

The Parchment

May 2016 2011 | Monthly Newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC

May Events

- 01 - **Worship with Communion**
- 02-04 - **Set up for the rummage sale**
- 04 - **Wednesday night dinner and programs**
- 05 - **Rummage Sale, Noon - 7 p.m.**
- 06 - **Rummage Sale, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.**
- 07 - **Men's Ministry Meeting**
- 15 - **CROP Walk**
- 25 - **Last Wednesday night dinner and programs until September**
- 30 - **Office closed for Memorial Day**

Greetings from Dr. Bob

Surprises, Part Two

Last month I wrote about surprises. I didn't tell you that retiring at the end of this year would be one of them. Surprise again.

Betty and I have talked this through for several months now, figuring out what would work best. December 31 is what we have decided. It will be just 1 month short of being here 15 years. 15 years! Holy smokes! Where did THAT go?!

We're both in good health, we'll both be 65 by then, and we both have a plan. It includes reconnecting in deeper, more time-intensive ways with our children and grandchildren.

We'll live close to two of those grandchildren, and the 3 who have lived in Montana for the past 8 years recently moved to Kentucky, 500 miles away instead of 1,600. So we will now see them more than once a year.

We both have hobbies to pursue, siblings to see more often, old friends with whom to reconnect, gardens to tend, wood to work, stories to write, and the pleasant task of finding a church in which to be involved. We suspect it will be the one our children attend, but we'll see.



Later on I'll have much to say about your influence in my life and ministry. Let me simply say this for now: This is the first time I've left a church for a reason other than going to serve a different church. I couldn't have found one I love more than this one. It has been a wonderful match since Day One.

But there is still much to enjoy and much to be done! While on Sabbatical I will be working on the transition Betty and I will be making, as well as the transition our church will be making. There is an excellent Interim Specialist with the Michigan Conference UCC who will be very valuable in that regard. I met with her

recently. It so happens that this summer I will be only about 30 minutes from her, so she can help me to help you.

You. I don't like talking about this church as your church, and about what you will do. For over 14 years it has been our church and what we can do. That's how we're going to keep it, except when absolutely necessary.

Not one of us is immune to transitions. We can fight them, resist them and deny them, but we can't stop them. We can also anticipate them, plan for them, and even enjoy them together. That's my prayer for this one. I hope it's your prayer, too. Those prayers rise

up to God, who oversees every transition imaginable while staying constant and dependable. You know the hymn:

*Great is thy Faithfulness,
O God our Father,
there is no shadow of turning
with thee.
Thou changest not,
Thy compassions they fail not.
As Thou hast been
Thou forever wilt be.*

