



The Parchment

Monthly Newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC
January 2016



Mark Your Calendar

1.3

Worship with Communion

1.6

Wednesday Family Night
Resumes with programs

1.9

Men's Ministry

1.14

Women's Bible Class
Resumes

1.23

Men's Ministry

1.31

Annual Meeting



Greetings from Dr. Bob

A New Year's Acrostic: RESOLVE

RESOLVE to be better, do better, think better, act better even if you fail the first day, third day, or 230th day of the new year, re-resolving every day of the year.

ENGAGE life like you've never engaged it before; fail to settle for second best; insist everything can be better than it is, for everyone.

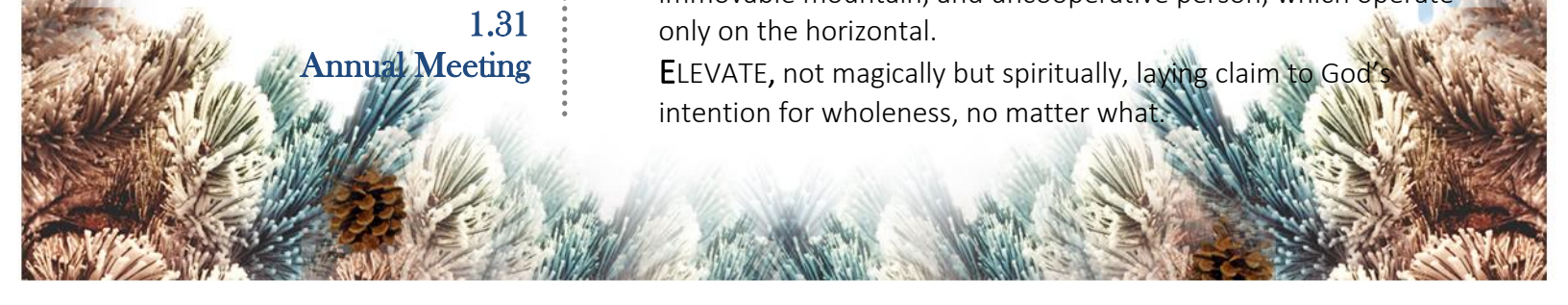
STICK to your guns, don't back down, don't be bullied, and be persuasive rather than persuaded.

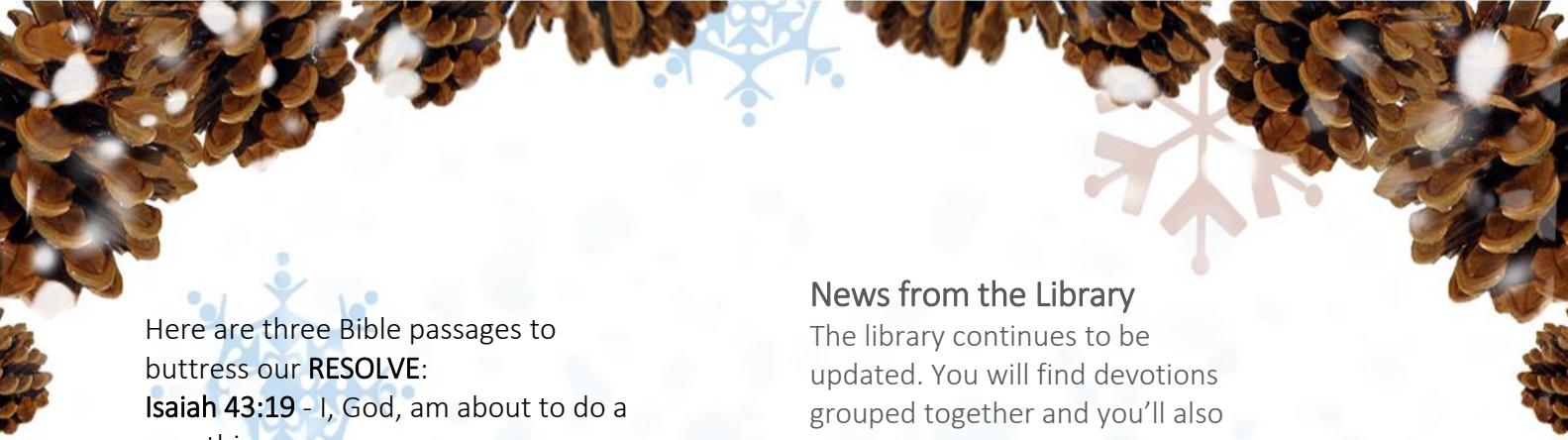
OOH and AHH at the wonders of this world, including natural and unnatural beauty, loveable and unlovable people, possible and impossible situations.

