

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

South Haven, MI

March 2018



March 25th
Palm/Passion Sunday
A Walk Through Holy Week

March 27th
Prayer Group

March 29th
Holy Thursday
Worship at 7 p.m.

March 30th
Good Friday
Community Service at Noon
at Hope Reformed

April 1st
Easter Sunday Worship—No Fooling!

(more details inside)

Prayers for continued healing of our church family:

Carolyn Stokes
Dick Brodhagen
Margaret Guimond
Sophia Cochran
Steven Siler
Carolyn Willobee
David Henry
MaryAnn Overhiser—Countryside
Jackie Protheroe—mother of Peggy McClendon



Memorial Contributions

**In loving memory of
Tom Whale**

Karen Moore
Robert & Kathleen Straits
Michael & Marcy Feinberg
Robert & Lynn Gabel
Janice Meltzer

Adopt-a-Days from February

February 19th, in honor of the presidents that have served our country, from Women's Fellowship

February 25th, thank you to Rick Olsen for preaching, from Jeffrey Dick

(See the article on page 7 that describes this program.)

SUNDAY, MARCH 11TH!



SATURDAY, MARCH 10TH!

Worship in March Sunday Worship is at 10:30 a.m.

March 4th - Ten Commandments Exodus 20:1-17

What do the Ten Commandments offer to us today? Can we see in them a way to structure life? Communion will be celebrated this Sunday.

March 11 - Temptation of Jesus Matthew 4:1-11

Our church school children and youth will present this scripture lesson during worship. How do we deal with temptation?

March 18 - Special Guest

We will be hosting guest preacher this Sunday for one of our sister's churches. This is an important part of covenant with the United Church of Christ and having as many people for worship that Sunday is helpful to the guest preacher.

March 25, 2018 - Palm and Passion Sunday A Holy Week Walk

Our worship on this Sunday will begin with a Palm Sunday parade, including cheers and song. Worship will then help us move through the events of Holy Week with Jesus. We will remember his teaching, being anointed, celebrating the Last Supper, washing the feet of the disciples, praying in the garden, his arrest and trial, and end with his walk to the cross.

There will be many participants in the service, including children and youth. There will be no church school this Sunday as families are encouraged to worship together.

March 29th - Holy Thursday worship at 7 p.m.

Gather around the table with Jesus and his disciples to remember the Last Supper. Worship will bring us to the table as well. This holy evening is a time to pause before Easter and remember this most sacred moment. Worship will be in the sanctuary.

March 30th Good Friday - Community Service at Noon at Hope Reformed Church

The seven last words of Jesus on the cross will be the focus of this service. Pastors and leaders of seven different churches in South Haven will each speak on these words (4-5 minutes each). Pastor Dick will be one of the speakers. All are welcome.

April 1st Easter Sunday Worship - No Fooling!

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."
-1 Corinthians 1:18

The custom of Holy Humor around Easter, is rooted in the musings of early church theologians (like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom) that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. "Risus paschalis - the Easter laugh," the early theologians called it.

How appropriate then that Easter falls on April Fool's Day this year. All silliness aside, worship will be at 10:30 a.m. on Easter Sunday.

Come, to sing, to rejoice, to laugh and smile. Let the light shine and smell the aroma of Spring. Put on your Easter bonnets and come gather to celebrate what the Lord has done. Easter is the defining element of the Christian Faith. It is a time for great joy and singing.



during Lent

During Lent St. Basil church will host a fish fry on Fridays from 5-7 p.m. These will be held at the Moose Lodge. Many from the church attend these, perhaps some could gather together for a meal and fellowship.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING



One Great Hour of Sharing, as part of Our Churches Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. The UCC works with inter-

Scripture Reference: Matthew 25:36

"I was naked and you gave me something to wear."

national partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

We will be collecting for OGHS during the month of March. Envelopes are in the pews and more information will be available through videos and announcements.

Hats off to Donna Schnepf

If you don't enter the church by the back door or walk through the lower level, you're missing some great bulletin boards. All winter Donna Schnepf has decorated our walls with artistic, thoughtful, colorful and entertaining messages. If you see her, thank her for this contribution to our building. She provides all the ideas and materials.

Dancing Fingers!

The church office needs someone to help with data entry once a week. Usually takes just 30-45 minutes per session. If you're dexterous at keystroking, or just eager to help, please contact Victoria in the church office.

Neighbors helping Neighbors

The Mission Board has started a new program entitled "Neighbors helping Neighbors". If you or someone you know needs help with small jobs, shopping, lawn care, getting to doctor appointments, etc. and have no one to help them, please let a member of the Mission Board know. If it is a larger job such as painting, light construction, we will need to set a date and get the proper help lined up.

