



CONNECTIONS

Our mission is to connect with God, as we live by faith, are known by love, and cultivate hope.



1ST SUNDAY OF

ADVENT

**December 3rd
10:00 a.m.**

Come and join us as our children take on the responsibilities of our church service.

They will be our readers, greeters, ushers, acolytes, and special music for Sunday morning worship as a way of giving back to the congregation!

GIVING AT ADVENT

This year, the CE team has decided to ask our church kids and family to be involved in service within the church in lieu of donations to an outside organization.

We invite you to join us as follows:

Sunday, December 10 - Peace - Prayer Rocks! We will provide river rocks for all to take and paint to either keep as a prayer rock or to place within the community in prayer for others...or both!

Sunday, December 17 - Joy - We will be sending out Christmas cards to those unable to attend service as well as local nursing homes and Grace Place.

Sunday, December 24 at 4:30pm service - Love Our RUCCUS kids and families will be available following service to hand out ornaments as well as hugs, high fives, and some Christmas love!

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16th



11:00 a.m.

“The Birth of Jesus”

*Followed by a Cookie Fellowship
(10:00am will be our dress rehearsal.)*



Roberts Congregational United Church of Christ

1001 Birch Drive | PO Box 116 | Roberts, WI 54023

Church Office: 715-749-3225 * | <https://www.facebook.com/RobertsUCC>

Pastor: pastor@robertsucc.org | Office: secretary@robertsucc.org *

Website: <http://www.robertsucc.org> | YouTube: Roberts Congregational UCC



This is the 22nd year I am serving as the Pastor of a congregation through Advent and Christmas. Over that time, I have shared in many wonderful memories

within the 4 churches I have had the privilege of serving. Christmas Eve's have always been the highlight of the year for me as far as worship services go, especially the 11pm service. In the time I have been doing this, God has often graced services with some wonderful moments. Here are a few which will last with me forever.

The second Christmas Eve I served Carmel Union Congregational Church in Carmel, Maine. The early service had gone very well, and the Board of Deacons had come over to the parsonage in between our 7pm and 11pm services for a small gathering with food and laughter. Around 9pm everyone departed, and snow was gently falling. Someone had left the lights on in the church across the street and the glow coming from the windows seemed almost like candlelight in the darkness of the night with no streetlights. The light was inviting and warm, so I made my way over just to sit for a while inside the decorated sanctuary. I lit the candles on the Altar, Advent Wreath, and the end of each pew and plugged in the lights of our twenty-foot tree.

I sat quietly watching the glow of the candles when a soft voice asked if he could join me. I hadn't heard anyone come in, but there behind me was a frail looking older gentleman. I offered him a seat next to me and we conversed for a while. There was nothing specific discussed until he looked at me and asked if I performed baptisms. When I told him I did, he conveyed he had never been baptized and was wondering if I would be willing to baptize him.

I got the Baptismal Font out and ready and there, in the glow of the sanctuary, we baptized him. With tears in his eyes, he thanked me. Although I invited him to stay for the service, which would begin in about half an hour, he said he needed to get home and thanked me again as he left.

About a month later, a young family showed up for Sunday Worship. I talked with them after service and the husband told me they needed to come see the place where his grandfather had been baptized. It was the grandson of the man from Christmas Eve. That night, the man shared with his family gathered at his home that he had been baptized and what the experience was like for him. He passed away that night but had the chance to share one last wonderful Christmas Eve with his family. I was shocked and saddened until the grandson started to thank me because his grandfather had always said he didn't believe in God until that night, and he had felt moved to stop into the inviting glow of the church light outside. It is a night I will not forget, ever.

Another wonderful memory happened while I was serving Peace UCC in Iowa. It was during the 11pm service again. As is often the case, I struggled to get people to read or light candles. Just as the service was about to begin a young family who had attended a few times showed up with both of their young children dressed in their pajamas. As we started the Advent Candle lighting, their young daughter (who may have been four at the time) came running up wanting to help. I lifted her to my hip as we performed the lighting ceremony. When I went to put her down, she clung to me. I performed the rest of the service with her there on my hip as we read and sang. She is now in her teens and has grown into a fine young lady, but she will forever be that little girl to me. I hope you realize how blessed I feel to have watched you grow, Brooklyn, and the photo of us lighting those candles still remains one of my favorites.