LUBRICATE every relationship with love, kindness, and understanding, intent on healing and reconciling even in the face of those who wound and separate.

VERTICAL-IZE your life, keeping your heart and mind on God above rather than on the seemingly insurmountable problem, immovable mountain, and uncooperative person, which operate only on the horizontal.

ELEVATE, not magically but spiritually, laying claim to God's intention for wholeness, no matter what.





Here are three Bible passages to buttress our **RESOLVE:**
Isaiah 43:19 - I, God, am about to do a new thing.

Psalm 51:10 - Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

Together let's resolve to have a truly meaningful New Year.

Dr. Bob



New Member Classes

New Member Classes are for those people who have been around awhile and have decided they want this to be their church home. It is also for those who want to know more about our church, without making the commitment to join at this time.

Our next 2 classes—plan to come to both—will be held before worship, from 9:15 to 10:10 a.m., on Sunday, January 24 and January 31.

It's helpful if we know you are planning to attend, especially if you need childcare. Please contact the church office: 983-5519, office@fcstjoseph.org.

News from the Library

The library continues to be updated. You will find devotions grouped together and you'll also notice that all people of the Bible have a new shelf. All books by Max Lucado, C.S. Lewis, and others are grouped together. We are making room for new books and DVD's as we change the look of the shelves. Be looking for a section that will hold new additions to the library. Come visit the library.

Nancy, Caryl and Patty

Women's Bible Study


All women are welcome to come join our Women's Bible Study on Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. in the Gathering Room. Books will be available at the first session on January 14. **Eye-wit-ness:** Noun: *a person who has personally seen something happen and so can give a first-hand description of it.* Synonyms: *witness-bystander-spectator-beholder.* Does this intrigue you? Come learn with us. Questions? Contact Patty Nordberg at pnordberg@comcast.net or 429-7297.

EyeWitness...A study from 1, 2, 3 John by Crystal Colp, Jacki Kachner, Erin Lehmann, Alice Park. (They are from First Church of God.)

January 14 – Lesson 1

January 21 – Lesson 2

January 28 – Lesson 3



BE WARM, BE KIND

News from Parish Nurse

Jan

My *Parchment* article this month will be exceedingly abbreviated. No health advice or suggestions on how to successfully keep your New Year's resolutions or the like. I will soon embark upon my fourth year as your parish nurse. As I think back over my tenure, I ponder about those who have entered my life through this journey and reflect on how blessed I am to be part of this ministry.

This jubilant New Year marks a fresh new start of a brighter and more exciting journey. It is my prayer you will have the most enjoyable ride ever in 2016. **A Very Happy New Year to All.**

On a secular note, some of you have requested that I make mention in the *Parchment* that my band PastTime will be performing at the Box Factory in

St. Joseph on January, 16, 2016. The performance starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are obtainable at the door or on line. The Box Factory hosts concerts, theatre presentations, films, book talks and readings, which help continue to fund The Box Factory and the Berrien County Artist Guild.

Is Logan Leaving?

The Logan Center recently received approval from Sodus Township to rezone Stump School, at Pipestone and Nickerson, for the new home of the Sonya Ansari Autism Learning Center, which has been in our church building for nearly three years. That means they will move sometime in 2016, perhaps at the end of the summer, after significant renovation to their new home. There is the possibility that they will continue some services here in our church. Whatever their future, we are extremely proud to have been the place of their "birth" and they will receive our support whatever the future might hold.

Musical Notes from Paul Flyger, Director of Music Ministry

Christmas Season Review and Thanks

I can't remember a busier Christmas Season in general, but this year we started some new and fun events that were well-received and worth doing again and may become a tradition. The Monday Musical Vespers was once again very lovely and the sanctuary was nearly full with many community guests.

Kelly Yeager and I wish to extend many thanks for all the support and appreciation from both parents and the congregation for the *The Christmas Present* children's musical on December 13. Our goals were to have good participation, have something for everyone to do and present a quality Christmas Story program during the worship service. We decided we will need to begin a few weeks earlier next year to accomplish even more next year.

