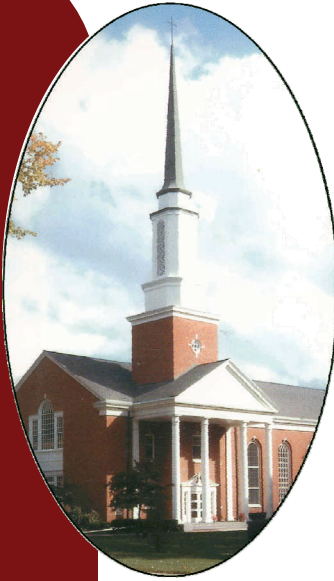


# THE PARCHMENT

February 2010



## An Answer to Prayer

The 5 year old told his dad he'd like to have a baby brother, not knowing one was "on the way." So his wise dad said, You just start praying, and in two months I'll bet your prayers will be answered. So he prayed every day for a month. Then he thought about what he was doing. He'd never heard of this happening. He asked around. He received many quizzical looks, as if to say "Are you kidding?" So he stopped praying. A month later his mom went to the hospital. When she came back home, mom and dad called him into the bedroom. Oh my gosh! There was not just one baby but TWO, a boy and girl, bundled up right next to his mom. His dad smiled and said, "Now aren't you glad you prayed?" The boy shot back, "You bet, but aren't you glad I quit when I did?"

Laughter puts prayer in perspective. But sometimes it's not quite that easy. Let's be honest about prayer. Often it isn't easy, convenient, or answered the way we want it to be. Jesus, faced with the hardest day of his life, asked three disciples to pray with him and they fell asleep. And you thought you were the only one to fall asleep while praying? And have you ever found three people who agree on the best time, place, and way to pray? If you relate to any of this, yet you still believe that praying is something we all should do because somehow it does make a difference, read on.

During Lent, join me as we read, talk, and pray through a very open and honest book about prayer. The author, Philip Yancey, is one of my favorite Christian writers. (I just heard several Amens). He tackles concerns which are central to our faith yet aren't often dealt with honestly. You can see it in some of his titles:

*Disappointment with God*

*Where Is God When It Hurts?*

*Church: Why Bother?*

*Rumors of Another World*

*What's So Amazing About Grace?*

This last one should be a "must read" for every Christian. It's refreshing, hopeful, and challenging.

We're going to read *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* Well, does it? What do you think? If you answer Yes, list the reasons for your answer. If you can't readily answer Yes, or if you answer No (it's okay. God will not throw a lightning bolt out of heaven and strike you dead), then think about why you answer that way.

(Continued on the inside cover.)

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC  
2001 Niles Ave • Saint Joseph, MI • 49085**

**SUNDAY**  
**SCHEDULE**

**September**  
**to May**

**9:15 a.m.**

**Adult Classes**

**9:30 a.m.**

**Children's Choir  
&  
Middle High  
Youth Class**

**10:25 a.m.**

**Worship**

**June**  
**to August**

**9:55 a.m.**

**Worship**

**OFFICE**  
**HOURS**

**Monday ~**

**Thursday**

**8 a.m. ~**

**3:45 p.m.**

Whether you answer Yes or No, let's talk and read and pray. Place your order NOW for a book if you want to get it through the church. Cost is \$20.00. We'll place the order on February 15, so after that date you'll have to order your own. I hope you'll choose to read it even if you don't come to the discussion.

We'll meet on Wednesday nights beginning February 24, 6:30 to 7:30, and finish on March 31. We won't be repeating this on Thursday mornings as has been our pattern. In addition to our regular Lenten services, look for other special "prayer" activities during Lent to help renew our prayer lives.

I'm praying that you join us.

Dr. Bob

### **New Member/Exploration Classes**

If you'd like to become a member of the church or simply want to know more about us, you are invited to join us for three classes during the month of February. We will meet during the hour just prior to worship on February 7, 14 and 21. If interested, please call or email the church office: [office@fccstjoseph.org](mailto:office@fccstjoseph.org) or 983-5519.

