

The Parchment

September 2017 | Monthly Newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC



Greetings from Dr. Guerreno

The other day I was looking for something in [The Lord of The Rings](#) and I rediscovered this poem by Bilbo Baggins. I'd completely forgotten it.

1. I sit beside the fire and think
of all that I have seen
of meadow-flowers and butterflies
in summers that have been

Of yellow leaves and gossamer
in autumns that there were,
with morning mist and silver sun
and wind upon my hair.

I sit beside the fire and think
of how the world will be
when winter comes without a spring
that I shall ever see.

4. For still there are so many things
that I have never seen:
in every wood in every spring
there is a different green.

I sit beside the fire and think
of people long ago,
and people who will see a world
that I shall never know.

But all the while I sit and think
of times there were before,
I listen for returning feet
and voices at the door.

Isn't that wonderful? Read it out loud. Meter, cadence, timing; tone, feel, vibe: call it what you will, sometimes J.R.R. Tolkien comes close to the feel of the Bible or Shakespeare, or a really good Super Bowl commercial.

Just kidding about the commercial.

Bilbo's poem touches me. I find myself thinking not just of life and death and such, but of aging and loneliness and how the attention of once caring friend or relative can make a difference in how life feels for someone out of circulation, someone in the wings.

(Continued on next page.)

News From Nurse Jan

The Trapani family had their first experience with joint replacement surgery this summer. My husband Vince, began limping around with increased pain about 5 months ago. Nothing he did (application of heat, cold, over the counter analgesics, physical therapy, etc.) helped alleviate his discomfort. It was determined he needed an MRI for evaluation but it was contraindicated as he has a pacemaker.

The good news was that his old pacemaker was in need of replacement and Dr. Beri from Great Lakes Heart & Vascular Institute, performed that procedure earlier this summer. He implanted a new MRI compatible device, and once proper healing occurred, it was game on. As expected, the MRI showed advanced arthritis of the joint.

On August 7, hubby had his total hip replacement and is well on his way to recovery and looking forward to returning to his teaching position this fall. He is walking without any assistive device, driving again and feeling minimal pain.

We'd like to thank you for your prayers, cards, telephone calls, food and visits pre and post hospitalizations. It is deeply appreciated. We love our First Congregational family!

PastTime's Final Summer Concert of the Season Coloma Medley In the Park

September 16 (7:00 to 8:30 p.m.)
Baker Park, Coloma, MI

Reminder:

*Don't forget to sign-up at
(www.fccstjoseph.org) for
your appointment for our new
picture directory.*

(Continued from front page)

Anyone come to mind? Go visit. Drop in. Yes, Jesus did say, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the age," but somehow that feels closer and more firm when someone brings it by in person.

God is good. See you church, and bring someone with you!



Rummage Sale

It's That Time Again

Start cleaning out your cabinets and closets and bring your clean

and useable items that you no longer want to the fall church rummage sale. The actual sale will take place on **Thursday, October 5** from (outdoor sales start at 10:00 a.m.) 12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and **Friday the 6th** from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The schedule for drop off is below.

September 29 & 30

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

October 1

11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

October 2

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

October 3

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

There are many ways that you can help make this a successful sale. Many workers are needed plus food to feed our volunteers. Watch your Sunday bulletin for more information and ways to sign-up.



Renovation Update

We're Making Progress!! Updates to Fellowship Hall are now 99% complete and the good news is we're on schedule and under budget. The floor has been resurfaced with a coordinated new color scheme on the walls and trim. New LED lighting brightens the space along with new windows and exterior doors, and a completely new sound system with integrated speakers has been installed. Phase I is nearing completion and will be ready to be used for Sunday morning worship while Phase II begins in the Sanctuary.

Sunday worship will be held downstairs in Fellowship Hall beginning Sunday, September 3 through mid-November. Most of us will remember doing this in prior years while the Sanctuary HVAC work was done, and the organ renovation, so this is nothing new. Work will begin on Phase II the last week in August and is slated to be finished and ready to move back in by the middle of November.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE: Our Capital Campaign Team is wrapping up a very successful fund drive that should enable us to complete all three phases of the renovation in a timely manner. Forty-six percent of our church membership pledged over \$247,000 and with the additional support of Women's Fellowship, the Remembrance Fund, gifts to the church, and the Endowment Fund, our total available for the Capital Campaign is slightly over \$572,000. Our goal was \$500,000 so this additional surplus gives us the opportunity to do everything the Renovation Committee wanted to do, plus upgrade some of the equipment and go a bit further than originally planned, such as replacing florescent light fixtures with LED's in the rest of the church hallways, offices and classrooms for additional rebate and energy savings.

