

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

South Haven, MI

May 2022

Pastor Dick's Final service on May 1st

This service will be Pastor Dick's last Sunday with us. He will be preaching this Sunday as well as baptizing his granddaughter. Communion will be celebrated and Pastor Dick will be offering the bread to each person coming forward. He will break off a piece of bread and hand it to each individual.

The children will be singing a special song toward the end of the service. The service will end with a special celebration called Recognizing an Ending of an Authorized Ministry. Elaine Fluck, the church Moderator, and Rev. Calandra Nevenzal, our Southwest Association Minister, will lead this part of the service. It is offered as a way of saying goodbye and recognizing that Pastor Dick will no longer be serving in a pastoral capacity at this church.



Wednesday, May 25 4-7 pm

Thursday, May 26 10-1:30

[A portion of the proceeds will go to
the UCC Ukraine Relief Fund]

Prayers for continued healing of our church family:

Lori Tupper
Margaret Guimond
Sharon McNicholas
Elsie Hoffman
Mike Livovich
Pat Kelemen
Lillian Jones



Adopt-a-Days from April

Many thanks to my drivers during the past months: Cathy Siler, Stuart Comiskey, Jeff Reber, Ted Guimond, Sue Murphey, and of course my wife. Given by Jeffrey Dick.

Thanks to all who came by the house and **played cards** while I was laid up, Given by Jeffrey Dick.

In honor of Louise Wepfer, given by Elaine Fluck.

We begin our **Holy Week** together, and end celebrating our risen Christ on Easter!, given by Women's Fellowship.

In honor of Margaret & Ted Guimond for their Dedicated Leadership of Thursday Night Suppers. Given by a grateful donor and anonymously.

Sign up for your favorite day(s) of May.

See the calendar in the Narthex!

Title of the series for May Worship

Resurrection Liminality: Discipleship during the In-Between Times

John 20:19-23 **The Doors Are Locked**
(Encountering our Fear)

John 20: 24-29 **I Don't Believe**
(Encountering our Doubt)

John 21:1-14 **Same Nets, Different Day**
(Encountering New Ways of Doing)

John 21:15-19 **Do You Love?**
(Encountering the eternal Call)

Greetings First Congregational Church,

I am so delighted to be among you as Bridge Pastor!

My name is Rev. EJ McGaughy. I grew up in the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ, spent my youth summers at a UCC summer camp called Pilgrim Pines, went to Catawba College (a UCC college in North Carolina) for my Bachelors of Arts in religion and philosophy, attended and graduated from the Pacific School of Religion (a UCC seminary) with my Master's of Divinity, was ordained in the UCC on March 27th, 2010 and you're the fourth UCC church I've served in a pastoral role. You'll hear me say it again and again: some of the world's best people hang out in our denomination. I cannot wait to get to know you.

I currently live with my family in Battle Creek. My family is the pride and joy of

my life. I hope you have a chance to meet them face to face, but in the meantime here are their names and a few fun details.

- Kate: My spouse. Hardest working and funniest human on earth. Works for the electrical union. Grew up in Battle Creek; youngest of seven in a Catholic family. Never lets anyone take themselves too seriously. Love of my life.
- Abbey: Oldest of siblings; joined our family by choice. Graduate of Bard and Vanderbilt Divinity School. Artist. Contemplative. Lives in Kalamazoo.
- Maddie: Kate's first born. Grew up in Battle Creek. Finishing up college at GVSU. Musician.
- Aurora: my first born. Love of horses and horseback riding. Artist/singer. Currently in 4th grade.
- Isaiah: my second born. Love of Star Wars and trash talk while playing sports and card games. Drummer. Good at math. Currently in 2nd grade.
- Caster: Kate's second born. Lives in Sacramento CA with her two dads. Loves to play outside, read books and sing. Turns 4 in August.
- Amos: EJ's third (and final). Loves Sesame Street, dancing, and hugging trees. 16 months old.