That's no surprise.
Onward,

Dr. Bob

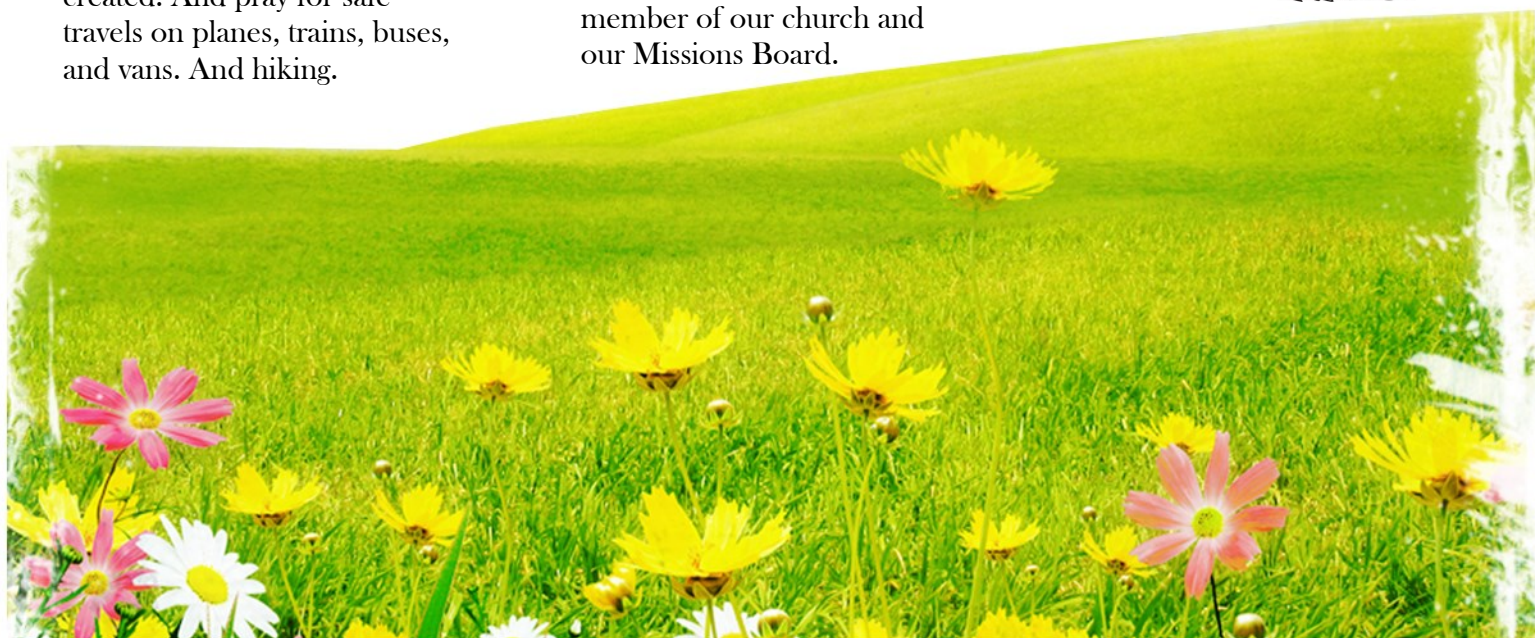
Pray for Our People In Russia

Please keep our travelers to Russia in your prayers as they visit the children in the orphanage in Urzhum, whom we have sponsored for about 8 years. Pray that their conversations with the children will deepen relationships with one another, as well as with our God, in whose image we are all created. And pray for safe travels on planes, trains, buses, and vans. And hiking.

Lory's Place Walk/Run

The annual Lory's Place 5K Run, Walk, & Rock, this year held on Saturday, May 21, is a great community-building event that supports one of the best ministries in the Twin Cities. Lory's Place specializes in grief counseling, especially for children but also for all ages. Lisa Bartoszek is their wonderful Director and is a member of our church and our Missions Board.

We LOVE Lory's Place. Consider running, walking, or rocking to support it. Find out more at www.lakelandhealth.org/lorys-place.





Music Ministry from Paul Flyger

On Friday and Saturday April 15/16, 7 of our Alleluia Ringers along with 5 members of the Kalamazoo Ringers attended the Area 5 Handbell Musicians of American Conference 2016 with clinician Kevin McChesney in Dayton, OH. This was a very inspiring experience for those who went. The Purdue Bells gave a masterful opening concert! All 700 participants were on their feet several times. The Alleluia Ringers were energized, had a great time socializing, and gave a wonderful performance at the final concert. In this picture, we were in the last back row of the auditorium.

Myself, three other Christian Education staff members and Dr. Bob are attending the Orange Conference in Atlanta, GA. The Christian Education staff are looking forward to the inspiration and new ideas that will be presented 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.

The music ensembles are now focused on polishing the pieces we will present in a Music Program at Pine Ridge on Sunday, May 15 at 3:30 p.m. The Called to Care Team, along with Nurse Jan are busy coordinating transportation for church members who can't attend worship services regularly. Our middle school and high school youth are invited to help the Called to Care Team at Pine Ridge as we assemble and share refreshments from 3:00 - 3:30 p.m. before the program begins. After the program, we will pack up and help prepare their Activity Room for their evening meal. Four of our five music ensembles will be participating as they did for this past Joyful Sunday.

