

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

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48879



This Month's Highlights:
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Pg. 6 Children and Youth News
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to seeing you at the sale.



15th Annual Attic and Estate Treasure Sale in our 150th Anniversary Year

April 20th and 21st
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Set up April 18th and 19th

Church Participants Sale, Monday April 19th, 7:00 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Special this year: Eighty-four items have been donated from the estate of Velma Garrett, mother of Elaine Rise. A complete set of Spode dinnerware has been given from the estate of Muriel Gilson (a bid item).

Please bring in your sale items beginning the week of April 12th, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Wednesday 9:00 a.m. to noon). Place your items in the North end of the kitchen.

If you have large size treasures to donate contact Paul and Joann Martis at 224-4165.



April 2010
The Congregational Connection...

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

“Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled”
(John 14)

Here you are at the crux of the matter, Easter. Jesus, the Son of and Messiah of God, has been crucified on the cross. He is defeated, dead and buried. Any hope or comfort you might have taken in his words and life has been snuffed out. Not only has Christ died, he has died with the sins of the world upon him. He has died with your sins upon him. As sin is death, he is truly dead!

But the death of the God-man is not the end. Jesus was resurrected from death and lives forever. In righteous triumph he overcomes death, making it possible for us to be free from sin and death.

During the two thousand years since Christ’s resurrection, the historical validity of the Easter story has been under assault. After all, the pagan world is littered with myths about a dying god who rises again. According to the skeptics, the resurrection is merely an expression of human hopes, not a real occurrence.

But in Christianity myth became fact. As C.S. Lewis puts it, *“The dying god really appears—as a historical Person, living in a definite place and time.”* Like a myth, the gospel is a colorful story that helps you wrestle with your deepest fears and needs, and inspires your imagination. It is, at the same time, something that happened in the real world. The story of Jesus, Lewis concludes, is, *“Perfect Myth and Perfect Fact: claiming not only our love and our obedience, but also our wonder and delight, addressed to the savage, the child, and the poet in each one of us not less than the moralist, the scholar and the philosopher.”*

The skeptics, enamored with the mythical meaning of Easter overlook the empty tomb as a historical fact, verifiable by observation. It clearly is observed. It is acknowledged by Jesus’ closest followers, and the soldiers who guarded the tomb. The resurrected Christ is seen by more than five-hundred witnesses, even one doubter who said, “I won’t believe it unless I can put my hands on his wounds!”

These encounters are no merely fleeting vapors. The conviction that Jesus is resurrected from the dead is so compelling that, faced with torture and death, the original disciples refuse to renounce him. What was once a defeated band who are already returning to

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.

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Do you have a special birthday or other event in **August**? 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.



FOOD BANK DONATIONS

1. Next "Throw Down Sunday" is on April 18th.
 2. Bring your donation of any canned or boxed food, or cash to be donated to area food banks. Personal products are also needed.
- More information? Contact John Fitch at 224-3565.

COMMUNITY NEWS

RELAY FOR LIFE FUNDRAISING CONCERT, Friday, April 16th, at 7:30 p.m. at Eureka Congregational Christian Church, 2619 East Maple Rapids Road, Eureka, MI. Rick Hopkins, Contemporary Christian Artist in Concert. Donations Accepted! For more information call 989-224-7709.

MEN'S MINISTRY, in collaboration with Dunamia.org, is inviting all men in need of personal support, to meet at Community Christian Church (400 East State Street) every fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. Please call Mike Stedry for further information at 517-449-5349.

The Clinton County Department of Human Services needs safe and caring homes for children of all ages. Especially teenagers in all areas of Clinton County. **FOSTER PARENTS** can make a difference in the lives of children in crisis. Contact Christine Sisung with the Department of Human Services at 989-224-5548 for information packets.

ST. JOHNS MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Leaders and members from many of the area churches will be taking part in this community service at 7:00 p.m. on April 2, 2010, at First Congregational Church. Please plan to attend.



their fishing nets and boats would never have been transformed into bold preachers of the gospel had they not seen the resurrected Christ.

The resurrection is not only historical. It is a present day event. At Pentecost the risen Christ sends forth the Holy Spirit into the lives of believers, to work out his purposes for their lives. Today this same Spirit is at work, giving those who receive it the power to become children of God, recreated in the image of God. In this way the Easter story continues in you as you die to sin and are resurrected to new life.

Praise be to God for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, you, and me.

Rev. Matt Olson

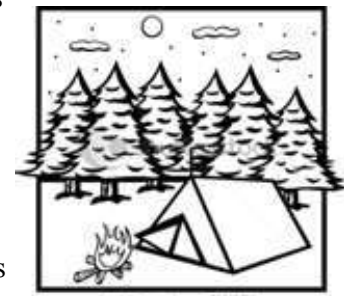
YOUR PLEDGE TO THE CHURCH helps provide donations to Special Olympics, Meals on Wheels, Senior Center and many more organizations right here in Clinton County. It also supplies materials for the Sunday school classes, adult classes and Small Groups. Your pledge pays for all of the office supplies, which in turn take care of the needs of various groups, plus supplying the sanctuary with visitor cards, prayer request cards, pencils and yes, Bibles!