### **Women's Lenten Study**

*Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus: How the Jewishness of Jesus can Transform Your Faith* by Ann Spangler and Lois Tverberg. We will meet Tuesday evenings - February 23 - March 30 from 6:30-7:30.

The season of Lent is a time of preparation, a time of reflection, a time to draw closer to Christ. This six week study and discussion of the beliefs, history, traditions, and customs of Jesus' Jewish culture will deepen our understanding of Jesus' life, his life-changing message, and the roots of our own Christian faith.

Ruthann Miller, Diana Seaman and Beth Kenagy will lead the study. Please contact Beth (428-3347) if you wish to order the book.

## Health News from Janel February - Women & Heart Disease

*“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.” Proverbs 4:23 NLT*

There is a misconception that cancer is the greatest health risk for women, especially breast cancer. In reality, heart disease kills more women than all forms of cancer put together. Minority women have the highest death rate from heart disease while the entire gender has a higher death rate from stroke than men. Part of the problem is that heart disease is displayed differently in women than in men so it becomes difficult to recognize in women if the observer doesn't know the difference in symptoms.

The classic symptoms for heart attack are severe chest pain, a squeezing sensation in the chest lasting 5-10 minutes, pain radiating down the left arm or profuse sweating. Up to 50% of women who suffer heart attacks have symptoms that are considered atypical. These include shortness of breath, indigestion, pain in the jaw, shoulder, or back, sudden nausea or vomiting, unexplained fatigue, fainting, or even dizziness. Anytime a female experiences these symptoms, she should seek medical attention by calling 911. Even a slight hesitation could lead to severe consequences if she is having a cardiac episode.

Plaque buildup can be different in women also. In men it tends to be clumpy and irregular which responds well to angioplasty and stents that flatten out the plaque. In some women, plaque forms an even layer on the vessel lining which means drug therapy works better than angioplasty. Women also respond to aspirin differently. In women, it seems more effective in preventing stroke while in men it is more effective for heart attack prevention.

For a woman, the most important thing to do is talk to her physician. She should discuss her health history and determine potential risks for heart disease. The next step would be to create a plan to change or impact those risks and follow the doctor's instructions. Women are the same but different. It is important to find out individual needs and then address them. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the Parish Nurse, Janel Groth.

Celebrate National Wear Red Day on Friday, February 5. Choose to be a leader. Inspire friends, family and coworkers to wear red and speak up about heart disease – our No. # 1 killer – on National Wear Red Day! National Wear Red Day is the one day each year the American Heart Association dedicates to building awareness for the risk of heart disease, and raising funds for research and education on behalf of women everywhere. (Source: [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com) & [www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org) )

This year, for the **Go Red for Women**, a national movement led by the American Heart Association, I'm asking **everyone** to please join in and wear red on Sunday, February 14. Wear a red dress, pants, sweater, tie or socks. Help support awareness of heart disease in our community.

## Exercise Adds Years to Life

Living with hypertension does not have to be a millstone around your neck! It can be an opportunity to make small changes in your daily routine that will add years and quality to your life.

A study released in 2005 by the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, Netherlands, based on more than 40 years of data from the Framingham Heart Study, found that people who exercised regularly added more than three years, mostly free from heart disease, to their lives. The study followed 4,121 people in suburban Boston who walked five or more days a week for thirty minutes a day (either moderately or briskly) and improved their heart health. The same was true for those who walked briskly for thirty minutes a day only three times a week.

It is clear that lifestyle plays a critical role in health promotion and disease prevention. It is often difficult, however, to change your lifestyle on your own. Our congregation's "Jacob's Journey" program is designed to provide a setting, a Biblical context, and support for a journey by members who want to prevent or address their hypertension. Jacob was supported—and challenged—in varying ways by family, strangers, and by God. You can be too!

Please contact Janel Groth, Parish Nurse, if you would like more information about this program.

