

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

South Haven, MI

September 2018

## First Congregational Church of South Haven 2019 Stewardship Campaign



In 1 Corinthians, Paul writes that we are “stewards of the mysteries of God.” As people who know the nature of our God and the love that God has for all of creation, a love that is more powerful even than death itself, we are called to share this story. We are stewards of the Gospel and as such we do not hoard this good news, but we offer it to others.

Paul was radically devoted to God and the mission to tell the world of God’s loving intentions toward creation. His priority was to love and serve the God who could not be contained in any idol of wood, stone, silver, or gold. When you know this to be true, it puts everything else in its proper place.

As we reflect on what it means to be a steward, we are invited to think both about our priorities and how well we have shared with others the real treasure we have in the story of our faith. How are you practicing this kind of stewardship? Who can you tell about God’s unconditional love?

The prophet Micah asks: “With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?” Yes, what shall we bring?

### Our Stewardship Gatherings

This past Spring we enjoyed widespread praise from those who attended the house gatherings. People loved the fellowship,

the sharing of ideas, the opportunity to contribute, and the camaraderie developed in breaking bread together over a simple meal.

For Stewardship this year we will gather around a meal on two Sundays after worship in various breakout rooms throughout the church. A light sandwich lunch with beverage and dessert will be provided, and a short 15-20 minute presentation and discussion will follow. The entire session will last between 45-50 minutes.

People are invited to choose ONE session to attend to hear about our Stewardship Program for 2019. At these gatherings you will be given a pledge card for the coming year. You are asked to fill them out while there, or take them home and bring back by the next Sunday.

Each Sunday there will also be a special Stewardship Speaker sharing why church is important to them.

Sign up sheets are at church, or you can call the office to reserve your space. We look forward to seeing you at church.

*Jeff Reber, Mike Nelson and Jeffrey Dick  
The Stewardship Team*

*Prayers for continued healing of our church family:*

Steve Siler  
Marilyn Miller  
Nancy Garber  
Art Ayers  
Dale Popp



If you are interested in taking CPR Training, please contact Art Ayers. Another class can be scheduled once we have six people.

### Newsletter Help

Do you enjoy working on the computer? The church office is looking for someone to take over putting the monthly newsletter and calendar together.

Materials are provided for you each month, many of them coming as computer documents so you just need to cut and paste.

If interested, or you'd like more detailed information, please contact Victoria in the church office.

### Adopt-a-Days from August

**August 18th**, in memory of Emma Jean Hoag on her birthday, given by Rick & Cathy Siler

**August 19th**, in honor of Jeffrey's 25th year here, given by Womens Fellowship

Sign up for your favorite day(s)!  
See the calendar in the Narthex!



Please come help!

**Sept. 15–21st**

#### **Contacts**

Mike Nelson 214-6846  
Bob Linderman 214-2550

## September Worship

### September 2<sup>nd</sup>: Labor Day Weekend

Last Sunday of two services, both held in the chapel with Communion at both services.

Our focus will be from the Letter of James (1:17-27) and is "Be Doers of the Word", very appropriate for Labor Day weekend.

### September 9<sup>th</sup>: Fall Kick Off. One Worship Service in the Sanctuary Begins!!

In our scripture lessons, both Jesus and James call us to be open to the spirit of God. To not show favoritism to some people and reject others. James asks us if we truly love our neighbor!

Our scripture lessons are: James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17 and Mark 7:24-37.

Worship will also include our first Stewardship Speakers.

### September 16<sup>th</sup>

Worship: Who are you Jesus?

In the Gospel of Mark (8:27-38) we hear Jesus' question to the disciples, then and now, "Who do you say that I am?"

Worship will also include our second Stewardship Speaker and the Reception of New Members.

### September 23<sup>rd</sup>:

Worship: Welcoming Children

Jesus welcomes children into his midst in the passage from Mark 9:30-37 and invited us to do the same. Rev. Mary Beth Moran-Cross will bring her puppet friends to share a special Children's Moment.

