



THE PARCHMENT

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC
2001 NILES AVENUE, ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

NOVEMBER 2011

November - Personal and Shared

How is your November shaping up? Mine includes four events that are very personal, but they're better when I share them with others. I'll be sharing three of them with you.

On November 6th, Sunday, I will offer my pledge card to fund and support our church's ministry for 2012. And **we will share** that experience together. Money is always very personal. Most of us have no knowledge of one another's finances. Even our pledges are kept confidential, known only by two who record them, with anonymous numbers given to the Trustees to create the budget. When each of us makes a personal pledge to the church, **we are pledging to and with one another** that we believe God makes a difference in our lives and has brought us together to make a difference.

On November 15th, Tuesday, I will be sitting in a deer blind. I'll share that hiding place with my Dad, soon to be 88. He missed last year's opening day in order to receive a pace-maker. This year he'll be with the group again--about 10, mostly family, all guys--who the night before will eat lots of food and play cards, and scheme. Yes, there's a little gambling. The big losers will be \$10 poorer when the last hand is played. Then we'll be up and out into the woods before there's one lumen of light in the sky. Most will be armed with high-powered rifles. I'll have my low-powered camera. Dad and I will catch up on family news. And all will be right with the world for a couple of days, a very personal time **shared with people** I've known all or most of my life.

On November 24th, Thursday, I will give thanks to God for countless blessings. Because it is a national holiday, **you and I will share** the day in spirit, grateful for Pilgrims. Because we are Christians, you and I will be united by God's Spirit, remembering that we, too, are spiritual pilgrims. Thanksgiving is the one secular holiday that we have successfully turned into a sacred day of thanks.

On November 27th, Sunday, the first day of Advent, I will begin preparing once again to remember the birth of Jesus Christ. I will wonder how this baby king-to-be could be born to a most unlikely couple, laid in a surprising cradle, honored by dumbfounded shepherds, all in anticipation of a life of humility and service. And that's hardly the end of the story. I will not wonder alone. **We will share** these four Sunday's together, you and I, in worship and with family and with the all those in the world who care that He cares. There are many.

MINISTERIAL STAFF

Senior Minister
Rev. Dr. Bob Braman

Associate Minister
Rev. Kathryn Nix

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

September to May

9:15 a.m.

Adult Classes

9:15 a.m.

Jr. & Sr. High Classes

Held During Worship

Children & Worship
Ages 4 to 2nd grade

DIVE Class
For 3rd—5th graders

Worship

10:25 a.m.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday
8 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Phone:

(269) 983-5519

WEBSITE

fccstjoseph.org

EMAIL

office@fccstjoseph.org

Note that each of these begins with “I will” and then includes “We will.” Each of us can do them privately, alone. But when you and I share and do them as We, they are magnified and intensified. It’s November. Reach out and grab a hand, attached to which you will find a heart, and let’s enjoy this month together.

Dr. Bob

November 6 Stewardship Sunday

As a church we have adopted 6 marks of discipleship: Prayer, Bible reading, Worship, Giving, Serving, and Spiritual friendships. Each is important all the time, including this time of year when we focus on giving.

On Sunday, November 6, as an act of **Worship** all of us will offer our pledges of money we will be **Giving** for our 2012 budget for our church’s ministry. We will **pray** over those pledges, asking God to show us how to best **serve** in the year ahead, remembering the words we have read and heard each of the previous weeks as we **read the Bible** together. And we will remember that we are not alone; we depend upon one another through our **spiritual friendships**, as we depend upon God.

If you did not receive a Pledge Card in the mail, please call the Church Office at 983-5519. We will also have cards available in the Narthex before worship on **November 6**.



Pastor Katie

Have you experienced our new Wednesday Night format? Because we are having a great time and we want you to join us! Everyone agrees that our part-time dinner chef, Shaun is creating masterpieces in the kitchen. If you want to know the menu ahead of time, you can always check out our church's face-book page or call the office.



