

# The Parchment

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church UCC  
November 2016

## Greetings from Dr. Bob

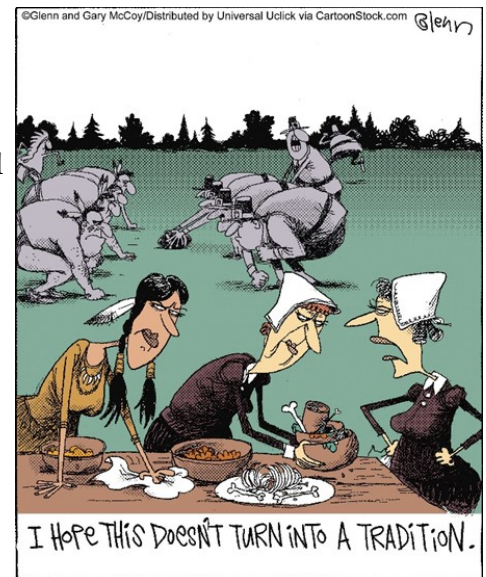
### A Season for Pilgrims

We are in the month of Pilgrims. Every year in my elementary school and Sunday school there was talk of Pilgrims. Maybe even a class skit, which probably was as corny as could be, but which made the “actors” feel very special indeed. I chuckle and shudder to think how we must have portrayed both Pilgrims and Native Americans, but the main point usually came across: Some very brave people risked life and limb to find a better place to live and live out their faith. Only when we grew up did we realize it came with a huge cost to those who already lived there.

If you grew up in a Congregational Church, your youth group might have been called Pilgrim Fellowship and you might have sung out of a Pilgrim Hymnal, as we did here until a few years ago. Congregationalists trace their heritage to those English pilgrims who came here in 1620, reminding us that we, too, are to be champions of Christian freedom in all facets of our lives. It was not an easy journey, and the first years in North America were hard on everybody, even deadly for some. The Native Americans were forced into pilgrimage of their own as a result of innumerable new pilgrims arriving in the new world, “new” being only relevant to the pilgrims, not those already here.

The Bible offers a starting place for us to understand what it is to be a pilgrim, even today. Abraham was called by God to find a land of freedom. His was a difficult journey, and the full promise of living in that land would only be realized by his ancestors, not by Abraham and Sarah. Hebrews 11 is a great chapter on people being faithful to God no matter what. In it we read:

*By an act of faith, Abraham said yes to God’s call to travel to **an unknown place** that would become his home. When he left he had **no idea where he was going**. By an act of faith he lived in the country promised him, lived as a stranger camping in tents. Isaac and Jacob did the same, living under the same promise. Abraham did it by keeping his eye on an unseen city with real, eternal foundations – the City designed and built by God. Hebrews 11:8-10, The Message*



(Continued on next page.)



Okay, it's time for a couple of takeaways.

The first: Betty and I will soon be heading for another land, but not a new one. Rather it's the home of our upbringing. The biggest challenge for me is getting my head out of serving in the Church as a way of life. The biggest promise is finding new ways to love our children, grandchildren and wider family. We are ready.

The second: You as a congregation will soon be heading not for another land but for another epoch, defined by Merriam-Webster as *a time marked by an event that begins a new period or development*.

For both you and us it will be a time of expectation and change, and the essential provision for our backpack is **faith** as we face the **unknown**. God, the author of that faith, will remind us over and over again that the journey has been mapped out by God, we travel together, and there is eternal purpose all along the way.

Let's chew on that while we chew on our turkey. Dark meat, please. And a little dressing.

Thankful for you,  
Dr. Bob

## One Time, Two Special Gatherings

The date is Sunday, November 20. First, a brief congregational meeting following worship, in the Sanctuary, to vote on the Nominating Committee's selection of people to fill positions on boards and committees.

Second, lunch and a Family Matters Gathering for an update on our congregation's life, including Dr. Bob's retirement and some exciting plans for our future. Plan on it!

## All Saints Sunday, November 6

Each year on this Sunday we remember those in our church family who have left this earth for the life God has prepared for us, from November 1, 2015 to October 31, 2016.

After the sermon, a family member or designated friend can come to the front to light a candle of remembrance for a loved one. The names of our deceased church members will be read at the end. Others are also invited, even if your loved one was not a member of our church.

## Fall Association Meeting

The fall meeting of the Southwest Association, our area of the Michigan Conference UCC, will be held on Sunday, November 6, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. in Kalamazoo. The first part is a business meeting, and the second part will be a discussion on guns and violence in Michigan, and our Christian response. Please call the office to register if interested. (983-5519 or [office@fccstjoseph.org](mailto:office@fccstjoseph.org))

## Holiday Blues

Are you grieving the loss of a loved one? Do the holidays get you down? Lakeland offers a program entitled Holiday Blues to support individuals and families who are walking through grief during the holiday season. The program is free and open to the community. Registration is encouraged but not required.