We will have our third Stewardship Speaker.

*Following worship will be our First Stewardship Gathering.*

### September 30<sup>th</sup>:

Worship: Getting out of the way

Jesus tells his disciples to not put stumbling blocks before people that would prevent them from knowing Jesus. Those words are also shared with us. What stumbling blocks are put before people today? What can we do about that?

Our scripture is from Mark 9:38-50.

Bibles will be presented to the Confirmation Class and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. Our final stewardship speaker will join us this morning.

*Following worship will be our Second Stewardship Gathering.*

### October 7<sup>th</sup>: World Communion Sunday



**Church School begins on September 9<sup>th</sup>!**

**Children and youth** will be learning about the Ten Commandments. Holly Cochran will be the lead teacher for this month. In October, Ted and Margaret Guimond will be the lead teachers for a rotation on Paul and Silas in prison.

Church School is held during worship, with students attending church for the first part and then being dismissed to their class.

The theme for this year's **High School Class** will be "Living a Life in Christ". We will be using Luke 10:25-37, the Great Commandment and the Parable of the Good Samaritan as our scripture study. The Great Commandment tells us to love the Lord with all our "Heart, Soul, Strength and Spirit" and to "Love our Neighbor as ourselves". We will take the different parts of the commandment and see how we can apply them in our own lives.

Part of our study will be answering the question; "How can I use my heart, soul, strength

and mind to glorify God". We will look at some of the people in the Bible who demonstrated their faith by acts of courage, strength and love. We will also be looking at people in today's world who are likewise demonstrating their faith.

The High School class begins on Sunday, September 9th after church. Hope to see you there.

**The Adult Class** will start up on Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> and meets in the lounge at 9:30. All are welcome.

## Invitation to Explore Membership

Throughout scripture we hear of God's desire that people should live in community. Words and phrases jump out at us like:

Being in right relationship with one another and with God;

Journey together, being brothers and sisters;

Be the Body of Christ.

Membership at First Congregational Church United Church of Christ is one expression of that common journey. It is a statement that we choose to be a part of this faith community at this time in our lives. That we desire to walk and grow in faith together with one another. Membership is not something that is required, rather it is an expression of commitment and desire.

To learn more about becoming a member here, contact Pastor Dick. An Exploring Membership Class will take place on Wednesday, September 12th at 7 p.m. in the church lounge. Other times can be arranged

by contacting Pastor Dick.



*Setting up at the Moose to bake the blueberry pies.*

## Summer Music

We are very thankful for the piano playing of Mary Pietenpol and the song leadership of Karen Ruesink. This has made our summer worship so wonderful.

Throughout the summer, we have been blessed by many special guest musicians at the 10:30 service. Patricia Kerr has lined them up, and at times has provided the music herself! Members of the church have also performed. The special music has enriched our worship all summer long.



## Confirmation Program to Begin in September

Typically we will meet twice a month after worship. This is open to 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> graders who want to participate.

Our first gathering will be on **September 16<sup>th</sup>**. This will be a meeting for parents and youth to review the year and prepare to receive bibles.

**September 30<sup>th</sup>** - Bibles will be presented to the members of the confirmation class during worship. Following worship, the group will meet for a presentation on Stewardship followed by a discussion on using their new bible.

**October 7<sup>th</sup>** the class will go participate in the Ropes Course at Warner Camp.

## Dear Friends of First Congregational Church,

As of June 22nd my house was sold and I have moved in with my daughter Susan Zimmer, 3264 West C Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49009. My cell phone number is 269-681-0994.

I really enjoyed my many years, first attending as a 1 year old. I loved teaching your children and miss all of you.

I get the newsletter so I read about the wonderful things you are doing.

May God Bless You,  
Carolyn Willobee

## 2018 Annual Meeting Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ

### Be Not Afraid (Isaiah 40:9)

*"Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, be not afraid..."*

We are excited and looking forward to having you join us for this year's Annual Meeting at First Congregational UCC, Charlotte!

