

2025
ANNUAL REPORT

**First Congregational
Church of Rochester**

January 25, 2026



First Congregational Church of Rochester
2026 Officers, Commission and Committee Members with Vacancies for 2026-27.

Church Officers:

Moderator:	Ruth Frost	(2 yr. Term)
Vice Moderator:	Rose Seeger	(2 yr. Term)
Secretary (Clerk)	Joanne Potter	(1 yr. Term)
Treasurer:	Mark Dahms	(1 yr. Term)

Church Council Members: (3 yr. Term)

Kelly Ball Sue Beach Steve Dolphin Joyce Gerard Bev Jensen Brian Mingus

Commissions:

Worship and Liturgy (5 members) (3 yr. Term)

*Rose Seeger
Lora Gensler
*Bev Jensen
Vicki Will

Finance (5 members) (3 yr. Term)

Mark Dahms (Treasurer**)
Dave Ball
Christine Gall
Mary Krall
*Rose Seeger

Fellowship (5 members) (2 yr. Term)

*Joyce Gerard
Cher Fritchen
*Kelly Ball
Kimberly Ball

Mission/Social Action (3 members) (2 yr. Term)

*Sue Beach
Lisa Hilgenberg
Sue Pope
Rose Seeger
Claudia Williamson

Education (3 members) (2 yr. Term)

Steve Manske
Jim Filicetti
Chris Hackett (*associate*)
Lisa Hilgenberg
Kim Mingus
JoAnne Potter

Pastoral Care 3 members) (2 yr. Term)

Amanda Busateri
Anne Gorski
Pat Parr
Claudia Williamson

Committees:

Nominating (4 members) (3 yr. Term)

Sue Beach
Mary Krall

Pastoral & Personnel Relations (2 members) (3 yr. Term)

**Mark Dahms (Treasurer)
*Ruth Frost (Moderator)

Auditing (3 members) (3 yr. Term)

Wayne Ball
Melanie Mingus

Stewardship (3 members) (3 yr. Term)

*Steve Dolphin

IT/Tech Committee

**Mark Dahms
*Brian Mingus

Flower Beds

*Ruth Frost
Mary Krall
Cher Fritchen
Lisa Hilgenberg

Buildings and Grounds (6 members) (3 yr. Term)

David Ball
*Steve Dolphin
Bill Gerard (*associate*)
*Brian Mingus
Jay Whyte

Note: (*) Council Representative

(**) Treasurer is ex-officio member of Finance Commission.

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA
FIRST CONGRGATIONAL CHURHC OF ROCHESTER, WI
SUNDAY JANUARY 26,2025 at 11:05am

Call Meeting to Order and Establish a Quorum	Ruth Frost, Moderator
Opening Prayer	Pastor Joe Hackett
For Approval	
Minutes of January 26, 2025, Annual Meeting	JoAnne Potter, Clerk
Minutes of November 9, 2025, Fall Meeting	JoAnne Potter, Clerk
Clerk's report on Congregational Activity 2025	JoAnne Potter, Clerk
2025 Treasurers Recap Report	Mark Dahms, Treasurer
For Approval	
Purposed Budget for 2026	Mark Dahms, Treasurer
Commission and Committee Reports for Approval	
Written reports submitted	
Education	Chris Hackett
Worship	Rose Seeger
Fellowship	Joyce Gerard
Mission	Sue Beach
IT/ Tech	Mark Dahms
Buildings and Grounds	Steve Dolphin
Old Business	
New Business	
Adjourn with Benediction and Blessing	Pastor Joe Hackett

First Congregational Church of Rochester
Annual Meeting
January 26, 2025

Meeting was called to order at 11:15AM with a quorum present. Opening prayer given by Pastor Joe Hackett.

Minutes from the Fall Meeting held November 4 were read, Jim Fillicetti moved to approve, Lora Gensler seconded, and motion passed unanimously.

Reports were reviewed as follows:

- Clerk's Report as written
- Treasurer's report by Mark Dahms via Zoom and as written with the following components:
 - 2024 Annual financial report highlights
 - 2025 Budget
 - Rose Seeger moved that the above be accepted as presented, Vicki Will seconded, and motion passed unanimously.
 - 2025 Projects in progress:
 - Steeple repair \$54,000
 - Parsonage updating \$16,000
 - Donations to the investment account to replenish it in view of the above should be earmarked as "capital projects"
- Fellowship Report as written
- Missions Report as written
- Worship Report as written
- Education Report as written
- Building and Grounds Report given orally by Steve Dolphin, Brian Mingus, and Wayne Ball
 - Normal maintenance continues on grounds
 - Steeple project begun and contractor will return to finish it when the weather gets a little warmer, along with a few other minor repair projects on windows and roof.
 - Parsonage painting is begun and will be followed by carpet installation and floor refinishing. Hopping project will be finished by the end of February. Pastor Hackett plans to move in on February 27
- IT – orally given by Mark Dahms
 - Traditional print and Facebook ads continue for events and holidays
 - Facebook followers are up to 120
 - Website is being updated weekly
 - More than 500 visitors accessed our website this year
 - New attendees can get regular updates about the church if they submit their email address

OVER

10/2

Sue Pope moved all committee reports be accepted, seconded by Christine Gall, and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:44 with a benediction by Pastor.

