

# The Bridge

WINTER 2023

## CONTENTS

The Bridge	page 1
Session Highlights	page 2
December Worship	page 3
Advent	page 4
PNC Update	page 5
Mission and Outreach	page 6
Shared Ministry	page 7
Fund Tech & Media	page 8

### 9:00 AM SUNDAY SERVICE

Service is streamed live on Facebook. A recording of the stream will be made available on YouTube following the service.

### 10:00 AM COFFEE HOUR

Coffee Hour and Fellowship will be held in the Fellowship Hall immediately following service. Join us for coffee, snacks, and conversation.

**SESSION MEMBERS  
&  
MINISTRY TEAMS**

**SESSION  
N HALL  
PERSONNEL AND  
MISSION/OUTREACH**

**MELISSA HARMON  
MISSION/OUTREACH  
AND LIAISON TO  
DEACONS/MEMBER CARE TEAM**

**BETTE HOYTINK  
CLERK**

**ROGER HOYTINK  
BUILDING,  
GROUNDS AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**MARILYN PAULSON  
WORSHIP/FAITH FORMATION**

**DAVID STRUENSEE  
BUILDING,  
GROUNDS AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**TREASURER  
JESSICA HARRISON**

**DEACONS/MEMBER CARE**

**KAREN ANGELL  
DEB BARTELT  
PEGGY BALFANZ  
ANNIE LEONARD  
ANNA MALEK  
LONNA NORTON**

## **SESSION HIGHLIGHTS**

The Session met on November 21st and took the following actions:

- Approved the use of the Fellowship Hall by Bible Baptist Church on the afternoon of November 26, December 17, and March 24, 2024 for a catered meal.
- Voted to remove Charlene Alecos, Martin Buser, and Amanda Bartelt-Goland from the membership role.
- Approved the date of December 17th for a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing new Deacons and Ruling Elders.
- Approved the date of January 14, 2024 for the ordination and installation of new church officers.
- Approved the date of February 18, 2024 for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation.



## December Worship Leadership

<b>Date</b>	<b>Pulpit Supply</b>	<b>Liturgist</b>	<b>Advent Candle Lighters</b>
December 3	Greg Braatz, CRE	Jason Harmon	Jason & Melissa Harmon
December 10*	Rev Andy Sonneborn	Marilyn Paulson	Lonna & Dave Norton
December 17**	Greg Braatz, CRE	Annie Leonard	Annie Leonard
December 24 - 9AM***	Greg Braatz, CRE	Marilyn Paulson	Bette & Roger Hoytink
December 24 - 7PM	Jessica Harrison, CRE	Sue Forbes	Peggy & Aaron Thums

\* On December 10 we welcome a new pulpit supply pastor, Rev. Andrew Sonneborn. He is a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PCUSA who has recently moved to Appleton from Illinois and is the staff chaplain at ThedaCare in Appleton and Neenah.

\*\* On December 17 there will be a short Congregational Meeting immediately following worship to elect new Deacons and Elders.

\*\*\*On December 24 there will be two services. The morning service at 9AM is the Fourth Sunday in Advent. The evening is the Christmas Eve service at 7PM.

# Advent Devotions

While we did not get an Advent Devotional this year, we encourage you to read the following scripture texts prior to worship each week. Our Pulpit Supply leaders have selected a theme throughout the season to learn about some of the overlooked characters in the traditional Christmas Story. The themes are as follows:

December 3 – The birth of John the Baptist foretold – Luke 1:1-25

December 10 – Mary’s song – Luke 1:57-80

December 17 – Jesus’ genealogy – Luke 3:22-38

December 24 (AM) – The Promise of Messiah and Comfort my People – Jeremiah 33:14-18 and Isaiah 40:1-11.

December 24 (PM) – Jesus’ birth and the Shepherds and Angels – Luke 2:1-20.

## Advent Book Study

### **An Unlikely Advent by Rev. Rachel Billups**

The Advent Study will continue to meet after worship on Dec. 3, 10, and 17 (following the congregational meeting). You are welcome to attend any or all. The book can be purchased on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Unfortunately the first session for Nov. 26 was canceled. The revised schedule is as follows:

December 3 – Chapter 1: “What if I Missed It?”. We will learn from Zechariah and Elizabeth that God’s plans often differ from our own, but if we trust God we are blessed in unexpected ways. The texts are Luke 1:5-25, 57-64 and Genesis 18:1-15.

December 10 – Chapter 2: “Playing the Villain”. (King Herod was jealous and obsessed with power and he committed unspeakable atrocities. But God’s grace is available to all regardless of what they’ve done – or what we’ve done – and that is good news!) and Chapter 3: “A Curious People”. (Jesus and his family were Jewish and the Gospel writers explain how he was the messiah the Jewish people were waiting for. Early in Jesus’ story we meet the Magi from the east who were not Jewish. They teach us how Jesus was a savior for all people.) The primary text for both lessons is Matthew 2:1-12.

