

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

South Haven, MI

January 2023

Next Family Fellowship Night will be:
January 8
at 5pm

Sarah Peterson volunteered to bring slider sandwiches as the main dish. Please bring a side dish or dessert.

Our after-dinner activity will be hearing about trips taken outside the US. Dani Veenstra has volunteered to talk about her trip to Bulgaria.

Anyone else interested in speaking about other countries they have visited are welcome to bring a story and pictures to share.



Yes, the Parsonage has sold!

The sale was finalized on December 19th. The profit from the sale of the parsonage, after paying expenses, is \$305,169.

JANUARY 16TH



Prayers for continued healing of our church family:

Rick Olsen
Nancy Garber

The Prayer Group meets every Thursday, at 1:30 p.m. in the Lounge. *Anyone is welcome to attend.*

If you would like the group themselves to pray for someone, please give Nancy Garber a call.

Names can also be added to the weekly bulletin insert, as long as we have been given permission to do so.



Be On The Look Out

We have received the final report from Lombard. The report is a cumulation of notes that were taken on a gathering held in November.

Copies will be sent sometime this week through the weekly e-mail list and mailed to some.



Happy New Year! Those words sound so hope-filled yet a bit hollow right now. As I write this message, it is a cold December afternoon and Christmas is a week away. A Christmas that we will celebrate in many of the same ways as we always have-candles, a manger, carols and scripture. But so much is NOT the same as years past. Many are still grieving the end of a long pastorate, many are frustrated that we haven't called a new minister yet, many are staying home because we don't like this or that small thing and darn it.....I want my way.

But church is not a place to get our way, rather it is the place where we learn to create God's way in the world. By gathering together each week, in person and online, we acknowledge we can do better as God's people. By gathering we acknowledge we all need to keep working on ourselves through prayer, singing, learning and growing in grace and knowing we cannot be God's people without one another. The kin-dom of justice and peace that I speak of often in my sermons will not appear through New Year's resolutions, not through our hopes and prayers but rather through us walking in the Way of Jesus-which, plain and simple, is the Way of Love.

So show up for one another, show up for God, seek new and better ways of loving others as you continue to live out your love for God. Let us 'Be the Church' together in 2023. Happy New Year indeed.

Isaiah 65:17 ESV "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind."

-Pastor Dani

JANUARY WORSHIP

January 8: Sacred Reading and Scripture
Poem : "Beloved is Where We Begin"
-Jan Richardson
Matthew 3:1-2, 5-6, 13-17
Sermon "Muddy Beginnings"

Beginning this week I will be preaching a series on Exodus - a Journey through the Wilderness.

January 15:
Psalm 12:5b-8 Exodus 1:1-21
Sermon "Two Gutsy Women"

January 22:
Psalm 72:12-14a Exodus 1:22-2:15a
Sermon "The Birth of a Savior"

January 29:
Exodus 2:15b-3:15 (CEB)
Sermon "Encounters"

Say More About That...

We will be holding soup supper on the **3rd Sunday** because Fellowship night is on the 2nd Sunday this month.

Thank you for Drawing the Circle Wide!

During the service on Sun., Dec. 18, the Open and Affirming (ONA) Committee celebrated the generous contributions you all have made to the community of South Haven and throughout SW Michigan. From clothing drives, food donations and countless volunteer hours to over \$75,000 in outreach through We Care, Centered on Wellness, Domestic Violence Coalition, OutCenter for SW Michigan, our Food Pantry, and many more charitable organizations, First Congregational UCC is living the spirit of love and compassion.

We invite you all to share with us ways that First Congregational UCC can draw the circle

wider. What are you passionate about? Where would you like to volunteer? Please share your ideas with us at dianeandlisa@owlsnestmusic.com. Thank you!

- The ONA Committee
Nancy Nelson
Marcia Claggett
Joyce Hagen-McIntosh
P.J. Lindemann
Jeff Reber
Diane Ritchie
Ted Guimond
Diane & Lisa Van Deurzen-Otey



HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

We have enjoyed several activities this year. We planned Jeffrey's retirement celebration in April and created a scaled down version of Blueberry baking for the festival.

In the summer, dinner theatre at Ghostlight Theatre in Benton Harbor and The Church Basement Ladies at Turkeyville in October.

On December 1, we met for our annual cookie and caroling event. After a brief meeting, we sorted and packed cookies for special members and friends and then delivered. There were even enough to freeze for Diane and Lisa's concert. Our caroling leaders were Mary Pietenpol and Karen Ruesink.

Donations during the year were made to We Care, Olivet College, UCC disaster relief to Ukraine, H.O.P.E. Parent Resource Center, Domestic Violence Coalition, and Memorial Gifts in memory of Miriam Dick. We also gifted Jeffrey with a sculpture of flying seagulls now in the Tenhopen Garden.

Events for 2023 include making new banners for the sanctuary. We would gladly accept purple fabric in solids or prints and whites to light browns. Brocades and shiny gold would be wonderful! We will be using strips so scraps are fine.

Our spring rummage sale will be in April.

Blueberry Fest baked goods sale at the

church will be in August, which now replaces the fall rummage sale.

Remember, all women and guests are welcome to Women's Fellowship events. Church membership is not a requirement. Any ideas for projects or events are considered and embraced. We look forward to seeing you.

Kris Ayers, Coordinator

ODDS N' ENDS

Thank you to Women's Fellowship for the Christmas gifts. The cookies were yummy.

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Thank you to everyone who took part in the recent Smoked Turkey Dinner.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Be it known that Elliot Guimond, 8lb 1 oz, 20" long, son of Andre' and Erin Guimond, grandson of Ted and Margaret Guimond, decided to enter this world at 11:08 p. m. Thursday 12/15/2022.

The parents are exhausted and elated. The grand parents are tickled pink to have another grand child to spoil.

Rosilyn, his big sister of 3 yrs old, now has a new job of helping and watching over Elliot.

Birthdays

01/01 David Veenstra
01/04 Theresa Gleason
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

Anniversaries

01/04 Art & Kris Ayers
01/27 Scott & Ann Raue, 50th

