

May 2022 NEWSLETTER

Greetings from the Pastor

Beloved Community,

It is a regular occurrence for someone who is passing through Winona to ring our bell during the week, asking if they could take a tour of our building. Both Ganga and I have given tours to visitors to our community, especially during the summer. There are things I love to show off – if it's the right time of day I like to take people into the dark chapel to see the light shine through the windows. I describe how fires in our fireplace burn big and hot, and add a level of coziness to our space. And I always take them into the sanctuary, saving it for last. People are amazed by the grand, yet comforting space. They marvel at the woodwork, the rose window, the organ. It is a wonderful addition to any day.

This month we will be celebrating the remarkable history of our church building, sharing its beauty with the community, and looking to the future of how we can continue to utilize our space to grow and thrive.

It was a year ago we got the official word that our building has been placed on the National Registry of Historic Places. A several year's long effort of research, writing, and meetings had finally been rewarded by the State of Minnesota agreeing with what we already knew – there is something special about our building and it needs to be honored and preserved.

While a church is not its building – something we learned with lived experience during our 14 months of ministry outside the walls of our building during the beginning of the pandemic – a church is a place of gathering for all of God's beloved creation. Having a space to gather in is a form of ministry. And preserving our beautiful building is a way to honor the ministry of those who have come before us and create opportunities for those who will come after.

So, this month we will celebrate our building! I hope you will come and I hope you will bring your friends!

Saturday May 14th

10am – Noon: Open House and Tours

4pm: Organ Recital with reception

Sunday May 15th

10am – Celebration Worship Service with Rev. Shari Prestemon and Senior Choir

11am – Catered Lunch

With Great Love,
Pastor Danielle



Pastor Danielle at Festival of Homiletics

Pastor Danielle will be once again attending the Festival of Homiletics (preaching conference) May 16th – 20th.

Women’s Fellowship: Gayle Gordon & Sandy Warnke, Co-Presidents

Thank you to everyone who donated funds for our three lovely Easter bouquets that decorated the front of our sanctuary for our Easter Service. We received more than enough donations to cover the cost of these bouquets and we will now use the remaining donations to buy flowers for our celebration weekend of May 14th & 15th. Again, thank you to all for your generous donations!

A few members got together in late March to once again get the kitchen ready to begin our in-person Fellowship Hour. Dishes were washed and supplies were restocked. There was also a discussion about spending \$600 of the T. Wilson funds. Each of the following received a \$200 donation – (1) Ready Set School, (2) Volunteer Services for their March Food Drive, and (3) After the Prom Party at the high school.

Attention Senior Choir Members (current and future singers): Nick and Linda, Senior Choir Directors

We are now planning to sing on Sunday, May 15th during the Celebration Service for our church becoming a National Historic Landmark. We will have a rehearsal on Wednesday, May 11th at 5:00 pm in the choir loft and again at 8:30 am on Sunday morning the 15th. Please note that vaccinations and an initial booster shot are required to sing in the choir loft. We will be sitting close together and will not be wearing masks when singing. Hope to see many of you there on the 11th for rehearsal and the 15th for our special service. Any questions please contact Nick Edstrom, Linda Knecht or Gayle Gordon.

MAY BIRTHDAYS: 7 Mike Kennedy; 10 Gayle Gordon; 13 Charles Shepard; 14 Marianne Harding; 14 Alice Grover; 16 Briana Cumiskey; 17 Andrew Schmidt; 21 Sylvia Penrod; 26 Jessica Penrod; 26 Chris Knecht; 27 Michael Martinson, Nancee Brevig & Jennifer Rohrer; 28 Betty Monroe; 29 Kate Schmidt; 31 Ann Rethlefsen



MAY ANNIVERSARIES: 17 Connie & Ray Dretske; 18 Charlotte & John Speltz; 29 Nancy & Steve Bachler



Moderator's Moment: by Chuck Shepard

There has been much activity in preparation for the National Historic Registry celebration. The celebratory events will occur on Saturday, May 14 and Sunday, May 15. On Saturday there will be an open house with guided building tours from 10 to 12 AM; at 4 PM there will be an organ concert. Please invite family and friends to these outstanding events.

On Sunday there will be a special service, led by the Conference Minister, Sherry Prestemon. Plaques will be dedicated on both buildings. There will be a catered luncheon, our first chance to share a meal together since Covid swept into our lives.

The Council has had surprising difficulty finding a suitable place to mount the church plaque. Our initial thought had been to put it near an entrance door, but there was no easily visible space. We also have learned that bronze has become quite valuable. There are groups of roving thieves that can descend upon a town, removing bronze plaques from graves and buildings, to be melted down and resold. We are currently looking at two places in the Fireside Room: over the fireplace, and on the wall near the Johnson St. entrance. There will be cardboard templates in place to help us visualize and make a choice. If you have an opinion, share it with a Council member.

