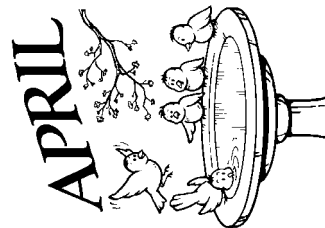


First Congregational Church
100 Maple Street
St. Johns, Michigan 48879

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This Month's Highlights:
Cover: *Holy Week Schedule & Attic Treasure*
Pg. 2 *Rev. Olson*
Pg. 3 *Music Report*
Pg. 4 *Moderator, Part 3*
Pg. 5 *Organ Fund*
Pg. 6 *Junior High Youth Group*
Pg. 7 *Member Profile*
Pg. 8 *Children and Youth News*
Pg. 9 *Schedules, Church Records and Dedication*



April 2012 The Congregational Connection...

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

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE



Palm Sunday: April
1st. Service at 11:00
a.m.



Maundy Thursday:
April 5th. Service at
7:00 p.m.



Good Friday: April
6th. St. Johns Minis-
terial Association
Community Service
at 7:00 p.m.

*Donations to SJMA



Easter Sunday:
April 8th. Service at
11:00 a.m.

*All services in our sanctuary
Childcare provided*

17th Annual Attic & Estate Treasure Sale

**Items from three estates*

**OPEN TO MEMBERS AND
PARTICIPANTS OF F.C.C.
Monday, April 16th, 2012
7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.**

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Tuesday, APRIL 17, 2012
10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.**

**&
Wednesday, APRIL 18, 2012
10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.**

*Dishes, vases, small furniture, glass-
ware, linens, Christmas items, knick-
knacks, toys, books,
older costume jewelry,
and much more!*

You may begin bringing your items to
church April 9th, 10th, 12th and 13th
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**For more information call
Paul and Joann Martis
at 224-4165
or the church at 989-224-2636**

No clothing.

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS, Submitted by Rev. Matthew Olson
“He Is Not Here”

A mass of hewn rock entombs the Rock,
A Living Stone embedded deep among
The mythic mines where gnomes and trolls have dug

The dark past for moral money, the Pearl of Great Price.
Mourning miners come in deep dawn to save the
Cached treasure

And find an empty hole, the loot plundered
And given away to God's poor and weak
Who lose their lives and gain—a resurrection.

-Eugene Peterson

So what is Easter all about? Not colored eggs, chocolate bunnies, and spring break. Easter is about resurrection; Jesus coming back to life after he died. He came back to life never to die again. No other faith claims that about its founder.

Judaism's founder, Abraham, is dead according to Genesis, “buried with his wife, Sarah” in a field Abraham bought from the Hittites. And 4000 years later he is still dead.

Buddhism is founded on the Buddha. Buddha, according to Buddhists, died about 438 B.C. and is buried in India. Buddha is still dead.

Islam is founded on Mohammed and his teachings. He died at about age 61 in A.D. 632. His tomb is a pilgrimage site for devote Muslims. Mohammed is still dead.

Christianity not only claims that Jesus is alive, but founds everything on that claim. As Paul puts it, “...if Christ has not been raised our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead.” (1 Corinthians 15:14-15). That is why Easter is the most important celebration of the year. In him we lose our “lives and gain---a resurrection.”

Rev. Matthew Olson

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.*

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.

THE BOARD OF MINISTRY

Sr. Minister: Rev. Matthew Olson

Moderator: Molly Minnick

Vice Moderator: Dr. Keith Mino, Jr.

Board of Ministry Members:

David Elms, Tom Flynn, Tom French, Rod
Fuller, Bill Kushmaul, Gary Larsen, Eugene
Livingston, Melanie Lounds, Cali Sackrider,

CHURCH STAFF

Church Administrator: Susan Larsen

Financial Secretary: Paul Martis

Treasurer: Jim Beagle

Chancel Choir Director: Dr. Charles Graham

Hands of Harmony Director: Susan Kilmer

Director of Music Ministry: Rachael Short

COMMUNITY NEWS

This is a reminder that the congregation is invited to **THE WHEEL INN**, St. Johns on Saturdays and Sundays and bring along a copy of our current weekly bulletin. The Wheel will collect those bulletins, attach your bill to it and every quarter they will total those numbers (pre-tax) and make a 5% donation back to our church.

