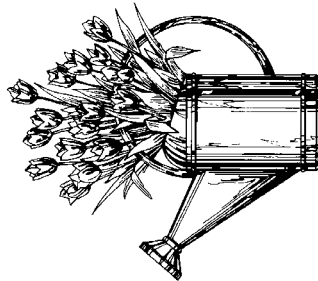


First Congregational Church
100 Maple Street
St. Johns, MI 48879

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APRIL

This Month's Highlights:
Cover, Spring Tea and Holy Week Schedule
Pg. 2 Article by Rev. Olson
Pg. 3 Senior High Youth Group Leader
Pg. 5 Attic Treasure
Pg. 6 Children and Youth News
Pg. 7 April Schedules, Church Records and Dedication
Pg. 9 Member Profile

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

APRIL 2011



The Congregational Connection...

*Our connection to the family and friends of
First Congregational Church, St. Johns, MI*



Save the Date
for a
Royal Princess Tea
Saturday, April 16, 2011
2:00 – 3:30 PM



Tickets are available
before church or by calling
517-775-7186 for ticket information
Child \$5.00 Adult \$8.00
Proceeds going to Youth Christian
Education at F.C.C.



Come and join members and participants of
our church as we prepare for Easter by wor-
shipping during this holy time.

APRIL 17th, 11:00 a.m. Palm Sunday,
Easter Cantata

APRIL 21st, 7:00 p.m.
Maundy Thursday Service

APRIL 22nd, 7:00 p.m. St. Johns Ministerial
Association Good Friday Service

APRIL 24th, 11:00 a.m. Easter Sunday Service

Child care provided for all services.

*All events take place at
First Congregational Church*

Does God Attend First Congregational Church of St. Johns? Do you? The Third in a Series of Articles on the Worth Ship (Worship) of God

Attending a worship service is about connecting with God. It does not matter how tuneful the hymn singing, how well composed are the prayers, how stunning the choir, how effectively read is the scripture, how sublime the music, or how relevant the message. What matters is personal interaction with God.

How important is worship to God? Throughout both Old and New Testaments worship is clearly the most important thing God's people can do. It is their first and ultimate calling. Abel is worshiping God by the fourth chapter of Genesis. God instructed Moses to ask Pharaoh to let his people go just so they could worship him (Exodus 4:22-23). The first commandment God issued to the children of Israel in preparation for entering the Promised Land dealt with worship: *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me."* (Deut. 5:6-7). When some of Jesus' disciples question why Jesus should allow himself to be anointed with costly oils that could have been sold to benefit the poor, Jesus responds, *"Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me."* (Matt. 26:10-11). Instructing the early church, Peter tells of God's work; *"...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...."* (1 Pet. 2:5). Further along in the same letter he expands on the point; *"...you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."* (1 Pet. 2:9). The Book of Revelation describes the heavens as a place of glorious worship of God.

How important is worship to you? Worship is your spiritual breath. Worship is not on the Christian's "to do" list; it heads and defines the list.

David is a good example of a worshipper of God. He came to worship wholeheartedly, passionately and lavishly. In Psalm 27:4 he expresses the heart and desire of a real worshipper

*One thing I ask of the Lord,
This is what I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
All the days of my life,
To gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
And to seek him in his temple.*

No wonder the scriptures call David, *"A man after God's own heart"* (1 Sam. 13:14). He comes to God with total focus on God.

Jesus said, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* (Matt 22:37). He said it as the greatest commandment, the foundation of the entire Christian life. Jesus knew and taught God that desires our worship above anything else. It should be number one on each of our agendas.

Rev. Matthew Olson

THE CHURCH STAFF

Senior Minister, Matthew Olson
Church Administrator, Susan Larsen
Treasurer, Jim Beagle
Financial Secretary, Paul Martis
Chancel Choir Director, Dr. Charles Graham
Director of Music Ministry, Rachael Short
Hands of Harmony Director, Susan Kilmer

First Congregational Church

100 Maple Street
 St. Johns, MI 48879

Telephone: 989-224-2636

Fax: 989-224-8306

E-Mail: fccsj@4wbi.net

Web Site: www.fccsj.com

Hours: Monday - Tuesday

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Thursday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

*We believe in God, the Father;
 infinite in wisdom, goodness and love, and in
 Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Savior,
 who, for us and our salvation, lived and died
 and rose again and liveth evermore;
 and in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things
 of Christ and revealth them to us, renewing,
 comforting, and inspiring the souls of men.*

THE BOARD OF MINISTRY

Moderator: Marianne Harris

Vice Moderator:
 Shirleyan Lake

Board of Ministry Members:

David Elms

Tom Flynn

Gary Larsen

Eugene Livingston

Melanie Lounds

Keith Mino

Denise Palmer

Randy Root

Cali Sackrider

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a church open to all.
 As modern day pilgrims we
 consider

it our privilege and committed
 responsibility to:

CELEBRATE the glory of God
 through worship, service and
 stewardship

NURTURE our relationships with
 Christian love and truth; and

SERVE others in our daily lives,
 individually and collectively
 as Christ's people.

