

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

South Haven, MI

December 2021

ADVENT 2021

The pandemic has laid bare, and widened, economic disparity locally and globally. As we enter the Advent season, how can our church become a house where the Holy will be born anew—offering respite, sustenance and care, opening the doors ever wider to those seeking shelter from the onslaught of life?

No one church can do it all, but each can do something. As we study the biblical prophets that call us to care for our neighbors and “make room in the inn,” the lonely and frightened spaces within us are filled with the light of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

This is our theme for Advent in 2021. How to make room for those who need it most. Here is a brief look at worship during Advent. Diane and Lisa Van Deurzen-Otey will be leading our music each Sunday during Advent and Christmas Eve. They have lined up many other musicians to be a part of the services plus our Adult Choir will join us!

Advent 2—December 5th **“A Place at the table for Peace”**

Communion will be celebrated.
Scriptures: Baruch 5: 1-5 and
 Philippians 1:3-11
Christmas Carols: Hark the Herald Angels
Sing and It Came Upon the Midnight Clear
Christmas Doxology sung to the tune
 of O Christmas Tree (each week)
Musical Performers: Adam Peterson,
 Louise Wepfer and the Chancel Choir
Preaching: Jeffrey Dick

Advent 4—December 19th **“A Room with a View of Love”**

Scriptures: Micah 5:2-5 and
 Luke 1: 46-55
Christmas Carols: Angels We Have Heard
 On High and O Come, All Ye Faithful
Christmas Doxology sung to the tune
 of O Christmas Tree (each week)
Musical Performers: Hand Bell Choir and
 Chancel Choir
Preaching: Michael Tupper

Advent 3—December 12th **“How Much is Enough? Joy”**

Scriptures: Isaiah 12: 2-6 and
 Luke 3: 7-18
Christmas Carols: Joy to the World and
 What Child is This?
Christmas Doxology sung to the tune
 of O Christmas Tree (each week)
Musical Performers: Adam Peterson,
 Nancy Nelson and Chancel Choir
Preaching: Jeffrey Dick



Prayers for continued healing of our church family:

Paul Rood
Joan Gruber
Novella Barden
Margaret Guimond
Joy Church

Bonnie Deke
Dave Wellever
Chip Harris
Sharon McNicholas
Elsie Hoffman



Fellowship, Learning and Prayers

Adult Class: Meets on Wednesday evenings. These are held in person in the lounge and on Zoom. They are from 7 to 8 pm and we study the text for the coming Sunday. Classes will be held on December 1, 8 and 15. Then we will take a break until Jan 5th. All are welcome.

Prayer Group: This group meets every Tuesdays by Zoom at 1:30 pm. We have an Advent reading each Tuesday and a time for prayer and reflection. The Zoom link will be in the weekly email.

Thursday Night Suppers: Are starting back up - they will be offered as a drive in and pick up dinner again this year due to the pandemic. Dinner is provided at 6 p.m. Contact Ted Guimond if you want to help.

The Fabulous Smoked Turkey Dinner will NOT be held this year. The pandemic just does not make sense to have 100 people in Fellowship Hall. Perhaps in 2022.

Giving Opportunities During Advent and Christmas

Christmas Fund - Veterans of the Cross - this special offering is collected by the Mission Board and is given to the United Church of Christ. One of the special aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds do not support programs, make grants to institutions, or fund advocacy programs, but rather, they provide direct financial assistance to individual retired UCC clergy and lay employees. This offering is collected through December 19th.

"Christmas" offering - Our Christmas Offering will be received this year to benefit our mission and ministry with those experiencing need. The offering will be split between the Diaconate Discretionary Fund and the Church General Fund.

EARLY RUMMAGE SPECIAL

We have recently acquired some very nice furniture and glassware available for purchase in the basement across from the ladies room. If you are interested in these things, you may tag them, give your donation to Kris Ayers or Sue Murphey, then make your own arrangements to move them.

Posted pictures of items that are too large to bring to the church, are located on the West Sunday School room door in the lower level.

NO OTHER RUMMAGE ACCEPTED AT THIS TIME!

December 24th: Christmas Eve

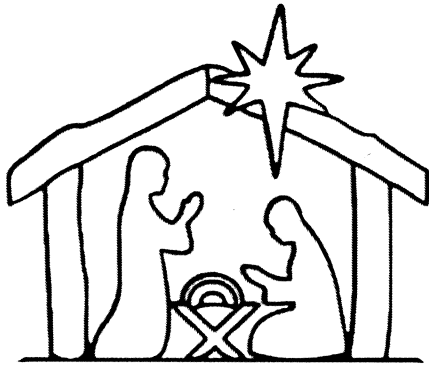
**Special Christmas Music begins at 6:30 p.m.
Worship Begins at 7 pm**

Our traditional Christmas Eve service will include the singing of all four verses of Silent Night, Holy Night and the lighting of individual candles.

There will be a special time for children, the reading of the Christmas Story and the singing of many Christmas Carols.

