

The Parchment

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC
April 2016

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TO STAY CURRENT WITH CHURCH EVENTS

FACEBOOK: FCCStJoseph
WEBSITE: www.fccstjoseph.org

Greetings from Dr. Bob

Surprises

Lent is over and Easter has exploded on our hearts once again. Only in a climate like ours is there often a clear parallel between the advent of spring and the surprise of Easter. Both never get old, and we are always entirely ready.

The next divine "surprise" for us is Pentecost Sunday, commemorating the day God "gave birth" to the Church, 50 days after Easter. This year it falls in the middle of May.

I'd like to prepare you for another surprise, although it isn't such for everyone. I will be on Sabbatical this summer, including **June, July and August**. This was planned for last summer, but a major staffing change required some major calendar changes, too. What makes the Sabbatical possible this year is a solid Christian

Education staff who already have their summer planning well underway.

This Sabbatical will be a bit unusual in the following ways:

- A recently-retired UCC Minister will be here Sundays for worship through Tuesdays for board meetings, as well as to help with pastoral care and administrative needs. There are a few Sundays he cannot be here, but we'll have them covered well.
- I will be in touch with Judy and Paul at least weekly and with the CE staff at least every other week.
- If needed, I will return for funerals.

(Continued on net page.)

April Events

- **03 – Worship with Communion – no Sunday School Classes**
- **06 – No Wednesday night dinner or programs**
- **09 – Men's Ministry**
- **13 – Wednesday night dinner & programs resume**
- **23 – Men's Ministry and Women's Retreat**
- **24 – Joyful Sunday and a Family Matters lunch following worship**

See *The Parchment* for more events taking place during April.

These are all exceptions to a common clergy Sabbatical, but in discussions with Church Council I have concluded they will help us stay strong as a church family, even as we continue to solidify this past year's staffing changes.

There are also a number of projects cooking on the stovetops of boards, committees, and other groups in our church. To that end, one more surprise, so mark your calendar:

Sunday, April 24 is the date of two big events:

- **Joyful Sunday** is the theme of worship, and it will involve all of our choirs, including the kids, and even more.
- **A Family Matters Lunch** will follow in Fellowship Hall. After lunch, we'll fill you in on the many plans and projects which will help us maintain our vitality, always looking forward, always grateful to God.

This can only happen and be successful because we have such a vital congregation of YOU, coupled with outstanding staff members. That combination is a blessing from God that makes our church a place where we want to be, knowing that God meets us in the middle of all that we do.

With you, I'm looking forward to a great spring and summer. With you, I am striving to be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Bob

April 6, Wednesday, No dinner or class, Spring Break

April 3 & 10, Sundays, No Sunday School classes, Spring Break

April 16, Saturday, Southwest Association UCC Spring Meeting, details to be announced.

May 25, Last Wednesday night dinner and class

June 5, Sunday, Graduation Sunday

July 31 – August 4, Vacation Bible School

August 7, Church Picnic

April 24, Sunday, Family Matters Gathering

Periodically we need to gather as a church family for lunch and for major updates on what is being planned for our future as a church. We'll meet in Fellowship Hall right after worship, eat a light lunch, and get right down to business. Don't miss it because we'll miss you!

Baptisms on May 8 - Children and Adults

We'll be celebrating the joy of baptism on this Mother's Day. Parents, please inform the church office or Dr. Bob if you will be having your children baptized. **AND**, although often we baptize babies and children, if you as an adult, young or old, have never been baptized and would like to receive baptism as a sign of your commitment to Jesus Christ and your growing faith, please tell Dr. Bob so you will have time to talk and prepare for this very special event.

From Your Missions Board

Our church will once again host the 37th annual Blossomland CROP Walk on May 15. Registration will take place at 2:15 p.m. in the church parking lot. You can sign-up on Sundays May 1 & 8th to walk or provide cookies. Be thinking of who you can ask to sponsor you in the walk. There will also be a common container in the corner outside the front office for anyone who would like to make a donation. Twenty-five percent of the money raised in the CROP Walk will be distributed to local agencies in Southwest MI. *"When did we see you? Hungry, thirsty, sick, stranger, naked, imprisoned."* Matthew 25:37-40. Please plan to give.