Community Resource Volunteers
Individualized Transportation Services

CRV has a goal to identify persons willing and able to drive a CATS bus and then they will be better able to serve the “frail and disabled public” in the future as soon as drivers are available.

We are seeking volunteer drivers to provide New Freedom special door to door transportation services for approved frail and/or disabled passengers on an individual(s) basis.

This transportation service will use **Care A Vans** as a new individualized transportation option for “*frail and disabled riders*”. (This only requires a chauffeurs license for drivers.)

While the funding for the vehicles and operation cost are the responsibility of Clinton Area Transit System services, it requires the Clinton County Community to provide volunteer drivers as their match to secure the outside funds.

The ideal driver candidate will be persons who have a desire to help others and are comfortable working with persons with disabilities.

Volunteer Drivers will need:

- a chauffeur license / 0-2 two points on present license.
- a commercial driver’s physical (not a CDL required for bus drivers)
- a drug/alcohol tests

Clinton Area Transit System will provide/pay for:

- Training and a Semi-annual driver trainer ride-along
- Bi-annual physical exam, chauffeur license, random drug/alcohol tests
- Provide round trip mileage reimbursement from your home to Transit Office

For further information contact Bill Richards at 1-517-331-4620 (cell) or 224-4182 (home).

“HERE COMES THE SUN”

Renewable energy is energy that comes from natural resources . The sun is one natural resource that produces renewable energy. Every day I need to be renewed just to tackle what life throws my way and Spring Break is just around the corner, so I can recharge for the end of the school year. How long has it been since you’ve been recharged in the sun on a vacation? A week? A month? A year? Longer?

More importantly, when is the last time you really took some time off from the daily grind to think about who you are, where you are going, and where you are in your walk with Christ? For adults and students it’s tough to slow down and think about these things. In our fast-paced world, it seems like everyone is passing us by. We may even fear that taking a quick “pit stop” will cause us to fall behind or lose the race. But even an Indy 500 or NASCAR driver needs to take multiple pit stops to win the race. They renew their tires, refuel, change brake pads, tighten up their nuts and bolts, and make adjustments. All of us need time to take a pit stop and re-energize.

It can be scary and uncomfortable when we make a pilgrimage; however, I love being out of my comfort zone from time to time. I’ve gone skydiving twice and love traveling. I even love the journey I take spiritually at biblical conferences like The Women of Faith and the Win Some Women conference at Mackinaw this last year. Taking the time to really walk with Christ may mean a mission trip (like our Peru adventurers), being in a strange and different new land. Some call this a vacation. When I think of all the work that happens in glorifying the Father and all the emotional journeys the heart takes at conferences I have been to, I would call this a vacation in the Son. WE ALL need to re-fuel and re-charge in the Son, and what wears us down as adults is similar to what wears our kids down.

Dan Brown, HOPE president, says “It’s impossible to finish if you do not take pit stops from your daily race to spend time in prayer and worship and have a relationship with God... This year’s NAPF conference gives our students the unique opportunity to take a 4-day “pit stop” from their daily race! They’ll be able to recharge their spiritual batteries, build up their strength against bumps in the road, learn ways to slow down and reflect, and get directions to continue their walk with Christ.” This year we are traveling to Arizona State University - Tempe. I’m hoping we will not only recharge in the sun but also in THE SON.

A place, time and friends, with which to share their faith, the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NAPF) conference helps students get reconnected with God in a supportive, fun-filled environment. Meeting annually in a different location around the country, this conference has various themes exploring scripture and helping youth apply it to their own lives. Students experience great Christian music, fellowship with other youth from all over the country, fabulous games and mission opportunities. We will be in large and small group sessions with a speaker . In NAPF these are led by youth leaders from Congregational Churches from around the country. It’s a great place for youth to promote, encourage, and nurture Christian Fellowship. Our youth may bring all they’ve learned and experienced back to strengthen our church and the lives of those around them.

As a youth leader, we sincerely thank you for supporting our youth. Whether it is monetary through pizza sales or supporting us emotionally with your prayers, we are very grateful for a church family. We are excited to reflect under the sun, in the Son, and on the Son.

Respectfully Submitted, Melanie Lounds

COME AND JOIN THE FUN!