First Congregational Church of Rochester
Fall Annual Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2025

Meeting was called to order by Moderator Ruth Frost, with a quorum in attendance.

Pastor Joe Hackett opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes from the May 4th Annual Meeting were reviewed by church members with a motion to accept the minutes by Kim Ball and seconded by Janette Novak. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report - Mark Dahms via Zoom.

Mark thanked the members of the Finance Committee who met monthly to review church financial matters. (Christine Gall, Mary Krall, Pat Parr and Rose Seeger)

Attendance has been averaging 38 in the first nine months, which is up from 34 a year ago.

As of September, the church's income was \$56,551, exceeding expenses of \$54,247 resulting in net income of \$2,304. Additionally, \$4,768 was raised for Missions.

Operating Expenses - Expenses are in line with the budget. The increase from last year was mainly due to the July to December 2024 pastor vacancy.

Capital Improvements - As of September, improvements amounted to \$71,864. Of this total, \$54,450 went to refurbishing the church steeple and the removal of the shorter steeple (which would have cost \$8000 more if the smaller steeple was repaired) and renovations for the parsonage cost \$17,414. (Resurfacing wood floors, replacement of carpet, painting all interior walls and minor repairs, and the addition of another parking space)

Banking and Investments - Mark indicated that the church continues to be in a good position to meet short-term and long-term needs, even after significant expenditures for the steeples and parsonage.

At the end of March, the church had \$36,000 in the Community State Bank, which included \$26,616 of unrestricted cash and \$9,628 reserved for missions, memorials landscaping and youth ministries.

Currently the church has \$72,701 in its long-term investment account with the NACCC's Congregational Investment Trust, a decrease of \$51,177 since last year. In February, \$61,500 was withdrawn for repairs, while market gains added \$10,323 as of September 30th.

Pastor's Report - Pastor Joe Hackett

Pastor Joe and his wife Chris have been with us a year.
Sunday School is going well.

Tai Chi is growing in attendance.
Chris is running Book Club.
Advent Bible Study will run December 2nd through the month 11am - noon.

Worship Committee - Ruth Frost in Rose's absence.

Four bands performed at our Music in Park Ice Cream Social held August 23rd, 2025.
Music still continues to be strong on Sundays.
If interested in performing during a service, let Rose or Laura know.

Education Committee - Pastor Joe Hackett

Adult Bible study finished "Soul Prayers"
Chris led Sunday School with other adults helping out. They used Study Blocks made by Bill Gerard. Kids are learning a lot about the Bible, Gospels, the church, Ten Commandments and so much more. The Sunday School group is planning to visit another church for a Lenten service.

Fellowship Committee - Joyce Gerard

Joyce thanked everyone who helped with fellowship.
Sign up for a dish to provide at the Thanksgiving meal November 23rd.
Madrigals will be performing December 5th. Christmas cookies and wassail will be served.

Missions Commission - Sue Beach

Crafting Group met every other Friday to assemble gifts for OCC shoeboxes. Our group goal is to fill 160 shoeboxes and asking the congregation to fill another 40 shoeboxes.

We served meals at Love Inc. February 24th, March 24th, June 23rd, August 25th and will serve a Thanksgiving meal November 24th.

Building and Grounds Report by Steve Dolphin

- * Steve thanks the members of his team: Brian Mingus, Wayne Ball, Jay Whyte, Bill Gerard and Edwin Ela.
- * New toilets were installed by Brian Mingus.
- * Mowing and leaf collecting is continuing for the fall season.

IT/Marketing Report by Mark Dahms

Website and Facebook are being maintained.

New Business - Ruth presented the new/updated slate of Council Members and Commission Members

Joe Hackett made a motion to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Kelly Ball. Motion carried. Followed by The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Beach

Clerk's Report 2025

Baptism:

Vincenzo Buscateri, March 2

Funerals:

Robert Bowers, February 28

Jim Stober's father, reinterment, May 22

Bill Thompson, July 20

New Members:

May 18:

Claudia Williamson

David and Lisa Hilgenberg

Joe Hackett

Pastor's ponderings for the 2025 Annual Report

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As we reflect on this past year, I am filled with gratitude for the many ways God has blessed our congregation and guided us through challenges and triumphs alike. It is my privilege to present this annual report, sharing our journey, accomplishments, and vision for the year ahead.