The Council continues to work on goals for the year, which have become more robust at each meeting. The current topics for goals are:

- Developing a system to organize and prioritize building maintenance issues.
- Starting a Capital Fund Drive in 2022
- Positioning First Congo to apply for a large grant in 2023. The grant would pay for most of the steeple repair.
- Developing and staffing a Christian Education program for our youth.
- Choosing and installing a gas insert for the Fireside Room fireplace.
- Exploring extension of the Lord's Lift to the second floor.

Last week an evergreen tree was removed from the Johnson Street side of the church. It had been tipped by the December derecho and needed to be removed before it fell. The tree, a Douglas fir, was removed in around 2 hours. See attached photos at <https://www.winonaucc.org/posts/tree-removal-april-2022/>. Since it had not damaged anything, there was no insurance coverage.

Yesterday Judy and I found hundreds of hepatica flowers on a wildflower hike. Spring has finally arrived. There will be much to celebrate this month.

Chuck Shepard



Winona Volunteer Services, Inc.

Client Education • Coordinated Assistance • Food Programs
Home Delivered Meals • Holiday Projects • The Clothes Shop

March 25, 2022

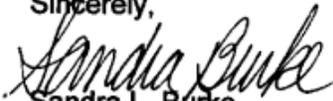
Dear First Congregational Church,

Thank you so much for donating to Winona Volunteer Services, Inc. We received your gift of \$1000.00 on February 22, 2022. This thoughtful contribution enables WVS to provide coordinated assistance to help people address life's challenges. In 2021:

- Food shelf volunteers donated 5,603 hours and distributed 426,719 pounds of food, serving an average of 466 households each month.
- Clothes Shop volunteers donated 4,259 hours and sold 55,463 items totaling \$110,763 in sales to support our operations. Additionally, we gave away \$1,433 worth of clothing to people in need.
- 80 individuals, 16 business and 11 congregations served Home Delivered Meals to an average of 114 clients every month donating almost 3,470 volunteer hours and 21,381 weekday meals.
- We coordinated 3 USDA Farmers to Families food drops in 2021 distributing 79,568 pounds of free food to community members.
- Issued 552 vouchers through our Coordinated Assistance Program, helping people with gasoline, lodging, transportation, internet, clothing, rent, other bills and dental assistance totaling over \$76,000. An additional 532 intentional referrals were made to connect people to other community resources.

Because of your generosity, WVS is here to help those in need.

Sincerely,


Sandra L. Burke
Executive Director

*Thank you for supporting our
Coordinated Assistance Program with this
gift. This is just fabulous!!*

Winona Volunteer Services hereby certifies that you have not received any goods or services in connection with your donation. Consult your tax advisor for more information.

402 East Second Street, Winona, Minnesota 55987 • Tel: 507-452-5591 • Fax: 507-457-0559 • www.winonavs.org



With dedicated volunteers and partners, Winona Volunteer Services helps people address life's challenges in a respectful and dignified manner.

Compassion • Respect • Intentionality • Stewardship • Integrity

Excited about what's happening at First Congregational Church? Help us to shine our light in the community and spread the word.



@firstcongouccwinona

Please follow, like, comment, and share our posts to help us reach more people!

And make sure you 'CHECK IN' during worship



Did you take a picture in worship today? Great! Share it with our Instagram account:

1stcongochurchwinona



www.winonaucc.org

Want to know when worship is? Upcoming events? Read sermons? Find out all sorts of information? Check out our brand-new website!

MINISTERS: All the members of our congregation

STAFF: Rev. Danielle Bartz, Senior Pastor
Ganga Harris, Administrative Assistant
Sandy Todd, Organist
Linda Knecht & Nick Edstrom, Sr. Choir Directors
Nancy Bachler, Jr. Choir Director
Marianne (Duffy) Hohenner, Handbell Choir
Cindy Samples, Elizabeth Scott, Roger Andring, Youth Group Directors

Contacting the Pastor: (507) 269-5424 or pastordanielle@winonaucc.org

Pastor's Office Hours: Sunday – Thursday: 8:30 – 4:30

Pastor Danielle works from home on Wednesdays

Main Office Phone: (507)452-4829; Hours: Tuesday - Thursday 10 am - 4 pm; admin@winonaucc.org

Email: admin@winonaucc.org ***Follow us on Facebook @ www.facebook.com/FirstCongoUccWinona