

ISSUE 7098—JANUARY 2026

# The Herald

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF  
TALLMADGE

*United Church of Christ*

"Making God the Foundation of Everyday Living"

It seems another year has come and gone and most of us wonder where it went! What did we accomplish this past year? What did we do that made a difference? Did we just waste another year? Life seems to spin so fast that we are left to wonder if we have been true to the baptismal vows of "furthering Christ's mission in the world."

In big and small ways we've helped many people. If we would step back and consider what we did, perhaps we could see where we "wasted" this past year.

We collected gently used warm clothing for the Eastwood Brethren Church's Christ Closet. We participated in the five major offerings of the United Church of Christ. We provided funds for the St. Bernard's Lunch Program and sent a team of youth and adults to the First Serve project in Akron's North Hill community.

Weekly, we've worshipped the living God; gathering to feast at Christ's table, baptizing our young ones and confessing that we've not always hit the mark. We've eaten meals together, prayed for home-bound, hospitalized and ill friends and family. We welcomed German visitors and sent Dan and Anne to Germany to plan a Young Ambassadors Youth Exchange Program. These are but a random sampling of all the things we do to "make God the foundation of everyday living."

We aren't, however, a family that only looks back - we embrace God's future and all that we can do together to "waste another year"!

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Tallmadge, OH 44278  
Phone: 330.633.4931

HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR



In a poem entitled “Happy New Year,” Hope Galaxie writes:

“Looking around, I wonder  
Since a year is like clashing thunder  
Booming suddenly then vanishing instantly  
Why waste time uselessly?  
The old year came and went  
I hope your time was wisely spent  
On helping others, working hard  
So that many people may regard  
Your lifetime as truly great and not just be-  
cause of fate  
So walk right now, into the light  
And find yourself shining bright  
Don't worry what people think  
Because right now you're on the brink  
Of showing others what is true  
Happy New Year, from me to you. “

May God grant another year to “waste” away together!



Diapers for Jesus

We are collecting diapers for Baby Jesus as a special offering at our 4:30 PM service on Christmas Eve. Please bring diapers, of any brand or size, and we will donate them to a local women’s shelter.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Advent & Christmas

- Christmas Concert Dec. 21st, during worship
- Blue Christmas Service Dec. 21st, 4pm
- Christmas Eve Services Dec. 24th, 4:30 & 7pm
- Christmas Brunch and Carol Sing Dec. 28th, 10:00 am

WORSHIP  
SCHEDULE

DEC 21	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Scripture:	Luke 1:26-38
Message:	“Upon a Midnight Clear: Rest”
DEC 24	CHRISTMAS EVE
4:30 PM	Bethlehem Marketplace Service
7:00 PM	Lessons and Carols from FCC
DEC 28	FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
	CHRISTMAS CAROL SING IN FELLOWSHIP HALL
Jan 4	SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
Scripture:	Matthew 2.1-12
Message:	“Guide Us to Thy Perfect Light”
Jan 11	BAPTISM OF CHRIST SUNDAY
Scripture:	Matthew 3:13-17
Message:	“Gifts That Keep on Giving: The Gift of Committed Community”
Jan 18	SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
Scripture:	John 1:29-42
Message:	“Gifts That Keep on Giving: The Gift of Unbridled Curiosity”
Jan 25	THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY/ANNUAL MEETIN
Scripture:	Matthew 4:12-23
Message:	“Gifts That Keep on Giving: The Gift of Bold Action”

## THE PRAYER CHAIN CONNECTION

We pray for the names listed below and also for many other church members and their concerns, which remain confidential. You may call or text Diana Caldwell with your prayer concerns @ 330-265-5723. *Please remember in prayer:*