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

Facebook:

firstcongregationalchurchofst.johns

Hours:

Monday - Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

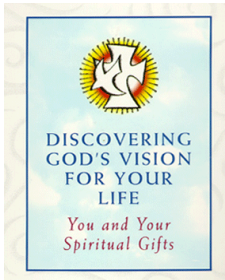
Thursday—Friday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Don't forget to bring your food items and gently used, clean clothing for the **THIRD SUNDAY THROW DOWN!** All donations go to the “Basic Needs Center” here in St. Johns. They need our support! Our next collection is Sunday, **April 15th.** Contact John Fitch at 224 -3565, or any Missions Team member for more information.

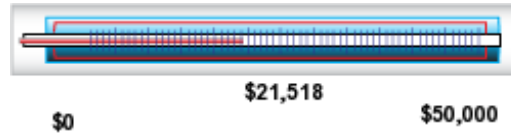


CHURCH UPDATES!

God has given you “**SPIRITUAL GIFTS**” with which to serve him. The Spiritual Gifts Class will help you discover those gifts and learn to use them effectively. Meetings will begin the week of April 15th, and run through the week of May 20th, on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings (whichever night most participants prefer) from 6:30 – 9 p.m. Jim Armantrout is the teacher. If you are interested please contact the church office.



AIR CONDITIONING UPDATE! The total estimated cost of this project is \$50,000.00. With the matching funds and several donations this month we now have \$21,518.30! We will continually keep you updated on our fund raising progress for this church improvement.



INVITATION TO PRAISE THE LORD: A small group of musicians meets on Monday nights from 7-8 pm in the Sanctuary to praise the Lord by singing/playing familiar songs and learning new ones to share on an occasional Sunday with the congregation. If you would like to join your voice, or musical instruments with ours, please contact Rachael Short (517-862-0750).

CALLING ALL CAMPERS!
We have changed our church camping weekend this year to June 22nd, same place River Ridge Campground in Breckenridge. Any questions please call Linda Fitch at 224-3565. We hope to see you at the campfire!
***I have just heard from River Ridge Campground. They have penciled us in for the June 22nd weekend. Please call them asap with your credit card number to hold the first night at 989-842-5184. The reservation is not set until they have received a deposit.



LITERATURE RACKS
“Don’t Put Me In A Nursing Home” by Claude Amarnick, D.O. is a compassionate guide to caring for our elders at home. This book and many more are available for you to take home free of charge.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Laingsburg Community Singers Spring Concert is Saturday, April 14th, at 7:00 p.m. at St. Isidore Catholic Church, Crum Street in Laingsburg. Members from our church including John and Linda Fitch, Kathy Lockwood, Bill and Brooke Witchell are members of this group. Refreshments are served and an offering is taken. We would love to have you join us!

Submitted by Linda Fitch

On Saturday March 17th, the Hands of Harmony Bell Choir attended the 28th annual Spring Ring Handbell Festival. The event was sponsored by the Lansing Area Ministry of Bells (LAMB) and brings together handbell choirs from around the greater Lansing area to play handbell music and attend classes to improve their knowledge and skill level. The event was held at Waverly High School which started at 9:00 AM and ended with a free concert at 4:30 PM. A free will offering was collected to help fund future events. The Hands of Harmony Bell Choir was one of 10 choirs that were present and we all had a great time and learned some new things. We hope you have enjoyed the music we have presented in worship this year, the songs we played in October through March were all part of the festival repertoire. We look forward to attending the next festival in the spring of 2013.



Submitted by *Susan Kilmer, Director*

MUSIC WITH A MISSION

The Music Ministry Team presented it's second "Music with a Mission" benefit concert on Sunday March 18th with proceeds going to the Baby Pantry. The concert featured the Silo Singers, The MSU Young Mens Chorus, and the MSU Accafellas. Approximately 70 people attended the concert and the music by all three groups was outstanding! Molly Minnick explained the history and mission of the Baby Panty which provides assistance to so many mothers and babies. A free will offering was collected for the Baby Pantry, which totaled \$486. These funds will go a long way to support the good works of this important ministry which is housed in our church. Thank you to the chancel choir members who donated cookies, Keith Mino who served as the Master of Ceremonies, the Silo Singers for singing and leading some singing of hymns, Gary Larsen for assistance with the sound system, and a big THANK YOU to the Jr. High PF and their leaders for greeting the guests and serving refreshments. This event was a wonderful success and the music ministry team plans to hold another benefit concert in October. Thank you to everyone who came out to enjoy this wonderful concert that helped the Baby Pantry.