The Handbell Choirs are planning a fun summer evening on Saturday night, June 11!! We would like to expand our handchimes from four to five octaves to equal the five octaves of handbells we own. This is phase 1 of a dream to have all our chimes and handbells match. Our fifth octave of handbells is made by Malmark and the middle 4 octaves are made by Schulmerich. These are the two main companies that manufacture handbells in the US, but they unfortunately do not sound great together. We would like to own 5 octaves of matching Malmark handbells, and since they are much more expensive than handchimes, we will replace and expand the handchimes first.

Nurse Jan has generously offered to help re-create a 50's Sock Hop right here in our Fellowship Hall as a fundraiser for new handchimes. The Handbell Choirs will be working the event as well as transforming Fellowship Hall into a dance hall from the 50's. We hope the weather cooperates for additional socializing space on the outdoor patio as we share some heavy appetizers and beverages and mingle between the dance floor and the outdoors. This event will not be limited to church members and will include tickets. There will be a limit of 200 sold so mark your calendar now for Saturday, June 11 from 7-9 p.m. Begin practicing your dance steps now!

Women's Book Group - Tuesday, May 31 at 9:30 a.m.

Join us in the Greeting Room as we discuss the book *Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics* by Daniel Brown. "... out of the depths of the Depression comes an irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times-the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant. It was an unlikely quest from the start. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington's eight-oar crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. Drawing on the boys' own journals and vivid memories of a once-in-a-lifetime shared dream, Brown has created an unforgettable portrait of an era and a celebration of a remarkable achievement."

Women's Bible Study

Our spring study is *LET.IT.GO...How to Stop Running the Show and Start Walking in Faith* by Karen Ehman. We have met Eve and Sarah during our first two sessions and each week we have opportunities to learn from the Bible, ourselves, and each other. Study guides are available. This series will end on May 26. Watch the Sunday bulletin for information about our summer schedule. Questions? Contact Patty Nordberg at 429-7297 or pnordberg@comcast.net.



We will again host the 37th annual Blossomland CROP Walk on Sunday, May 15. Registration will take place in the church parking lot at 2:15 p.m. Sign-up for the walk and also to provide cookies after worship on May 1 & 8. If you can't walk, sponsor someone or you can make a donation to the walk. Twenty-five percent of the money raised in our CROP Walk will be distributed to local agencies in Southwest Michigan.

Young Adult Book Club (HS & College Age)

You are invited to join us May 7 at 6:00 p.m. at Kimberly Giandeletti's house. We will have burgers and are asking everyone to bring a dish to pass. After reading and discussing our chapter, we will watch "God's Not Dead." This group has been lots of fun and we would love to have more kids from First Congregational involved! Please let Mrs. Giandeletti or Mrs. Burkhard know if you are coming. Invite a friend to join you!

Ordination for Eric Stricklin May 15th

You are invited to the *Service of Ordination* for **Mr. Eric M. Stricklin** on Sunday, May 15 at 3:00 p.m. at Portage UCC in Portage, MI. Eric is currently the Licensed Minister at First Congregational Church UCC in Coloma. He has now qualified for Ordination. This invitation is extended to you by the Southwest Association, Michigan Conference United Church of Christ. Portage UCC is at 2731 W. Millham Avenue. Portage UCC is Eric's home church.

PastTime Summer of 2016 Concert & Event Schedule

Since many of you have asked me where my band PastTime will be performing this summer, I thought I would forgo dispensing medical advice in this month's Parchment article and use this opportunity to provide you with our schedule of events. Here's what we have thus far. Thanks for asking, Parish Nurse Jan.

Spring Fling

Friday, May 20
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Coloma Senior Center (Private Event for Members)
North Berrien Senior Center
Coloma, MI

50's Sock Hop Fundraiser

Saturday, June 11
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

First Congregational Church of St. Joseph
2001 Niles Avenue
St. Joseph, MI (Tickets Available at the church week of May 9.)