Having learned just a bit about FCCSH, I must admit that I am in deep

awe of Pastor Jeffrey and Pastor Mike's leadership among you and impressed by the vital lay leadership that moves and sustains this community. The commitment of Staff, the OnA stance, the music programming, the gorgeous facilities, the tech accommodations, the warmth of Spirit and lack of pretense--I am beyond grateful to be here! I believe this Church is beautifully positioned for growth and I look forward to where we can go together.

I am bringing a depth and breadth commitment to the Gospel, expertise in cultural transformation for institutional equity and an ethic of centering social justice. It is my goal to serve God diligently, to love you fiercely, to lead with collaboration, integrity, humility and authenticity, to challenge you gently, and to leave room for the Mystery in between and all around us. Please remember that I'm new to you and that I could never possibly know all there is to know about FCCSH; I will need direct communication about what's important to you and some patience from all of us as I get oriented. I have faith that with God's help we will find our way.

My schedule will shift significantly at the end of May when my kids/pod are done with the academic year. During May I will be present on Sundays and one other day during the week (usually Wednesday or Thursday). Beginning in June I will be able to hold more consistent office hours and a routined schedule, which I will update you about in next month's newsletter. In the meantime, I want to invite small groups, families, couples, and individuals to meet with me after church on Sundays in the month of May so we can get acquainted. If you'd like to take

me up on that, please reach out via email (address below) to schedule. If you want to meet with me for spiritual care or any other pastoral need that's urgent, I invite you to text or call me (phone number below). I am able to utilize zoom and the phone on days when I am not in South Haven.

Email: emilyjoye@gmail.com
Phone: 269-832-9447

Text messages will be responded to the fastest. In the case of a pastoral emergency, please text, then call. *I generally do not answer any electronic devices after 8pm.* You can reach me in the mornings starting at 7am.

I want to extend particular gratitude to Patty Gruber, Nancy Nelson, and Dave Murphey for convening the search committee work that got me here and Pastor Tupper for coming alongside me in preparation for this position.

The Holy Spirit is trustworthy in all things and I believe She has called me to you and you to me for the glory of God. Let's DO this, church.

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms,
Rev. EJ

Children's Ministry

Sunday School led by Sarah Peterson is meeting every Sunday morning after our time with children in the worship service. This is for all children who are not yet in sixth grade. They look forward to singing in worship on Pastor Jeffrey Dick's last Sunday which is May 1.

Plans are beginning to be made about

a Vacation Bible School this summer along with First United Methodist and Peace Lutheran churches.

New Book Study: Speaking Christian by Marcus Borg

Pastor Dani Veenstra, one of our newest members, will be leading an in-person study of the book, *Speaking Christian* starting on May 10 at 2:00 in the church lounge. The book helps thinking Christians reclaim their language in a way that can help us talk about our faith with one another and with those who are not familiar with the story of God's justice and love demonstrated so fully by Jesus. Join us for this four-part (attend one or all) book discussion. Masks are optional as long as numbers remain low.



Truck, May 19th

As the saying goes 'many hands make light work' is so true when it comes to holding a Food Truck distribution. If you can help, please let John or Sue Gillett know. They need to make sure they have the 'many hands' showing up.

Workers should arrive about 10:30 to help set up. All distributing begins at 11 a.m.

Memorial Garden

A few years ago there were some in the congregation that had asked if they could have their ashes buried on the church grounds. No such area existed. So, a committee was formed to explore this and the result is an area located along the west side of the building, designated for the specific use as a memorial garden.

When it initially started the thought was how to best share those names whose ashes have been buried. A local artist, Kayla Ridley, was asked to create a design with ideas that had been presented. The final project is a large green tree, with some background scenery of Lake Michigan included. It is beautiful. It is located in the foyer off of the office wing.

The cost to have your ashes placed in the memorial garden is \$ 250. This includes the cost of the name plate for the memorial plaque and the upkeep of the Memorial Garden.

This arrangement can be set up anytime by contacting Victoria in the church office.

