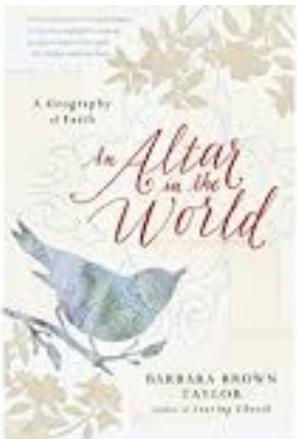




SEPTEMBER 2023



BOOK STUDY SIGN UP

An Altar in the World
by Barbara Brown Taylor

In *An Altar in the World*, Taylor shares how she learned to encounter God far beyond the walls of the church. She reveals meaningful ways to discover the sacred in the small things we do and see, from simple practices such as walking, working, and playing.

Barbara Brown Taylor is a best-selling author, teacher & Episcopal Priest. She has served on the faculties of Piedmont College, Emory University, Mercer University, Columbia Theological, an Oblate School of Theology. She and her husband tend a small farm in the foothills of the Appalachians.

The discussion will be led by Pastor Dave and Marcia Claggett. We will meet in the Lounge (garden, weather permitting) on the following Sundays at 2:00 p.m.:

September 24 (Chapters 1-3)
October 1 (Chapters 4-6)
October 8 (Chapters 7-9)
October 15 (Chapters 10-12)

This book study is being sponsored by the ONA Committee and books will be provided. Books may be picked up in the church office. A sign up sheet is available at church, or let Marcia or Pastor Dave know you want to participate and enough books can be ordered.

Make a joyful noise!
Come join our choir!

We will gather for a rehearsal on
Wednesday, September 6,
from 1-3 pm in Fellowship Hall.

We would love to see you there!



Prayers for continued healing of our church family:

Rick Olsen
Joyce Thompson
Art Ayers
Donna Capps
Mary Pietenpol



Grieving

Family of Kevin McNicholas, brother of Ken McNicholas



I've been called to serve Zion Evangelical United Church of Christ in St. Joseph beginning October 15th as their Settled Minister.

Thank you for your prayers and support as I discerned where God wants me to serve.

-Pastor Dani Veenstra

Adopt-a-Days from August

August 11, a successful pie sale, given by Women's Fellowship.

In honor of Theresa Gleason who for several days in July, helped with my packing and moving; without whose help I would not have been ready.
Given by Bonnie Deke.

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





Hello to you on the verge of autumn. It is still hot and humid, but summer is fading. This is the beginning of my favorite time of year.

There will be an opportunity beginning in late September to enjoy a four-week book discussion. The book is Barbara Brown Taylor's An Altar in the World. We'll meet Sunday afternoons at 2 PM here at church. You can find the complete details elsewhere in the newsletter, but I'd like to tell you a little about the book.

An Altar in the World is set up as an exploration of twelve practices that add up to a whole life of faith. The practices involve things like waking up to God, wearing skin, getting lost, living with purpose, feeling pain, and pronouncing blessings. As we focus on these practices, we may find ourselves developing vision and reverence, discovering community and vocation, keeping Sabbath, making breakthroughs, and offering prayer and benediction. I think you'll find the book easy to read and stimulating. I believe it will help each of us experience our spirituality, talk about it, and expand the possibilities for connecting purposefully with God and one another.

This book discussion experience will hopefully be the first of many future opportunities to explore the life of your spirit in a small group setting. Going forward, I'll bring other opportunities to you, but I'd like to know what you want to pursue, too. If you have ideas, even partially formed ideas, please reach out to me for conversation. If there is something that would help you live and grow as a person of faith, it will help others, too!

In time with hope,
Pastor Dave



Hello Diners, Deadline is September 4th!

It's sign up time for the next year of fellowship and fun dining. There will be a sign up sheet in fellowship hall by the refreshment table. Meals can be brunch, lunch, or dinner. This event is open to singles and couples and friends. There are four meals each with a different group who bring different parts of the meal. Dates are arranged by groups.

Contact Kris Ayers 637.8762 for any questions.



Food Truck Tuesday, September 12th

If you can help with the distribution please contact Scott Raue. 639-1181.

Volunteers arrive at 10:30 a.m.



Guest Speaker
Mary Jo Schnell

Executive Director
of the **OutCenter**
of Southwest Michigan

Come
Listen
Learn

Sun., Sept. 17, 2023 12:15 pm

The Goal of this presentation is to.....