### When & Where

Thursday, November 13, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.  
Hospice at Home – 4025 Health Park Lane, St. Joe.  
Contact DJ Hosbein or Jaime Hoover at 429-7100

Monday, November 17, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.  
Lory's Place – 445 Upton Drive, St. Joe.  
Contact Trisha Pickett at 983-2707





## *Health News from your Parish Nurse Jan*

My message this month is to remind those of you who have **not** received your flu shot or shingles vaccination to “Get ‘Err Done” for the following reasons:

### **Flu/Influenza**

Each year between 3,000 and 49,000 Americans die from flu and its complications. Although most people are back on their feet within a week after having the flu, certain people are more susceptible to complications. If you have asthma or other lung diseases, or chronic conditions, you are at higher risk of developing complications from flu. Anyone can get the flu as it is spread easily from person to person, usually when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccination every year.

### **Shingles**

People 60 years of age or older should get a shingles vaccine. They should get the vaccine whether or not they recall having had chickenpox, which is caused by the same virus. Studies show that more than 99% of Americans aged 40 and older have had chickenpox, even if they don't remember getting the disease. There is no maximum age for getting shingles vaccine.

Even if you have had shingles, you can still receive shingles vaccine to help prevent future occurrences of the disease. There is no specific length of time you must wait after having shingles before receiving shingles vaccine, but generally you should make sure the shingles rash has disappeared before getting vaccinated. The decision on when to get vaccinated should be made with your healthcare provider.

Shingles vaccine is approved by the Food and Drug Administration for people aged 50 years and older. However, CDC does not have a recommendation for routine use of shingles vaccine in people 50 through 59 years old. Protection from shingles vaccine lasts about 5 years, so adults vaccinated before they are 60 years old might not be protected later in life when the risk for shingles and its complications are greatest. Adults 50 through 59 years who have questions about shingles vaccine should discuss the risks and benefits with a healthcare provider.

Because of the enormous availability of the flu shot in our community and from the area health care providers, we no longer offer flu shot administration here at First Congregational. Please feel free to contact me however, for information on how to receive these lifesaving immunizations.

## Music Ministry News from Paul Flyger



First, a BIG thank you to the Chancel Choir for hosting and singing in the recent Choir Festival Concert that we had in the sanctuary on Sunday afternoon, October 23 at 4 PM. We had over 100 voices from the four local choirs that participated in the Festival Finale, O When the Saints Go Marching In, arranged by John Rutter. Steve Zork invited Journey from Berrien Springs, the Zion United Church of Christ Choir from Baroda, the Andrews University Singers, and of course, our own Chancel Choir. The concert opened with a glorious Sanctus by René Clausen, sung by Andrews University Singers and was followed by an organ solo, When In Our Music God is Glorified (Wilbur Held), by organist Paul Flyger. Each of the guest choirs presented several pieces and all combined at the end for the finale which also included audience participation. Our guest musicians were Mike Perkins, clarinet; Alan Mitchell, trombone; and Robert Johnson, double bass. It was a great afternoon of great music!

November is a time of thankfulness and preparation. The first Sunday is Communion and also our celebration of All Saints Sunday. Even though we do not normally schedule a bell choir on a Communion Sunday, the Alleluia Ringers will be performing that day in order to present Arnold Sherman's most beautiful arrangement of Londonderry Air on the NEW five octaves of Malmark handchimes that we purchased in July. While I was at the National Seminar for the Handbell Musicians of America, I asked many well-known and prominent handbell conductors what piece they would choose to debut a new 5-octave set of handchimes. Londonderry Air is one of three pieces that will feature the new chimes before Christmas. Kathleen Ebling Shaw, director of the Westminster Concert Bell Choir, suggested we learn Julie Stitt's *La Paix* (Peace). Her choir performed it at their Christmas Concert last year (because their handbells had already been shipped to the West Coast for their bell tour) and it was very well-received by the Westminster Symphony conductor. It is the most difficult piece we have attempted and the Alleluia Ringers are planning to play it at the late Christmas Eve Service during the candle lighting before we all join in singing Silent Night. I hope you will like it also!