Calling All Campers!!! Save the dates for the 4th annual church camping weekend June 9 – 12, 2011. It is always the weekend after St. Johns graduation. River Ridge Campground near Breckenridge is the place (same as last year). There are two cabins for you folks who are non-campers, but want to join us. Don't call for your reservation until late April or May as they are gone until then. For more information contact Linda Fitch at 224-2565.



DOUBLETS, ETC.

On April 3rd, Doublet's Etc. will meet in the afternoon. Dr. Lou Neuder, a veterinarian, will be our host to tour the Green Meadows Dairy Farm in Elsie. Contact Linda Fitch for more information at 224-3565.

CELEBRATE THE OCCASION!

Do you have a special birthday or other event in **JUNE, JULY, OCTOBER OR DECEMBER?** Then why not reserve that month of the **"CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTION"** in honor of this occasion? The cost is \$50.00 and is used to help cover the cost of postage. Please contact the church office at 224-2636 to reserve the month.



SMALL GROUPS

All men from our church and community are invited to attend the **TUESDAY MORNING MEN'S BIBLE STUDY**. They open with a prayer at 7:00 a.m. sharp and always try to close the study time by 7:50 a.m. with time for prayer until 8:00 a.m.



THE WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP is meeting weekly on Tuesdays from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. in the Parlor. The focus of this study is the Old Testament beginning with Genesis. Please feel free to join the group at any time. For more information contact Kathy Farnum, Intern Minister, at 517-669-5864 farnumk@comcast.net.



A **SMALL GROUP** is being held on Wednesdays, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor. They are working with the Upper Room Daily Devotional, available on the Literature Rack. You are invited to join them.



Rev. Olson is leading a **BIBLE STUDY/ DISCUSSION CLASS** on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. in Wilcox Hall. You can join the group at any time. This is a good chance to meet new people and grow in your Christian faith.

WORKSHOP ON AGING

The Workshop on Aging will continue in April. A presentation on Dementia was given by the Alzheimers Association on Sunday, March 27, 2011. Due to the complexity of this issue, a speaker for the Aszheimers Association will return to provide additional information on the topic of Dementia and Alzheimers at the workshop scheduled for Sunday, April 10. This workshop will be held at the church beginning at 7:00 p.m. For more information contact Marilyn Newman at 517-331-3457 or Kathy Farnum at 517-669-6864.



WHEEL INN, ST. JOHNS

John and Pam Foster would like to invite our congregation to visit The Wheel Inn (in St. Johns) on Saturday's and Sunday's and bring along their current weekly bulletin. They will keep the bulletin and attach your paid bill to it and once every month they will total those numbers (pre-tax) and make a 5% donation back to the church. They hope that these monies will assist in supporting our favorite mission in these economic hard times. This program will go on indefinitely.

BOOKS, VIDEOS & MUSIC

Our church library is filled with many books, both fiction and non fiction, musical tapes, and the Bible on disc for adults to check out. For children we have the Veggie Tale video series and many great books for them to take home to read.

Check out the library and enjoy!

MEMBER PROFILE



We would like you to meet Dick and Charlotte Shoup. They have been members of our church since 1981. Dick was born and raised in St. Johns and Charlotte is from Adrian. Dick works for the United States Postal Service where he has been an Automotive and Diesel Technician for 38 years. He is about to retire! Charlotte is an attorney and has her law office in her home. They have two sons: Rick lives in St. Johns and has three children Rick, Christine and Jordan. Their younger son Jeff is married to Paula and they live in Lansing. The Shoup's like to take bicycle rides, go to the theater and concerts, canoe and kayak, travel and cross country ski. Back in the 80's Dick and Charlotte tried our church and liked Rev. David Lord, the minister at that time. They also like the friendly congregation. Both Dick and Charlotte have served on the Board of Trustees and taught Junior High Sunday School. The next time you see Dick and Charlotte tell them how happy we are to have them as long time members of our church.

2011 Easter Flower Order Form

If you would like to honor, or remember, someone special, here is a perfect way. Lilies, Tulips and Mums (in 6 inch pots) are being offered for you to purchase.

Please have your order in the church office by **Sunday, April 10th.** Please enclose your payment with the order form. You may pick up your plant following the Easter Sunday Service. A list of the names of the donors and their designation will be included in the Easter Bulletin. Make your check payable to First Congregational Church.



Your Name: _____

I would like to order _____ **Lilies** at \$8.00 each. Total _____

Dedication: _____

I would like to order _____ **Tulips** at \$8.00 each. Total _____

_____ Red _____ Pink _____ Yellow

Dedication: _____

I would like to order _____ **Mums** at \$8.00 each. Total _____

_____ White _____ Yellow _____ Lavender

Dedication: _____

ATTIC TREASURE BID ITEM

Pictured below is one of the very special pieces that will be offered for bids...a must see!