December 17 – Chapter 4: “When God Shows Up”. (The Shepherds were the first people outside of Jesus’ family to hear the good news of his birth. They had difficult jobs and were frightened by the angels’ presence but nonetheless responded to God’s sign setting an example for followers of Christ still today.) The text for this session is Luke 2:8-20



## A NOTE FROM THE PNC

I want to share some straight talk with you about the search process for a new pastor. We have heard that some of you have concerns or are disappointed that we merged the search with our brothers and sisters in Weyauwega. I will tell you that this decision was no one's first choice. It is a strategy to increase our chances of finding a pastor. The simple fact is that there are more churches in our denomination looking for a pastor than there are pastors looking for a new call. Pastors looking for a less than full-time position are few and far between. Both congregations have been without dedicated pastoral leadership for over two years.

Neither Winneconne nor Weyauwega, on their own, can support a fulltime pastor for more than a few years and would be relying on investments to supplement the giving of members to pay the salary and benefits package of a pastor, which approaches \$90,000 for 2024.

Our decision to join forces with Weyauwega coincided with the rollout of a new software system at the denomination level, known as the CLC, which attempts to match churches and pastors who are searching---similar to an online dating app.

If any of you have experience with new software applications, you know that there are usually hiccups and bumps in the initial days of use. That has been the case with the CLC. There is a learning curve for everyone trying to use the new process. However, the ministry profile that we wrote is "live" on the system and we have had some interest expressed by a few pastors. We have also received compliments that our ministry profile is very well written. This gives us confidence that God will answer our prayers and send us a new leader.

As members of this congregation, the PNC needs your prayers and participation. Sign up to be a liturgist or communion server or help at the thrift store the fourth Saturday of each month. The nominating committee is still looking for two persons to serve as Ruling Elders—one for a 2-year term and one 3-year term. Vacancies for these positions do not present a very healthy picture to someone considering a move to the Fox Valley. This church continues to make a positive impact in this community and thru world mission, but it requires all of us. May it be so.

## NEWS FROM MISSION AND OUTREACH

It is time for the 4th and final special offering for 2024, Christmas Joy! Let us join other Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) congregations to make an impact on the world. Let's be the Church, together.

**THE PERFECT GIFT** When Jesus was born among us, he came as a helpless baby destined to bring joy, peace and salvation to his people. This child, God's Word made flesh — fully human and fully God — became one of us. One with us. One among us. In all of our vulnerabilities, struggles and triumphs, Jesus became one of us — leading us, knowing us, connecting us to himself and to each other, and offering us his gift of eternal life. The perfect gift. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us, with generous support of church leaders among us — past, present and future — who have pointed us to God. We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and their families who have faithfully guided and led us but who now find themselves in critical financial need. We honor and celebrate emerging leaders like students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color, who develop leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much. Jesus' example as a child born to be among us and lead us to eternal life provides a pattern for us to follow as we celebrate those who have led us in the past and will lead us into the future. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ

Thanks in part to support from this Offering, church workers can receive critical financial assistance to support them through life's challenging circumstances. These generous actions bear witness to our faithful response to God's charge to love one another as Christ commanded. \$1.1 million of gifts from the 2022 Offering are being used to provide critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their times of need. Income supplements helped nearly 272 individual recipients, assisting retired church workers and surviving spouses with the means to provide for themselves. Housing supplements helped more than 223 individual recipients remain in their homes, afford assisted living, or long-term care. Emergency Assistance Grants helped more than 621 individual recipients facing times of great financial need or uncertainty due to unforeseen circumstances.

We will collect the Christmas Joy Offering in church each Sunday during Advent, 12/03/23 - 12/24/23. Or you can donate online here: [Presbyterian Special Offerings \(pcusa.org\)](https://www.pcusa.org)

Thank you for continuing to live out our mission to Share God's Love and Shine God's Light.

HOW TO GIVE ONLINE  
WINNCHURCH.ORG

CLICK THE LINK ABOVE  
THEN CLICK "GIVE NOW"



## OCTOBER 2023

OCT TOTAL INCOME (w/o pass thru)	\$6,612.46
OCT TOTAL EXPENSES (w/o pass thru)	\$7,073.00
<b>LOSS FOR OCTOBER</b>	<b>\$ 460.54</b>
<hr/>	
YTD INCOME (w/o pass thru)	\$68,207.57
YTD EXPENSES (w/o pass thru)	\$71,740.50
<b>YTD LOSS</b>	<b>\$3,532.93</b>
10/31/2023 Checkbook balance	\$58,110.31



ALL FINANCIAL GIFTS TO THE CHURCH MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN **DECEMBER 28TH** IN ORDER TO BE INCLUDED IN 2023 GIVING RECORDS. OFFERING RECEIVED ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST WILL BE PROCESSED BY THE BANK IN JANUARY OF 2024.



Visit our website often to get access to past sermons, musical selections from the Harmons, and stay up to date with our church calendar. Click the button below to be taken to our website. Click the "Online Giving" button to be automatically directed to the Online Giving page.

[FPC WEBSITE](#)

[ONLINE GIVING](#)



If you don't want to worship in person, please join us in live worship every Sunday, streamed from our Facebook page at 9:00am. FPC of Winneconne regularly posts pictures, videos, church information, and events on our page. Please "like" our Facebook page for updates.

[FPC FACEBOOK](#)



YouTube gives you access to all of the videos we have produced. Here you can find past worship services and musical selections from the Harmons. Missed our live Sunday Service? Recordings are posted for viewing following the service on our YouTube Channel.

[FPC YOUTUBE](#)



Various church-related meetings, special gatherings, and Bible Study will be held via Zoom. Links will be provided in our weekly email as scheduled.