The Jubilate Ringers have combined forces with our younger ringers in Joyful Praise this past week. Because of after-school activities and sports, I've only had two young ringers this year. There were also two openings in the Jubilate Ringers so it was suggested to combine and double up parts if necessary. This will make Jubilate Ringers a multi-generational handbell choir and will strengthen the wonderful ringers in this group. We will keep doubling up the parts for anyone still wishing to learn to ring. (This is the best way, because you'll be ringing with someone else on your part!) **The new rehearsal time is Wednesdays from 5:00 - 6:00 PM** giving 30 minutes after rehearsal for dinner in Fellowship Hall before 6:30 activities. Jubilate Ringers are schedule to perform next on Thanksgiving Sunday, Nov 20.



All choirs are beginning to work on their Christmas music for December. The first Sunday of Advent falls on Sunday November 29 and our second annual **Christmas Carols in St. Joseph** will be after the church-wide Christmas Dinner on Wednesday, December 14 (5:30 PM). This year, the Symphony Brass Quintet will be our special guests as we combine brass, organ and bells to accompany the singing of our favorite Christmas Carols in an hour long concert at 7 PM. Please mark your calendars and begin making plans to bring your friends to this wonderful Christmas celebration. The Holiday fun begins!!



## NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

01 ~ Dennis Bowen  
02 ~ Emmett Achramowicz  
02 ~ Doug Wood  
03 ~ Vickie Florin  
03 ~ Barb Lovellette  
04 ~ Andy Capes  
05 ~ Ruthann Miller  
06 ~ Bodhin Fletty  
06 ~ Mary Wortman  
11 ~ Verlin Harder  
11 ~ Gene Maddock  
11 ~ Jerry Warren  
13 ~ Marian Edinger  
13 ~ Hannah Wier  
14 ~ Joanne Averill  
15 ~ Bill Benner  
15 ~ Audrey Elwell  
17 ~ Mark Zielke  
18 ~ Abby Michaels  
22 ~ Sheila Knight-Day  
22 ~ Jennifer Terry  
23 ~ Jeff Ort  
27 ~ Cathie Schalk  
28 ~ Priscilla Byrns  
30 ~ Julie Koch  
30 ~ Andrea Lawrence

### Women's Bible Study

The group meets on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Greeting Room. We are reading *Becoming a Woman of Strength* by Cynthia Heald. We will meet on the following dates:

#### November 3

Session 8 ~ "Strong Enough to be Bold"

#### November 10

Session 9 ~ "Strong Enough to be Christ's Bondslave"

#### November 17

Session 10 ~ "Strong Enough to Persevere"

#### November 24

Thanksgiving ~ no class

### Church Women United

World Community Day will be celebrated at Union Memorial A.M.E. Church, 911 South Crystal Avenue, Benton Harbor on November 4. The theme, "Sharing the Gifts at the Table" will begin with a Bible study at 11:00 a.m., lunch at noon and the program starts at 1:00 p.m. If you have any questions, please contact Patty Nordberg at 429-7297.

### Church Library

Stop in and see what has been added. Besides new additions, books that were donated to the church have also found a new home. If you look on the bottom shelf by the library closet you will see a collection of books that relate to Michigan and our local area. Check out the DVD collections below the Bibles. One very interesting series is *That the World May Know* by Ray VanderLaan. You could travel with him to places where Biblical stories took place. It won't be long before the shelves will have permanent identification to help you locate just what you might be wanting to read. Any ideas for our library, please let us know.

Caryl, Nancy & Patty

### In preparation for Advent

I will need help bringing all the decorations up from the Christmas storage space behind the stage in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, November 20, immediately following the **All Church Family Matter's lunch**. Big hands and small, will make short work of it.

Do you enjoy the glow of the candles in the windows of the Sanctuary, the wreaths



everywhere, doors and windows all dressed up for Christmas? Advent will begin sooner than we think.

**Decorating will begin on Tuesday, November 22 at 9:30 a.m.** There is

the tree in the Gathering Room to be decorated, the garland hung from the balcony wall, the ornaments arranged in the Greeting Room, plenty of work available for all. With the help of many we should be finished around noon. Hoping to see you then, Carol Geldhof.

## Important Dates for Christian Education

*November 11* – High school book club

*November 13* – Kids in Worship, Sunday school students will be dismissed to Sunday school after the children's message during worship

*November 23* – No Wednesday night dinner or programs

*November 27* – No Sunday school, children are welcome to join their parents for worship (Nursery open for children 3 and under)

*December 10* – High school book club & Christmas party, junior high included in Christmas party

*December 11* – Children's Christmas program during worship, no Sunday school (Nursery is open for children 3 and under)

*December 14* – No Wednesday night programs, join us for a special Christmas dinner and an evening Christmas Carols in St. Joseph concert

*December 21* – No Wednesday night dinner or programs

*December 25* – No Sunday school and no childcare in the nursery, children are welcome to join their parents for worship

*December 28* – No Wednesday night dinner or programs

*January 1* – No Sunday school and no childcare in the nursery, children are welcome to join their parents for worship

*January 4* – Wednesday night dinner and programs **resume**



## November's Teaching Themes

### Preschool

During November children will be learning to be **THANKFUL** for people who help them. They will learn that family, friends, and neighbors all help them. And, they will learn to say thank you for that help.