We want to thank each and every one of the individuals and families that supported the Capital Campaign drive, attended one or more of our Focus Group Sessions, and wrote letters of concern offering suggestions and comments along the way. Everyone's contributions have been extremely valuable to our leaders and committees.

PARDON OUR DUST: As mentioned earlier, Sanctuary work will begin the last week in August, slightly earlier than planned, with projected completion by mid November. We can't wait for everyone to see the improvements in Fellowship Hall so come and join us for Sunday worship on **September 3 at 10:25 a.m.**

Steve Reed – Capital Campaign Team Chair

Russ Zick – Renovation Committee Chair



WELCOME!

Emily Luther is our new part-time Director of Christian Education. Emily earned her BA from Western Michigan University with a major in Elementary Education and minor in Early Childhood Education. Emily is from the Battle Creek area where she has been subbing K -12 for the past two years. She resides in Niles and is the lead teacher for 2 1/2 - 3 1/2 year olds at a Christian based Child Care Center. In addition, she has worked in other child care facilities and has held leadership positions with 4-H. She describes herself as committed, compassionate and collaborative. Emily began Monday evening August 21 by attending the Board of Christian Education meeting.

Brenton Offenback is our new Director of Music Ministry. Brenton earned a BA in Music Education and a Masters of Music from Andrews University in Choral Conducting & Organ Performance. He has been serving as organist and accompanist at the Zion UCC in Baroda since 2012. Past positions include Minister of Music/Organist at the Village SDA Church in Berrien Springs, organist/accompanist at Forest Lake SDA Church in Florida and Choral Director/Organist at the First United Methodist Church in Sodus.

Brenton is a member of the American Choral Directors Association and the American Guild of Organists. He resides in Berrien Springs with his wife, toddler and infant that was born 16 hours before he played with us July 23!

Welcome Back To Adult Sunday School

We will be continuing our travels with Ray VanderLaan as he takes us to the Holy Land. In this fourth set of Faith Lessons, learn how confronting evil can be loudly proclaiming the name of Jesus or quietly caring for someone in need. We will be looking at the historical, geographical, and cultural context of the sacred scriptures. Each week we will watch a DVD and discuss what we have seen. All are welcome. No homework, just an opportunity to learn and share. We meet in the Greeting Room at 9:15 a.m.

September 10

When Storms Come
Sea of Galilee

September 17

Piercing the Darkness
Kursi

September 24

Gates of Hell
Caesarea Philippi

Celebration and Recommitment to Urzhum Orphanage Mission

On September 17, our congregation will celebrate nine years of active partnership in mission with Children's HopeChest, Fund Nadezhda and the orphanage in Urzhum, Russia. We are pleased that Wil Crooks, Vice President of Strategic Partnerships, will be here to speak during our worship service. Following worship, there will be light refreshments served and a time to meet with Wil and ask any questions you may have regarding this mission. This will also be a time to learn about sponsorship and the ten new children at the orphanage who are eagerly waiting for someone from our congregation to be their special friend.

Over the past nine years, dozens of children at the orphanage have benefited from our congregation's dedication to this mission. Through letter writing, Skype calls and visits by members of our congregation, close positive relationship have developed. Through monetary sponsorship, Children's HopeChest and Fund Nadezhda have been able to provide a Discipler who works with the children on life and relationship skills training and other enrichment activities as well as providing for Christmas and birthday gifts. We have also provided money for many badly needed improvements to the orphanage including furniture, appliances, a fire alarm system, and internet access upgrades.

September 17 will be a time of recommitment and rededication to this mission which has truly made the love of Christ real in many ways for these children.



VOLUNTEER WITH TEC

The Therapeutic Equestrian Center (TEC) engages the power of horses to challenge people with special needs to build stronger bodies, minds and spirits. We are growing and have an urgent need for more volunteers! No experience necessary with horses or people with special needs. We have a variety of opportunities available.

Become part of the TEC team and help children from ages 3 to adults improve their physical, emotional and intellectual abilities. We also now serve veterans and their families. Visit TEC's Facebook page or visit our website www.tecfarm.org.