The **Christmas Carol Spectacular** scheduled the Wednesday before Christmas Eve was also well-received and in some cases filled an unexpected spiritual/holiday experience for those unable to attend either of our two Christmas Eve Services. For them, this was their "Christmas Eve." I was pleased with the attendance and singing participation and very grateful to the extra volunteer musicians who played either in the Brass Quartet or String Quartet. Their additional sound colors added a whole new dimension to the caroling of our favorite holiday tunes. Thanks for all the emails you sent the next day!

The Chancel Choir was wonderful in their presentations on December 20 and at the second Christmas Eve Service. I was very happy to have Susan, Steve and the rest of the Zork family here to present their special prelude pieces on Christmas Eve. Christmas Dinner has always been a favorite of mine. I thank all three handbell choirs for their hard work and practice for their involvement at both Christmas Eve Services. Of all seasons, I think Christmas and handbells go together the best. I also want to shout-out a special "thank you" to several Alleluia Ringers who stepped in to help fill in the gaps with Joyful Praise and Jubilate Ringers. Without these extra hands, many bells would have laid silent on the table. Thanks for going above and beyond to help out! If you missed Christmas Eve this year, check out the short video recap on the church's Facebook page. Thanks Jan, for your special work once again!

Women's Book Group

We'll meet on Tuesday, January 26 at 9:30 a.m. in the Greeting Room. Our winter read will be a personal pick. Select a book of your choice – history, biography, science, poetry, or fiction. We'll each share a bit about our book with the group – why you chose the book, a particular character or situation that resonated with you, an insight that you gained. We'll look forward to variety and unique perspectives!

Reading Ahead:

February 23: *Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus:*

How the Jewish Words of Jesus Can Change Your Life by Lois Tverberg.

March 29: *Boston Girl* by Anita Diamante

April 26: *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante

May 31: *Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown

June 28: *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* by Gabrielle Zevin

July 26: *God Will Use This for Good* by Max Lucado

FCC Music Ensembles Resume January 6.

Jubilate Ringers will resume regular rehearsals from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. each Wednesday. This ensemble is for those who are interested in ringing handbells at a beginning to intermediate level. There are several open positions for new ringers and we welcome you to come try it out. This is a fun group and is showing great potential!

Joyful Praise Ringers (Elementary & Middle School Bells) will resume regular Wednesday rehearsals from 5:15 -6:10 p.m. This ensemble is primarily for young musicians in the 4th - 8th grades but any interested HS musician is welcome! I hope to see regular appearances in worship services along with the Elementary Kids Choir to make it easier for parents.

We are continuing the **Kids Elementary Choir** rehearsals on Wednesdays from 6:30 - 7:00 p.m. downstairs in the Choir Room. Kelly and I will share the hour with the first half being a kid's choir rehearsal and the second half will be in the Chapel with the Orange curriculum and activities. Participation in worship services will be once a month and in conjunction with the Joyful Praise Ringers so both groups will perform on the same Sunday.

Alleluia Ringers rehearsals will resume on Thursday, January 7 from 5:00 - 6:30 p.m. This ensemble is for those who have handbell ringing experience and can ring at an intermediate level. We use 5 octaves of handbells and handchimes and they will continue their regular participation in worship services. Childcare is provided.

The **Chancel Choir** rehearsals will resume on Thursday, January 7 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. We hope the new time is helpful for new members to the Chancel Choir, especially younger adults with children. Easter is right around the corner and we welcome all those who would like to sing during this special season. Childcare is provided.



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

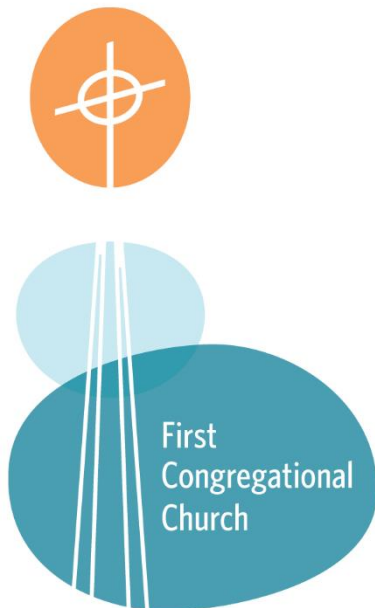
The Invitation to Discipleship from Jesus Christ

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. Adult Classes

9:30 a.m. Chancel Choir warmup

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. Elementary and Middle High Youth Programs

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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