## Services during Lent

- **February 17, 6:30 p.m., Ash Wednesday Service** – This marks the beginning of the forty days of Lent (not including Sundays), a time of prayer and conversation about the life of Jesus Christ, culminating in his arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection. To remember our origins and mortality, we offer ashes made in the sign of the cross on the forehead, and we end with Holy Communion. The ashes come from burning the palms used on last year's Palm Sunday.
- **March 28, Sunday, Palm/Passion Sunday** – We remember Jesus riding into Jerusalem to shouts of Hosanna, evicting the money-changers from the Temple, and planning the rest of a very difficult week.
- **April 1, 6:30 p.m., Maundy Thursday** – Jesus eats his last supper with the disciples, washing their feet to drive home his insistence that the best leaders are servant leaders.
- **April 2, 12 noon, Good Friday** – We have a brief, simple Communion service to remind us that Jesus was crucified on this day.
- **April 4, Sunday, Easter Sunday** – We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the true beginning of the Christian faith.

The gospels tell us of these events in the following places:

Matthew 21:1-17; 26 - 28

Mark 11:1-1; 14 - 16

Luke 19:28-48; 22 - 24

John 12:12-19; 13; 18 - 21

**Suggestion: Read one of the gospels in its entirety during Lent.**



## **Come join us for fun and fellowship from 6:30-8:00 Wednesday nights:**

February 3 - **NO YOUTH GROUP**, just rest following the Geneva Retreat

**February 10** - Human Clue at church

**February 12** - Olympic Opening Ceremony Party/Game Night Bring \$2/person for pizza  
NOTE TIME AND DAY CHANGE 7–10 p.m.

**February 17 & 24** - Regular youth group

## **New Address**

George Fisk has recently moved to Bickford Cottage, 4707 W. Milham Avenue, Portage, MI, 49024. He will also celebrate his 90th birthday on February 26. He would enjoy hearing from you.

## **Mark your calendar for an afternoon of beautiful music!**



We will present the Andrews University Singers in a pre-Super Bowl concert of inspiring and uplifting choral music on Sunday, February 7 at 4 p.m. in our Sanctuary.

The University Singers are a nationally award-winning choir representing Southwest Michigan and Andrews University nationally and abroad.

Opening up for the University Singers is the all-girls choir “Girls of Mercy”.

This choir, comprised of teenage young women, is committed to vocal excellence as they perform music from their African heritage. Their sound will transport you to Africa.

The concert is free but the complete proceeds of a free-will offering will support Doctors Without Boundaries active in medical relief in Haiti.

## Men's Ministry

We meet at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast in the Gathering Room. Please join us. Questions? Call Bill Bock at 983-7576.

**February 6**

“That the World May Know” - video series session #5 “Iron of Culture”

**February 20**

“Prophets & Kings”

(Continuation of “That the World May Know”) video series session #1 “Innocent Blood—Meggiddo”



The Altar Guild has the following dates open for flowers for the church altar: March 21, April 18, and May 16. If you are interested in providing flowers for a Sunday, please call the church office at 983-5519.

## Got talent?

Do you dance? Sing? Do card tricks? It's time to share your talents at the 2010 FCC Talent Showcase coming on March 21. If you'd like to share your juggling skills, your instrumental skills, your balloon animals, contact John Thomas at 983-3107 or email him at [j.thomas135@gmail.com](mailto:j.thomas135@gmail.com) or contact any member of BAM.