2010 FLOWER SCHEDULE

The 2010 Flower Schedule is posted on the bulletin board in the Wilcox Hall corridor. Now is the time to sign up for that special date you want this year. If you can not make it in to church to check on a date please call the office at 224-2636.

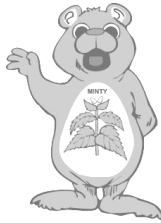
THIRD ANNUAL CHURCH CAMPING TRIP

Our third annual Church Camping Trip will be June 11-13th, at River Ridge Campground in Breckenridge, MI. If you haven't camped with us before, but want to, give me a call. Some of us go up Thursday afternoon. The campground has three cabins if you don't have a tent or trailer. Last year we had thirty-one campers so why not come and join the fun. Call Linda Fitch for more information at 224-3565.



**2010 MINT FESTIVAL
FOOD BOOTH**

First Congregational Church is looking for someone to take over the organizing and running of the booth on August 13th, 14th and 15th. Kim Root, who has taken the leadership of this church fund raising event for the last couple of years, is stepping down. Are you willing to help out? Kim will be available to help you get ready for this project. Please contact the church office at 224-2636 if you are interested.



YOUR PLEDGE: MAKING IT EASY

We have Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization Forms available in the church office. This system makes it very easy for you to keep up with your pledge to the church.



Stop in and pick up a form at your convenience.

**INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE
BOARD OF MINISTRY?**

The Nominating Ministry Team, under the leadership of Tom Flynn and Cali Sackrider, is starting to seek out members of our congregation who are interested in holding a position on the Board of Ministry. This is a three year commitment and involves preparing our church for today, and tomorrows needs. Contact Tom at 224-9372, Cali Sackrider at 224-9228 or talk to any Board member, (listed on page 11), if you have any questions.



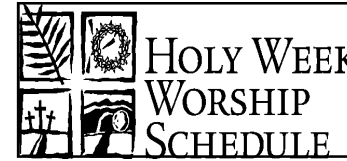
SPECIAL THANKS TO

Gene Barnhart and Shirleyan Lake and their Ministry Team organized and hosted the **Annual Spring Tea** on March 21st. It was a sold out event! The Tea was beautifully decorated, the food was wonderful and the bridal fashion show was fun. Team members included Mary Faloon, Karen Pontius, Chris Leasher, Nancy Mino, Fay Clark, Jane Jolly, Jan Myers and Kate Upton.

Thanks are extended to the Chancel Choir, Hands of Harmony, Children's Choir, Silo Singers, Holy Mamas, Barbara Lehnen Jacques, Mary Lewis and to the Brass Sextet for all the time and effort they put into making the **2010 Easter Cantata** a success. Thanks also to the directors, Dr. Charles Graham, Rachael Short, Denise Palmer and Susan Kilmer for your dedication.

Shirleyan Lake and Gene Barnhart have just completed the **150th Anniversary Church Directory**. It was a huge undertaking and they did a very professional job. We all need to thank them for the many months they worked to get this directory published and in your hands.

Thank you to **Paul Martis** and **Gary Larsen** who did a lot of the cleaning up of the gardens this Spring. These two members of our church also kept the sidewalks clear all winter.



MARCH 28th, 11:00 a.m. Palm Sunday,
Easter Cantata

APRIL 1st, 7:00 p.m.
Maundy Thursday Service

APRIL 2nd, 7:00 p.m. St. Johns Ministerial
Association Good Friday Service

APRIL 4th, 11:00 a.m. Easter Sunday Service

Child care provided for all services.

All events take place at First Congregational Church

FOURTH SUNDAY SUPPER

We are using a new system of a volunteer a month being in charge of the dinner. You would need to be here to turn on the ovens. Coffee, condiments, salt and pepper are all provided in the kitchen. You would be responsible for providing milk for the children, cleaning off the tables, cleaning and unplugging the coffee makers after the supper, and locking the kitchen door to the parking lot when leaving. You can sign up on the sheet posted in the Wilcox Hall corridor or call the church office. We are still in need of a host for the the Fourth Sunday Supper on April 25th.

MEET NEIL AND GENE!

Our "Member Profile" for this month features Neil and Gene Barnhart. Gene is originally from Corunna and Neil is a life long resident of St. Johns. They enjoy special holidays with their children and grandchildren! They have 4 children, Kyle, Kris, Kara and Lynn, and nine grandchildren.



Neil is a retired farmer, but still enjoys gardening and riding horses. Gene likes to sew, crochet and shop. They also like to go camping in their 5th wheel trailer. Many of us can attest to the fact that Gene can maneuver that truck and trailer with the best of them. Neil and Gene originally came to church back in the 70's and are valuable members of our family.

Neil and Gene are both ushers. Gene has been very involved with many special events here at church. She just completed working on a second church directory. In this edition Gene did much of the photography. She also has co-chaired the last few Spring Teas. And if you ever need Tupperwear, she is the person to see. We are truly blessed to have them in our congregation.