InterCare Community Health Network

Last year the collection of items for farm workers through InterCare was a huge success due to the generosity of our congregation. This past year Mary Preston Guild members (each month since fall) have been collecting items for this project as well. **April 10 & 19th we will again** conduct a campaign for the farm workers. Personal hygiene items, pantry supplies (pinto beans, corn tortillas, rice) and general need items (bath towels, wash cloths, sheets, cleaning supplies) are needed. Thank you for helping those in our community.

Attention Parents

Alison Achramowicz

Starting April 20 through May 25 (no class on April 27) during Wednesday night programs from 6:30-7:30, a new adult class, focusing on the topic of parenting, will begin and led by one of our church's Christian Education directors, Alison Achramowicz. This is an interactive class that includes videos discussions, and workbook activities (yes, you will have homework!). We will be using the parenting workbook by Doug & Cathy Fields, *Intentional Parenting: 10 Ways to be an Exceptional Parent in a Quick Fix World*. Here is the back cover summary:

"Every parent has dreams for their children. As parents, we all start out with the best intentions.

Although, at some point, we move from DREAMS to DUCT TAPE and hope that each day everything will just stick together. Raising kids in today's culture is a difficult challenge and it requires a plan. Without a plan, parents usually default to Quick-fix Parenting. Let's face it: it's just easier to focus on immediate problems rather than deal with the deeper and more important ones. Surviving each day is much easier than taking the time and energy to consider how parenting actions impact a child's future. We get it.

To be an exceptional parent, you need to be an intentional parent. But, don't worry! You're not alone - Doug and Cathy are here to help. They're veteran parents who can help you move from Quick-Fix Parenting to Intentional Parenting.

It's never too late to become an intentional parent. Remember, you are the GREATEST influence in the life of your child (no matter their age)! And it can all begin with these resources. Let's walk this important journey - together."

Workbooks are \$17.00 each. Please let the office know by April 13 (983-5519 or office@fccstjoseph.org). The authors recommend both parents buy a book so one doesn't end up doing it all! But, if you are a team, one book will do. More info? www.intentionalparenting.com, including a preview video.

Men's Ministry

Dr. Bill Bock

The group meets at 8 a.m. for a warm breakfast and a discussion follows. We are using the book, *When a Nation Forgets God*. The group will meet on the following dates in April:

9th - Chapters 4 & 5

23rd - Chapters 6 & 7

On May 7 we'll finish with a happy, joyful "Italy as seen in 2016" presented by Joe Thomas. Please join us and contribute your thoughts and solutions.

Women's Retreat

Presented by

Women's Fellowship Council

April 23, 2016

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

Calling women of all ages! Moms, teens, grandmothers, and career women are invited to a day of fellowship, writing, singing, and enjoying the company of a diverse group of women.

From 9:00 - 9:30 a.m. there will be coffee, tea and, of course, something delicious to eat.

At 9:30 our morning will begin with Pamela Chappell guiding us as we learn to use writing and contemplation to find that wise voice inside each of us. We will break at noon for a special lunch prepared by Ann, our very own chef. We'll finish up after lunch and then go out feeling renewed and refreshed.

Tickets go on sale on April 3 for \$5 and must be purchased by April 18 to reserve your place. WFC hopes to have childcare available. For questions, call Ruthann Miller (269) 470-8195 or Shannon Milnickel (269) 325-7432.

We look forward to seeing you!

Music Ministry from Paul Flyger

We just passed the second important milestone in the church year – Easter. What a great Holy Week we had this year! I had a wonderful time planning, preparing and performing all services with Dr. Bob and I hope they were meaningful and relevant for your Easter experience this season. Moments ago, I decided what the Easter Postlude will be next year. I plan to learn a new piece that's on my "bucket list" of organ repertoire over the summer so it will be ready for next Easter. I hope you'll love it as much as I do.

I was reminded of this piece last weekend when I attended the Inaugural Recital of the new Andrew Pipe Organ installed at Fourth Presbyterian Church in downtown Chicago. This is now the largest organ in Chicago with 204 stops, 5 keyboards and 8,343 pipes – a 3 million dollar project. This organ is basically double the size of our instrument and was built by the Quimby Pipe Organ Company in Warrensburg, Missouri. Their organist, John Sherer played this piece as the finale of that recital. I first heard this piece at the Young Artist's Competition at the American Guild of Organists Convention held in Lexington and I recall being on the edge of my seat with excitement as I watched Kate Emerson execute a magnificent performance that brought the entire audience to their feet at the conclusion. I vowed to learn it so I must discipline myself to the task.

