
January Newsletter

1 message

First Congregational Church <church@uccsouthhaven.com>
To: Susan Murphey <susan.murphey@gmail.com>

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JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER**January 3rd – 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”.

Pastor Mike Tupper will be preaching.

Advent and Christmas Helpers

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

Thank you to all who wrote a **devotional piece**, and those who shared a story along with a picture of their personal **nativity** at home.

Candle Lighters: Veryn Winter, Jocelyn Saucedo, Anthony

Prayer Group – meets by Zoom on Tuesday at 1:30 pm. You are welcome to attend and or send prayer joys and concerns to the church office.

Adult Bible Class will resume on Wednesday, January 6th at 7 pm. We will be looking at the Book of Psalms each week,. The first Psalm is # 72. Contact Pastor Dick or the church office to join this weekly study.

Music: Lane Alsup, Choral groups with Janice Peterson, Adam Peterson, Marcia Claggett, Lane Alsup and Rick Olsen.

Our Hand Bell choir Ann Habicht, Cecilia Wondergem, Sue Murphey and Mary Pietenpol.

Guests musicians from Arizona, Lisa and Diane Van Deurzen-Otey.

Barb King on the organ and each Sunday Lane Alsup on piano and Adam Peterson singing for us. This music has ministered to us and enriched this season.

Decorations: Diaconate members all helped to decorate the sanctuary. Special thanks to Barb and Larry Wittkop, along with their grandsons Jacob and Ben Meyer, who set up the Christmas Tree in the lounge.

Thank you to Art Ayers and Celeste Wheeler for staffing worship each Sunday. Celeste also made sure the pew candelabras were put up.

Margaret Guimond and Keri McGarr for the outside lights.

Diane Ritchie assembling the luminaries and candles for Advent wreath.

Nancy Daugherty for ordering and arranging the poinsettias.

Phil Rood – for putting up the Christmas tree in fellowship hall

Sound and video: Robert and Theresa Gleason each week and Christmas Eve. Mike and Joe Nelson on the Sunday before Christmas and recording during the week.

Christmas Eve – music and readers

Readers: Carly McGarr, Riana Rowles, Joe Nelson, Madi Nelson, and Jacquelyn Bennett (*holding her daughter Alice*)

ATTEND ONE ATTEND BOTH

Book Study Small Group on Sundays begins Jan. 10th on Zoom

Art Ayers extends an invitation to attend a Zoom book study, set to begin on Sunday, January 10th, at 3pm. The book is entitled *Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity* (2012), and the authors are Rev. David M. Felton and Rev. Jeff Procter-Murphy. It's a book for those who are looking for a faith conversation that encourages questions and open dialogue.

“Many feel like there’s no place in organized religion for deep thought, doubt, or questions that challenge the status quo. It’s an invitation for those who seek to go beyond the stagnant cliches of faith and pursue the questions that deepen your understanding, as you make your way through a lifelong spiritual journey...It’s about progressive Christianity”.

It will be a five or six week series ending either on February 7th or February 14th. If interested, please contact the church office, Mike Tupper, or Art Ayers so we can send you a Zoom Invite. You can order the book yourself or we can order one for you through the church.

Book Study Small Group on Mondays beginning Jan. 11 on Zoom

We will be offering for study the book “Why Religion?”, a powerful memoir by Elaine Pagels. This religious scholar offers a way to go on in the face of immeasurable loss. This Zoom class will start on Monday, January 11th from 1-2 p.m. It will be a four week series. If this is

Music: Barb Musgrove on guitar, Jessica, Claudia and Ilona Fiedorowicz on strings, Ann Habicht and a 70 piece hand bell choir (performed by the LA Metro division of the Handbell Musicians of America).

Kristina Lindemulder singing with Cecilia Wondergem playing piano.

Nancy Nelson on flute, accompanied by Lane Alsup on piano.

Lane Alsup on piano and Adam Peterson singing

The Sunday after Christmas -
Nancy Nelson on flute, Lane Alsup piano, and Adam singing the hymns.

New Series: God is Holding Your Life

Do you remember the children's song, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"? Well, that is part of our theme for the next six weeks. We will be using the Book of Psalms as our guide during this time. As we enter this new year, we had hoped for new beginnings and times of gathering together. Alas, that is still something to look forward to....but it is getting closer!

Written over a span of time from exile and isolation, to the rebuilding of community, the poetry of the Psalms will accompany us in this series. These readings will remind us that through every circumstance of life, we can trust and even give our thankful "Oh Yeah!" because God is indeed holding our lives.