This year, our church has continued to be a place of spiritual nourishment and growth. Weekly worship services have remained central to our faith community, with thoughtful sermons, heartfelt prayers, and uplifting music. Our attendance has been strong, and we have welcomed several new members into our fellowship. Special services, such as Maundy Thursday, Good Friday Easter and Christmas Eve, were celebrated with joyful participation and reverence.

Our ministries have flourished this year, reaching both our congregation and the wider community. The youth programs have offered faith formation and fellowship through our WCA Camp in July as well as our Sunday School program. Our adult Bible studies have deepened the spiritual lives of participants both members and the wider community. Outreach initiatives, including supporting Love Inc food pantry, community meals, have provided tangible assistance to those in need. Our Operation Christmas Child program along with our crafting team made the lives of children better throughout the world. Many volunteers have given their time and talents, embodying Christ's love in action.

Fellowship remains a cornerstone of our church life. Events such as potlucks, picnics, and holiday gatherings have strengthened the bonds among our members. The congregations continued involvement in Rochester's Memorial Day weekend events and Day in the Country has extended our reach to hundreds of people beyond our walls.

We are blessed by the faithful generosity of our congregation. This year's financial contributions have supported our ministries, maintained our facilities, and allowed us to invest in future projects. Our Finance Commission has managed resources responsibly, ensuring transparency and accountability. The annual budget report, available separately, provides detailed information on our financial health and priorities. Our building and grounds team have also taken great care of our buildings and property. From the refurbishment of the parsonage to rehabbing the church steeple and mowing and snow removal and flowerbeds these members and the whole congregation deserve our gratitude.

As we enter a new year, we look forward with hope and anticipation. I have now experienced a full church year with the Congregation. In the coming months, we plan to expand our outreach efforts, introduce new opportunities for spiritual growth, and continue fostering a welcoming environment for all. I invite everyone to participate actively in our programs and to share ideas for how we can serve God and our neighbors even more effectively.

I extend heartfelt thanks to our church staff, volunteers, ministry leaders, and every member of our congregation. Your commitment, faithfulness, and love make our church a beacon of light in the community. May God continue to bless us and guide us in the year ahead.

With gratitude and faith,

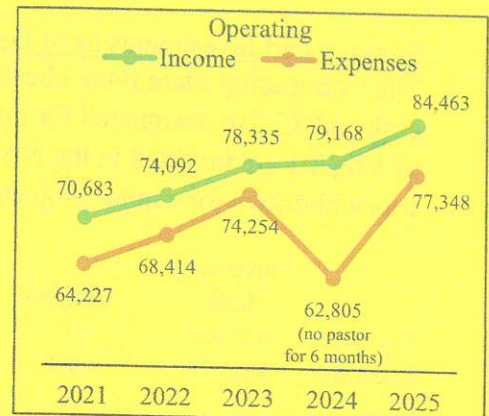
Pastor Joe



First Congregational Church of Rochester, Wisconsin
Financial Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2025

2025 was a GREAT financial year

- Grew weekly attendance from 35 to 39.
- Raised operating income that exceeded expenses by \$7,115.
- Completed major renovations to the parsonage and church steeples with \$71,864 of capital expenditures.
- Raised \$5,215 for our supported Missions.
- Provided four Summer Camp scholarships from our Youth Ministry Funds.
- Maintained healthy unrestricted cash and investments at \$100,391 (>15 months of operating expenses).



Operating Income

- Pledges and Offerings: \$76,542 (all-time high) including \$1,372 of In-Kind Donations.
- Fundraising \$5,243 from: Memorial Day, Music in the Park, and Day in the Country.
- Memorials \$1,800 for: Bill Thompson (\$1,100), Lois Lange (\$600), Bob Bowers (\$100).
- Miscellaneous: \$804 for poinsettias (\$320), Easter Lilies (\$170), refund on the cancelled Church Mutual insurance policy (\$164), \$150 hall rental for a funeral, and \$75 of interest.

Other Income

- Missions: \$5,215 from two rummage sales (\$3,199), individual offerings (\$1,000), shoebox shipping collections (\$447), Lenten services (\$346), bible study collections (\$223).
- Capital Income: \$5,100 donated for steeple and parsonage improvements.
- Youth Ministries: \$555 collected during adult bible studies to support youth programs.