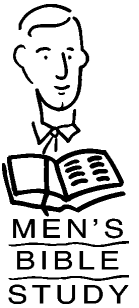
CLASSES/SMALL GROUP

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. This class is currently discussing the Book of John.



A **SMALL GROUP STUDY** is being held on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor. They meet, read and discuss the "Upper Room" Daily Devotional. Call Jerry Harte at 224-6655 for more information.

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. They are now covering the Book of Malachi. Come and join them!



CONGRATULATIONS to Peter and Alice Murphy on the birth of a new grandson, Liam Isaac Bushong. Liam is the son of Colin and Jean (Murphy) Bushong and was born on March 9th. Congratulations!



LINDA SCOTT DIVISION

Linda Scott Division, a Ministry Team that includes ladies of all ages, meets once a month. Their next meeting is working at the Attic Treasure Sale on April 20th, and 21st. Please RSVP to Joann Martis at 224-4165.

COME AND JOIN US!

A musical presentation, performed at the River Walk Theater in Lansing is the program for the next **DOUBLETS, ETC.** (couples and singles group) gathering. Come and join them on Sunday, April 11th. Call Shirleyan Lake at 224-1870 or Jenny McCampbell at 224-6134 for reservations, details on car pooling and dinner afterwards. The deadline to reserve seats is March 31st.

CHECK OUT THE BOOKS!

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!

LITERATURE RACKS

"Enjoying a Rich and Fulfilling Life" is full of time-tested thoughts for success, courage, and wisdom. It is edited by Richard Shea and is a collection of timeless ideas and thoughts from the world's greatest thinkers. This book and many more are available for you to take free of charge.

150th ANNIVERSARY

There are two events planned during the month of April, 2010, recognizing First Congregational Church of St. Johns' 150 years of history.

The first event will take place during the April 4th worship service, Easter Sunday. The focus of this service will be Christ's triumphant victory over death for the forgiveness of our sins. In addition to this, we will be dedicating our Michigan Organization Milestone Award. This award has been received by FCCSJ from the Historical Society of Michigan in honor of our 150 years of service to our members, community, and state. It was on April 1, 1860 that certain Christians in the Village of St. Johns met to organize our Congregational Church by adopting the constitution, articles of faith and covenant to be a Congregational Church. This award plaque will become a permanent part of our church.

The second April event offers the opportunity for our congregants to continue our long and rich history of service. During the April 25th 11:00 a.m. worship service, Reverend Olson will be unveiling the theme to **CELEBRATE SERVICE**. Because this is an exciting event, we do not want to disclose the particulars until the time of unveiling. We do encourage everyone to attend the April 25th service and be a part of **CELEBRATE SERVICE**.

How blessed FCCSJ and its members are to enjoy this long journey in history.

Ruth Nihart,

150th Anniversary Committee

Children and Youth News

APRIL CHILDREN AND YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Tim Palmer
- 12 Samuel Sackrider
- 21 Abby Doss
- 21 Mallory Smith
- 26 Katie Root



SUMMER CAMP

The dates and site of the summer camp for this coming summer have been set. It will be held Sunday, August 1st, to Friday evening, August 6th. 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 with a deadline for early registration being May 1st. They have limited space, so they are encouraging the campers to register as soon as they are able.



EASTER BREAK SCHEDULE

The Sunday School classes, Children's Choir, Youth Groups and Adult Sunday School will be having classes on Easter Sunday, April 4th. No classes will be held on April 11th. Classes resume on April 18th at the regular times.

APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT

The plans for our ASP team are under way. The Team members include John Fitch, Adult Leader; Jamie Cheeney, Trish Cheeney, Katie Root, Brad Tooker and Zach Zuker. The group will be traveling to Inez, Kentucky the week of August 1st to August 8th.

To help fund this Mission Trip, the ASP Team will be hosting the Fellowship Hour on April 18th and kicking off a Rada Cutlery Sale. The sale includes soy candles, seasoning mixes and cookbooks. We will close the sale out on April 25th. Please note the cutlery will make great gifts for weddings, anniversaries and birthdays. For more information contact Teresa Zuker at 682-4966.



Making Homes Warmer, Safer and Drier Transforming Lives

APRIL SIGN UP SCHEDULES

<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Nursery Care</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour</u>
4 Easter	4 Stacie Stevens	4 *	4 Easter Sunday, No Fellowship Hour
11 *	11 Trisha Cheeney	11 *	11 Harris and others
18 *	18 Stacie Stevens	18 *	18 *
25 Ed & Suzanne Martis Pulpit: Jolly Wedding	25 Stacie Stevens	25 Fritz Thurston & Doris Swatman	25 4th Sunday Supper

*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

Member Death:

Joyce Dyer, March 1, 2010

Friend Death:

Ruth Inman, March 15, 2010
Grandmother of Molly Minnick



4th Sunday Supper Host/Hostess

APRIL *

MAY *

THE APRIL DEDICATION

The Congregational Connection for this month is in celebration of the April 21st Birthday of

Gene Barnhart

It is given by her husband
Neil