Our central image during his time will be a pair of hands. We will be taking pictures and asking for photos of hands to display as a part of worship. Contact pastor Dick if you are willing to submit a photo.

Here is a look at what we will be focusing on in this series.

January 10th: Psalm 72
These lives are precious

January 17th: Psalm 139
Where can I go?

of interest to you, please contact the church office, John Gillett or Mike Tupper so we can send you a Zoom invite. You can order the book yourself or we can order one for you through the church.

Christmas Offerings

Financial gifts to the church to support its ministry and missions were amazing this Christmas.

Project Christmas Hope – we were able to support this project of helping children at Christmas with a cash donation of \$ 1500.

The Christmas Fund (formerly known as Veterans of the Cross) totaled \$ 500. 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 Diaconate Fund (to help people in need) and the General Fund (which provides the building and utilities for the Food Pantry). This offering **totaled \$ 1463!**

What a Christmas blessing. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Looking Ahead

Given the uncertainty of circumstances due to the pandemic, a number of events may or may not happen. If they do, they may be more virtual or limited. This includes a local celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr Day and Scout Sunday. As plans become available we will let you know.

MLK Day – Speaking of that, Lake Michigan College is planning a

January 24th: Psalm 62
In God alone

January 31st: Psalm 111
Whole heart hallelujah

February 7th: Psalm 114
We wait, we hope, we stay

February 14th: Psalm 50
The One is shining forth

CHRISTMAS DECORATION FUND

In loving memory of...

...Charles Stein and Allston Lawwill,
given by Jean Stein
...William and Lucille Murphey,
given by Dave & Susan
Murphey
...Robert Goodenough,
given by Dave & Susan Murphey
...our parents,
given by Tom & Karen Ruesink

In honor of...

...our sons,
given by Tom & Karen Ruesink
...our family so far away,
given by Chuck & Nancy Garber

A special donation given to the Christmas Fund was in memory of Tom Ruesink's grandparents who served in the missionary field in Turkey from the 1900's-1940's.

number of online events to celebrate that day. You can find these at their website. <https://www.lakemichigancollege.edu/community/mlk>

“Welcoming Team” Forms

Our church voted 84-5 on November 15 to approve a Welcome Statement and become Open and Affirming. The Church Council encouraged the formation of a new team to continue the work done by the ONA team.

The new team is called the “Welcoming Team.” It will help us live out the goals of the welcome statement which is to “welcome into the full life and ministry of the church, persons of every race, culture, age, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, marital status, education, and economic status”. The two co-leaders of the team will be Marcia Claggett and Joyce Hagen-McIntosh. The members of the team include: Terry McGarr, Denise Muck, Terri Wakild, Nancy Nelson, Riana Rowles, and P J Lindemann.

Our first meeting will be to Zoom together with other Southwest Association ONA church members on January 12 at 7:00. The subject we'll discuss is this: “We're Open and Affirming, now what?” Let us know if you would like to be included in this Zoom meeting.

The last few years some of us have been **knitting (or crocheting)** in church. We have made many hats and scarves for our food pantry to give to those in need. The Gillett's say they were much appreciated.

The basket of started projects is no longer in the narthex , we can still make those hats and scarves, either during in person worship or while you're on Facebook .

When you finish, drop them at the church for the food pantry.



If you need yarn call Nancy Garber for directions to our large supply.

A warm thank you to all.

"For as you do it to the least of these you do it for me."

Memorials given to the church

In memory of Doyle Bingham
Mark & Peggy McClendon

In memory of Irene Wiens
Women's Fellowship of FCC
Chuck & Nancy Garber
The John Karuschak family
Mark & Peggy McClendon

In memory of Carolyn Willobee

Jack Pardo
Tom & Karen Ruesink
Chuck & Nancy Garber
Mary Pietenpol
Harold & Sue Manning
Christine Valentine
Robert & Lynn Gabel
Cathy Siler
Nancy Asche
St. Basil School

January Birthdays

03 - Carey Frost
04 - Theresa Gleason
05 - Caroline Meyer
07 - David Daugherty
08 - Kris Ayers
Cathy Siler
12 - Alice Warfield
21 - Philip Rood
22 - Joe Nelson
Terry Tatsch
23 - Tony Martorano
27 - Bonnie Deke
28 - Megan Larson
Maia Rowles

January Anniversaries

04 - Art and Kris Ayers
27 - Scott and Ann Raue

First Congregational Church 651 Phoenix Street South Haven Michigan 49090

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