Operating Expenses

Total operating expenses were \$77,348 with 86% going to the top 4 expenses: wages and payroll taxes for the pastor and secretary (\$38,586); pianist and choir director (\$11,266); utilities (\$10,076); and insurance (\$6,210). Other expenses included: church, parsonage and grounds maintenance (\$1,758); purchases from Memorial funds (\$1,619); fundraising--mostly donated food and supplies (\$1,610); printing, supplies and postage (\$1,416); voluntary donations to national and state Congregational associations (\$1,100), and software/app subscriptions (\$1,038).

Fundraising

Fundraising activities generated **\$5,243** of income against \$1,610 of expenses (primarily in-kind donations of food and supplies) for a net of **\$3,633**. The Memorial Day Luncheon raised \$863, Music in the Park Ice Cream Social raised \$775, and Day in the Country raised \$3,605 from the sale of food, baked goods and space rental.

Missions

The church supported its missions by giving **\$4,991** to: \$2,444 to Love Inc, \$2,098 to Transitional Living Center, and \$450 to Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child.

Capital Expenditures (separate from operating expenses noted above)

Capital expenditures for the year totaled **\$71,864** of which \$54,450 went to steeple refurbishment and \$17,414 funded the first major parsonage renovations in 18 years.

First Congregational Church of Rochester, Wisconsin
Financial Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2025

Banking and Investments as of December 31, 2025

The Community State Bank checking account balance was \$33,296 with \$27,690 of unrestricted cash and \$5,516 designated for missions, memorials, landscaping, and youth ministries. Reserves of \$72,701 are invested in the NACCC's *Congregational Investment Trust*. In February, \$61,500 was withdrawn for capital projects. Since then, market gains added \$10,323 as of September 30.

	Unrestricted Cash	Missions	Memorials	Landscaping	Youth Ministries	Invested Reserves	Total Cash & Investments
Dec 2025	\$27,690	\$314	\$1,480	\$977	\$2,746	\$72,701	\$105,907
Dec 2024	\$29,675	\$90	\$1,408	\$977	\$4,038	\$123,878	\$160,066

<u>Operating Income</u>		<u>Operating Expenses</u>		<u>Net Operating Income</u>	
\$84,463		\$77,348		\$7,115	
Operating Income	\$84,463	Operating Expenses	\$77,348		
Pledges & Offerings	\$76,542	Wages & Payroll Taxes (Pastor, Secretary)	\$38,856		
Day in the Country	\$3,605	Paid Musicians (mainly Pianist, Choir Director)	\$11,266		
Memorials	\$1,800	Utilities, Internet & Phone	\$10,076		
Memorial Day Lunch	\$863	Insurance	\$6,210		
Music in the Park Ice Cream Social	\$775	Buildings & Grounds Maintenance	\$1,758		
Poinsettia Sponsorship	\$250	Memorial Fund Purchases ¹	\$1,619		
Easter Lily Sponsorship	\$170	Fundraising (mostly donated food & supplies)	\$1,610		
Interest	\$75	Printing, Supplies & Postage	\$1,416		
Miscellaneous Income	\$384	Donations to NACCC ² & WCA ²	\$1,100		
		Software & App Subscriptions	\$1,038		
Other Income	\$13,016	Printed Music & Music Licenses	\$847		
Missions	\$5,215	Church Décor / Flowers	\$529		
Capital Projects	\$5,100	Instrument Maintenance	\$456		
Gain on Investments	\$2,146	Pastor Auto Mileage	\$309		
Youth Ministries	\$555	Advertising	\$227		
		Miscellaneous Expenses ³	\$300		
		Capital Expenditures	\$71,864		
		Church Steeple Refurbishment	\$54,450		
		Parsonage Renovation	\$17,414		

¹ Memorial Fund Purchases: 2 toilets (\$399), GoPro camera, (\$390), entrance mat with non-skid cleats (\$229), music equipment (\$215), 4 American flags (\$204), upright vacuum cleaner (\$181).

² NACCC is National Assoc. of Congregational Christian Churches; WCA is Wisconsin Congregational Assoc.

³ Miscellaneous Expenses: appreciation gift (\$100), kitchen supplies (\$78), background check for new pastor (\$50), WI annual business registration fee (\$45), bank charges (\$28).