Retirement Party Was Fantastic

What a send off! What a great party! My deepest thanks to everyone involved who made my retirement party such a huge success. The whole event was so well planned and really allowed time for me to visit with all the people from church and the community who attended. It was delightful and wonderful.

I have read through the cards and the

rocks (what a fabulous memory to keep) and am touched by all the warm words of thanks and appreciation. Sunday evening reading through all of those was perhaps more emotional than the party.

The video display by Theresa Gleason was great and I look forward to going through it at home more closely. The toys the children made is so touching. I love the curved plaque and photo - and that photo even has the new sculpture in it - which is so awesome. I will take a picture of it this week. The sculpture is beautiful and much better than a new garden in my name!! Such a wonderful gift.

Special thanks to Sarah Peterson for such wonderful food - and gluten free crackers and cookies for Lynn were so appreciated. She and the whole team of planners provided the perfect setting for this event. I am touched and humbled by this outpouring of love.

With my deepest thanks for all your gifts, love and support.

Jeffrey



Our first Highway Clean Up on M-140 is in the bag - all 30 bags full! We met Saturday April 23rd to clean and pick up trash on a 2.1 mile section of M-140. This was a great way to celebrate Earth Day and to give back to the community.

Thank you to all who came to help. Good weather, and good company!

Young Adult Ministry (18-55 and their families)

Our next event will be our third annual Burger Burn at the church on Sunday, June 12 at 12:00. Plan for a great meal and wonderful gathering.

SPRING RUMMAGE SALE IS COMING!

It's that special time of year to trade your treasures! The sales will be on:

Wednesday, May 25 4-7 pm
Thursday, May 26 10-1:30

That last half hour on Thursday will be free. Pack and haul will begin at 1:30.

Official deliveries of rummage can be made on the 22nd after church, and 23rd during office hours, or by arrangement. (These periods will NOT be staffed necessarily.) *IF set up can happen before Sat. May 21, then deliveries can be sooner. Stay tuned.*

The term DELIVERIES means you bring your items to the appropriate area/table and unpack. It will be labeled. Staging/arranging will take place on Tuesday, May 24th. Only big ticket items are priced.

VOLUNTEERS will be needed:

Tuesday, May 24 beginning around 9:00 til 3:00 to arrange donations
Since items are presorted, it goes quickly.

Three cashiers and a few aisle managers are needed for Wednesday and Thursday. *Check out is by the bundle.*

Packers and haulers are needed Thursday 1:30. There is already 1 volunteer!!

PLEASE: Place your items in the designated areas. Avoid under the tables if possible.

Bundle, tie, tape, package, pin items, pairs, and sets that go together

Label linen sizes or shape

Bundle CLEAN, DRY, functioning items only

Limit of 2 containers of clothing per family with the exception of bulky, outdoor gear.

Label bins if you want them returned, or, unload and take them with you.

Large items go in the basement. VERY LARGE items can be placed in the office hallway. Plants and starts sell VERY well.

We had to streamline the sale during COVID and it has worked out very well, so that process continues.

Thank you in advance for following the guidelines.

If you have any questions, call me. Accommodations can be made if necessary.

Kris Ayers 637.8762

[A portion of the proceeds will go to the UCC Ukraine Relief Fund]

A note of Farewell from Pastor Dick

So, I am really doing this! Retiring! I have spoken of it for a year, but now that it is here, it is like scary and very emotional. Lynn and I have lived here in South Haven, in the parsonage, longer than any other place our whole lives. This has been home. A place where our family grew from four to 8 and then 11 (with the three grand kids)! The church provided a 5 bedroom parsonage and we filled it. Oh my, the memories here in that home – one could write a long book. Perhaps someday. That the church has supported and welcomed our very unique and diverse family has meant so much to Lynn and I. You helped us provide a home and safe place for children and grandchildren to grow. That is what a church should do and you have. Thank you.

I have been so honored to be here and know that God called me to serve here. And I am so thankful God did that – and that you have welcomed me into your church, your homes, and your lives. Sharing in ministry together has been delightful and fulfilling.