We've also seen in worship the beauty and practice our two bell choirs are putting into their work. Paul Flyger is doing a wonderful job and is always looking for more ringers. Dr. Bob and Jeff Terry's class have been engaging and informative

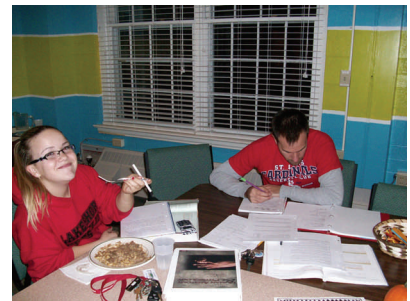
about the Bible, and Diana Seaman's class for parents is a great compliment to our Sunday morning programs. And you can't forget all the fun the children and youth are having with

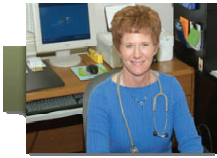


Felicia, our part-time family coordinator. We've thrown marshmallows, baked cookies for our college students and chased each other in octopus tag. As for my time with the children and youth in the Chapel, it has been a wonderful exploration into the six marks of a disciple. We've talked about prayer and giving so far. Starting November 2 we are going to use our time to start writing the

Children's Christmas program. That's right, I'm letting the youth design the service.

So come join us as we fellowship together, learn about God, and grow as disciples of Jesus Christ!





Janel Groth, RN, FCN

Life Transitions:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"
2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

Life never stays the same. There are several stages with unique challenges that make each one memorable. As new parents you add new responsibilities and a baby to your life while trying to establish yourselves as a couple. This new role means sharing your partner with someone else so make sure you talk to each other, have a date night, and share your struggles. Adjustment is easier when you know what challenges exist.

The next stage is the teen years and the bid for independence. This coincides with financial concerns such as maintaining a home, supporting the family, preparing for college, and possibly helping an elderly parent. Know that the caregiver role for your child is starting to end. To prepare your child for adulthood, teach him/her about financial and personal responsibility and be open with your spouse about any conflicts you have about letting go.

Next is sending your child off to college, career, or marriage. You are no longer the parent/controller but a friend/advisor. If this is your last child it may mean reconnecting with your spouse since the previous years have been focused on your child(ren). You might also be adding the role of caregiver for a parent. Keep in mind as you struggle with your changing roles, your parent is also struggling with his/her loss of independence. Be patient, include your parent in decisions when possible, ask siblings and friends for help, and be honest about your feelings.

The last stage is retirement where some have a loss of identity because they no longer work while others find new beginnings. To make the transition successful, consciously look for things to do. Resurrect an old hobby or find a new one. Travel to visit family and spend time with your grandchildren. If you can't travel, call them on the phone or use email. Stay connected and interested and you will find a whole new world.

Life is ever changing and I too am experiencing change. As you may or may not know I have taken a new job with PACE of Southwest Michigan. PACE is the acronym for Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. The program will serve the frail elderly, who are Medicare & Medicaid eligible and qualify for nursing home care but want to stay in their own homes. I will be the Center Manager of the adult daycare center where the clients will come for their care. I am very grateful for the time spent with the members of the church. It has been a pleasure and privilege to have been able to care for the health needs of the congregation. I appreciate the support and well wishes as I start a new phase of life. May God bless and keep each one of you. See you in church!

In Christ's Service,
Janel Groth
Parish Nurse

**Need a Break?
Come Bowl With Us!**

On Friday, November 25 (the day after Thanksgiving), we invite you to join us at Kelley's Bowl in St. Joseph. We'll be at the lanes from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. Come for the whole time, just a game, or to visit with friends. **This event is open to everyone**, and we hope you'll bring friends and family; the more the merrier! If you know you're going to make it, please RSVP so we can go ahead and reserve the lanes. If you aren't able to RSVP but end up being able to make it, come anyway.

Contact Felicia Lemyre at felicialemyre@gmail.com or (614) 477-2022 with questions or to RSVP.

Opportunities to Serve

Wednesday, November 16 from 9:00-12:00 and 1:00-3:00 we will be assisting Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency warehouse in their quarterly food distribution. We will be handing out food items (usually 2 pounds or less per item) and assisting clients in loading their cars.

Please sign up on the church bulletin board or contact JoAnn Sprayberry at 921-1659 or j_sprayberry@hotmail.com.

ALSO

The Berrien County Association of Churches founded the Benton Harbor Street Ministry in the belief it offers a way of following Christ. Executive director Yvonne Hester and her volunteers work with children, teenagers, adults, and seniors, providing an array of services including: GED classes and after school homework help. The Board of Missions is looking for a team of 2-4 people to assist the program by listening to a child read, playing a board game after school, working on simple craft activities, or assisting the GED teacher in grading papers. Contact JoAnn Sprayberry at 921-1659 for more information.