Volunteer training for the fall session is Tuesday, August 29

and Wednesday, August 30. Both classes start at 6:00 p.m. at TEC. We are located at Stockbridge Equestrian Center, 615 N. M-140, Watervliet. For more information and to register for training, please contact TEC's Volunteer Coordinator, Beth at 269-932-5005 or beth.drollinger@gmail.com. **Horses can change a life, let them changes yours!**

Happy Birthday

01 - Sara Collum
01 - Luke Iddings
01 - Leif Norland
01 - Scott Sternaman
02 - Mary Eppelheimer
02 - Dean Gerbel
03 - Beth Christy
04 - Dominic Giandiletti
04 - Anne Gottlieb
05 - Patt Johnson
07 - Jeff Schmidt
08 - JoAnn Sprayberry
09 - Bink Seaburg
10 - Katherine Ort
11 - Carol Syles
12 - Chuck Worthington
14 - Sue Plummer
15 - Bill Bock
15 - Karen Laetz
17 - Bea Starke
18 - Larry Morrow
22 - Diana Seaman
23 - Dick Linden
23 - Vic Palenske
28 - Gary Lulenski
29 - Oliver Gregory
29 - AJ Jaeger-Heiden
29 - Elizabeth Upton
30 - Jeanne Atwood

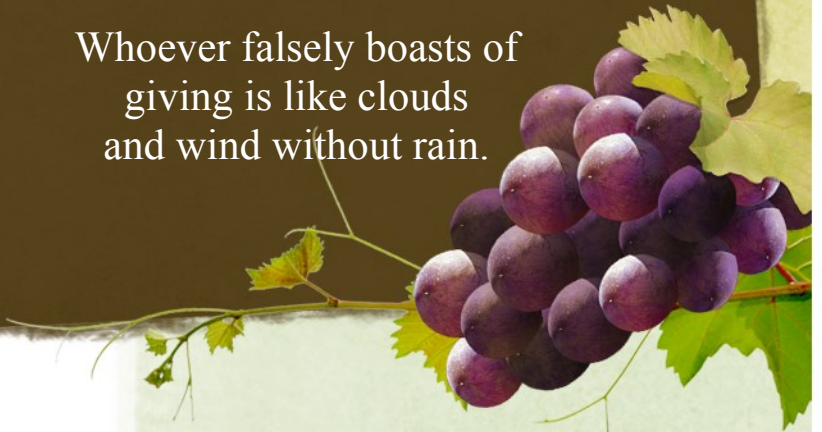
Library Update

All books have been labeled and a chart is hung to explain the system. This has been a process over the last few years involving many helping hands. We hope to keep books shelved more easily and have it be easier to locate a book. While we are not using the Dewey Decimal System, the books are still in alphabetical order according to the author's last name. Come browse. If you have an author or topic you would like to see added, leave your suggestion in the basket. Thank you for your patience. The Library Crew



Proverbs 25:14

Whoever falsely boasts of
giving is like clouds
and wind without rain.



Women's Bible Study

The group meets on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Gathering Room or Library. The study this year will begin with *20 Ways to Make Every Day Better - Simple, Practical Changes with Real Results* by Joyce Meyer. Women's Fellowship Council will be helping with the cost of materials. Your fee will be \$5/book. Weekly topics will be included in the Parchment and Sunday bulletins. Bring your Bible and a friend and join us for fellowship. Questions? Call Patty Nordberg at 429-7297 or pnordberg@comcast.net.

September 14

Orientation for our fall session-books available

September 21

Chapter 1
Have a Conversation with God
Chapter 2
Dream Big

September 28

Chapter 3
Decide to Help Others
Chapter 4
Reexamine Your Expectations
Chapter 5
Don't Give into Dread

News from Christian Education

Important Notes for CE

- For the month of September children will start out in the Sanctuary with their parents.
- Round-Up Sunday is September 10. Please join us after service for an open house of our redesigned children's wing.
- Wednesday night classes will start on September 20. We will have classes for every age, including adults. Please watch your inbox for more information.
- Youth Book Club (9th grade and up) will be meeting on Saturday, September 9 at 6:30 p.m. at Barb Callendar's home. If you have any questions, please contact Shannon Milnickel at Shannon@fccstjoseph.org

Confirmation News

We are excited to announce that we will soon be starting a year-long course this October and your student(s) are invited! The class will be open to anyone entering sixth, seventh, or eighth grade this fall. If your student is older and has not been confirmed, they are welcome to join this class! At First Congregational Church, we strongly believe that parents are the primary teachers of faith to their children and it is the church's role to help empower and support parents. We also believe that confirmation is not graduation from church life but a time to confirm one's faith and strengthen one's commitment to the church.