This doll house is made of composition wood and measures 42 inches high, 22 inches wide and 15 inches deep.

Be thinking of that special child or grandchild that would enjoy playing with this unique item.

See you at the Sale!



Pictured: Ruth Nihart and Joann Martis Attic Treasure Sale Ministry Team Members.



Where Will the Money Come From?

The Building and Grounds Ministry Team is moving ahead with the remodeling work on the bell tower. No major work has been done on this part of the church building since it was built. So this is going to be an expensive project; probably around \$100,000. Where will the money come from?

The church has the money. It was given, for just such a project, in a bequest. Without the bequest we would not have begun the project. This bequest money can only be used for this kind of special work. It cannot be used for the church's regular expenses. That was part of the agreement in receiving the bequest.

The "Where will the money come from" question is better asked concerning the church's regular operating expenses. Giving has not kept up with expenses. The expenses cannot, without making major changes in the life of the church, be further cut. They have been already cut. The church budget has been lean for several years. A lean budget is good stewardship. A lean budget assures that the money given to the church is being well used in the ministry of the church.

Since the gap between income and outflow cannot, reasonably, be closed by cutting expenses, the "Where will the money come from" question is put to you. Will you increase your giving? Are you giving what you can?

Without your increased giving the church can do major building projects; they are already paid for. Without your increased giving the church cannot continue its present ministry. Please consult with God about increasing your giving.

ANNUAL EVENT

16TH ANNUAL ATTIC TREASURE SALE WILCOX HALL, LOWER LEVEL

**Monday, MAY 2, 2011
7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.
MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS OF FCC.**

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Tuesday, MAY 3, 2011
10:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.
(Extended hours)**

**&
Wednesday, MAY 4, 2011
10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.**



Donations may be brought to church the week of April 25th.

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday 9:00 a.m. until noon.**



Dishes, vases, small furniture, glassware, linens, Christmas items, knick-knacks, toys, books, older costume jewelry

No clothing please.

Children and Youth News

APRIL CHILDREN AND YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Tim Palmer
- 12 Samuel Sackrider
- 21 Abby Doss
- 22 Mallory Smith



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IS COMING!

Children age 4 to 10 are invited to come and join the fun June 21st—24th, 9:30—11:30 a.m. here at First Congregational Church. Lessons, crafts, snacks and singing are all a part of each morning. Watch the May newsletter for more information.



The dates for camp for this coming summer have been set. It will be held Sunday, July 31st, to Friday evening, August 5th. It will be held at the YMCA Camp Copneconic in Fenton, MI, Genesee County. You can check their website at www.campcopneconic.com. Summer camp is for all youth currently in 3rd grade through the 8th grade. This camp is an amazing experience and a great week of Christian fellowship, fun and faith.

Registration packets are available in the church office. All registrants with a deposit postmarked no later than SATURDAY, April 30, 2011 receive a \$30.00 early registration discount. All other applications are due by July 23, 2011. They have limited space, so they are encouraging the campers to register as soon as they are able.



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

The **Sunday School** classes, age 4 through 8th grade will not be meeting on April 3rd. or Easter Sunday.

The **Junior High Youth Group** will be taking Sunday, April 3rd. and Easter Sunday off.

The **Senior High Youth Group** will not be meeting on Sunday, April 10th and Easter Sunday.

REMINDER: That the last Sunday for Sunday School classes and the Youth Groups is May 15th. The Sunday School, Youth Group pins and Award Bibles will be given out during the Worship Service that morning.

APRIL SIGN UP SCHEDULES

<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Nursery Care</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour</u>	<u>4th Sunday Supper Host/Hostess</u>
3 Beaufore	3 Kelly DeRosia	3 Livingston/Martis	
10 Myers	10 Susie Fromson	10 Jane Jolly	April *
17 Harris	17 Stacie Stevens	17 *	May *
24 Easter Sunday	24 Stacie Stevens	24 Easter Sunday	

***Openings that need to be filled.**

This page is published to keep you informed of participation in our church on Sundays and of changes in our church records. This also includes the dedication of our monthly newsletter.

CHURCH SERVICE

Friend Death:

G. Archie Abbott, March 2, 2011, Step Father of Nancy Mino

Member Death:

Otto Thurston, February 23, 2011, Husband of Fritz Thurston

THE NEWSLETTER DEDICATION

The "CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTION"
for the month of April
is dedicated in
Celebration of the 56th Wedding Anniversary of



Darwin and Hila Beaufore