Brad Ashley	Alice Sheeler
Noreen Ashley	Eddie Showalter
Tim Ashley	Lt. Maxwell Spear
Sharon Bible	Jeff Sullivan
Katie Ann Bickett	Richard & Karen
Margarete Boschert	Thomason
Jim Brown	Kim and Noel Walters
Patti Calvarese	Ensign 2 Kaitlyn Wetter
Jim Caplinger	Don Woerz
Patty Conely	Alzheimer's Care Giver
Rylin Davis and family	Support Group
Sean and Sara Doty	
Debbie Fickes	
Karen Ford	
Marge Gibbs	
Eleanor Hall	
Angela Hammelman	
Alleen Hilbish	
John Huffman	
Jim Jackson	
John James	
Nancy Johnson	
Zell Lambert	
Roberta Lewis	
Ellen McKee	
Ron Mitchell	
Roberta Nehrenz	
Bob Poff	
David and Jackie Parker	
LTJG John Norton	
Heather Read	

*Blessed be God who did not refuse me  
the kindness I sought in prayer.  
Psalm 66:20*



### Christmas Eve Offering

It has been the tradition of First Congregational Church to receive a Christmas Eve offering and divide equally between two ministry partners. Half is given to a local ministry partner and the second half is given to The Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ.

The Christmas Fund (formerly the Veterans of the Cross 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.

We will gift half of the Christmas Eve offering to our local ministry partner, Faithful Servants. Faithful Servants Care Center provides free urgent healthcare services with a Christ-like compassion for those without insurance.

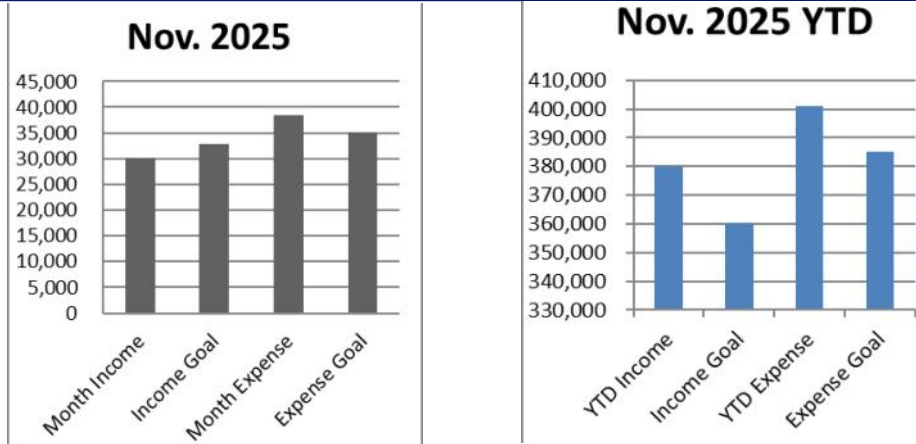
Come and worship with your FCC family this Christmas Eve and give generously to support these two ministry partners!

**GIVE TO OUR CHRISTMAS EVE  
OFFERING USING THIS  
QR CODE.**





# MONTHLY FINANCIALS



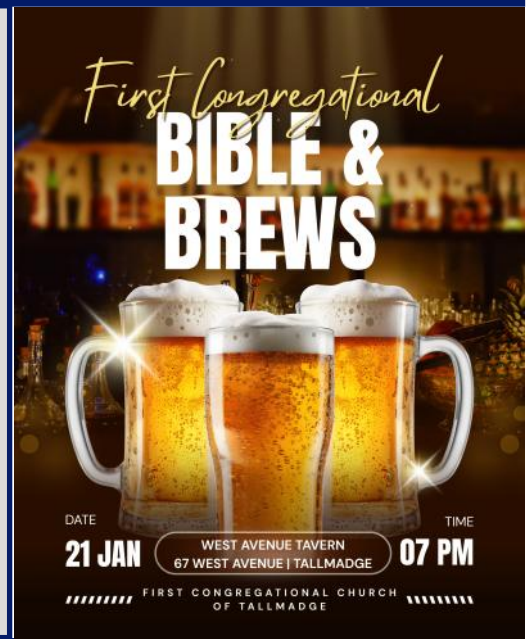
November 2025 operating income of \$30,063 was \$2,700 **below** the monthly income need. Operating expenses for the month were \$38,400 resulting in a **deficit** of (\$8,340) in October, and a YTD **deficit** of (\$20,850). Faith Offerings in November were close to the “budgeted” amount, but continue to fall short of our monthly expenses. We continue to hope for a strong finish for the church calendar year. Expenses were above budget in November but will hopefully decline in December. We look forward in prayer to a theology of generosity and the ability to strengthen the growth of our ministries as we move through the year. Contact the Church office to find out how to sign up for automatic monthly giving. Offerings may also be made online through a link on our website, mailed to the Church or sent from your bank’s online system.