Looking ahead - The Missions Board will be conducting the Thanksgiving food drive on November 13 and 20. Food will be donated to the food pantry at the Benton Harbor Street Ministry. The Berrien County Department of Human Services will be providing us with a list of children who will be spending Christmas in a foster home. We'll have 'wish lists' for specific children available in mid to late November. And finally, the Mitten Tree will make its annual appearance in early December, all mittens, hats, scarves, and socks will be donated to the Salvation Army for distribution to families in need. Please watch the bulletin for more details for all of these upcoming opportunities to assist those in our community.

COMING IN NOVEMBER

**2nd ~ Wednesday Night Programs
(K-8th grade start preparing for Children's Christmas Program)**

3rd ~ Women's Bible Study

5th ~ Men's Ministry meets at 8:00 a.m. in the Gathering Room

**6th ~ Last Confirmation Class for 2011
Stewardship Sunday**

**9th ~ Wednesday Night Programs
(K-8th grade continue working on Christmas Program)**

10th ~ 1:30 p.m. Women's Bible Study

13th ~ Senior High WILL NOT MEET

**17th ~ "Young at Hearts" Thanksgiving Dinner
1:30 p.m. ~ Women's Bible Study**

**18th—29th ~ National Youth Workers Convention
(Pastor Katie and other youth leaders out)**

19th ~ Men's Ministry at 8:00 a.m. in the Gathering Room

24th ~ Office Closed for Thanksgiving

25th ~ All-church bowling party at Kelly's Bowl

**27th ~ Congregational Meeting to vote on the report of the nominating committee
Farewell gathering for Nurse Janel after worship**

What a sale!! Thank you to everyone for your generous participation in the fall rummage sale.

The sale generated \$14,000+, one of our largest ever. This is possible only because of your contributions of items for “recycling” in our community and the donation of your time and money. The thousand of items donated make a difference in the lives of the people in our community who wouldn’t be able to purchase elsewhere because of cost restraints.



Thank you also for the hundreds of hours of your time bringing items in, providing food for the workers, setting up and taking down racks, sorting and marking clothing, pricing, testing items, directing traffic, and yes, even buying! All of us who were able to work in the various departments enjoyed the opportunity to become better acquainted with one another and appreciate the wonderful fellow-

ship. We also enjoyed the delightful people who come to our sale and the wonderful comments from them are most satisfying. We’d also like to thank First Church of God for loaning us clothing racks. (We ran out of space and needed more!)



An idea of how some of the funds have been spent over the past few years: Scholarships, \$10,000; Missions, \$15,000; Parsonage kitchen & bathroom, \$12,500; Parlor, Gathering Room, Kitchen, \$30,000; Chapel renovation, \$11,500. Significant funds are also distributed to the Soup Kitchen, “Caring & Sharing”, and special needs situations.

Near the end of the sale we permit the Opportunity Center, Riverwood, Red Wagon of Rotary Club (children’s books), Benton Harbor Library, Buchanan Soup Kitchen, Operation Coats, Intercare Community Health, Catholic Community Center, and Hope Chest to select items to fill some of their needs. Six Degrees Resale Store takes the bulk of items left to aid many in need in our community.



Our grateful appreciation is given to each of you again.

The Rummage Sale Committee

Remembrance Fund – some memorials, one significant purchase

Gifts were made during July/August/September in memory of Charlie Field and in memory of Bernie Darvill. Much appreciation to the families who chose to include First Congregational in their suggested memorial recipients list.

As a practice, the church sends a thank you note to each donor recognizing their donation and a separate note to the family of the deceased with the donor's name (but not the amount) to give them an opportunity to express appreciation. Each note is sent no matter the size of the donation.

Remembrance Fund balance at the end of September was \$12,427.29 which represents a decrease from the \$13,767.38 June-end balance.

Per our mission of addressing special needs of the church, the Remembrance Fund paid \$4,439.70 for the new Bibles in the pews. Individual donors have chosen to sponsor a pew Bible in memory or honor of a loved one and those donations have returned \$2,265.00 to the Fund. Memorial donations for a Bible are still being accepted.

Your Remembrance Committee welcomes questions concerning the fund and hopes you will consider the fund a viable way to remember a friend or loved one. Our next report will be in the Parchment at the end of December.

Sincerely,
The Remembrance Fund Committee
Perry Ballard, Evelyn Edmunds & Midge Carr

Coming in 2012

We are hosting a Marriage Retreat Workshop on Saturday, February 11 from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Meals, couple massages, and childcare are all included in the cost (\$50 per couple). So mark your calendar for this opportunity to strengthen and renew your marriage, and keep an eye out for more information in the months ahead.