First Congregational Church of Rochester, Wisconsin
Budget for the Year Ended December 31, 2026

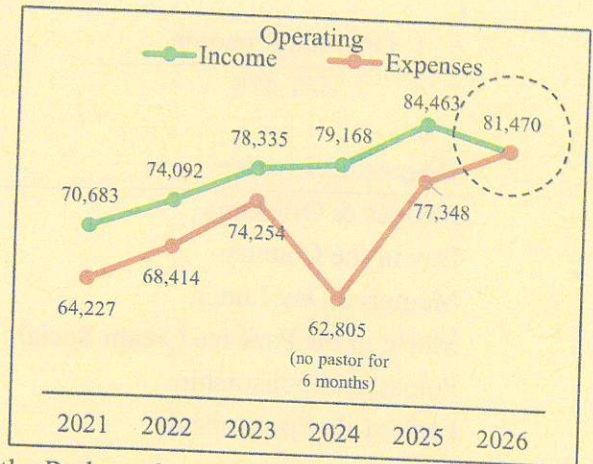
A balanced budget for 2026

Coming off a year with a surplus of \$7,115, the budget for 2026 calls for operating income to match operating expenses that are expected to increase 5% to \$81,470.

Top Operating Income

- Pledges & Offerings have grown each of the last 4 years. It's riskier to assume an increase every year, so a more conservative assumption is that Pledges & Offerings will be \$76,000 -- \$542 below 2025.
- Fundraising Income at \$5,000 reflects the 19% drop in 2025 from the Memorial Day Luncheon, Music in the Park, and Day in Country combined.

As in prior years, income is not budgeted for Memorials, Missions, Youth Ministries, Capital Projects or Investments as these do not fund operating expenses.



Top Operating Expenses

Expense	2025	2026	What's Noteworthy?
Wages & Payroll Tax	\$38,586	\$38,248	Pastor's salary is unchanged in the second year of his contract, but there is an extra 2 weeks' pay given his 1/15/25 start date. The church secretary resigned in December 2025. To avoid the need for a paid position, Pastor Joe will adapt to do more himself and call on volunteers for help, as needed.
Paid Musicians	\$11,266	\$11,066	No change to contracted base rates for the pianist and choir director; both took a one-time payment at the end of 2025 in lieu of a 2026 rate increase. The budget includes \$300 for special music guest performers.
Utilities	\$10,076	\$9,872	5% inflation for gas, electricity, sewer, trash and storm water. Internet & Phone switch to TDS in January saves \$80 monthly compared to Spectrum's current rate.
Insurance	\$6,210	\$7,344	Premium renews at 10% increase; \$400 to add the shed and parsonage garage.
Buildings & Grounds	\$1,758	\$4,425	One-time gutter repairs (\$1,245) and circulator pump replacement (\$1,030) in January add to annual service for emergency equipment and HVAC, softener salt, fire inspection, and water testing.
Fundraising	\$1,610	\$1,525	Primarily in-kind donations of food and supplies (expense is matched by income).
Printing, Supplies & Postage	\$1,763	\$1,416	Additional replacement of toner cartridge as two colors will need to be replaced very early in the year.
NACCC/WCA Donations	\$1,100	\$1,100	No change to voluntary donations to national and state congregational associations.
Software/App Subscriptions	\$1,038	\$989	Canceling the annual subscription to Microsoft Office for desktop.
Printed Music & Licenses	\$847	\$913	5% inflation on in-person and streaming music copyright licenses and \$255 printed music funded from remaining Pastor Paul Ray memorial funds.
Conferences & Seminars	\$0	\$850	Registration for Pastor Joe to attend the NACCC Annual Meeting & Conference in Springfield, MA and the NACCC Ministers' Convocation in Mundelein, IL.
Christian Ed.	\$0	\$500	New materials for Sunday School and Confirmation using Youth Ministry funds.
Total	\$77,348	\$81,470	Driven by Building & Grounds, Insurance, Conferences & Seminars, Christian Ed.

First Congregational Church of Rochester, Wisconsin
Budget for the Year Ended December 31, 2026

Operating Income	Operating Expenses	Net Operating Income
\$81,470	\$81,470	\$0
Operating Income	\$81,470	Operating Expenses
\$81,470	\$81,470	\$81,470
Pledges & Offerings	\$76,000	Wages & Payroll Taxes (Pastor, Secretary)
Day in the Country	\$3,500	\$38,248
Memorial Day Lunch	\$800	Paid Musicians (mainly Pianist, Choir Director)
Music in the Park Ice Cream Social	\$700	\$11,066
Poinsettia Sponsorship	\$250	Utilities, Internet & Phone
Easter Lily Sponsorship	\$170	\$9,872
Interest	\$50	Insurance
		\$7,344
		Buildings & Grounds Maintenance
		\$4,425
		Memorial Fund Purchases ¹
		\$1,225
		Fundraising (mostly donated food & supplies)
		\$1,585
		Printing, Supplies & Postage
		\$1,763
		Donations to NACCC ² & WCA ²
		\$1,100
		Software & App Subscriptions
		\$989
		Printed Music & Music Licenses
		\$913
		Conferences & Seminars
		\$850
		Church Décor / Flowers
		\$529
		Christian Education Materials ³
		\$500
		Pastor Auto Mileage
		\$300
		Advertising
		\$300
		Instrument Maintenance
		\$200
		Background Checks ⁴
		\$120
		Bank Fees ⁵
		\$90
		State Business Registration Fee
		\$50

