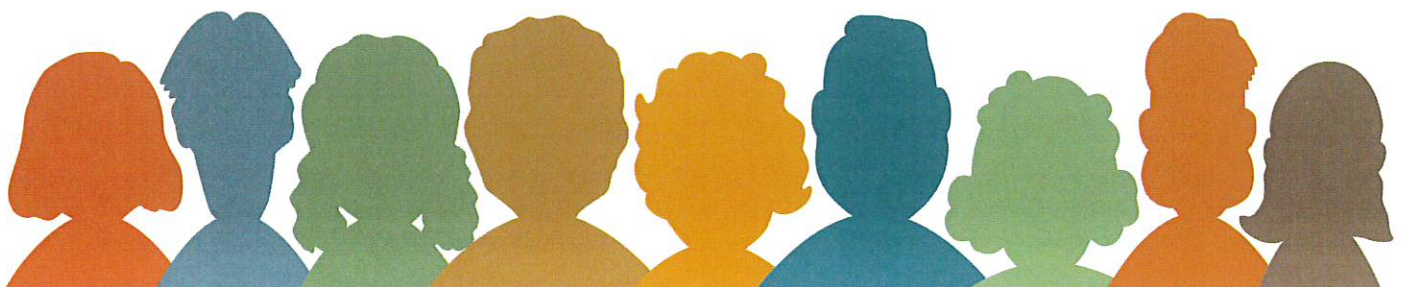
What I've discovered is a very warm and inviting community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as a whole person through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

I can't wait for our group to grow and to have women across multi-faiths join us! This I perceive will be an exciting faith group advocating and supporting local and future endeavours to women and children in our community.

Please consider joining us, by visiting at a future meeting in the New Year! If you are interested, please let me know. You can email me at [carlawarla@gmail.com](mailto:carlawarla@gmail.com).

Blessings,

Carla Chropkowski



# December 2025

First Congregational United Church of Christ

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
30	10:00am –11:00am In-Person and Facebook Worship, Guest Rev. Missy Miller, Kids Club and Youth Group 11:00am –12:00pm Fellowship Time/Coffee Hour	1		2	10:00am –11:00am TOPS (Lounge) 6:30pm –8:00pm Northwoods Choralliers Rehearsals (Fellowship Hall)	3	9:00am –10:00am Deepen: Searching the Scriptures Together (Lounge) 3:30pm –4:30pm Sr. Vocal Choir	4	5:00pm –6:00pm GEM Handbell Choir 5:00pm –6:30pm NATH (Bob Wolf) Conference Room	5	8:00am –12:00pm Christmas Cookie Sale at 1st United Methodist Church	6	2:00pm –3:00pm Blue Christmas Community Service at Carlson Funeral Home (Tim & Susie Grade leading)
7	<b>Poinsettia Order Deadline</b> 10:00am –11:00am Communion 10:00am –11:00am In-Person and Facebook Worship, plus Kids Club and Youth Group <b>11:00am –12:00pm BRUNCH</b> 3:00pm –6:00pm 4-H Positive Youth Development (Fellowship Hall)	8	<b>1:00pm –2:00pm Trustees</b> 4:00pm –6:00pm Warm for Winter Distribution	9	<b>8:30am –9:30am Outreach Board (Outreach Room) on hold until further notice</b> <b>10:00am –11:00am Spiritual Life Board</b> 10:00am –11:00am TOPS (Lounge) 6:30pm –8:00pm Northwoods Choralliers Rehearsals (Fellowship Hall)	10	9:00am –10:00am Deepen: Searching the Scriptures Together (Lounge) <b>9:30am –10:30am Building and Grounds</b> 3:30pm –4:30pm Sr. Vocal Choir	11	Candlelight Dinner Set-Up (Fellowship Hall) 4:00pm –5:15pm Northern Arts Council (Conference Room) 5:00pm –6:00pm GEM Handbell Choir	12	Candlelight Dinner Set-Up (Fellowship Hall)	13	5:00pm –8:00pm Candlelight Dinner (Fellowship Hall)
14	10:00am –11:00am In-Person and Facebook Worship, plus Kids Club and Youth Group 11:00am –12:00pm Fellowship Time/Coffee Hour	15		16	10:00am –11:00am TOPS (Lounge)	17	9:00am –10:00am Deepen: Searching the Scriptures Together (Lounge) 3:30pm –4:30pm Sr. Vocal Choir	18	1:00pm –2:30pm Non-Fisher' Book Club (Lounge) 2:30pm –4:00pm Book Bags (Lounge) <b>3:30pm –4:30pm Executive Council</b> 5:00pm –6:00pm GEM Handbell Choir 6:30pm –7:30pm Blue Christmas Service at 1st United Methodist Church	19	<b>Newsletter Article Deadline</b>	20	
21	10:00am –11:00am In-Person and Facebook Worship, plus Kids Club and Youth Group <b>11:00am –12:00pm BRUNCH</b>	22		23	10:00am –11:00am TOPS (Lounge)	24	Christmas Eve 9:00am –10:00am Deepen: Searching the Scriptures Together (Lounge) 4:00pm –5:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service, Nursery Only (infants -4 year olds -No Kids or Youth Ministry)	25	Christmas <b>Church Office will be Closed</b>	26		27	9:30am –11:30am Warm for Winter Distribution
28	10:00am –11:00am In-Person and Facebook Worship, Carol Service - No Kids Club and Youth Group 11:00am –12:00pm Fellowship Time/Coffee Hour 11:00am –12:00pm 'Townhall Listening Post' after Worship (Lounge)	29		30	10:00am –11:00am TOPS (Lounge)	31	New Year's Eve 9:00am –10:00am Deepen: Searching the Scriptures Together (Lounge) 3:30pm –4:30pm Sr. Vocal Choir	1	New Year's Day (Church Office will be closed) 5:00pm –6:00pm GEM Handbell Choir	2		3	