### Elementary

During November students will learn about **HONOR** and that honor is letting someone know you see how valuable they are. Each week will focus on a different bottom line which include:

- Honor others by giving them a chance.
- Honor others by putting them first.
- Honor others by keeping your promises.
- Honor God by giving Him credit.

### Youth

Students have been working in a series called **SHAMLESS** in which students will discover there's nothing wrong with feeling a little red-faced every once in a while, but when that feeling of shame carries over to how we see ourselves, how we treat others, and even what we think about God, it can be really harmful. As we explore what the Bible says about our best and worst moments, we may just discover that the best thing we can do with one of the worst feelings is to shame...less.

In mid-November students will begin a series called **UPSIDE DOWN** where students will discover that any time you learn new information, it can turn your world upside down. Jesus had a habit of doing just that with the people closest to Him. This was especially true when Jesus talked about how we treat people, specifically people who like us, people who don't, and people we don't even notice.

## Bakers Needed

Each Christmas Mary Martha Circle group provides cookies for our homebound and nursing home members. This year they are asking for your help to continue this outreach. If you would like to provide cookies, please call Jinny Bock at 983-7576. They are also looking for Christmas tins to use for the cookies. The tins can be dropped off in the church office. Thank you for helping!

### Women's Bible Study

Our study continues with *Becoming a Woman of Strength*. Bring your Bible and join us in the Greeting Room on the following dates:

**November 3**

Session 8 - Strong Enough to be Bold

**November 10**

Session 9 - Strong Enough to be Christ's Bondslave

**November 17**

Session 10 - Strong Enough to Persevere

**November 24**

Happy Thanksgiving

### Mary Martha Circle

The meeting will be Tuesday, November 8 at 1:30 p.m. in the Gathering Room. Please bring your gifts for cancer patients along with gift wrap.

### Men's Ministry

The group meets in the Gathering Room for a light breakfast at 8:00 a.m. followed by a discussion that ends around 9:30. Listed are the dates for upcoming meetings:

**November 12 & 26**

We'll continue with "Charity Detox"

**December 10**

John Bock will discuss  
"The MI Dept. of Ag and You"

**Coming on April 22, 2017**

The Linden's will enlighten us about Mongolia. This meeting is for both men, women and friends. Questions? Call Bill Bock at 983-7576.

### Missions Board Giving Update

At the September and October Missions Board meetings the following donations were approved:

Berrien County Cancer Service  
\$2500 for replacement copier



Wonderland Toy Store  
\$500 for toys and gift cards

Many individuals in this community will benefit in many different ways because of your generous giving which makes these donations possible.

Thank you from your Missions Board.

### Up Coming Events!

**Wednesday, November 16**

Regular programs and our annual Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings.

**Wednesday, November 23**

No programs

*Happy Thanksgiving*

**Wednesday, November 30**

Regular programs and dinner resume.

**PLAN AHEAD**

**Wednesday, December 14, 5:30 p.m.**

Special Christmas Dinner

**Christmas Carols in St. Joseph, 7:00 p.m.**

with handbells, a piano/organ duet, and the South Bend Symphony Brass Quintet

### Mary Preston Guild

The November meeting will be held on the 9th at 1:00 p.m. in the Greeting Room.

### Women's Fellowship Council

The meeting is open to all women in the church. They'll meet on Wednesday, November 16 at 10:30 a.m. in the Greeting Room.

# 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

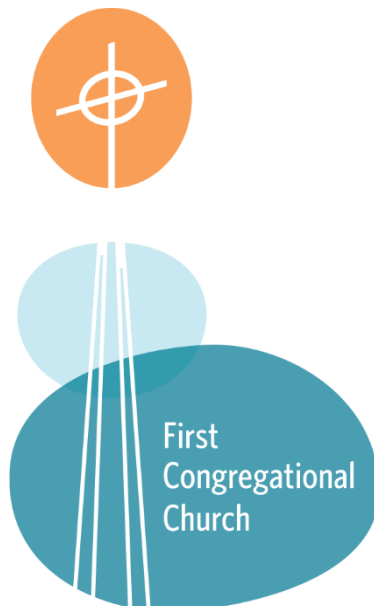
## The Invitation to Discipleship from Jesus Christ

*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*

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

*Childcare available during worship.*

## WEDNESDAY FAMILY NIGHT

*September thru April*

5:00 p.m. Jubilate 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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