¹ Memorial Fund Purchases assumes full use of funds remaining for Bill Thompson (\$800) and Doris Schaefer (\$425) for the purchase and/or improvement of church assets that provide a long-lasting contribution to the church mission, not normal operating expenses.

² NACCC is National Assoc. of Congregational Christian Churches; WCA is Wisconsin Congregational Association.

³ Christian Education Materials will draw from the Youth Ministries account that had 12/31/2025 balance of \$2,746.

⁴ Background Checks will be done for anyone working directly with our young people in our Sunday School and Confirmation programs. This is new for 2026 to comply with our insurance policy.

⁵ Bank Fees include a new cost of \$5 per month to move from paper checks to direct deposit for recurring monthly payments to the Pastor, Pianist, and Choir Director.

First Congregational Church of Rochester
Christian Education Committee
2025 Activities

The goal of the Christian Education Committee is to offer opportunities for individuals to grow and deepen their faith and understanding as Christians in the world today. We strive to give our youth a solid foundation of church principles through engaging activities while having fun.

Adult Offerings

- January- April: Prayer and Progress; Led by JoAnne Potter and Jim Fillicetti; 12 week program; Synopsis: Exploration of spiritual journeys beginning with Paul, continuing with Deitrich Bonhoefer and finishing with personal journeys
- June- July: Heritage of Faith; Led by JoAnne Potter; 6 week program; Synopsis: A teaching based on the ways in which Augustine influenced the modern faith we are now taught
- Fall: All that You Have is Your Soul; Led by Jim Fillicetti; 8 weeks
- Advent: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus; Led by Pastor Joe; 4 week program shared in conjunction with Community Baptist Church of Honey Creek
- Congregationalism 101; Offered by Pastor Joe

Youth Offerings

- Met 2nd and 4th Sundays during worship
- Spring Teaching Team: Jim Fillicetti, Steve Manske
- Fall Teaching Team: Chris Hackett, Steve Manske, Lisa Hilgenberg, Kim Mingus, Jim Fillicetti
- Spring themes: Abraham Lincoln and his faith journey
- Fall themes: Prayer practice (Our Father, Doxology, Glory Be), Bible basics – general information, how to find things, books, versions of the bible, introduction to the Old Testament; Gospels, Letters, Congregationalism basics, Christmas
- Youth participated in Advent by lighting the candles one week
- Average attendance: 3-5 youth

Thank you to all who are dedicated to leading, teaching and learning about our faith. Youth teachers are always welcome.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Hackett

2025 Annual Report
Building, Grounds, and Maintenance

2025 was overall a good year and our thanks go to those involved. We have kept the ship afloat for another year. The year saw many improvements such as the church steeple (thank you, Brian). The parsonage was updated with cleaning, painting, flooring, and new carpeting. Huge thanks to Wayne and Brian for spearheading the project.

Jay and Dave kept the grounds beautiful and, as always, it was all hands on deck for projects and events.

The crew gathered to discuss potential goals for 2026. They are:

1. Improve gutters
2. Paint the basement
3. Cement work
4. Additional lighting for safety
5. Improvements to the yard and building

Moving forward, signups will be posted for events such as Day in the Country and Spring Cleanup. In addition, a basic blueprint will be posted for those interested in maintaining flower beds.

NO VOLUNTEER WILL BE TURNED AWAY!

A budget has been allocated, but bear in mind that needs and concerns can't always be predicted. Our goal is to keep problems small and cost effectively controlled.

Again, many thanks to the potluck maintenance crew. Remember that if you see something that needs to be done, say something to the member of the crew. Your involvement is appreciated.

Respectfully,
Steve Dolphin

First Congregational church of Rochester
Annual Meeting

Missions Commission Report 2025

Missions Commission Members in 2025 are Rose Seeger, Melanie Mingus and Sue Beach.

Missions held two Rummage Sales in 2025. The Spring Rummage Sale in May, Memorial Day weekend and the Fall Rummage Sale in September during Day in the Country.

Spring Rummage Sale raised **\$1153.50**, which was divided equally between Love Inc and TLC (Transitional Living Center). They were presented their gift of \$825 each in person due to a generous donation of \$500 by an anonymous donor.