<u>September Statistical Information</u>			
Income for Sept.	\$ 44,017.47	Year-to-Date Income	\$ 338,485.55
Expenses for Sept.	<u>27,475.07</u>	Year-to-Date Expense	<u>324,573.89</u>
Gain/Loss for Sept.	\$ 16,542.40	Year-to-Date Gain/Loss	\$ 13,911.66

November Birthdays



- 01 ~ Dennis Bowen
- 02 ~ Doug Wood
- 03 ~ Vickie Florin
- 03 ~ Barb Lovellette
- 04 ~ Andrew Capes
- 05 ~ Ruthann Miller

- 11 ~ Verlin Harder
- 11 ~ Gene Maddock
- 11 ~ Jerry Warren
- 13 ~ Marian Edinger
- 14 ~ Joanne Averill
- 15 ~ Bill Benner
- 15 ~ Audrey Elwell
- 16 ~ Paul Florin
- 16 ~ Donna Johnson
- 16 ~ Lorry Johnson
- 17 ~ Mark Zielke
- 18 ~ Abby Michaels
- 20 ~ Sally Posey
- 20 ~ Juanita Powe
- 22 ~ Hank Gleiss
- 22 ~ Sheila Knight-Day
- 22 ~ Jennifer Terry
- 23 ~ Jen Ort
- 24 ~ Meghan Vukorpa
- 27 ~ Cathie Schalk
- 28 ~ Priscilla Byrns-Field
- 30 ~ Julie Koch

CPR Class

We will be offering a HeartSaver CPR class on Tuesday, November 29 at 5:00 p.m. in the Gathering Room. This class is for community members wishing to learn CPR or to renew their skills (the class is not for healthcare professionals). The class will include adult and infant CPR and AED training. The cost is \$20 per person. Please sign up at the Health Center Desk or call Parish Nurse Janel at 983-5519.



“Young at Hearts”

Thanksgiving Dinner

We hope that you will come out and join us on Thursday, November 17 at noon for our annual Thanksgiving Dinner. This event is open to all church members.

PLEASE NOTE that all reservations need to be called into the church office (983-5519) by Monday, November 14 so the cooks can order the food supplies.

Looking forward to seeing you on the 17th!

Women’s News

Women’s Fellowship will meet on Wednesday, November 16 at 10:30 a.m. in the Parlor. All women of the church are invited to attend. Following the meeting we all go out to lunch. Please join us!

Mary Martha Circle will meet November 8 at 1:00 p.m. in the Parlor.

Mary Preston Guild will meet Wednesday, November 9. Time and place to be announced.



Though we are still raking leaves it is time to start planning for Christmas. On Sunday, November 20, immediately following worship, I will need the help of all the youngsters and their parents to carry the decorations upstairs from the Christmas storage room. Then on Tuesday, November 22, I look forward to working with as many of you as possible who can decorate a tree and hang a garland or a wreath. We’ll start at 9:00 a.m. and will be finished before noon.

Thank you. Carol Geldhof

Women's Book Study
Tuesday, November 29 @ 9:30

Join us as we discuss ***The Red Skirt: Memoirs of an Ex-Nun*** by Patricia Gibson. The author will join us to share her poignant story of answering the call to enter the convent and ultimately the pain and joy in her decision to return to a secular life. We look forward to seeing you on the 29th!

Family Farewells

In September the following families bid farewell to family members, so we keep them in our prayers as they adjust to their loss.

- † Phyllis Root and her family on the death of her brother, Bob Williamson.
- † Jennifer Terry and family on the death of grandmother, Florence Rider.
- † To the family of Joan Roscher, she died on October 19.

Family Craft Night

Wednesday, December 14 will be family craft night this year. Please come and join us for dinner and crafting from 6 to 8. All our welcome! Please contact Felicia Lemyre at 614-477-2022 or felicialemyre@gmail.com if you would like to help.

Nursery Schedule for November

6th ~ Infant ~ Laura Fletty & Madeline Paul
Toddler ~ Teylor Collum

13th ~ Infant ~ Patty Nordberg & Rowan Conybear
Toddler ~ Kelly Yeager

20th ~ Infant ~ Tammy Thomas & Rowan Conybear
Toddler ~ Kelly Vukorpa

27th ~ Infant ~ Mary Griffin & Teylor Collum
Toddler ~ Krista Parin

Questions regarding the nursery schedule,
please call Patty Nordberg at 429-7297
or email her at pnordberg@comcast.net.