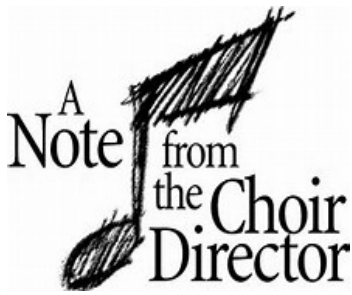
Mission Board members: Patty Gruber, Nancy Garber, Dave Murphey, Theresa Gleason, Louise Wepfer, Beth Keithly and Shirley Sollman



WOMENS FELLOWSHIP

POCKET PRAYER QUILTS is the Women's Fellowship activity for March. Can you machine stitch a straight(ish) line, use a safety pin, or cut an outlined cross? These are the only skills needed for this simple project. We will be sharing these Pocket Prayer Quilts on Easter Sunday.

We'll need lots so join us on Thursday, **March 8 in Fellowship Hall** to assemble these special spiritual gifts to share. Refreshments, too. All are welcome. Questions? Contact Kris Ayers 637.8762



The Music Department has Easter in its sights! The Choir is working on anthems for Holy week--a reprise of "The Upper Room" for Maundy Thursday, a Jazz Hosanna on Palm Sunday, and some wonderful celebratory Easter music that incorporates bells, trumpets and more! **The bells will be playing March 11.**

We just finished up the last Sunday in Black History month and the choir sang a rousing Black spiritual called "Calvary". I've been using the keyboard (synthesizer) lately for playing the introit and have been getting such lovely complements from you all--thank you for the encouragement!

Have a blessed and penitent Lent!
Patricia Kerr
Music Director

MISSION NEWS

On behalf of your Mission Board, I delivered 260 pair of socks, one pair of gloves and three bras to Degage Ministries in Grand Rapids.

Marge Palmerlee Executive Director wrote: "Thank you so much for the practical way you shared with those we serve. Warm socks are always appreciated! I'll make sure it is noted that this donation came from your church. "

On behalf of your Mission Board thank you all for your contributions.

-Shirley Sollman

On Saturday, February 17th the High School Youth got together for a day of Service and Learning. The first order of business was picking up Food items, Personal Care Items and pop cans to support the Food and Personal Care Pantries of We Care. Thanks to all of you who helped out. We collected over 125 items of food, over 50 Personal Care items and \$175 in pop and beer cans. It was a very successful effort and the High School students would like to thank the church for their strong support.

After this, it was on to the educational part of the day. The first stop was the "Out Center" in Benton Harbor. The Out Center provides resources and programs for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual individuals. We were met by a very engaging counselor who spoke about the different programs that the center offered. The students learned a lot about the day to day stresses that these individuals experience.

The next stop was the Southwest Michigan Islamic Center where the Imam spoke to us for an hour about the Muslim faith. He did a great job describing the basic concepts of Islam and the relationship between the Muslim faith and Christianity. It was a very interesting hour.

Then the fun part of the day began. First, bowling and pizza, and then back to the church for activities and sleepover.

On Sunday after church, the high school youth presented a murder mystery entitled "Murder at McDonalds". A special thank you to the parents who provided soup and salad for the meal. Also, a special thank you to Karen Drake for volunteering to be our murder victim. And finally, a thank you to the congregation for supporting the murder mystery by donating \$380 towards the Food and Personal Care Pantries.

Congratulations to Camborley Gleason and Joan Gruber for being our prize winners of the coveted "Murder Mystery" Tee Shirts for solving the case.

-Rick Olsen

A Changing Sign for Changing Times

The Lenten Offering this year goes to help underwrite installation of a new electronic sign on Phoenix Street! The Trustees have approved the project, plans are being coordinated with the city, and we already have received special funding designated for the new sign!

But why do we need a new sign? The short answer is: Weather and Time. Both negatively impact the changing of messages.

Take weather. Seasons change. Rain, snow and winds blow. Heat and cold take their toll. Locks freeze, hinges wear and fail, open plexiglass panels catch gusts when changing the letters, thereby banging heads, smashing fingers, chilling initiative and inflaming tempers! Many times inclement weather simply means new messages don't get posted.

Time becomes a double-edged sword - impacting both the ease of changing messages and the speed between message changes. First Congregational is an active church. We have ongoing weekly events such as Sunday Worship, M-W-F Food Pantry, and Thursday night suppers in Winter. But we also host a variety of other activities: special worship events such as Ash Wednesday and Good Friday services during Lent, Scouts and scouting events like the recent Pinewood Derby, Youth Lock-Ins, AAUW's book sale, Garden Club events, the Holiday Bazaar and annual Church rummage sales, ecumenical interchurch Worship events, and of course weddings and funerals. Many of these frequently occur on the same day, or sometimes arrive with short lead times. Often there's not enough time to quickly create, post and change many important time-sensitive messages manually, letter by letter. Especially in bad weather.

Meanwhile, the success of our ministries and breadth of our activities create the need for a variety of vital new messages! Imagine the possibilities. Imagine for a moment you cre-

ate a weekly Sunday Worship message once, and then post, remove and re-post it again... at the push of a button. Imagine you create a series of special event messages days or weeks in advance when your schedule is slow, and store them on computer until needed for posting. Imagine using color or graphics to increase the impact of your message. Imagine being able to change messages in inclement weather without having to venture out into it! Finally, imagine making all these possibilities come true through your generosity this Lenten season.