During April our music ensembles will work on final preparations for Joyful Sunday, April 24 here at First Congregational. This year, we will engage most of our music ensembles for a joyful worship service of music. Yes, Dr. Bob will still have a homily, but you will experience a preview performance of what I am developing for our Musical Outreach Program that we're taking "on the road" to Pine Ridge on Sunday afternoon, May 15. This project will engage all ages of musicians and volunteers in an afternoon of fellowship, sharing, and music. The Called to Care Team and our Nurse Jan are teaming up to transport our members who aren't able to attend church regularly. If you'd like to assist with the project, please talk to me, Beth Kenagy or Nurse Jan. I'm sure we can find something for you to do!

On Friday April 15, the Alleluia Ringers are traveling to Dayton, OH for the Area 5 Handbell Musicians of American Conference 2016 with clinician Kevin McChesney. We are in the middle of three extra Monday evening 2-hour rehearsals so we will be ready. Five members of the Kalamazoo Ringers are joining 8 of our Alleluia Ringers to make a complete choir of 13 ringers who are looking forward to a great education and musical experience. We return Saturday evening after the final concert ends at 6 p.m. Please pray for a safe trip!

April 27-30 finds me, three other Christian Education staff members and Dr. Bob attending the Orange Conference in Atlanta, GA again. This was a fantastic experience last year and we are looking forward to more inspiration, ideas and education as we seek new and relevant ways to keep our kids engaged in meaningful worship experiences – not just until confirmation, but into college and through their whole life.

April Music

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|-------|--|
| 3 | 2 nd Sunday of Easter/Communion
Chancel Choir |
| 10 | 3 rd Sunday of Easter/Spring Break
Chancel Choir |
| 13 | Wednesday Night Programs Resume |
| 15-16 | Area 5 Handbell Conference, (Dayton)
Alleluia Ringers |
| 17 | 4 th Sunday of Easter
Chancel Choir |
| 24 | 5 th Sunday of Easter/Joyful Sunday
Jubilate Ringers
Alleluia Ringers
Kids Connection Choir
Chancel Choir |
| 27-30 | Orange Conference, (Atlanta)
No Wednesday programs |

Health News from Parish Nurse Jan

April showers bring May flowers, or so “they” say. April will be a milestone month for me as I celebrate four years as your Parish Nurse.... and what an amazing adventure it has been thus far!

The last several months have brought abundant changes! Many of our church friends and acquaintances have had significant life altering events. Some of them have moved to other cities. Some have relocated to various care facilities. Some are dealing with life altering health changes, and others have left this world and are now at their heavenly home.

It has been a challenge for me because when there is change with those we hold in fellowship, there are health-related questions and concerns directed my way and to other church staff. Perhaps this is a good time to revisit the role and availability of the Parish Nurse,

Did you know that, although I am an employee of the church, I am also an employee of Lakeland Health? They started the Parish Nurse program here and we partner with them. As a Lakeland employee, I am legally bound by HIPAA, the privacy standards that protect individuals’ medical records and other personal health information. Therefore, I must request that you not ask me about the health status of our congregants. Legally I can’t give you an answer. I and selected church staff must be compliant. Therefore it is necessary to ask that you refrain from seeking information regarding the health status of our congregants. Failure for me to comply with HIPAA can result in serious legal consequences, and not just for health personnel. Seeking information does not stop with verbal communication but includes texting, emails, Facebook messaging and other forms of media. It is best to direct your concerns and questions to the individual, family member, agent, or power of attorney.

Generally, I am aware of most hospital admissions, transfers to other care facilities and declining health of our membership. I’m very fortunate to have a private line with messaging at my church office. If there is need to contact

me, please call the church and follow the prompts to my voice mail. The line is secure and no other individuals have access. This is the appropriate choice of connecting to me and meets the current HIPAA guidelines.

As your Parish Nurse, I am available on Tuesdays, Wednesday & Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. There may be some slight variations to that schedule so contact the church office for my availability. If you have an emergency, or a serious health concern, please call your health provider or access emergency services by calling 911. My role as your Parish Nurse (generally) is as follows:

Health Educator - focusing on a variety of educational activities for all ages that explore the relationship between values, attitudes, lifestyle, faith and health.

Personal Health Counselor - assisting individuals to deal with health issues and problems and may include hospital, home, nursing home, etc. visits.

Referral Agent - providing congregational and community resources for healing and wellness.