The Keynote Speaker this year is Rev. Dr. Alice Hunt, Immediate Past President, Chicago Theological Seminary and beginning in July: Executive Director, American Academy of Religion.

This year's Annual Meeting has more of a traditional format with Friday bringing some Continued Education time, workshops, resolution and budget hearings, and an Award Banquet. Saturday begins with a continental breakfast, worship with Rev. Dr. Alice Hunt preaching, plenary, lots of singing, and more workshops!

If you would like to represent the church at this meeting, or just attend, please contact

Dave Murphey or Pastor Dick.

Youth Programming at Annual Meeting will begin on Friday, with youth and their chaperones gathering at the Upton Gym on the campus of nearby, Olivet College for an overnight and evening of fun. Youth will travel to Charlotte Saturday morning to share in the continental breakfast and take part in the morning worship. There is opportunity for mission and service within the local community - and time for youth who traveled and took part in the Great Lakes Regional Youth Event (GLRYE) to share their continued excitement and energy from this summer's event!

The cost to attend the Youth Program for Youth and Chaperones at Annual Meeting is \$25 and covers your lodging Friday evening, Saturday continental breakfast and a special Saturday lunch just for our Youth Program folks!

Youth interested in attending should contact Pastor Dick.

*Blueberry pie making at the Moose Lodge*



## Dear Board of Trustees,

If we had a dollar for every time we heard how wonderful First Congregational Church was, we wouldn't need to hold a book sale next year. We all appreciate the use of your building, but especially you people who make us feel welcome and allow us to raise money for scholarships.

God bless you!  
Sincerely,  
AAUW Book Sale Committee



## Blueberry Festival

Another fantastic Blueberry Season is in the books. Theresa Gleason and her crew made 470 pies and more turnovers than can be counted. The profit this year was \$4,567!

New this year was baking pies at the Moose Lodge and that worked extremely well. A large turnout of folks made the work go so fast. Many thanks to all involved.



## Rev. Dick,

I wanted to thank you and the church for your generosity in lending us your movie screen, which enabled us to show the movie, "Jordanville". We were tickled that about 50 people came and enjoyed the movie and toured the building.

We could not have done it without you!

Always,  
Steve Tolen  
First Hebrew Congregation

## Drain and Gutter work

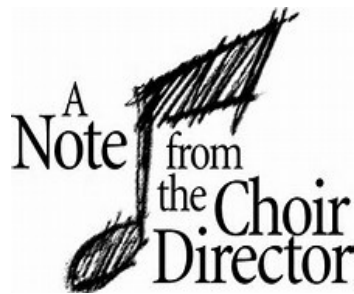
The area at the bottom of the outdoor stairs from the kitchen is a serious hazard in the winter. Ice builds up and creates a danger zone where people have fallen. Over the years we have tried different ways to deal with this.



In August, a new plan was created. At first it looked like it would cost \$3,500. A lot of money, but when safety is a factor, you do what you have to do. Then, a new idea was considered and a return of some college students from Cornerstone made it possible.

Tom Ruesink and Ted Guimond designed the project and spent an extremely long, hot, steaming day working with 7 college students (members of the track team). They busted cement, dug 2 large trenches, installed piping and gutters, then filled it all in and cleaned up the area. The hope is that this will divert water to the drainage area and eliminate most of the ice problems. The other good news is that with this volunteer labor, the church saved \$3,000!

Please be sure to say thank you to Tom and Ted, along with Dave Murphey. A job, well done!



## We Care INC News

### Full-time position

We Care is looking for a talented, compassionate not-for-profit professional for the new full-time position of Deputy Director.