The final one I want to share happened here. It was our first 11pm Christmas Eve service. It is always a much more intimate service with the ones who come to attend that service. That night just before the candlelight ceremony, the Spirit moved me to call everyone up around the tree for a prayer. We remained after the prayer and began the Candle lighting ceremony in a semi-circle around the tree. There in the glow of the candles we stood singing Away in the Manger and Silent Night. No one needed the slides on the screen, we stood there looking around at the family which had gathered there as the notes rang out. As we sang the final verse of silent night the accompanist stopped playing and we continued to sing. The warmth of the notes, the glow of the candles, and the looks of peace and love on people's faces will forever remain in my heart as one of the fondest services I have ever had the privilege of performing.

There are so many more moments of laughter and love I could share, but these stand out at the moment to me. Thank you all for the past 6 years of fond memories and wonderful moments in ministry. May God bless you on your journeys this Advent season and give you the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love the Christ child brought so many years ago.

God bless,
Pastor Burt

COMMUNITY DINNER

SPONSORED BY WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023

4:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.



MENU

Scalloped Potatoes & Ham
Green Beans & Cole Slaw | Rolls
Assorted Desserts | Milk & Coffee

Adults: \$7.00 Children \$4.00

5 & Under: FREE

Take out is available upon request.

ROBERTS CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1001 BIRCH DRIVE, ROBERTS WI 54023 715-749-3225

DINNERS ARE SERVED ON THE FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH FROM 4:30 TO 6:30PM AND PROVIDE A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD CONNECTIONS WITH ONE ANOTHER.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SERVE OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

JUDY SNOEYENBOS: JSNOEYEN@GMAIL.COM, LORI JUREK: LORIJUREK@GMAIL.COM, OR THE CHURCH OFFICE AT THE NUMBER LISTED OR SECRETARY@ROBERTSUCC.ORG. WE'LL FIND A SPOT THAT WORKS FOR YOU!



ROBERTS

Food Pantry

Giving hope to our neighbors

Food Pantry Needs With the season changing we are in need of: Hearty Soups, Bear Creek Soups, Soup Crackers, Pudding, Jello, Hot Chocolate, Paper Bags, & White Plastic Bags.



A THANK YOU FROM THE NEW RICHMOND MIDDLE SCHOOL

"Thank you so much for the care and support you provide our students through the hygiene kits! We are so blessed to have a community that is willing to meet kids' needs in such a kind and personal way. The love and positive energy in each kit is so apparent and really is touching. Your time and efforts are truly appreciated by so many. You are angels here to work so hard to help others!"



Take Care,

Paula Gretzlock, School Counselor

ELECTRONIC TRANSFER OF FUNDS

Did you know we have a way to have funds automatically withdrawn from your checking account each month? Forms can be found in the church narthex. Completed forms along with a canceled check can be mailed to the church or brought to the office. When you use this choice funds will be withdrawn on the 15th of each month. No More Writing checks each month! For questions, contact the church office. *

CHURCH COUNCIL
CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
November 2, 2023

Lori Jurek (Moderator, S.H.I.F.T. and Women's Fellowship), Duane Loewell (Deacons), Toni Williams (CE), Pastor Burt Williams, and Connie Mueller

Meeting was called to order Lori at 6:00 P.M.

Opening devotion was led by Duane: "Would You Rather"

Minutes: September 28 minutes were reviewed. Motion was made by to Toni to approve the minutes and seconded by Duane. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Christian Education: (Toni)

- In lieu of collecting for an organization, the CE Board has planned on having more involvement of the RUCCUS children during the Sunday services throughout Advent.
 - Dec. 3: Kids will provide special music and serve as greeters, readers, ushers, and acolytes for the service.
 - Dec. 10: Prayer rocks will be distributed
 - Dec. 17: Children will create Christmas cards to be sent out to those unable to attend services at this time and area nursing home.
 - Dec. 24: Children will pass out ornaments and spread some Christmas love.
- Silly Supper will be held on Feb. 17th. It will begin at 5 P.M.

Deacons: (Duane)

- Grand Finale for the Stewardship campaign will be held Nov. 19th. Live music and food will be provided for the event.
- Advent: Will be using "Coming Home" theme
- Christmas church decorating will be done on Dec. 2. All are welcome to help.