Submitted by *Susan Kilmer*

Dear Friends and Members of First Congregational Church

At the 2012 Congregational Budget Meeting in January Church Moderator Molly Minnick gave an overview of the work the Board of Ministry has done to focus the ministry of the church on meaningful goals. She also explained how this was reflected in the church budget. Her comments were so comprehensive and helpful that I asked her to allow us to publish them in the newsletter in three installments. This is the third.-MWO

Each member of the Board of Ministry is dedicated to ending our history of deficit spending. In order to do so, we feel that we must have a 3-4 year budget plan in front of us at all times. At the Business Committee meeting last week, we reviewed budget projections for the next four years.

These projections, based on preliminary information and assumptions, have us at a \$2,500 deficit in 2013, but by 2014 we would have a \$3,000 budget surplus and by 2015 we would show a \$9,000 budget surplus. This is the kind of planning that we are committed to do as we believe it is critical to becoming completely independent of the endowment fund transfers.

In the 2012 budget proposal, you will see that there is a \$7,746.00 budget deficit. The Board of Ministry has proposed and passed a resolution which would handle this transfer of money from the endowment funds in a new innovative way. Instead of making transfers which are somewhat random to cover monthly expenses, we are going to deposit this entire amount on January 2, 2012. No further transfer are authorized unless they are brought before the Board of Ministry and discussed with the congregation.

If, we as members and friends of FCC are meeting our monthly pledge amounts and such things as plate income and other revenue generating events continue to happen, then there will be no need for any additional transfer of funds. This is our prayer. Furthermore, on a quarterly basis, we are going to report to the congregation the budget. We will give you detailed information about where we stand in both the revenue and expense sides of the budget and will discuss with you the need for any additional transfer of money from the investment funds. In keeping with our commitment to communication and transparency, we believe this will go a long way.

Now a couple of additional comments. You will see that the amount given for our 2012 pledge income is \$199,810. In the past we have factored in a 5% decrease in the amount which is actually pledged. After a great deal of discussion it was decided that we would not do that this year. Rather, we would rely on people to make the pledges which they committed themselves to make. We are moving forward with all good faith in ourselves and our fellow members and friends.

You will notice that we have given our Senior Minister and our Administrator each a 4% increase in salary. Our Director of Music was given a sizable increase in August of this year to bring her more in line with her job responsibilities, education and experience. In addition, it was

APRIL SIGN UP SCHEDULES

<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Nursery Care</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour</u>	<u>4th Sunday Supper Host/Hostess</u>
1 Shirleyan Lake	1 Stacie Stevens	1 *	April * May *
8 Easter Sunday	8 Stacie Stevens	8 No Fellowship	
15 *	15 Stacie Stevens	15 Dennis & Janet Scott	
22 Arlene Wood	22 Chelsea Rossow	22 *	
29 *	29 Chelsea Rossow	29*	

***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 RECORDS

Baptism:

Owen Robert Winsor, February 26, 2012, son of Jason and Jessica Winsor. Owen is the grandson of Wayne Dedyne and great-grandson of Bob and Marsha Dedyne.



Member Death:

Phyllis J. Rice, March 12, 2012

THE APRIL DEDICATION

The "Congregational Connection" for this months is in celebration of the birthday of

Gene Barnhart

It is given with love by her husband, Neil.



Children and Youth News

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 12 Samuel Sackrider
- 21 Abby Doss
- 21 Mallory Smith



MICHIGAN CONGREGATIONAL SUMMER CAMP

The dates for camp for this coming summer have been set. It will be held from Sunday, July 29th, to Friday evening, August 3rd. 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 through the 8th grade. Registration packets are available on the Literature Rack on the south side of the sanctuary. All registrants with a deposit postmarked no later than May 1st, receive a \$30.00 early registration discount. All other applications are due by July 15, 2012. They have limited space, so you are encouraged to register as soon as you are able.



SUNDAY SCHOOL & YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE

We will not be having Sunday School or Youth Groups on Palm Sunday, April 1st, due to Spring Break. Classes will resume on Easter Sunday, April 8th.

***No Hallelujah Choir on Palm or Easter Sunday.**

AWARDS DAY!

The last Sunday School class for this school year will be held on May 20th. Class is followed by the presentation of Sunday School awards during the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service.

“Give me a teacher who loves Jesus.

Someone who will pray for me.

Someone who will tell me the truth.

Help me understand the Bible.

And show me that God is Real.

I want to believe.

Give me Jesus.