Provide the knowledge needed to help create and maintain an equitable culture that respects and values LGBTQ+ persons.

Objectives include:

- * Discuss the importance of terminology and provide definitions
- * Outline initial best practices and guidance for congregants
- * Provide time for questions to ensure the best understanding can be achieved
- * Workshop part 2 (date TBA) will include walking through situations relevant to your organization and, together, put knowledge into practice as we develop informed, respectful and appropriate responses

*

Come Join Us!
at First Congregational Church UCC
Fellowship Hall
651 Phoenix St. South Haven, MI 49090



Blueberry Festival pies

According to the report that Marge Lampe provided, the Women's Fellowship earned about \$ 1,500.

There was a pie assembling day here at the church, the week of the festival. It was a well oiled machine with many helpers, who we thank for coming. Afterwards, any of the workers were encouraged to take pies home for baking.

We also thank those who baked at home making muffins and Blueberry Buckle (YUM!)

We express our thanks to Diane Ritchie and Marge Lampe who coordinated this baking event this year. For without their leadership, it wouldn't have been such a success!

Update on Sanctuary Air Conditioning:
This week we learned that the adjusted, adjusted, adjusted lead time is now October. Obviously, this is frustrating for all parties. Parts maker A needs parts from B,C, and D. C and D are waiting on materials from E and F. In addition, it is no use going with a different company, because a different company has the same issues. Thanks for your understanding and patience.

Other Building Related Info:

We are currently receiving bids for the repair of the outdoor cement stairs leading to the Narthex, repair of the parking lot, and the final completion of the brick bell stand.

Sincerely,
Your Trustees

Do you know our custodian, Tim Ridley?

Tim has been working for FCC for 8 years, he's now pretty familiar with the flow of the church-- meetings, schedule, etc., and related cleaning needs.

Tim works 15 hours a week for FCC, and has a lot of tasks to fit in that limited time. The majority of his tasks are done 1x a week (bathrooms, trash, clean glass doors, vacuum carpeted areas, etc.); while other tasks are done only monthly. (i.e., vacuuming Fellowship hall wall to wall). There are also a variety of other tasks that aren't on his given list, and he'll still try to get to them.

Tim takes pride in his work, and is meticulous, and is working with church staff to continue to improve.

What is NOT on his designated work list? for example- dusting of surfaces; setting up Fellowship Hall for groups using the building (including FCC members), changing light-bulbs, other maintenance.

Congregation members can help us out by making sure to clean up after themselves following meetings, etc. Also-- in watching for maintenance needs, like burnt out light-bulbs. Just leave a note on the small bulletin board between the Volunteer and middle office. We have (fortunately!) a group of people who have been taking care of those types of jobs.

If you have concerns about the cleanliness of the church, please share with Victoria or the Personnel Committee chair (currently Dea Bishop).

Address Directory

The church office would like to print up a new address directory by mid September. Please review the current information listed. If there are any changes please let the office know by September 5th.



September 23rd is our last time of 2023 to pick up trash in our designated area on M140.

We meet at 9 a.m. at the curve off of 24th/M140, in between South Haven and Covert.

Please wear appropriate clothing and bring a pair of gloves. Bags and stab sticks are provided.

We could certainly use your help that day. The more people, the less time it takes.

Thank you in advance!

September

Birthdays

- 09/01 Veryn Perez
- 09/03 Marilyn Arnott
- 09/11 Ron Danczyk
- 09/16 Kathy Campbell
- 09/21 Sarah Peterson
- 09/22 Sue Mears
- 09/23 Terry McGarr
- 09/28 Lynn Gabel
- 09/29 Juanita Wellever
- 09/30 Nancy Garber

Anniversaries

- 09/04 Mark & Peggy McClendon
- 09/11 Aaron & Jane Strebeck
- 09/12 Jim & Sue Mears
- 09/22 Sean & Sarah Peterson





LOOKING TO OCTOBER

A Halloween event - Trunk or Treat

will be Oct 29 at 2. We need people to decorate their cars and hand out candy as well as extra hands to do games and activities from the church.

Talk with Sarah Peterson about what you can help with!
214-2310



Planned for
October 1
October 8 (rain)

Southwest Association Meeting
October 22nd
at Portage UCC

Need delegates
2 adult and 1 youth delegate

Please contact Dave Murphey or Pastor Dave if you are interested in attending.

2023 Annual Meeting
Michigan Conference of
the United Church of Christ
October 28th