S.H.I.F.T. (Lori)

- Have handed out 61 Feed Good Kits.
- Cookie Sale will be held on Dec. 10th. Great response seeking volunteers for this event.
- No meeting in November

Pastor:

- One baptism just done for Beau Bayer. Two more baptisms are scheduled.
- Attendance is climbing.
- A living nativity will be held on Dec. 16th at the Christian Reformed Church in Baldwin. If you are interested in helping or participating, please contact Pastor Burt.
- Counseling sessions have increased greatly.
- Our e-mail system continues to have issues.

Trustees: (Tony submitted report and Lori gave the highlights from the meeting)

- Started work on budget for 2024
- BINGO will be held next spring
- No meat raffle has been scheduled at this time.
- Maintenance has been completed on kitchen vents and low drain. Work on the dishwasher needs to be done yet.
- Recommended the trustees take down the long rain gutter extensions and replace them with the splash guards for the winter. Pastor Burt indicated that more dirt was needed in that area.

Continued page 5.

TREASURER'S REPORT

***Detailed minutes of the Trustees meetings, including full financial statements are available upon request.*

General Fund Financial Summary as of October 31, 2023**Statement of Activity**

Income/Contributions	\$ 148,688.59
Fundraising Income	22,332.97
Facility Use	4,925.00
Interest	<u>1.24</u>
Total Income	175,953.80
Expenses	188,857.36
Transfers from other Accounts	<u>21,225.03</u>
Net Activity \$	8,321.47

Statement of Financial Position

Assets	
General Accounts \$	4,655.91
Other Bank Accounts	48,203.12
Fixed Assets	<u>1,874,642.28</u>
Total Assets \$	<u>1,927,501.31</u>
<u>Liabilities & Equity</u>	
Accrued expenses \$	4,117.34
Bank mortgage balance	<u>562,826.97</u>
Member mortgage balances	150,000.00
Total liabilities	716,944.31
Equity	<u>1,210,557.00</u>
Total Liabilities & Equity	<u>1,927,501.31</u>

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**CHURCH COUNCIL
CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
November 2, 2023**

Women's Fellowship: (Lori)

- New rugs were purchased for the kitchen.
- Replaced mats by the dishwasher.
- Transferred \$2000.00 to the general fund.
- Will redo signage in the kitchen to make it clearer how various pieces of equipment work and should be left following the use of such equipment.

New Business:

- Duane requested that the Church Board Team be placed on upcoming agendas.

Next meeting: December 7 Duane will do the opening

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Mueller, Church Clerk

RUCCUS

Roberts *UCC* Understanding Scripture

Join us! All are Welcome!

1st & 3rd Wednesdays of each month

****October thru May**

5:30pm Potluck meal

All are invited to come and join us as a church family for this meal together. Please bring a dish to pass, beverages for your group/family, and plates/utensils to use. We look forward to seeing you there!

6:00pm – 7:15ish Program

Music, Discussion Groups, Worship & Prayer

Our RUCCUS program is underway. We want to make sure you all had the dates of class available.

****December dates are different from normal to prepare for our Christmas program****

Wednesday, December 6 - RUCCUS: potluck at 5:30, Christmas program practice at 6:00

Wednesday, December 13 - RUCCUS: potluck at 5:30, Christmas program practice at 6:00

Saturday, December 16 - Christmas Program Dress rehearsal at 10, Show at 11, Coffee fellowship to follow.

Have some friends who you think might enjoy this time of family worship and learning?? Invite them and their family along!

Let us know if you have any questions!

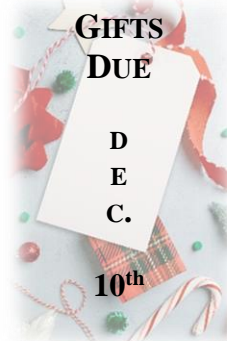
drtonidc@gmail.com.



God bless,

Toni

CHRISTMAS CLOTHESLINE



Christmas Clothesline began November 19th and all the tags have been taken!

As in the past, we have received these individuals through the St. Croix County Mental Health Social Workers.

If you are purchasing clothing, please include a gift receipt.

Thank you for your support!
Nancy Kirouac



2ND ANNUAL COOKIE SALE

**DECEMBER 10th
11:00 a.m.**

Shop for your holiday treats from a wide selection of cookies and bars!

Boxes provided – you choose the kind & quantity.

