

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

South Haven, MI

January 2019

## Star Words

I recently came across an interesting Epiphany tradition that a number of churches have been using. It is called Star Words. Each year, on Epiphany Sunday, each worshiper randomly selects a star shaped piece of paper upon which a word has been written. This becomes the person's "Star Word" for the year. Worshipers are encouraged to resist the temptation to dig around for a "better" word or to swap their word with someone else, receiving their star word as a serendipitous gift from God.

On Epiphany Sunday, you will receive a Star Word. If you can't attend that service and would like a word, let me know and we will get one to you.

*Do note the following:*

*\*You may find it is a word that fits you perfectly. If so, celebrate that, and see how you can be more intentional about sharing your gift with the world.*

*\*You may find it is a word that offers you the encouragement or challenge you need. If so, receive that gift and let it shape you in the days, weeks, and months ahead.*

*\*You may find yourself resisting the word or even wanting to reject the word. If that is the case, I encourage you to sit with it for a while, explore the source of your resistance, and be open to what this word may have to teach you.*

Live with your word, reflect upon it, journal about it, talk about it with others, share your thoughts with me. Discover how this Star Word may shine its light on you and on your path throughout this coming year.

This new tradition reminded me of a poem by Ann Weems, called Star-Giving. Let these words be my prayer for you in this season of Christmas and Epiphany.

Jeffrey Dick, Pastor

## Star-Giving by Ann Weems from Kneeling in Bethlehem

What I'd really like to give you for  
Christmas is a star. . . .  
Brilliance in a package,  
something you could keep in the pocket of  
your jeans  
or in the pocket of your being.  
Something to take out in times of darkness,  
something that would never snuff out  
or tarnish,  
something you could hold in your hand,  
something for wonderment,  
something for pondering,  
something that would remind you of  
what Christmas has always meant:  
God's Advent Light into the darkness  
of this world.  
But stars are only God's for giving,  
and I must be content to give you words  
and wishes and  
packages without stars.  
But I can wish you life  
as radiant as the Star  
that announced the Christ Child's coming,  
and as filled with awe as the shepherds  
who stood  
beneath its light.  
And I can pass on to you the love  
that has been given to me,  
ignited countless times by others  
who have knelt in Bethlehem's light.  
Perhaps, if you ask, God will give  
you a star.

*Prayers for continued healing of our church family:*

Jean Stein  
Bill Wood  
Steve Siler  
Joy Church  
Glenn Pietenpol  
Shelly Cowles  
Karl Barden, Watervliet  
Patty Gruber  
Jackie Protheroe—mother of  
Peggy McClendon  
Hilda Sinclair, mother of  
Laura Bos



***Grieving***

Family of Marian Brennen,  
mother of Bill Brennen

**Martin Luther King, Jr. -  
Day of Community Service**

**Monday - January 21st - 10 am to noon  
LC Mohr High School**

A day of community service where individuals and groups will come and help to package a ton of rice and beans for area food pantries. A lunch will follow in the cafeteria. Contact Pastor Dick if you would like to help. Boy Scouts from Troop 188 will be helping with the collection of canned goods and delivering the rice.



As a part of the day of service, people are invited to donate canned goods for the We Care Pantries. Even if you can't come and work, help stock the food pantry with your donation this day.



## JANUARY WORSHIP

### January 6th—Epiphany Sunday

We will explore the story of the Magi as found in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 2. We will sing the Christmas Carol, “We Three Kings”.

On this first Sunday of the new year, we will also celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

### January 13th

The Baptism of Jesus as found in Luke 3:15-17,21-22

### January 20th

The Wedding at Cana of Galilee and turning water into wine is our focus this morning. This story is found in John 2:1-11.

### January 27th

Jesus begins his ministry with a proclamation in the temple. What is he saying? Find the story in Luke 4:14-21.

## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS HELPERS

Many individuals have made our Advent and Christmas here at First Congregational Church meaningful and blessed.

**Decorations:** The many members of the church who decorated the church, it looks wonderful as always. Larry and Barb Wittkop decorated the lounge and assisted the Diaconate with the Sanctuary. Nancy Daugherty oversaw the decorations in Fellowship Hall. Dave Murphey helped hang the wreath in Fellowship Hall. The 9 foot Christmas Tree was gift a from Randy and Karen Morey and

Phil Rood decorated it. Many people made the stars hanging in the sanctuary - Ted Guimond and Brandon Dick hung them. Our special Christmas Eve Decorations were created by Phil Rood.