## END OF YEAR FINANCIAL INFORMATION

If you have reached an age where you are required to take a minimum distribution from your IRA Account, talk to your tax and investment advisors about having the distributions sent directly to First Congregational Church and/or any other qualified charities to which you donate. This could help reduce your taxable income.

In order to be included in your 2025 "gift letter" from the Church, monetary gifts must be received by the Church by December 31, 2025, or if mailed, post marked by that date.

**2026 Giving Envelopes are available for pick up in the atrium. We are no longer using giving numbers. Please find your name and take yours today!**



We will not have  
**Faith In Action,  
Children’s  
Message, or WAM**  
on Dec. 28th or  
Jan 4th.



**SAT.  
JAN. 17  
@  
9:00 AM**

## WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

Women’s Fellowship will not have a luncheon or Spaghetti Dinner during the month of January.

FCC | December 28 | 10am

## Christmas Brunch and Carol Sing

Fellowship Hall

Casual Christmas Carol Sing & Brunch: Join your church family on the First Sunday after Christmas (Dec. 28th this year) for a casual service of carol singing in our Fellowship Hall. Wear a Christmas sweater (ugly or not). We will gather around tables and eat, color Christmas mandalas, sing, pray and hear scripture readings.



The Chancel Choir Family is pleased to welcome the addition of Jeff Cotton to the tenor section. His musical background includes directing the choir at McNaughton Street Baptist Church and singing in other musical groups, quartets, etc. He previously attended the Tallmadge Methodist Church with his wife, Carol. Jeff enjoys reading and spending time with his family. His son, Fred, is also a member of our choir. The choir encourages you to join our fellowship of singers with or without a musical background.

### Book Study Winter 2026

The Winter 2026 FCC Book Study will be a study of the book "Second Thoughts about Hell: Understanding What We Believe" by Ronald Allen and Robert Cornwall.

From the book description: "Various ideas float around about the subject of last things, leading many Christians to conclude that they don't know what to think about the subject. Yet at the core of the Christian doctrine of last things lies two simple and complementary hopes: that God ever and always offers hope for our individual futures and for the future of the whole world."

In this helpful book, Allen and Cornwall explain how we don't have to subscribe to sensationalist theories or sketchy interpretations to believe in Christian hope. They walk the reader through the central biblical teachings on last things and then show the ways the church has interpreted those teachings throughout the centuries. In a respectful way, the authors demonstrate that end-time beliefs centered on the Rapture came into existence only recently, and they then offer several more life-affirming, contemporary interpretations as alternatives."

This book study will begin at noon on January 14 in the David Bacon Room. Bring a lunch and bring a friend!



### Bible Study Winter 2026

The Winter 2026 Bible Study will continue its study of the Christian Scriptures in chronological order. The study will commence on Wednesday, January 14, and begin with 2 Corinthians. We will then go to James and finish with Colossians. The study will take place on Wednesdays at 1:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. A reading list that will allow you to prepare for each class will be distributed on Sunday mornings beginning Dec. 21. See you there!



## **"Jesus: Who is This Person We Profess to Follow?"**

### **2026 All-Church Retreat**

*<sup>23</sup>Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who has promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as we see the Day approaching.*

(Hebrews 10:23-25)

Over the centuries, Jesus has been many things to many people. Our collective thoughts are perhaps shaped by years of Sunday School, Bible Study, and private devotion. It seems increasingly, however, like Jesus is being "bent" to accommodate theological schemes that may not be in line with who Jesus was and what he actually taught. This year's retreat will focus on discovering who this person is that we profess to follow.