The new sign will help us better communicate with our South Haven and surrounding community. We are currently reviewing legal, technical and aesthetic requirements with the city. Results will help us finalize functional and budg-

etary parameters so we can send specifications out for bid. We hope to do so soon! Preliminary estimates currently range between \$8,500 - \$14,000 depending upon final specifications.

Our Lenten offering runs from Sunday February 18th through Good Friday March 30th. Special offering envelopes are available in each pew.

-Jeff Reber, member of Trustees



Please come help!

March 3-9

Contacts

Mike Nelson 214-6846

Bob Linderman 214-2550

ADOPT-A-DAY

Have you seen the new display for this on the north bulletin board in the Narthex? The Board of Trustees started this project about five years ago to help defray the rising costs of the utilities of the church.

How does it work? Pick a day, any day, and write on the calendar what you are celebrating or remembering. Besides writing on the calendar there are cards to fill out that are attached to the calendar. Fill one out and place it in the offering plate with your check/cash.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MARCH 2018						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Download and print calendars from www.calendarplate.com



Easter Flowers

The flowers at Easter add a richness to our worship that is very special. You are invited to place a flower (lily, tulips, hyacinth) in honor or in memory of someone. A minimum donation of \$15 is requested. Your gift over and above that will go to help add additional flowers, and decorations for our Easter Worship. Extra forms are available in the Narthex.



Order Form

This year for Easter you may order a specific plant(s) that will adorn our altar for Easter morning. After the Easter morning worship service please take the plant that you ordered home to enjoy. Deadline for placing your order is **Sunday, March 25th**.

Please complete this form and return it to the church office with your check made payable to the church. Each plant costs \$15.

_____ I will take my plant home.

_____ I will leave my plant at church.

The plant is in memory / honor of: *(please circle which one)*

NAME: _____

_____ Easter Lily

_____ Tulip

_____ Hyacinth

The plant is in memory / honor of: *(please circle which one)*

NAME: _____

_____ Easter Lily

_____ Tulip

_____ Hyacinth

Your name, which will appear in the bulletin Easter morning.

Looking at March

Lay Assistant

4– Susan Murphey
11– Ted Guimond
18– Theresa Gleason
25– Jeffrey Dick

Acolytes

4– Lauryn Daugherty
 Sydney Daugherty
11– Kitty Brennen
 Chloe McNicholas
18– Erin Bos
 Kyle Bos
25– Ben Meyer
 Jake Meyer

Ushers

Nursery

Hospitality

4– Aaron & Jane Strebeck
11– Scott & Ann Raue
18– the Mission Board
25– Need volunteer

Financial Counters

4– Chris Valentine
 Wes Stephens
11– Aaron Strebeck
 Dave Daugherty
18– Patty Brennen
 Marcia Claggett
25– Ted Guimond
 Terry McGarr

Birthdays

03/06 Glenn Pietenpol
03/07 Tom Barczak
03/13 Terri Wakild
03/14 Doyle Bingham
03/14 Gabriel Saucedo
03/17 Dea Bishop
03/18 Wes Stephens
03/19 Len Walter
03/20 Donna Beauchamp
03/21 Jocelyn Saucedo
03/24 Tom Ruesink
03/25 Rick Siler
03/28 Nancy Asche
03/28 Ted Guimond
03/29 Madison Nelson
03/31 Millicent Huminsky



Anniversaries

03/03 Jeff & Denise Muck
03/18 Tony & Holly Cochran–25 years
03/22 Dick & Gail Brodhagen
03/22 Deryck & Kim Gruber–15 years
03/23 Ed Withey & Louise Wepfer



Below is a letter that was sent to Dave Murphey, our Moderator:

February 12, 2018

Dear Mr. Murphey:

From time to time, churches in our regional Associations need assistance from other UCC churches. In particular, when a church is in the search and call process, securing a “neutral pulpit” is necessary in order to more personally interact with a finalist for the pastoral position. First Congregational has gone above and beyond the call of duty in offering to host a neutral pulpit candidate twice in four months. Please know how much I, and the churches of the Southwest Association, appreciate First Congregational playing such a vital role. I am glad for this significant way that you support the work of the wider church.

I also deeply appreciate Pastor Jeffrey’s willingness to include a potential colleague in the planning for the neutral pulpit service of worship. He has “walked the extra mile” when it would have been far simpler to make all of the arrangements by himself. First is fortunate to have such a professional at the helm.

If there is any way that I can be helpful to the mission and ministry of First Congregational Church in South Haven, please do not hesitate to call on me.

With you on the journey,
Campbell Lovett
Conference Minister



Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ

University of Michigan Runners

They are coming back! For many years we have hosted some 60 to 70 runners from the University of Michigan who arrive here early on a Sunday morning (often around 5 a.m.) They spend Saturday into Sunday running across the state. Last year they raised over \$20,000 for Special Olympics.

While they don’t expect anything more than clean bathrooms and a place to sleep for a couple of hours, we have always provided a continental breakfast.

If you are willing to help by donating orange juice, pastries, granola bars or fruit, let Pastor Dick know. If you would like to help welcome them here at 5 a.m., a couple of volunteers would be great.