## Organ concert series

As we have been anxiously waiting for the new instrument to be complete, this Lenten Season we will offer five short Sunday afternoon organ concerts. These concerts are co-sponsored by the First Congregational Church and the Twin Cities Organ Concert Series and we will be celebrating our newly renovated and expanded pipe organ. The Lenten Organ Mediation Series will begin with our former organist, Linda Mack, and conclude with our current organist, Paul Flyger. The other three local organists will each present a different and exciting organ concert. The concerts are free and open to the public with a suggested free-will donation of \$5.00. The concerts will take place at 4 p.m. Listed below are the dates:

February 21 - Linda Mack

February 29 - James Kraus

March 7 - Philip Peter

March 14 - Perry Heppler



## February Birthdays

- 02—Sallie Coldren  
02—Caryl Eller  
03—Karmen Brower  
05—Carol Geldhof  
05—Betty Westmaas  
06—Ken Zimmerman  
07—Georgina Haight  
11—Nina Dominy  
11—Adam Parin  
12—Bob Cultice  
12—Shirley Garey  
12—Karen Mitchell  
14—Perry Ballard  
15—Jacob Havenaar  
15—Debbie Wood  
18—Riley Bair  
19—Reese Bair  
20—Jim Meister  
21—Deb Burkhard  
22—Bill Chickering  
22—Nancy Gaynor  
22—Daniel Michaels  
23—Brady Iddings  
25—Everett Case  
25—Ron Gaynor  
26—George Fisk  
26—Karen Molineaux  
26—Dorothy Symons  
27—Carol Johnson  
27—Bill Sinclair  
28—Kim Capes  
28—Walt Waldenmaier



## “Young at Hearts”

We will be taking our winter break to give all our volunteers a rest during February. We will meet again on March 18.

## Circle News

**Women’s Fellowship**—All women of the church are welcome to participate in Women’s Fellowship. We will meet at 10:00 a.m. on February 17 in the Parlor.

**Mary Martha Circle**—Will meet on Tuesday, February 9 at 1:00 p.m. in the Parlor.

**Mary Preston Guild**—Will meet Wednesday, February 10 at 4:00 p.m. in the Parlor.

## Bridge Club

We will meet Wednesday, February 10 at 1:00 p.m. in the Gathering Room.



To the family of Betty Harness. Betty died on January 4.

## Holy Donations for Helping the Haitians

Haiti’s earthquake disaster points out the need for immediate help, which many of you undoubtedly contributed to. Many disasters require ongoing help, and this is one of them. The coming season of Lent provides an opportunity for us to take a big-picture approach. Suggestion: Fast one meal each day (or lighten up on what you normally eat), beginning Ash Wednesday, February 17 and set aside an amount of money for each of those meals during this forty day period. On Easter Sunday, April 4, we will bring our collected monies together, dedicate them to God, and send them through One Great Hour of Sharing for the relief work in Haiti, for the feeding and healing of those who need so much of both, and for the glory of God.

## **The Search Committee has great news!**

After a very thorough review of over 30 candidates, which led to fifteen telephone and two face-to-face interviews, we have a Candidate of Choice for associate minister of First Congregational Church whom we want you to meet on Sunday, February 28.

Her name is Kathryn Cooper; she goes by Katie, and she is wonderful. Katie was raised in a UCC church in the suburbs of St. Louis, MO. She will receive her Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary this spring. In fact, she will graduate from Princeton on May 22 and be married on May 29.

Katie absolutely and very passionately wants to work in youth ministries and Christian Education, which is exactly what we were looking for. Her professional experience includes creating and sustaining a youth ministry at a large Presbyterian church in Flemington, NJ, and a year-long internship at a large Presbyterian church in northern Ireland, where she assisted the senior minister in all areas of church life. We received not one or two but five excellent references from highly respected professors and church leaders who were quite clear that Katie has distinguished herself and would be an asset to our church. She is on track for ordination in the UCC. Her tentative start date would be mid-June.

The Search Committee had the opportunity to spend time with Katie when she came to St. Joseph to meet with us during the weekend of January 3. We are unanimous that this person is our Candidate of Choice. We want to present her to you at a congregational potluck on Saturday evening and in worship on Sunday morning during the weekend of February 28. Our church follows UCC protocol in hiring an associate minister, and this includes a congregational vote on her candidacy, which we will hold immediately following worship on the morning of February 28.