Gospel Light

time that her employment status went from part time to full time. That increase was funded in 2011 with funds from the Youth Leader Fund and in 2012 will be part of the general budget.

Finally, we view this document as one which guides us and allows us to assess where we are financially at any given time. However, it is a document which can be adapted as need be from time to time based on feedback from the congregation and on the needs and concerns which are brought before us.

We thank you for reviewing this information. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of our Board of Ministry.

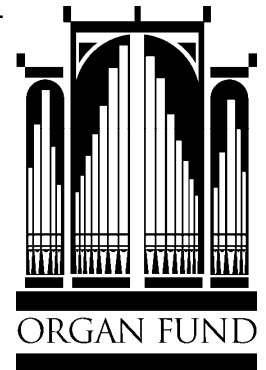
Submitted by Molly Minnick, Moderator

Finance Focus: the Brown-Kellogg Organ Endowment Fund

The church organ was built in 1908 by A. B. Felgemaker. Among those who enjoyed its music over the years was Winchell Brown. In 1989 the Brown Organ Endowment Fund was established in his memory. In 2011 a bequest from Carrie Kellogg was added to the fund in her memory. Consequently the fund was renamed the Brown-Kellogg Organ Endowment Fund.

The purpose of the fund is to perpetuate organ music at the First Congregational Church of St. Johns. Monies may be used for the care, maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of the sanctuary pipe organ. The fund supported a major renovation in 1989. The Brown-Kellogg Organ Endowment Fund may also be used to support organ concerts, provide lessons to enhance the skills of organists, and in other ways to promote organ music in the church.

At present the organ is in excellent overall condition. The current principle balance of the fund is \$22,000. This money is not to be spent but reserved to generate income to the fund. The money available to spend totals \$26,000. To replace the organ would cost about half a million dollars.



Submitted by *Rev. Matthew Olson*

DOUBLETS, ETC.

Everyone, both married couples and singles, are invited to the next meeting of this church social group, on Sunday, April 1st, 6:30 p.m. in the All Purpose Room at Clinton Commons. We hope you can make it! For more information contact Gary and Jenny McCampbell at 224-6134.

Junior High Youth Group Page

Easter is here! ...almost.

For the past 40 days, Christians around the world have waded into the wilderness that is Lent. This time, before the Easter celebration, commemorates the time that Christ spent in the wilderness fasting and enduring the temptations of Satan. Together with our Christian community we have contemplated the hurt in our lives and broken nature of our world, just as Christ did in the wilderness. As this journey comes to a close, we are certainly ready to have our sins put to death on the cross and rejoice in the saving work of our Lord.

We have only days to wait for this relief! But before we can celebrate the work of the cross, we must witness the acts of Good Friday. Darkness has yet to cover the land, the curtain is yet to be torn, and Christ will soon suffer his eminent death (Luke 23: 44-46). The events and reality of Good Friday may feel distant to us, but as Christians in the 21st century we still encounter the suffering of Christ everyday. When we turn on the news we see violence and injustices that plagues our world. Evils such as human exploitation, the continuing atrocities of war, and crumbling relationships haunt us. In the remaining days of our Lenten vigil, let's take some time to pray for the redemption of God's creation; that Christ is present in the broken places of our world. There is so much to look forward to this Easter! Not only do I have plans to outdo my Easter egg designs from last year, but also God has promised that life will win out over death yet again! Christ has worked to bring relief to pain, healing to what is broken, and salvation to all!
Easter is nearly here!

Sarah Gladstone

Sarah is a student at Fuller Seminary



Let me introduce Dennis and Janet Scott. Dennis was originally from Brighton and Janet was born and raised in St. Johns. They have two children, son Bill and his wife Kendra who live in St. Johns and have four children, Levi, Mitchell, Jessica and Bryce. Their daughter Elizabeth and her husband Jeff live in Holland and they have three boys Jacob, Elijah and Noah. Dennis worked in the floor covering business for twenty-five years and is now retired. I know many of us bought our carpet from him! Janet is retired from the Lansing State Journal where she was a Customer Service Manager. Dennis is an advocate for veterans and spends most of his time with his various duties in the veterans organizations in St. Johns and Clinton County. Janet enjoys quilting and reading. She also volunteers at Jessica's school. Both enjoy spending time with family and traveling. The Scotts were searching for a new church when they were invited by Keith Mino and Dick Root to come to First Congregational Church. They found our congregation to be warm and friendly and they liked the more traditional worship service they found here. They became members in 2011 and we are very lucky to have them here with us.