We'll study the Historical Jesus, the Teachings of Jesus and what it means to be a "Christian." The distinction between calling yourself a Christian and actually being a follower of Jesus is crucial. At the retreat, we will also explore what it truly means to follow Jesus, rather than merely holding the title of Christian.

We are planning a fantastic time to engage in community-building, hands-on activities, games, worship, studying the bible, and spending quality time in small groups. Sign-ups have begun. The cost for the one-day retreat, which includes all meals and retreat materials, is \$60 per person.



## **"Gifts That Keep on Giving" - Epiphany Sermon Series 2026**

Now that the more commercialized season of gift giving has come to a close, we can now look to gifts that keep on giving. During this Epiphany season, we will focus on some of God's unexpected gifts that we can enjoy long after the Christmas tree has been hauled away. These are gifts that "reveal" themselves in new ways as time goes on. We will be challenged to recognize the often-surprising gifts that are extended to humanity and are ours to receive if we are bold and loving enough to accept them.

This series will start on Sunday, January 11, following the Epiphany celebration which focuses on the gifts brought to Jesus by the Magi. Gather with your church family each Sunday through February 15 to discover what these priceless gifts are!





# UM UPCOMING EVENTS

❄️ Let's have some FUN in the snow!

Hey youth grades 6–12! Grab your friends or just bring your awesome self and get ready for a snow tubing adventure for our January Youth Fellowship! We're heading to the slopes at Boston Mills/Brandywine Ski Resort for Polar Blast Snow Tubing!

Please RSVP with Ms. Anne by January 19th. A sign-up link will be shared as we get closer to the event.



We hope you'll join us for an exciting winter outing filled with fun and fellowship!

**Grades 6-12**

## UM JAN. 2026 SCHEDULE

**SUN  
4**

**NO FAITH IN ACTION  
WINTER BREAK**

**SAT-SUN  
10-11**

**CONFIRMATION  
RETREAT**  
📍 Loyola Retreat House  
Green, OH

**SUN  
18**

**FAITH IN ACTION**  
🕒 9AM  
📍 Youth Room

**SUN  
18**

**SUNDAY IN SERVICE**  
\*NOTE DATE/TIME CHANGE THIS MONTH  
🕒 6:30-8PM  
📍 FCC

**SUN  
25**

**YOUTH FELLOWSHIP  
SNOW TUBING**  
🕒 4-8PM  
📍 BMBW SKI RESORT

UNITED IN CHRIST



**UM Christmas Party  
and Blanket Making**



## Treehouse Preschool

We are closed for Christmas Break, but on Jan. 5 we will be back in the building. We had a wonderful month full of new and traditional Christmas festivities. Thank you to Helen and Jack McKee, Kathy and Jim Harris, and Arleen Miller who helped prepare the Christmas baking bags that our preschoolers received. We provided baking items and tips as to why baking with children is a learning opportunity.

The Board of Christian Education also provided a Christmas bell to them with an invitation to join us for the children's pageant and Christmas Eve service.

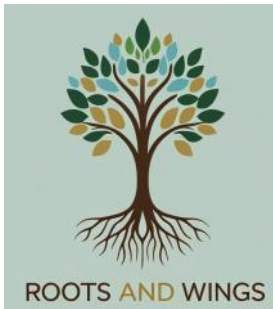
Treehouse 2026 Open House and registration will be Feb. 5 @ 6-7 pm. If you know anyone looking for a preschool, please spread the word. We do have Registration for church members on Feb. 4 @ 10-2 pm. Registration requires a \$50 registration fee and a copy of the child's birth certificate.

## NEW 4:30 Christmas Eve Worship Service

We have worked really hard to prep all the supplies we need for the 4:30 Christmas Eve service. Now we need to put it all together. We are going to have a workday on Dec. 20 @ 9 am. Come have breakfast and then help us set up this beautiful Bethlehem Marketplace.