Fall Rummage Sale raised **\$2545** which was divided equally between Love Inc and TLC (Transitional Living Center) and gifted \$1,272.50 each in person.

Missions served 5 meals at Love, Inc. in 2025. Each time we served approximately 28-30 individuals. In 2026, we are planning to serve 6 meals. Lisa Hilgenberg and Sue Pope will be leading those meals and asking for volunteers to help with side dishes. We are fortunate to have many of our church members volunteer for this rewarding mission.

Operation Christmas Child was once again an amazing mission by our church. The crafting group filled 150 shoeboxes due to our ability to make gifts for children, beginning in February of 2025. The crafting group met every other Friday to create items for "Operation Christmas Child" shoeboxes. No sewing was needed to be part of this group. We worked as a team to assemble book bags, pencil bags, clothes, bead kits, games and more. The other 37 shoeboxes were packed by our generous church members. **We totaled 187 shoeboxes in all! AMAZING!!!** And several of you donated shipping costs which came to **\$447. Thank you to all of you!**

I followed 2 of our boxes which went to 2 different countries; Malawi, which is in Southern Africa near Zambia and Tanzania and shipped December 3rd. The other box traveled to Trinidad and Tobago, the southern most island in the West Indies, and was shipped December 18th.

Once again we will continue the crafting group this year that will begin February 6th, 2026 and every other Friday thereon until the packing party in October. Melanie Mingus will lead this group. Everyone who wants to help is welcome and a salad lunch is provided, as well as fellowship.

Through "Adopt A Family" program at Love, Inc, our church adopted 3 local families with gifts for the holiday season. We all helped those families have a blessed and special Christmas. Thank you notes from our families are being posted on the bulletin board near the entry door.

Thank you to everyone who supported the missions events in 2025. Thank you for your time, talents and treasure, as it is the volunteers who makes these events a great success.

Submitted by
Sue Beach

2025 Worship Committee End of Year Report

The 2025 year brought a wealth of talented friends to share their music.

They include:

Joni Konecki

Vicki Will

Daniel Mitchell

Steve Dolphin

Cindi Ovokaitys and friends

Elmer Spark

Mel Mingus

Rose Seeger

Jubilee

Phil Peters

I apologize if I forgot anyone.

FCC Choir

Ukulele Band

Tracy Seeger

Lora Gensler

Harry Tufford

KR Bluegrass

Lissa and Wayne Jensen

Tim Paetsch

Holy Crowe

Laurie Auer and Sandman

Special music for Wednesday night Lenten services that were held at FCC was presented by FCC Choir.

Memorial Day honored our veterans, past and present.

The program started with FCC members who are veterans. They included Bill Gerard, Mary Krall, Glenn Richmond, and Jay Whyte. *Thank You for your service.*

Special music was played by Tracy Seeger accompanied by Laurie Auer and Jubilee.

Music in the Park was an enjoyable afternoon with four bands playing; Jubilee, Holy Crowe, KR Bluegrass, and Tin Bucket Music Show. These bands have each donated their time to this festival for the past five years. Thank You!

Christmas Eve Service was a beautiful program filled with beautiful music. Sharing their musical gift were the FCC Choir, Jubilee, Lissa Jensen, Piano and Chimes, our congregation, and friends.

A memorial was held to celebrate the life of our dear friend Bill Thompson. Music was played by Lora and Rose.

We continue to livestream using Church Copyright Licensing inc. (CCLI) For ALL streamed services, all songs are input onto their website.

We thank all the musicians for their gifts to glorify God

Fellowship Commission Annual Report 2025 First Congregational Church Rochester WI

The following is a summary of our 2025 activities:

We had potlucks in February, August, November and December. Our Dec. one was followed with "Robber's Bingo".

We had many coffee hours. Some were for our annual and quarterly meetings and some were just for socializing. One was for the baptism of Vincengio Busateri, and one was to welcome new members-Pastor Joe, Lisa and David Hilgenberg, and Claudia Williamson.

On February 28th, we served a luncheon after the memorial service for Bob Bowers, and on July 20th we served coffee and cookies after the memorial service for Bill Thompson.

March 19th we served coffee and cookies after our evening Lenten service.

December 5th we served cookies and wassail after the Waterford High School Madrigal performance.

We also helped with our church's other events, including our Memorial Day luncheon and rummage sale, Music in the Park Ice Cream Social, and Day in the Country.

A huge THANK YOU to all our very generous and helpful congregation who helped with baking, serving, and cleaning up. We are grateful.

A special thank you to Ruth Frost who helps with everything.