Special Christmas music will begin at 6:30 featuring many different musicians. Watch for more information to be announced.

This service is for people of all ages. It will be in person and live on Facebook. Do know you are most welcomed here.



A wonderful group of folks of all ages helped to decorate the church on Sunday, November 28th—great job everyone!

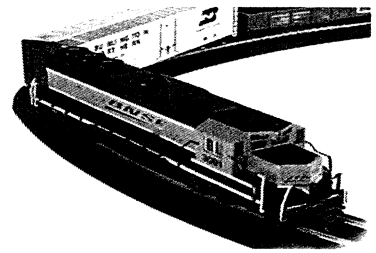
Special thanks to **Kyle Bos and Doug Gruber** for opening the barn doors (that **Phil Rood** made) during the sermon on First Sunday of Advent.

We continue to be blessed by wonderful music. On the first Sunday in Advent Celeste Gruber played clarinet and Alex Davis played violin.

On November 21st we had the **Handbell Choir** under the direction of **Ann Habicht, with Dea Bishop and Janice Peterson**, offered a song for us. Many, Many, Thanks.

Congratulations to **Alex Davis** for passing his State Nursing Boards. And many thanks for playing violin in worship for us.

Christmas Train Display



We Care along with Tom Feeney and Pastor Dick, present a Train Display that will feature a Lego Train Group, the Holland Modular Train Club and many others. This will be held on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sundays throughout December.

This is a free event for all. It is being held in the basement of City Hall. There will also be Christmas Trees decorated by children and area groups to be auctioned off. Donations will go to We Care.

OFFICE NOTES

2022 Offering envelopes

Packets will be ordered by December 10th. If you would like one please let the church office know. Those that marked it on their pledge card do not need to respond, unless you want to double check.

Year end gifts to the church need to be received by December 31st, NOON. Donations have to be deposited in the bank on the 31st to be included on your 2021 statement.

Statements will be mailed out in January. Thank you for your support of the ministry of FCC.

The church **office will be closed** December 24th and 31st. There will be limited office hours between December 27-30.

REMINDER the deadline for the January newsletter will be December 15th.

Christmas Flower Fund



This year for Christmas we are offering you the opportunity to order a poinsettia that will be used for adorning our Sanctuary during this Advent season. After the Christmas Eve service you are encouraged to take your poinsettia home with you or share it with someone. Please let us know on the form if you will be doing that.

You may order a flower for a donation of \$15 /each, or more, which can be in memory or in honor of someone. A list of donators will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

To make a donation, fill out this form and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office by **December 19th**.
Thank you.

I wish to give \$ _____ in memory/honor of
(circle one)

I wish to give \$ _____ in memory/honor of
(circle one)

I wish to give \$ _____ in memory/honor of
(circle one)

Signature

Note: Whatever name(s) that appear for the signature is what will be printed.

I will be taking my poinsettia home with me.

Pulpit Committee report

We wanted to report that we received some feedback from our UCC Conference search and call ministry, and we have more work to do before our profile is approved and submitted.

Updates will come as we have them.

CHURCH HISTORY UPDATE

Loose photos and memorabilia have finally found a home. Albums are labeled in a creative order. Through the past few years, many of you have helped label and date some of these things. These remain works in progress so if you are browsing through them (which you should!) and have info you can add, please do. There is a box with post-its and pens on the shelf. You can also drop off pictures, articles, etc. in this box. PLEASE do your best to date and name these before dropping them off, using the post-its.

Dec. 5, duplicates, including Creative Playtime, will be available in the narthex for anyone who wants them.

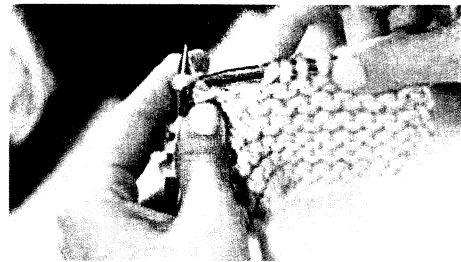


Birthdays

12/01 Tony Cochran
12/03 Scott Raue
12/04 Zach Hanner
12/06 Carolyn Stokes
12/08 Margaret Guimond
12/09 James O'Niel
Joseph O'Niel
12/15 Nancy Daugherty
12/17 Sue Gillett
Faith Spies
12/27 Donnell Thomas
Jason Turner
12/28 Adam Peterson
12/30 Bob Straits

Anniversaries

12/09 Diane & Lisa Van Deurzen-Otey
12/22 Matt & Tammy Larson
12/17 Robert & Theresa Gleason
12/30 Don & Elaine Kitchin



Thanks for the donation of prayer shawls that are given for comfort. They have also been given to mothers of new born babies. Joan Gruber was able to present Rachel one earlier this year. Cheryl Gauntlett presented one to Sydney, her granddaughter, as well.

Some recipients have asked the names of the specific persons name of who knitted the shawl. If you don't mind sharing, please include your name, or they can remain anonymous.