Health Advocate - encouraging all systems (congregant, faith community, primary health resources) to find the best solution for healing and wholeness - body, mind and spirit.

Integrator of Faith and Health - seeking, in all activities and contacts, to promote the understanding of the relationship between faith and health.

Any Thing Else Dr. Bob Wants Me to Do!

Finally, I care about you and want to be available when the need arises, but I’m not “On Call” and I don’t provide emergency interventions. I enjoy my days off, especially Sundays and holidays. If I’m not at First Congregational worshipping with you than my husband and I are attending services at St. Paul’s in Stevensville. Please respect our time

to worship and give thanks.

May Easter happiness continue to dwell in you and may you be blessed with peace, joy and goodness.

Nurse Jan

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Day – April 13

This opportunity is provided by Berrien County to recycle and dispose of all sorts of household items. (Make sure if you have anything that can be sold at our rummage sale, you bring to the church!) Recycle Day will take place in the parking lot of Lake Michigan College on Napier Avenue, on April 13 from 3 – 7 p.m. For details go to:

<http://www.berriencounty.org/recycle/ReduceReuseRecycleDay>.

Volunteer Perks

Celebrate National Volunteer Week (April 15-21 this year) by meeting a need in our church or community.

Volunteering not only helps the people we serve. It also has surprising benefits for the volunteer. Serving others builds social and relational skills, increases self-confidence and boosts physical health. Studies show that volunteering can even ease chronic pain and heart disease.

Some of the ways you can volunteer for our church: spring rummage sale, ushering on Sundays, teaching Sunday school, and assisting in our nurseries.

There are many opportunities in our community and one way would be volunteering for Hospice at Home. They are in need of volunteers in the Niles, Buchanan, Edwardsburg, Cassopolis, and Dowagiac area. Individuals are needed for a variety of services such as sitting with patients, delivering flowers, transportation to appointments, small home maintenance projects, pet therapy visits, and music therapy. New ideas

are also welcome. Please contact Amanda Dunnem at (269) 695-1099 or adunnem@hospiceathomecares.org to volunteer or get more information.

So do yourself – and others – some good by following Jesus’ example of serving.

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

JOHN 13:35. ESV



April Birthdays

02 - Jacob Goos
04 - Sue Barr-Burrows
05 - Lori Hellenga
06 - Amey Upton
08 - Linda Becker
11 - Jeff Yeager
12 - Emma Dibkey
12 - Ann Zimmerman
13 - Katy O'Donovan
14 - Dan Hopp
14 - Dottie Neller
15 - Fran Chickering
15 - Emma Goos
15 - Nancy Schroeder
16 - Ashlyn Lawrence
16 - Nolan Rich
16 - Elizabeth Sexton
23 - Barnaby Parin
23 - Darcey Steinman
23 - Fred Upton
23 - Talan Yeager
25 - Roger Bertsch
25 - David Hilbink
25 - Don Margoni
26 - Jay Van Den Berg
27 - Mary Griffin
28 - Ron Griffin
29 - Tom Fowler
29 - Lynn Ward
30 - Andrew Paul

Rummage Sale Workers

It takes many hands to make a successful sale. We will start setting up on Friday, April 29 & 30 from 9 - noon. We'll also need help sorting and displaying items the week of May 2 from 9 - 5 p.m. Items for the sale can be dropped off the 29th & 30th from 9 - noon and the 2nd & 3rd from 9 - 5. You'll find sign-up sheets on the bulletin board across from Dr. Bob's office. Any amount of time that you can help will be greatly appreciated!

Please remember to only donate clean and wearable clothing and workable items to the sale.

Calling All Cooks, Bakers & Crock-Pot Chefs!

AJ Jaeger-Heiden

We need your help during our spring rummage sale the week of May 1 - May 6. You too are a very important part of our rummage sale team. Your delicious food, snacks and goodies help to empower our hard working team members. Sign-up sheets are located on the bulletin board across from Dr. Bob's office. Plus, there are lots of ideas of what to bring, or just purchase items and our kitchen cooks will be happy to put the dish together for you and bake it. Questions? Call AJ Jaeger-Heiden at 982-4135.

Traveling in Love to the Orphanage in Urzhum, Russia!