**Advent Worship:** We had a different format for worship in Advent and many of our young people provided leadership for the service, including many in the Confirmation Group. Participants included: Liam Cochran, Sophia Cochran, Jasmine Dick, Joshua Dick, Kyle Bos, Erin Bos, Camborley Gleason, Katherine Brennen, Filimon Saucedo, Chloe McNicholas and Faith Spies.

**Christmas Eve** was a joyous and festive occasion. Worship included many out of town people visiting their families and seeing whole pews filled with one family is always such a joy. Helping were Ben Meyer, Jake Meyer, Elian Garcia and Yamil Garcia.



Financial gifts to the church to support its ministry and missions were amazing this Christmas. Gifts to the Christmas Fund (formerly known as Veterans of the Cross) totaled \$ 900. These funds are used to support retired pastors, many who served small churches and have small pensions. Some funds are used in emergency situations for these former church workers.

The Christmas offering this year was designated to be split between our own Food Pantry, the Diaconate Discretionary Fund and the General Fund (which provides the building and utilities for the Pantry). We received \$ 1,069. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

## Adult Groups Forming

A book group led by Art Ayers will start in January. They will be reading the book, *Them* by Ben Sasse. The full title is *Them: Why We Hate Each Other and How to Heal*. Mr. Sasse is a senator from Nebraska. If you are interested in being a part of this group, contact Art or the church office.

Other groups are being planned for February and March. Stay tuned.

## Women's Breakfast returns to Thursdays

Beginning this week our breakfast at Six Chicks, 8:30 a.m., returns to Thursdays each week. All women are welcome.



### Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup>

beginning at 6:30 p.m. This is for all ages, although young children should be accompanied by an adult. Pastor Dick has some new board games he is looking forward to playing. You are welcome to bring a game to play, either a board game or card game. Coffee and hot chocolate will be available. Bring a snack to share.

Another game night will be held on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

## ODDS N' ENDS

### Christmas card

We received a Christmas card in the office that was to be shared with you all.

*Dear Church family,*

All is well in North Carolina! We hope you all enjoy a healthy and happy holiday season.

-Ed and Mona Eggers

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**Congratulations** to Iza Graham whose graduated. She plans to work until she applies for Law School.

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**Thank you** to everyone who took part in the recent Smoked Turkey Dinner. The donation will help many people being served by the food pantry.

We appreciate your help!

-John & Sue Gillett

### LOOKING AHEAD.....

February 3rd - Communion Sunday  
Mark 1:29-39

February 10th - Scout Sunday  
Mark 9—the Transfiguration

# Looking at January

## Lay Assistant

6– Don Kitchin  
13– Larry Wittkop  
20– Jeff Reber  
27– Ted Guimond

## Acolytes

6– Camborley Gleason  
13– Kitty Brennen  
    Chloe McNicholas  
20– Erin Bos  
    Kyle Bos  
27– Ben Meyer  
    Jake Meyer

## Ushers

6– Dave & Susan Murphey  
    Scott & Ann Raue  
13– Don & Elaine Kitchin  
20– Don & Elaine Kitchin  
27– Dave & Susan Murphey  
    Scott & Ann Raue

## Nursery

6– Linda Olsen  
    Chloe McNicholas  
13– Elaine Stephens  
    William Brennen  
20– Virginia and Sam Guzman  
27– Elaine Kitchin  
    Yamil Garcia

## Financial Counters

6– Chris Valentine  
    Dave Daugherty  
13– Patty Brennen  
    Terry McGarr  
20– Aaron Strebeck  
    Doug Gruber  
27– Ted Guimond  
    Marcia Claggett

## Birthdays

01/03 Carey Frost  
01/04 Theresa Gleason  
01/05 Caroline Meyer  
01/07 David Daugherty  
01/08 Kris Ayers  
01/08 Cathy Siler  
01/12 Alice Warfield  
01/21 Philip Rood  
01/22 Terry Tatsch  
01/22 Joseph Nelson  
01/23 Ed Bierhalter  
01/23 Tony Martorano  
01/28 Megan Larson



## Anniversaries

01/04 Art & Kris Ayers, 45th  
01/27 Scott & Ann Raue

**Hospitality** after worship changed in the last few months of 2018. Each board/group has agreed to provide hospitality on a scheduled Sunday **UNLESS** individuals would like to step in and choose it.

The sign up sheet is in the Narthex and will have two spots for each Sunday. The **FIRST** is for anyone wishing to provide the hospitality and the **SECOND** will be a chosen board/group.

So, go check it out. For now this is how January looks:

6– Men's Breakfast group  
13– Music board  
20– Christian Ed. board  
27– Trustees board