Goodies sold at \$ 8.00/pound.
Sponsored by SHIFT

COOKIE BAKER VOLUNTEERS

As a reminder, please deliver your cookie/treat donations to the church on Saturday, December 9th from 9:30 to 11am or no later than 9:15am Sunday, December 3rd.

Thank you for your support of the 2nd Annual Cookie Sale! We look forward to having lots of wonderful treats available for our sale!

A HUGE thank you to the Trustees and all who helped this past Thursday with fall Clean-Up!



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE (also from the Pastor...)

We had our Commitment Celebration on Sunday, December 16th and what a wonderful time to be together. As we talked about our Stewardship and what it meant during the celebration, I wanted to share with all of you some of the things which we had to celebrate. Our stewardship is about so much more than the money we give and paying bills. One way to see this is to look at the ministries we do here at Roberts Congregational UCC and the real impact they are having on the world. Here is a little bit of what we discussed and celebrated last Sunday!

We spend 19% of our budget **Connecting with God**...approximately \$54,000. Another 27% is spent on **Living by Faith**. Which translates into approximately \$74,000. 28% of our budget goes to **Being Known by**

Love...approximately \$76,000.00. And 26% of our budget covers **Cultivating Hope**...almost \$73,000. This is just the financial stuff though. We were able to track approximately 5,300 hours of volunteer time in this building.

That is an average of 102 hours a week or 14.5 hours a day of time given to the ministries of this church by members and friends, our church family. That is an average of 14 hours per day given to this congregation.

The average wage in the United States in 2023 has been just over \$28/hr.

That translates into \$405 per day, or \$2,835 per week, or a yearly total of \$147,435 which is given in time at \$28/hr.

That is staggering to think about and also something to remember when we look around and see what our members and friends are doing for our ministries for God.

Over the last year we have had 16,951 points of contact.

That is someone who has attended a worship service, come in for aid or counseling, been to the food pantry, been helped by one of our outreach programs, or receive some other form of contact through our congregation.

These are all times which God has an opportunity to touch the life of someone because of the generosity of all of you.

ORDER NOW FOR

CHRISTMAS



DID YOU KNOW GIFT CARDS SUPPORTS OUR CHURCH?

Just purchase a card here for a gift or use it where and when you already shop.

BROWSE RAISERIGHT FIRST

Go to: <https://www.raiseright.com/>. Once you find your shops, create an account.

OR

Print out a form NOW!

<http://www.robertsucc.org/mt-content/uploads/2023/05/raiseright-form.pdf>

And either drop off or mail in your completed form. We will contact you when your gift card(s) are ready.

To obtain a CODE for ordering, or with questions:

Dianne Loewel: dianne.loewel@gmail.com

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HELLO CHURCHES!

WILL YOU HELP US RING THE BELL THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON?

Bell ringing will take place from
November 16th- December 23rd.

To reserve your spot, **REGISTER NOW** at
www.registertoring.com or
call Patty Gallaty at **715-554-4928.**

Thank you for prayerfully considering this important call to service.



Your Friends at,
The Salvation Army of St.
Croix County

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16,951 points of contact. That is an average of 46 a day.
46 individuals a day have the opportunity to know our God's love because of all that you and others in this congregation so generously give.

What is even more staggering is the ripple effect this has in the world.

Each of those people goes out into the world taking that love with them touching others.
Imagine what that number would look like if we were able to track it!

It takes time, talents, and finances to do that though.

When we look at our time donated, 5,280 hours, that means for every 19 minutes volunteered 1 person was touched.

Every hour volunteered more than 3 people were touched.

In 8 hours, you could reach 26 people.

Last year we had a total of 56 giving units in the church. A giving unit is a household or organization which has given to the church. Which means to reach our budget we need each giving unit to give \$13.54/per day. We realize that isn't feasible for every household, it is just an average number. Some of us can give more and others less. Just like one person might have more time to give than the next. That \$13.54/day translates into it costing \$0.29 per contact per unit per day. 29 cents for the chance to change a life? That seems much more doable. We need your help in time talents and finances. We are all feeling the crunch of the rising costs of living. Yet, we are doing so much good! Would you be able to help financially, or maybe already do, could find it in your heart and budget to help just a little more? Can you find a way to give just a little more time to help? Do you have a talent you might be able to share? For every dollar we give, every hour we give extra, 3 more people could be reached. We are doing some awesome work. We have great reason to celebrate. Will you help us to continue to reach as many people as possible with the ministries of Roberts Congregational UCC?