## Root and Wings



**Roots and Wings** is a new fellowship group for grandparents and grandchildren to grow in faith and friendship together. Inspired by Colossians 2:6-7, we seek to be "rooted and built up in Him" as we share activities, stories, and time that strengthen family bonds and create lasting memories. This is open to all children, but our activities will be geared toward elementary-aged grandchildren. If your child wants to come and doesn't have a local grandparent, we can find an adoptive grandparent that would like to participate. If you have grandchildren that don't normally attend FCC, they are welcome too. The next few meetings will be on the THIRD SUNDAY instead of the second Sunday of the month due to scheduling...

**January 18 @ 4:00 pm—Winter Wonderland games, please come in the kitchen doors**

**February 15 @ 4:00 pm – Let's share the love with others (service project members in care facilities)**

## Grade 3-4-5 Lock-In Sleepover

Friday, January 23—Saturday, January 24 @ 7 pm—9 am

We eat, play games, meet new friends, and sleep over in the Fellowship Hall. What a great way to spend a Friday night! Bring sleeping bag, pillow, sleeping clothing, comfortable running/playing footwear. We could use adult help, too—please see Wendy.

Registration and permission form is REQUIRED by Jan. 18. You can find this on the next page of The Herald. Cost \$10; friends (in grade 3, 4 or 5) encouraged!





**First Congregational Church of Tallmadge, Ohio  
Youth Permission and Medical Information Form**

**Permission for Participation**

I give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the **Lock-in** with First Congregational Church of Tallmadge, Ohio, on Jan. 23-24, 2026.

In the event that contact with a parent or guardian is not reached, I hereby authorize and empower Wendy Brown or adult advisor to take such action as, in his/her opinion, shall be necessary for the welfare of my child including, but without limitation, transportation for medical/dental and/or surgical treatment; and I, the undersigned, will pay or reimburse any and all costs and expenses incurred.

Dated \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's / Legal Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
street number city state zip code

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Other emergency contact** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
**Medical Information**

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Current medical conditions that need to be made known: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any other concerns/conditions that need to be made known: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Food Allergies \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Allergies \_\_\_\_\_

Current Medications \_\_\_\_\_

\*If this is more than an overnight stay at the church, please attach a copy of the medical card.

## Worship Attendance

Nov. 23 143

Dec. 7 136

Nov. 30 102

Dec. 14 134



## UPCOMING SUNDAYS

### Greeters

Dec 21 Jim and Kathy Harris  
Dec 24 Mark and Cathleen Clark  
Dec. 28  
Jan. 4  
Jan. 11  
Jan. 18  
Jan. 25

### Altar Flowers

Dec 21 POINSETTIAS  
Dec 24 POINSETTIAS  
Dec. 28 POINSETTIAS  
Jan. 4  
Jan. 11  
Jan. 18  
Jan. 25

Sign up in  
the hallway  
\$28 per  
arrangement

### Ushers



Dec 21 Dave Marconi, Jane Charles, Sandy Haydu, Gary Myers  
Dec. 24 4:30 PM—Mark and Cathleen Clark  
7:00 PM—Bob and Sandy Haydu, Larry Robinson  
Dec 28 Joe Labay, Ann and Patrick Hagan, Larry Robinson  
Jan. 4 Larry Robinson, Dave Marconi, Tom Labay, Ken Caldwell  
Jan. 11 Sandy Haydu, Karen Huth, Kim Darkow, Jane Charles  
Jan. 18 Dave Marconi, Jane Charles, Sandy Haydu, Gary Myers  
Jan. 25 Joe Labay, Ann and Patrick Hagan, Larry Robinson

### SAVE THE DATE

Our Annual Meeting  
will be held on  
Sunday, Jan. 25, 2026.

Our Church Office will  
be closed  
Dec. 25-Jan 4th.



# JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 New Year's Day	2	3 7:30/9:00 AM— WW
4 10:00 AM—Worship	5 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 5:00 PM—Social Action Meeting 6:00 PM—Heritage 6:30 PM—Trustees	6 6:00 PM—Naranon	7 9:00 AM—Quilters	8 10:00 AM—WW 1:00 PM—Staff meeting 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	9	10 7:30/9:00 AM— WW 8:00 AM—All Church Retreat/ Confirmation Re- treat
11 9:00 AM—EC Meeting 10:00 AM—Worship/ Baptism of the Lord	12 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 6:00 PM—Heritage	13 6:00 PM—Naranon	14 9:00 AM—Quilters 12:00 PM—Book Study 1:00 PM—Bible Study 7:00 PM—Cub Scouts	15 HERALD DEADLINE 10:00 AM—WW 12:00 PM—Staff Holiday Lunch 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	16	17 7:30/9:00 AM— WW 9:00 PM—Men's Prayer Breakfast
18 9:00 AM—Faith in Ac- tion 10:00 AM—Worship 11:30 AM—Global Mis- sion Meeting 4:00 PM—Roots and Wings 6:30 PM—Sunday in Service	19 MLK Day Church Office Closed 6:00 PM—Heritage	20 6:00 PM—Naranon	21 9:00 AM—Quilters 10:00 AM—Herald Angels 12:00 PM—Book Study 1:00 PM—Bible Study 7:00 PM—Bible and Brews (West Ave.	22 10:00 AM—WW 1:00 PM—Staff meeting 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	23 6:00 PM—Pinewood Check-In	24 7:30/9:00 AM— WW 9:00 AM— Pinewood Derby
25 SUB SALE 9:00 AM—CE Meeting 10:00 AM—Worship/ Annual Meeting 4:00 PM—Youth Snow Tubing 6:00 PM—WJHM	26 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 6:00 PM—Heritage 6:00 PM—Treehouse Board Meeting	27 10:30 AM—ACSG 6:00 PM—Naranon	28 9:00 AM—Quilters 12:00 PM—Book Study 1:00 PM—Bible Study 7:00 PM—Cub Scouts	29 10:00 AM—WW 1:00 PM—Staff meeting 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	30	31 7:30/9:00 AM— WW



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
PO BOX 420  
TALLMADGE OH 44278  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
TALLMADGE OH  
PERMIT NO. 30

**DATE: December 17, 2025**

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#### Spiritual and Pastoral Care Ministry Contacts

Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group and Elders Ministry	Roberta Nehrenz	330.634.0713	<a href="mailto:rgnehrenz@att.net">rgnehrenz@att.net</a>
Hearts in Service	Janet McCaulley Barbara Rowles	330.633.3775	<a href="mailto:34babs@sbcglobal.net">34babs@sbcglobal.net</a>
Prayer Chain	Diana Caldwell	330.265.5723	<a href="mailto:scdcg@icloud.com">scdcg@icloud.com</a>
Yarning for Peace	Elaine Engle	330.633.0896	<a href="mailto:elengle@aol.com">elengle@aol.com</a>

#### Staff E-Mail Addresses

Rev. Daniel Doty	Senior Minister	<a href="mailto:seniorminister@fcctallmadge.org">seniorminister@fcctallmadge.org</a>
Cathy Cotter	Administrative Coordinator	<a href="mailto:info@fcctallmadge.org">info@fcctallmadge.org</a>
Wendy Brown	Director of Family Ministries	<a href="mailto:wbrownfcc@sbcglobal.net">wbrownfcc@sbcglobal.net</a>
Nancy Lynn Robinson	Choir Director / Organist	<a href="mailto:nrbgp@aol.com">nrbgp@aol.com</a>
Anne Pertick	Digital Minister/ Youth Ministries Coordinator	<a href="mailto:digitalministry@fcctallmadge.org">digitalministry@fcctallmadge.org</a> <a href="mailto:unitedministry@fcctallmadge.org">unitedministry@fcctallmadge.org</a>
Bill Hoover	Finance Administrator	<a href="mailto:bhooverfcc@sbcglobal.net">bhooverfcc@sbcglobal.net</a>
Teresa Snyder	Head Custodian	<a href="mailto:budrose42@yahoo.com">budrose42@yahoo.com</a>
Gary Marlow	Sunday Custodian	