The South Haven community is a wonderful place to live and serve. I have been active in many places in the community and appreciate the support the church has given me to do just that. From Kiwanis (where I served twice as president) to Rotary, from Scouts to the Samaritan Center, from leading the CROP Hunger Walks to working with the Diversity Coalition. And there was much more. One of the aspects of this church that attracted us was how much the church allowed the community to meet in the building. Church members have been instrumental in the starting of We Care, Habitat for Humanity and the Samaritan Counseling Center. This is a

church that seeks to serve the community. I hope going forward you continue to do just that.

You have supported my desire to participate in mission trips, especially to Haiti. That so many people of various ages have traveled with me has been wonderful. The orphanage in Carrfour is so great and their ministry so important. We have made a difference with our visits and our support of their food ministry. Thank you.

Having served here for 29 years means I am now baptizing children of children that I baptized or confirmed and officiated at their weddings. Those celebrations have been very special. Speaking of which, as one who loves stats, I have baptized 113 people while here. And speaking of weddings, there have been 144 of those.

This church has also allowed me to minister to many non members of the church at the time of a death in a family. Being present with people at this time of grief and sorrow has been very important. Many are people with no church home, this church reached out to them to provide comfort and hope. At times, it is seen people become active with our church family. Either way, we have a ministry of compassion and out reach. That ministry has reached 326 families.

First Congregational Church has a vibrant and exciting ministry in this community. It is a place people know as welcoming and friendly. A safe place to attend. While there are all sorts of stories about church attendance declining across the country, we have seen a significant increase in visitors in the past 6 weeks. Some of that is because of our outreach with baptisms and funerals, barbecues and of our music ministry. With the arrival of a new Bridge Pastor and then a new Senior Pastor, I expect more visitors checking out this ministry. That is good news. Welcoming these new people, while maintaining connections with long time members will be important.

Just as important will be welcoming and supporting your new Bridge Pastor, Emily Joye McGaughy, and then your new Senior Pastor. Give them time to get settled. Call them, invite them to coffee, invite them to your home, share with them how you see ministry and most of all pray for them. As you welcomed our family into your lives, do the same for these new pastors. They will do things differently (might even keep their office clean and neat!). Expect life to be different. I was different than my predecessor and things worked out, life went on and ministry was fulfilling.

Also continue to give Victoria Henry, our Office Manager from before I arrived, your utmost support. She carries a lot of the institutional history of how things get done. When she asks for help, be quick to respond. While not a member here, she values and loves this church and its members deeply. She is a rock and a gem, be there for her as much as you can.

I will be holding you all in prayer. We won't see much of each other for quite some time, but when appropriate, our paths will cross again. Lynn and I will be taking time with grand kids, visiting our moms in Buffalo, hopefully every other month, and doing some traveling. All part of enjoying retirement.

Thank you for the joy of serving here for all these years. It has been the best of times. I feel so blessed. May God's love unite us and strengthen us.

Blessings,

Jeffrey

Looking at May

Lay Assistant

1– Elaine Fluck
8– Tom Ruesink
15– Diane Ritchie
22– Jason Turner
29– Dea Bishop

Usher Captains

Don & Elaine Kitchin

Anniversaries

1– Greg & Marian O’Niel
7– Ted & Margaret Guimond, 45th
21– Tony & Pat Martorano, 55th
25– Craig & Chris Arms, 20th
27– Mike & Lori Tupper

Congratulations to those having special anniversaries this month.



Birthdays

2– Kate Staib
4– Karen Ruesink
4– Josiah Trimble
7– Tim Larson
13– Shirley Sollman
15– Peggy McClendon
16– Aaron Strebeck
Erin Bos
17– Beth Keithly
18– Lisa VanDeurzen-Otey
19– David Campbell
20– Camborley Gleason
23– Diane VanDeurzen-Otey
24– Mike Nelson
25– Elliot Larson
29– Greg O’Niel
Debbie Walter

