

FIRST CHURCH CONNECTION

First Congregational Church of Onekama

United Church of Christ

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January 2025

Pastoral Ponderings

“For now, we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.” 1 Corinthians 13:12 NRSV

January is said to be named for the Roman god Janus. Janus was the god of beginnings and transitions, and therefore, by extension, of gates, doors, doorways, passages and endings. He is usually depicted as having two faces, since he looks to the future and to the past. In short, Janus was a two-faced god!



The common definition of someone who is “two-faced” is a person who practices deception. When we stand at the threshold of a new year, we can often feel the pull of that ambivalence. We wish people a “better year” in 2025. We look back at our own 2024 with all its heady mix of ills, pains, disappointments and happy moments of joy and project for ourselves a future of “better days.” But what are we actually saying by this?

Are we saying, “out with the old,” (a.k.a. good riddance!) and “in with the new” (a.k.a. Whew! Glad that’s over!), or can we just possibly put a “different” face on all of this? The figure of Janus in the present, looking to the past, and looking forward to the future can mean something a lot richer than that.

Let me explain. As a church in 2024, we literally “put a new face” on our building following the hailstorm damage. In so doing, however, we sought to maintain the same historic lines of the building and the steeple. In short we claimed our past to enrich our present, so as to move into our future with joy and confidence.

Personally, each of us has things represented by living through the year 2024 as best we humanly could that we would change if we were able: A sharp word said in anger; a phone call NOT made; a chance to help someone else that we let slip by; an egregious error in judgment that caused hurt, pain, or conflict. We are, after all, only human. Things that are past cannot be changed. Our challenge in “facing” a new year then is to learn from those things and to seek God’s help in transforming them.

As Paul reminds us, in the present, we can only see through a glass dimly . . .we don’t have all the answers, nor do we even know the questions! But, if we grab on to our faith and hang-on for dear life, we can often make the changes in our situations that can bring fulfillment and hope. We can

learn to make amends immediately when we realize we have “erred and stayed like lost sheep,” as the old confession in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, so poignantly states:

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father; We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore thou those who are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind In Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

This is my prayer for all in 2025. Amen and Happy New Year!

Pastor Alison

For Sale

**Church Logo
Mugs
\$10 each
2 for \$15**

Add \$5 for shipping and handling, if not able to pick-up at church.

Dear Church Family—

Thank you for all your continued prayers for my Mom and I for our accident It really meant a lot to us. You really continue to be a blessing to us, now and always. Blessings to you, thank you again. We truly appreciate and love all of you.

Love, your sisters in Christ now and always,

Betsy & Shelley Lyman



Manistee Medical Care Facility

Sunday church services at the Manistee Medical Care Facility have been scheduled January 19th, **Easter April 20th**, July 20th, October 19th.

A small group has arranged to attend and lead the service on **January 19th at 2 PM**.

The visit will be confirmed with staff prior to the service. Those attending have agreed to wear masks and expect the standard protocols for entering a residential facility.

Call Pastor Alison 802-829-3211. If you have any questions.

Bible Study



**Saturday Bible
Study
Beginning
January 11, 2025
10-11:30 am
RSVP**

802-829-3211

We will be
studying Genesis -
Join us in the
Fellowship Hall for
Coffee and Goodies
And lively discussion!



**First Congregational
UCC of Onekama
4920 Spring Street**

Great News for 2025!

Remember the wonderful feasts you enjoyed at Thanksgiving and Christmas?
Did you indulge in a New Year's Eve potluck to welcome in the New Year with family or friends?
Are you experiencing a tinge of regret for all those calories consumed?
Want to do something to feel better?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above, we have the solution!

COME EXERCISE WITH US ON TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS 3:30-4:30 !!!

Stretch, Strength and Balance classes begin January 7th

For a prepaid fee of only \$90 for the full session, you can sign up for the next 22-class session, which will last until March 20th. (Please pay by the first night of class—make check out to Tonya Evans). Drop-ins welcome for \$5 per class.

Class Description:

A strong core, flexibility and balance are your most important assets regardless of your fitness level. This class incorporates core strength training, light weight training upper and lower body workouts, stretching and balance practice for an overall effective yet not so strenuous workout. (Co-ed)

Bring your own weights, and yoga mat or towel for floor exercises. Chair exercises are an option to floor exercises.



About the instructor: Tonya Evans is a Physical Therapy Assistant at the Manistee County Medical Care Facility. She helps patients to follow an appropriate exercise program that will increase their strength, endurance, coordination, and range of motion. She has been in the business 26 years!

*Come enjoy the fun, puns,
good music and great camaraderie ... you know, misery loves company! 🤔*

December Treasurer's Report 2024

Contributions for December \$7,198.00
The yearend contributions were \$78,048.00

Year-end total income was \$111,388.08

Year-end total expenses were \$112,558.27

(\$1,170.19) over. But that is pretty darn good if you ask me. :) Thank you to all who increased there giving, used their special talents in other ways and glorified GOD!

January Goodies

5th Carol Rackow

12th Shelley Lyman

19th Joy Lind

26th Carol Rackow



In the upcoming months, if there is a Sunday that you could help by volunteering, it would be greatly appreciated. Just send me an email with the date.



January Anniversaries

25th Mike & Shelley Lyman

Monthly 2024 Events & Dates

Worship – Every Sunday at 10 a.m. This month Communion will be on the 5th.

Choir Rehearsal – Sundays 3:30 – 4:30

Financial Advisory Committee – meets on January 8th this month at 2:30 by zoom.

Ministry Council – 3rd Thurs. each month, this month it is on January 16th at 7:00 by zoom.

Outreach Ministry – Game Night is on Friday the 17th at 6pm.

Worship Ministry – As called by Chair.

January Birthdays

9th Dan Behring

16th Melissa Bray & Noel Nieman

20th Pam Lyman & Ed Kalis

21st Betsy Jasperse

27th Susie Halloran & Brook McIsaac

28th Nancy Behring

29th Ann Hutchinson

Steps for viewing Facebook Live -Streamed Services...

Be sure to like our page on Facebook "First Congregational Church of Onekama".

Find the three dots on a post. Click or touch the dots.

Scroll down and turn on notifications for this post.

You will be notified when the page goes live.

Church Staff for 2024

Pastor – Alison Young

Moderator – Bill Sawhill

Vice Moderator - Marcia Rogers

Treasurer – Joy Lind

Clerk – Lynn Jans

Secretary – Joy Lind

Pianist – Carolyn Brooks & Kathy Wilson

Choir Director – Dan Wilson

Custodian – Carol Rackow

First Congregational

**United Church of Christ
4920 Spring Street**

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