

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

*South Haven, MI*

January 2020

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

*Margaret Guimond and Keri McGarr* for the outdoor lights around the front door. Those, and the angel add a festive touch.

*Phil Rood* for putting up the tree and decorating it in Fellowship Hall.

*Nancy Daugherty* for her expertise with decorations to fit our "Let Heaven and Nature Sing" advent theme.



Special thanks to *Adam Peterson and Patricia Kerr, and our choir* for leading us in our special Heaven and Nature song that we featured throughout Advent and Christmas. Something different, and the song added much to our worship.

**Advent Worship:** We had a different format for worship in Advent and many of our young people provided leadership for the service.

Special thanks to our Living Advent Wreath participants: *Camborley Gleason, Yamil Garcia, Chloe McNicholas, Katherine Brennen, Maralmaa Dugar, Sophia Cochran, and Theresa Gleason.*

The *Hand Bells* played during Advent and added to our celebration of joy with their ringing. Many thanks to *Ann Habicht* for arranging the music and leading this group.

**Christmas Eve** saw a number of guest musicians helping with our service. These included: *Nathan Morey, Chloe McNicholas, Liam Cochran, Nancy Nelson and Adam Peterson.* They brought great joy to the service.

The **Sunday after Christmas**, *Barb Musgrove and Patricia Kerr* offered our special music.

On **Epiphany Sunday**, we will have a guest organist - many thanks to *Barb King.*

*Prayers for continued healing of our church family:*

Irene Wiens  
Rick Olsen  
Rick Siler  
Steve Siler

*Grieving*

Family of Shirlee (Tromotola) Clark

Family of Richard Brodhagen



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

Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>. 11:30 to 1 pm  
LC Mohr High School

This yearly event is taking a new form this year. Instead of packing rice, we will be gathering products for the Personal Care Pantry - with a special focus on laundry soap. There will be youth speakers and music. A special part of the event is eating lunch together, coming together as a community. This fits in so well with the theme of our worship on the 19<sup>th</sup> of Christian unity.



All are welcome to this free event.

**LOOKING AHEAD.....**

February 2nd - Communion Sunday

February 9th - Scout Sunday



## JANUARY WORSHIP

### January 5<sup>th</sup>—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”.

### January 12<sup>th</sup>—Baptism of Jesus Matthew 3:13-17

Hearing the story of Jesus’ baptism is a time to remember our own baptism and to renew our baptismal vows.

### January 19<sup>th</sup>—Christian Unity - 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Paul’s letter to the early church addresses some of the divisions in the early church. In 2020, we can still see those divisions at work. What is the church called to in this day? How important is unity in Christ? A good conversation to have as we gather on the weekend that celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr’s life.

### January 26<sup>th</sup>—Micah 6:1-8 is our focus. Here is verse 8:

*“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”*

This verse was Pastor Dick’s father-in-laws favorite scripture verse. In this new year, how will we live into life the words of the prophet?

**Hand Bells** will start rehearsing after church on January 5th. Perhaps we’ll have something prepared for worship early in February.

Please let Ann Habicht know if you ARE available to participate.



The Church office has received inquiries about how to set up the automatic transfer of pledges & donations into the Church bank account on a regularly scheduled basis. Such transfers can be made from a checking, savings or investment account. The process is easy to set up and is especially convenient for those members who head South each Winter.



If you’re interested in learning more about this procedure contact Jeff Reber. Call 630-469-3615 or Email [bubbareba9@gmail.com](mailto:bubbareba9@gmail.com) and he’ll be happy to walk you through the simple steps involved.

**Our thanks to the following** for their contribution to our Church School leadership:

Margaret Guimond, Keri McGarr, Kris Ayers and Theresa Gleason for teaching our young Church School classes this fall.

Holly Cochran and Rick Olsen shared in leading and teaching the Young Adult Class.

We are always looking for others to be involved in this ministry. If you want more information contact Pastor Dick.

## Looking Ahead New Book Groups Starting

There are a couple of interesting books being considered. One is by Jim Wallis, [Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus](#). The other is [The Book of Joy](#) by the Dali Lama and Desmond Tutu. If you are interested in either of these, let the church office or Pastor Dick know.

**Lent:** Yes it is far off, but comes quickly. During Lent we will be offering some conversations regarding making plans while growing older. This will include everything from Advance Directives to funeral plans. Watch for more details to come.

## From the Pastor's Desk



In December, two very dear women died. Iona Krogel and Donna Mae Harper. Both of these women were a part of the group who led worship for many years at Countryside Nursing Home. I was honored to officiate at both of their services in early December. That they died days apart was unusual and brought a bit of a chill to myself. Both had spent many years in long term care facilities.

As I have remembered them, I was reminded of how important their ministry to those in nursing homes and care facilities was. Iona was one to visit at every care facility in our area. She enjoyed sitting and visiting with the residents. She brought a special presence and gift to each of them.

Donna loved to play the piano and sing and these facilities and did so often. From birthday parties to worship, from social events to recognition events, Donna was there. She played for Christmas Eve worship services that we offered at the Warren Center for a number of years. One year, when Christmas was on a Sunday, we went out to Countryside and sang some Christmas Carols and read the Christmas Story, and Donna came along.

Donna was always up for playing at these services, saw it as a ministry. It was also a great joy to her to play and to sing. Donna also sang in our church choir for **over 50 years!!** And loved doing so.