Outdoor Music Venue

Thursday, June 16
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Buchanan Commons
Downtown Buchanan
Buchanan, MI

Baroda Music in the Park

Sunday, June 26
6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Baroda Village Park
1500 Lemon Creek Road
Baroda, MI

Shoreham Village Concert

Thursday, July 21
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Shoreham Village Park
Corner of Wissing Lane & Lakeshore Drive
Shoreham, MI

Summer Concert Series

Friday, August 5
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

John E.N. Howard Band Shell
Corner of Lake Blvd & Port Street
St. Joseph, MI

Coloma Glad & Peach Festival

Saturday, August 6
8:00 p.m. – 11:30 p.m.

Downtown Coloma
Show Case Stage
Coloma, MI

Berrien County Youth Fair

Thursday, August 18
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Mall Stage
9122 Old U.S. 31
Berrien Springs, MI





Welcome to Our Church Family!

On Sunday, April 17 the following people joined our church:

Lee Wolford

434 Wittenberg, St. Joseph

(H) 408-8866

(C) 517-290-5428

hcclking@comcast.net

Richard & Veronica Thompson

2816 Sunnydale Ct., St. Joseph

338-5748

RVTHOMP22@gmail.com

Church Women United Event

The May Friendship Celebration, "Finding Grace at the Table," will take place June 3. There is a board meeting at 10:00 a.m. with Bible study at 11:00 a.m. with Pastor Laurie Hartzell. Lunch is served at noon and the program begins at 1:00 p.m. with Pastor Minnie Autry, Union Memorial A.M.E. Church as the speaker. The host church for the event is Stevensville United Methodist Church on Ridge Road in Stevensville. Questions? Contact Patty Nordberg at 429-7297 or pnordberg@comcast.net.

Library News

Recently, the library has been given a number of donations. Each book is reviewed to see whether it will be added to the shelves or whether it might be passed on to others during our church rummage sales. If you are looking for a wonderful true story, check out the DVD *Woodlawn*. All DVD's are together and can be borrowed. We are currently keeping 1-2 copies of books (Bibles, too) so our shelves are getting ready for new additions.



MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 01 - Barb Callendar
- 01 - Les Miller
- 02 - Elijah Edlefsen
- 03 - Betty Braman
- 05 - Judy Bertsch
- 06 - Abigail Winsman
- 07 - Steve Upton
- 10 - Maddox Morphey
- 10 - Jenna Schlipp
- 11 - DeWayne Hellenga
- 14 - John Bannow
- 15 - Bruce Molineaux
- 16 - Kaye Lulenski
- 16 - Claire Norland
- 16 - Ginny Steinman
- 22 - Margaret Klos
- 22 - Nathan Rich
- 24 - Matthew Burkhard
- 25 - Kathy MacTavish
- 26 - Jan Polmanteer
- 27 - Doris Tippet
- 29 - Maddie Burkhard
- 29 - Ron Drews
- 29 - Mary Goff
- 30 - David Laetz
- 31 - Ron Guertel



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

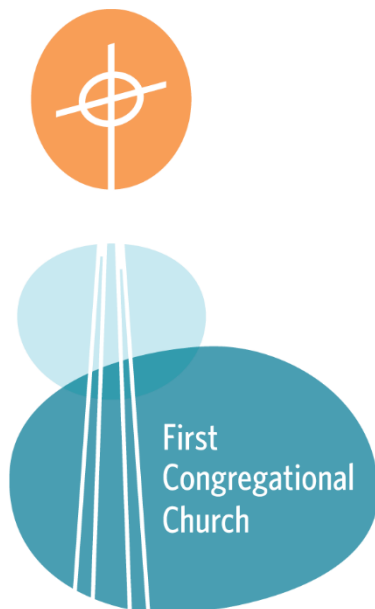
The Invitation to Discipleship from Jesus Christ

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.

Phone: (269) 983-5519

Website: fccstjoseph.org

Email: office@fccstjoseph.org

Address: First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
2001 Niles Avenue
St. Joseph, Michigan