In Christ's name, your love will be taken to the orphanage in Urzhum by several congregation members from May 8 - 18. Those committed to the mission trip are Ruthann Miller, Cathie & Bill Schalk, Nancy & David Fowler, and Roger & Judy Bertsch. Already, many members are helping to get the travel group ready to go by preparing gifts for the orphanage caretakers since gifts are very important in the Russian culture. However, this trip is a really big undertaking and much more help would be greatly appreciated. The cost for seven travelers is approximately \$21,000. In addition, two years ago the expenditures for gifts and activities for the children and improvements for the orphanage was \$2,200. If you have seen a picture from previous years of the smiles from the children and orphanage director, you sensed the joy that the presence of this congregation has made half a world away from St. Joseph. What an example of God's love to us and from us and back to us again. That is the way God's love works best through us! Donations for this mission trip will be gratefully accepted. Please prayerfully consider supporting this trip through your gifts and prayers.

Church Ladies Gathering


Deb Burkhard

Our new date for the oil workshop is Sunday, April 17 at noon at Deb Burkhard's home (2901 Thayer Drive, St. Joseph.) We will serve lunch after church, learn about oils (make and take \$20) and also work on creating gifts for the workers at the orphanage in Russia. We are thinking of making bookmarks or pins or both. Please RSVP to Shannon Milnickel (s.milnickel@live.com) so she has an accurate count for lunch and oils.

Church Women United

Patty Nordberg

The Human Rights Celebration, "Experiencing Blessings at the Table," will take place on April 1. Lunch is at 11 a.m. and the program begins at 1 p.m. The host church is Second Baptist in Benton Harbor and co-host churches are St. Johns and St. Bernard Catholic churches in Benton Harbor. All women are welcome to attend. See the flyer on the bulletin board by Dr. Bob's office. Questions? Call Patty Nordberg at 429-7297 or pnordberg@comcast.net.



Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Library News

Patty Nordberg, Caryl Meister, Nancy Fette

Books continue to be moved around. If you have borrowed a book, please return it to the box. By May there should be listings of new books that have been purchased. Some shelves have been adjusted to fit location of subject matter. Categories are slowly coming together. Any comments or suggestions please talk with one of the library gals.

Women's Bible Study

Patty Nordberg

All women are invited to attend our Women's Bible Study sessions on Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. in the Gathering Room. Questions? Contact me at 429-7297 or pnordberg@comcast.net.

April 7, will be our last lesson for *Eyewitness* April 14, we'll start *Let. It. Go. - How to Stop Running the Show and Start Walking In Faith* by Karen Ehman.

WHAT OUR CHURCH IS ABOUT

Our Vision

As believers in Jesus Christ, we will be a church of vibrant Christians.

Our Mission

We welcome people to faith in Jesus Christ to:

- Discover God
- Equip one another for life
- Reach inward and outward to serve

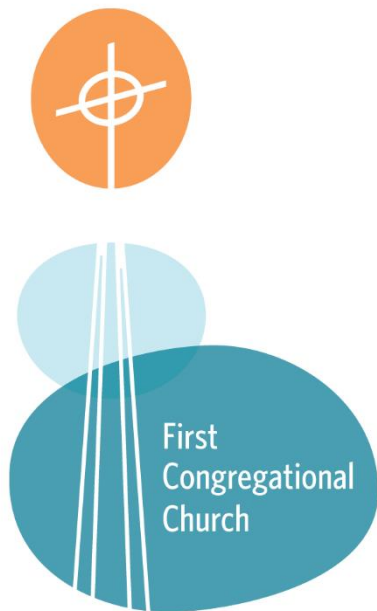
The Invitation to Discipleship from Jesus Christ

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30

We grow as disciples through these 6 practices:

- ✝ Daily Prayer
- ✝ Bible Reading
- ✝ Weekly Worship
- ✝ Generous Giving
- ✝ Selfless Serving
- ✝ Spiritual Friendships



SENIOR MINISTER

Rev. Dr. Robert Braman

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

September thru May

9:15 a.m. Christian Discipleship

9:30 a.m. Chancel Choir

10:25 a.m. Worship

10:45 a.m. Christian Education classes

June, July, and August

9:55 a.m. Worship

Childcare available during worship.

WEDNESDAY FAMILY NIGHT

September thru April

4:00 p.m. Jubilate Ringers

5:15 p.m. Joyful Praise Ringers

5:45 p.m. Church Family Dinner

6:30 p.m. Kids Connection
Middle High Youth Group

6:30 p.m. Dr. Bob's Class

THURSDAY NIGHT

5:00 p.m. Alleluia Ringers

6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

OFFICE HOURS

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

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