I shared these stories for two reasons. One, many today will not have known these women as they have not been able to attend worship here for 8 to 10 years. Second, the importance of visiting people in care facilities is an important ministry. Taking time individually or as a group to visit people there is a way of showing out love and appreciation. This past Christmas the Women's Fellowship took cookies to our friends and members in such

places. During the year, we will take flowers on a couple of Sundays. What more could we be doing? Please consider taking time to make a visit or two. If you want to know who to visit, ask me. If you want to go along with me on a visit, I would be honored to have you come along.

Your visit will be appreciated.

Blessings

Jeffrey Dick

*Postscript:* Since writing the above, we have heard more news about members who live a distance away from South Haven.

*Irene Wiens* is in Arizona and her health is failing. She has dementia, but still has good days. Her address is:

9805 W. Sandstone Dr.  
Sun City, AZ 85381

*Shirlee (Tromotola) Clark* passed away on December 22<sup>nd</sup> in Mesa, Arizona. Shirlee had been very active before going to Arizona for the winter. She was a volunteer for the Food Pantry. She took ill and was in the hospital for a short time before passing. Services will be held here in South Haven in 2020.

*Richard Brodhagen* died on Christmas Day in Florida at home. Dick has had a rough two years. His wife Gail called to inform us of his passing. A service for Dick will be held in South Haven late spring or during the summer. Gail's address is:

417 Kingsrow Lane  
DeBary, FL 32713

Do keep all of these families in your prayers.

## Good Shepherd Orphanage - Haiti

### Child Sponsorship Program

Back in November we hosted Chrispin and Kristen Gabriel and their children who work with the Good Shepherd Orphanage in Haiti.

There are two ways to support the orphanage. The first is with a one time gift of any amount of money. These gifts will be used to support food, shelter, clothing, education, medical and other living essentials for the children there. These gifts can be sent online or by mail to the addresses below. The second way is through a child sponsorship program. This is a monthly program that cost \$25 per month. Your sponsorship would mean a child receives the care, hope, and love he or she desperately needs. In addition, your child would know someone is investing in his or her future and regularly thinking about and praying for him or her.

Your monthly support of \$25, combined with the gifts of other sponsors, would help to provide a Christian education, food, housing, care from staff, medical and dental care, and other living essentials for your child.

Again, you can sign up for this online or by mail at the addresses below.

It is my hope that through our church we can sponsor a number of children and create awareness of what is going on in Haiti and make a difference in the lives of these young people. We only need to see how such support has made a difference in Chrispin's life.

#### **Here is some more information about Child Sponsorship**

How long is the sponsorship commitment? We ask that sponsors try to commit to the program for at least one year; however, we understand that anyone can have unexpected financial trouble or other life challenges and may need to cancel at any time.

Letters: Children at the orphanage love to receive letters, and sponsors are encouraged, but not obligated, to write to their child a few times a year.

Keep your letters simple. Write about things your sponsored child will understand, such as family, pets, hobbies, and activities. Encourage your child's learning activities and relationship with Jesus Christ.

Emphasize things you have in common, such as sports, music, or a favorite school subject. If possible, get your own child/children involved in the correspondences.

Print large and clear. Avoid using cursive. Remember, English is not your child's first language. Send postcards of where you live and places you have visited. Postcards are fun and educational for your sponsored child.

Flat paper items are the only things we can forward to your sponsored child in a postcard size envelope. Bookmarks, fun stickers, pages from coloring books, photos, and postcards are all acceptable.

The children love your letters, and receiving communication from you lets them know that someone else cares about their future and well-being. However, please keep in mind that sponsorship is not a pen pal program. You will be mailed updates periodically, including artwork, letters, and photo updates as your child develops into who God called him or her to be.

*(continued next page)*

Send pictures of yourself and your family. Dress standards may be different in your child's culture, so please send pictures where everyone is dressed modestly. These photographs will become prized possessions.

**USA Contact**

The Good Shepherd Orphanage  
P.O. Box 5051  
Kingsport, Tennessee, 37663

**Email**

**Haiti Contact**

Orphelinat Le Bon Berger  
2 Rue Terminale  
Cotes Plages 18  
Carrefour, PAP, Haiti

Website: <https://www.gsohaiti.org/>

Sign up on their website for their newsletter

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**THE CHRISTMAS FUND**  
for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

Gifts to the Christmas Fund (formerly known as Veterans of the Cross) totaled \$ 395. 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 Eve 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 a total of \$ 2,632. What a special blessing!

Thank you to everyone who contributed.

# Looking at January

## Lay Assistant

5—Celeste Wheeler  
12—Art Ayers  
19—Theresa Gleason  
26—Don Kitchin

## Usher Captains

Susan Murphey and Ann Raue

## Nursery

5—Kris & Art Ayers  
12—Virginia Cooper and  
Samantha Guzman  
19—Elena Garcia  
26—Donna Saucedo

## Hospitality

5—Elaine & Don Kitchin  
12—Karen Morey  
19—Keyana Dick  
Lynn Dick  
26—

## Financial Counters

5—Dave Daugherty  
Ted Guimond  
12—Marcia Claggett  
Terry McGarr  
19—Doug Gruber  
Ken McNicholas  
26—Jeff Reber  
Scott Raue

## 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 Tony Martorano  
01/27 Bonnie Deke  
01/28 Megan Larson



## Anniversaries

01/04 Art & Kris Ayers  
01/27 Scott & Ann Raue



*You two quit it or I'm turning  
this caravan right around!*