Your Fellowship Commission, Kelly Ball, Kim Ball, Karen Kaldor, Jill Hillner and Joyce Gerard

First Congregational Church of Rochester, Wisconsin
IT and Marketing Annual Report for 2025

Marketing

Facebook

New in 2025, Pastor Joe and Rose Seeger can post content. This has greatly improved the frequency, timeliness, and relevance of posts.

The Facebook account now has 134 followers (up from 120 at the end of 2024). Content includes weekly posts about upcoming services including reminders for communion and Sunday School as well as links to watch Worship Hour.

Other posts feature news about Missions activities, news about fundraising activities (Memorial Day Luncheon, Music in the Park, and Day in the Country), and pictures from church events such as potluck dinners. Posts with photos of church members tend to drive the most "likes".

Website

The website is updated weekly with the latest bulletin, monthly with the latest newsletter, and annually with the annual meeting handout. Website Traffic over the past year:

- 645 unique visitors (540 in 2024) with 1,262 site sessions (1,033 in 2024)
- average duration of 3 minutes 47 seconds (4 minutes 41 seconds in 2024)
- 67% of visitors only visit one page. The home page had by far the most page views with 941. That was followed by Events at 68, About at 54 and Contact Us at 20.
- 44% of all traffic comes from Google searches and 31% is from typing the web address.

Advertising

Advertisements in the Hi-Liter weekly newspaper were run for Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, both rummage sales, and Music in the Park. We will explore doing more on Facebook in 2026.

IT Report

The church has minimal IT hardware -- just one desktop computer for the church secretary and one printer/copier. Pastor Joe uses his own laptop. High speed internet is through Spectrum, though that will change to TDS fiber optic in January 2026. Software subscriptions include: 4 Microsoft 365 licenses, Microsoft Office for the secretary's desktop, QuickBooks Online for bookkeeping, and Wix for managing the website. After Karen resigned as secretary, Pastor Joe and Mark were given access to that Microsoft 365 account and all files were moved to online storage for easier access. Microsoft Publisher files can no longer be accessed after April 1, 2026 when the current desktop application license ends.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Dahms

Church Website: www.FCCRochesterWis.org
Church Facebook: www.facebook.com/FCCrochester.wisconsin

Addendum to Marketing Report, Annual Meeting 2025

During April of 2025, a comprehensive history of our church building and congregation was compiled using original documents in our possession and information in Wendy Ela's archives as well as recordings and writings from Ray Moyer and Ida Ela. This was used to develop a new trifold brochure and to provide source material from which to conduct live tours of the church. About a dozen tours were given during the Memorial Day celebration and another during Day in the Country that may provide a foundation to participate in a future town-wide history tour. Brochures are still available on the back table in the sanctuary.

Thanks to Ruth Frost and Wendy Ela for all their help.

JoAnne Potter

Report for Annual Meeting, 2025
Churchwide Survey Results

In October, 2025, the council agreed that, after having welcomed a new pastor to the church for the first time in 18 years, it might be helpful for us all to assess where we have been, where we might want to go, and elicit ideas about how to get there. With that in mind, we wrote and offered a survey, hoping that anyone who has a vested interest in the church would respond with input. By the end of November, we received 19 responses back and in December, Steve Dolphin, Kelly Ball, and JoAnne Potter assimilated their contents.

We learned a lot from them and after reading through everyone's input, found that some suggestions could be immediately implemented and we have done so:

- More frequent committee meetings and better committee communication – 4 committees (finance, worship, pastoral care, and building and grounds) have held recent meetings and we look for the results of those meetings to start appearing in the newsletter.
- Use more lectionary readings in the service in addition to the gospel – an Old Testament reading and/or a reading from the letters is now being used every week.
- Speed up the tempo of the hymns – this was being addressed even before the survey was compiled.
- Take care of the ill or shut-ins – a pastoral care committee has been formed and activated
- Better use of social media, especially using videos on our Facebook page – our Facebook page did not allow some kinds of postings, including videos. We are looking at ways to change that.
- Post a link for fellowship opportunities on the website. - there is already a place for fellowship opportunities there.

Other suggestions will take more time and planning. To see they are addressed, all suggestions have been categorized and referred to the appropriate committee heads so they might investigate their viability.

Almost all of the surveys were submitted anonymously, which was intended, but anyone who has a particular interest in seeing their suggestion through is welcome to ask a member of the council to see which committee is handling it and to lend a hand. After all, this church is our shared responsibility. Especially now, when we've been given so many new ways to move into the future, there is plenty for everyone to do.

Thanks so much to everyone who participated in the survey. It is willing participation and fresh ideas like these that will keep us vital.