## **The weekend activities look like this:**

### **Saturday, February 27, from 6:00-8:00 p.m.: Congregational Potluck**

The potluck will provide an opportunity for Katie to introduce herself to us and for us to ask Katie questions in an informal setting. The Search Committee is providing the main dish, beverages, and tableware. We ask members of the congregation to bring a side dish to share.

### **Sunday, February 28, from 10:25-11:30 a.m.: Worship and Congregational Vote**

Immediately following worship members will vote on calling Katie as our new associate minister.

### **Sunday, February 28, 11:30 a.m.: Fellowship Hour**

Everyone is invited to come downstairs immediately after church to welcome Katie and share light refreshments of cake, punch and coffee.

## Women's Book Study

For the February 23 meeting of the book group, we will be discussing the first U.S. published book by Tatiana de Rosnay entitled, *Sarah's Keys*. Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten-year-old girl, is brutally arrested with her family by the French police in the Vel'd'Hiv' roundup, but not before she locks her younger brother in a cupboard in the family's apartment, thinking that she will be back within a few hours. Paris, May 2002: On Vel'd'Hiv's 60th anniversary, journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article about this black day in France's past. Through her contemporary investigation, she stumbles onto a trail of long-hidden family secrets that connect her to Sarah. Tatiana de Rosnay offers us a brilliantly subtle, compelling story of France under occupation and reveals the taboos and silence that surround this painful episode. Please join us as we discuss this amazing story and learn about Sarah and Julia's story. *Sarah's Keys* is available from Borders.com or Amazon.com. We meet in the Parlor at 9:30 a.m.

## Spotlighting - Well of GRACE Ministries (One of the groups our Missions Board has helped this past year.)

Well of GRACE Ministries is a non-profit, Christ-centered organization that transforms physically, emotionally and spiritually wounded young women. GRACE is an acronym for "Girls Restored And Christ Exalted." Well of GRACE Ministries was created to bring hope and healing to many young women in our community who are struggling with depression, anxiety, eating disorders or issues from past abuse from the hands of others or from themselves in the form of self-mutilation.

Well of GRACE Ministries is committed to providing services that address the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of young women. Our ministry is also committed to providing these services free of charge as finances and lack of insurance can be huge barriers for many young women to receive the help they need.

For two years Well of GRACE operated a residential home for young women ages 18-24. During that time our ministry provided services to 12 young women. It was exciting to see God transform the lives of these women during their stay. However, our residential program was limited as we could only serve 4 women at a time. Because we believed we had something valuable to offer, we pursued ways to expand our ministry. As a result, we are restructuring our residential program into an intensive day program so that we can accommodate more young women to receive our services. We are hoping to have the day program ready for enrollment in March 2010.

Another result of expanding our ministry was the creation of Club H2O. It is our newest endeavor providing services to adolescent girls ages 13-18. Club meetings are organized into 12 "splashes." Each splash addresses self-esteem, self-concept and defining God's purpose. Currently, two Club H2O groups meet every Tuesday afternoon at Overflow Café at Orchard Mall in Benton Harbor, and Tuesday evening at First Church of God in St. Joseph. Participation in Club H2O is free. For information about Club H2O or about our ministry, please visit our website at [www.wellofgraceministries.com](http://www.wellofgraceministries.com) or call our office at (269) 428-9355.

## Do You Love God?

*You can't honestly say that you love God unless you know Him and know yourself.*

**D**o you love God? Are you personally involved with Him, or are you just relying on family or social traditions? Is your whole being involved, or are you closing off part of your life from Him?

Do you *love* God? Love means more than just knowing or respecting Him. Are you giving Him a place of priority in your life above everything else? Is it love in words only, or are there actions that prove your love?

Do you love *God*? Do you love just the notion of a celestial being, or do you love the real God who deserves our devotion? Are you only interested in the parts of Him that you want (like His loving and forgiving nature)? Or, do you love God for all His attributes (such as His righteousness and holiness that abhor sinful behavior)?

Spend this day considering the questions: "Do you love God?"

*"And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength."  
Mark 12:30*

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God is  
still speaking,



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