### Position Description

Reporting to the interim executive director (ED), the Deputy Director's primary responsibility is to oversee the daily, internal operations of We Care I.N.C., providing day-to-day management of staff and oversight of client services and programming, information technology, operations, and finances to ensure goals and mission are met. The Deputy Director will also partner with the interim ED and the board of directors in some external-facing duties, particularly during this critical time of transition and planning to position We Care for its next chapter. This is a full-time, salaried position without benefits.

More information can be found on their website at: <http://wecare-inc.org/join-our-team/>

### Volunteers

Do you have one morning each week that you could commit between now and January 1? Do you like engaging with people - and are you comfortable answering phone calls and handling data entry on computers? This volunteer opportunity could be for you! We need a few extra hands on Monday, Tuesday and Friday mornings.

For more information go to their website at: <http://wecare-inc.org/helpus/> or contact Lynn Dick at 269-637-4342.

### Help Feed Local Families

Make a commitment to donate a meal basket (or more) to help make the holiday bright for local families. You can do this on your own, get a group of friends together, or rally your book club, basketball team or youth group.

**Summer worship** brought us a lovely change of pace, as most of the Sunday services were held in the chapel--a wonderful place to sing together. We enjoyed the talents of so many who brought us a variety of special music. **Jim Cooper** brought his vibraphone, **Pete Whele** sang "What a Wonderful World."

The **Men's Choir** came and sang a few songs for us, led by the capable **Mike VandenTak**, who came back another time by himself to sing the inspiring "Gentle Like Jesus". My friends from Glenn, the **Blue Star Ramblers**, got us to sing along on a couple enthusiastic folk-gospel tunes, and **Alex Davis** came and played "Halleluia" by Leonard Cohen on his violin. **Nancy Nelson** played not once, but twice, and I really enjoyed playing along with her on Ukelele as she played "Somewhere Over The Rainbow". Other members of the Chancel Choir, **Dea, Denise and Karen**, formed a trio to sing "Surely The Presence". One Sunday our guest artist had to cancel, so I brought my dulcimer and played "Simple Gifts". We wind up the season with **Doug Peterson** playing "Simple Gifts, and--a first--**Louise Wepfer** will play a short piano solo for the offertory! Thanks to one and all for your inspiring contributions to Sunday worship.

**Chancel Choir** starts rehearsals Wednesday September 5 at a new time--6:30pm. We welcome anyone who likes to sing, regardless of your ability to read music.

The choir will be offering special music September 9, 16, and 23, and the Bell Choir will be playing for us on September 30.

Let's all make a joyful noise unto the Lord!!

# *Looking at September*

## Acolytes

9— Erin Bos  
    Kyle Bos  
16— Ben Meyer  
    Jake Meyer  
23— Chloe McNicholas  
30— Kitty Brennen

## Nursery

(sign up in the Narthex)

## Hospitality

(sign up in the Narthex)

## Financial Counters

2— Marcia Claggett  
    Aaron Strebeck  
9— Ted Guimond  
    Dave Daugherty  
16— Mike Nelson  
    Terry McGarr  
23— Chris Valentine  
    Jeff Reber  
30— Patty Brennen  
    Wes Stephens

## **Deacons of the Month**

Barb Wittkop  
637- 5890

Joe Nelson  
447-0670

## **Birthdays**

09/03 Marilyn Arnott  
09/08 Keyana Dick  
09/12 Brett Ayotte  
09/13 Steven Daugherty  
09/17 Morgan Dickens  
09/19 Jonathan Larson  
09/20 Troy Ayotte  
09/22 Sarah Peterson  
09/22 Sue Mears  
09/22 Dale Popp  
09/23 Terry McGarr  
09/25 Chrystal Smith  
09/26 Jack Ayotte  
09/27 Fiona Ellis  
09/28 Lynn Gabel  
09/29 Juanita Wellever  
09/30 Nancy Garber



## **Anniversaries**

09/04 Mark & Peggy McClendon  
09/06 Judy Johnson & Becky Mudd  
09/11 Aaron & Jane Strebeck  
09/12 Jim & Sue Mears  
09/22 Sean & Sarah Peterson