September's Teaching Themes

Kid Connect Jr.

(4 years old to Kindergarten, Meets on Sunday mornings, and Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.)

All kids want to be Super Kids, and they can when they realize that God is always with them. Because God is with them, they can be brave. Because God is with them, they can be strong. Because God is with them, they can be courageous. Because God is with them, they can be wise. We want our children to know that when they know God is always with them, they can be super!

The lessons we want the preschoolers to learn during this month include:

God loves me

Who is always with me? God is always with me!

September's memory verse:

Strong and Courageous. Do not be afraid . . .

For the Lord your God goes with you.

DEUTERONOMY 31:6, NIV

Kid Connection

(Grades 1-5, Meets on Sunday mornings and Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.)

During the month of September we will be helping our kids and families discover that God desires a relationship with us. That's why He created us in the first place. When we sinned and broke that relationship, God continued to pursue us. God sacrificed His only Son to make it possible for us to have a relationship with Him again. Jesus demonstrated friendship in the most generous way possible. He showed us the greatest love when He laid down His life for His friends. He went to the cross, not on principle or for a cause, but because of love and wanting to be with us forever. **Friendship is a reflection of the character of God.**

The lessons we want the students to learn each week include:

Friends love one another

Friends accept one another

Friends forgive one another

Friends encourage one another

September's memory verse:

A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes.

Proverbs 17:17, NIRV

Youth

(Grade 6-12, Meets on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.)

During September students will complete the series called **Move**.

- Have you ever volunteered or felt really committed to a cause or charity only to feel like someone flipped a switch and your focus shifted back to your everyday life? Ever felt a little let down when it was over? When we look at the life of Jesus, we see Someone who served without a turn-off switch. And when we choose to serve as He served, when it becomes part of who we are, we experience the joy of knowing we have a lasting impact.
- The lessons we want students to learn each week during the *Move* series include:
Movements, not moments, will change the world.
For Jesus, serving was not just about an event.

Women's Book Club

We will meet Monday, September 25 at 9:30 a.m. in the Greeting Room. The date is changed due to the availability of the author. *The Charm Bracelet* by Viola Shipman. Viola Shipman is the pen name for Wade Rouse. He chose the pen name to honor his grandmother who shared family stories that inspired Wade to create the heirloom novels. *The Charm Bracelet* was the first in the series.

The novel is centered around three characters. They are the mother Lolly, daughter Arden and granddaughter Lauren. Each charm on Lolly's bracelet represents an important experience in her life or her mother's life. Lolly uses the charms to explain family history and to instill the importance of family to daughter and granddaughter. Lolly is also trying to have her girls see what is truly important which is to be happy.



If you have a charm bracelet, please bring it to the meeting and share one of your memories. We also hope to Skype the author the day of our meeting.

Wade is an excellent author and communicator. I think you will enjoy hearing his thoughts and answers to your questions about the book.

Banking Change

Chemical Bank has changed their online banking system. If you are one of our members that have the church automatically withdraw your generous donations on the 24th of each month, please look at your bank statement this month to make sure it processed through the system correctly. If you have any questions, please call our bookkeeper, Nanci Fenrick at 845-2595 or email her at nanci0126@yahoo.com. Thank you for using this service. **(This does not have anything to do with VANCO online giving.)**

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

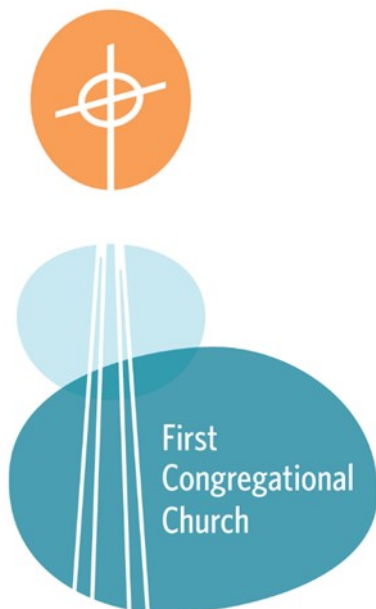
The Invitation to Discipleship from Jesus Christ

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



INTERIM SENIOR MINISTER

Dr. Charles Guerreno

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

September thru May

8:30 a.m.	Handbell warmup (if scheduled)
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
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Childcare available during worship.

WEDNESDAY FAMILY NIGHT

September thru April

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

THURSDAY NIGHT

6:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir
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OFFICE HOURS

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