If you haven't yet turned in your Commitment (Pledge) Card, it is not too late. If you do not have one and would like one, please let us know by emailing us at infor@robertsucc.org or calling the church office at 715-749-3225. We thank you all for all that you have and are doing to make these ministries such a success! Peace!!

Yours in the family of Christ,
Pastor Burt

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

"Grace upon Grace." John 1:16

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!

Below is a video link about The Christmas Fund and the life-changing impact your giving has made:

<https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home>.

Roberts Congregational UCC Offering Day is Christmas Eve, December 24th

Or

Mail to:

The Pension Boards-United Church of Christ, Inc.
Christmas Fund
75 Remittance Dr., Suite 1637
Chicago, IL 60675-1637

To pay by check, make checks payable to
"The Christmas Fund."

Telephone: 1.800.642.6543 x2738
212.729.2738

Email: pramsey@pbucc.org



**December 1**

Cole Delander

December 2Justin Johnson
Tony Jurek**December 3**Cecil Brighton
Mandy Clay
Aubrey Mondry**December 4**

Melanie Robelia

December 5Nancee Hurlburt
Dianne Loewel**December 6**

Burt Williams

December 7

Trudy Hinkel

December 12Presley Dull
Keith Logas**December 13**

Dan Frye

December 16Aiden Hansen
David Lindquist**December 17**

Rylee Muller

December 18

Brian Wille

December 19Emma Delander
Shawn Vorwald**December 20**

Scarlett Logas

December 21

Grant Gooding

December 22Janice Kuschel
Luke Vorwald**December 27**

Adele Ament

December 28

Don Graf

December 29

Mike Kamm

Baptism

November 12th

*Congratulations Archer Anderson,
son of Darin Anderson &
Nora Lindsay on your Baptism.*

*Welcome to the
Family of God!*

**December 1**Carol & Terry
McKinley**December 2**Dan & Megan
Frye**December 3**Mike & Pamela
Kamm**December 13**Dave & Roxie
Hatch**December 31**Donna & Wayne
Hadley

PLEASE HOLD THE FOLLOWING IN PRAYER

Earl Pechuman

Tom Sullwold

Terrill Floreyk

Family & Friends of Mary Ellen Frederick

Linda Hall

Allison

Niki Freeman

Terry McKinley

Missy Reed

Cecil Brighton

Audrey Ackley

Maggie Olson

All those serving in our law enforcement, first responders, military, healthcare settings,
and those in Ukraine.

For all those not listed above but needing prayer, we lift you up.

Thank you for helping to keep the prayer list up to date.

 D E C E M B E R 						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 9am All participation, Advent Church Decorating
3 1 st Sunday of Advent 10am Worship with Holy Communion	4	5 6pm Deacons Meeting	6 5:30pm RUCCUS Potluck 6pm RUCCUS Family Worship & Discussion 6:15pm Bell Choir	7 3:30pm WF Meeting 4:30pm Community Dinner 6:00pm Council Meeting	8	9
10 10am Worship 11am Cookie Sale <i>RaiseRight Orders</i>	11 6pm CE Meeting 6:30pm SHIFT Meeting	12 6pm Church Board Team Meeting	13 5:30pm RUCCUS Potluck 6pm RUCCUS Christmas Pageant Practice 6:15pm Bell Choir	14	15 <i>Annual Reports Due (Jan. 21st Meeting)</i>	16 10am Pageant Dress Rehearsal 11am Christmas Pageant <i>Followed by a Cookie Fellowship</i>
17 10am Worship	18	19 6:30pm Trustees Meeting	20 6:15pm Bell Choir <i>Newsletter Deadline</i>	21 5pm SHIFT @ Grace Place	22	23
24 Christmas Eve 10am Worship 4:30pm & 11pm Worship with Communion & Candlelight <i>RaiseRight Orders</i>	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve 10am Worship	1 New Year's Day <i>Church Office Closed</i>	2 6pm Deacons Meeting	3 6:15pm Bell Choir	4 3:30pm WF Meeting 4:30pm Community Dinner 6pm Council Meeting	5	REMINDER January 21 st ANNUAL MEETING



Roberts Congregational United Church of Christ

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