

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

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DECEMBER

This Month's Highlights:
Cover, December Worship Schedule
Pg. 2 Rev. Olson
Pg. 3 New Security System
Pg. 6 Children and Youth News
Pg. 7 December Schedules, Church Records and Dedication
Pg. 9 Member Profile

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DECEMBER 2010



The Congregational Connection...

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

DECEMBER HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 5th



Second Sunday of Advent

- 9:30 a.m. Children's Choir
- 10:00 a.m. Children and Adult Sunday School & Youth Groups
- 11:00 a.m. Worship Service
- 12:00 p.m. Coffee Hour hosted by Linda Scott Ministry Team
- 12:30 p.m. Holy Mamas Rehearsal
- 4:00 p.m. Children's Pageant Rehearsal

Sunday, December 12th



Third Sunday of Advent

Poinsettia Orders Due Today

- 10:00 a.m. Children and Adult Sunday School & Youth Groups
- 11:00 a.m. Worship Service/Children's Christmas Pageant
- 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Hour
- 12:30 p.m. Holy Mamas Rehearsal

Sunday, December 19th



Fourth Sunday of Advent

Giving Tree Gifts Due Today

- 10:00 a.m. Children and Adult Sunday School & Youth Groups
- 11:00 a.m. Worship Service/Chancel Choir Cantata
"Winter's Grace, A Christmas Cantata" by Martin
- 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Hour
- 12:30 p.m. Holy Mamas Rehearsal

Friday, December 24th



Christmas Eve

- 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Various Musical Groups

“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” -Luke 2:15

See the toy commercials. See the ads. See the lights. See the excited children and harried parents. See the crowds, sale prices, and slush. See the relatives we like, and those we don’t; see the man in the red suit and white beard. See plates piled high, and presents under the tree. See the baby, lying in a manger.

See the baby, lying in a manger?

Sometimes that baby is hard to see. Christmas has grown into such a busy, complex time; and he is so simple. Sometimes he seems invisible.

Jesus said, “*He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.*” He was speaking to those who would see him, claiming this principle; whatever we love we see. If we love the truth, it will show itself to us. If we love lies, lies will fill our minds and hearts. If we love goods, goods will be all around us.

We tend to think ourselves as passive recipients and that which is shown to us is actively communicating. Not so. The recipient will see plainly what he loves. What he doesn’t love, he will not see.

To see Jesus it is necessary to love him. If we do we will see him. Amid all we do he will be there, holding a place in our minds and hearts. To see him we don’t schedule him in. We make him the focus of our love. We think about him, pray in his name, contemplate his meaning. We go to Bethlehem.

“Let me love you, Jesus, that I may see you.
Let me see you, Jesus, that I may love you.”

*Merry Christmas,
Matt 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.

SPRING MISSION TRIP

BRING YOU RETURNABLE CANS AND BOTTLES FROM YOUR HOLIDAY EVENTS and donate them to the next International Missions Trip. This is an easy way to GET INVOLVED! This ministry team is conducting several fund-raising efforts for the trip to Peru next Spring. A red box is on the landing for your convenience.

CARES AND CONCERNS

If you know of anyone who is in need of a get well or a sympathy card please let this Ministry Team know by calling Bonnie Wickerham at 227-5635.

2011 NEWSLETTERS!

It's time to reserve your special month of the "**CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTION**" for the 2011 church year. The cost is \$50.00 and is used to help cover the cost of postage. We have eight months available for your special anniversary, birthday, graduation, or "just because". The months of January, April, May and August are already taken.

Please contact the church office at 224-2636 to reserve your month.

WORD OF THE WEEK

Are you interested in receiving an introduction to the sermon text the week prior to it being delivered to the congregation? You can sign up by calling the church office. We would e-mail, or mail, the "Word of the Week" to you each week. Please call 224-2636.

COMMUNITY NEWS

The St. Johns Community Band Presents

The 2010

Holiday Music Spectacular

Featuring:

The Laingsburg Community Singers

St. Johns High School Quintet

1st Congregational Church

Handbell Choir

St. Johns String Ensemble

St. Johns Community Band

Friday, December 3, 2010

7:30pm

Wilson Center Auditorium

(101 W. Cass St., St. Johns)

Admission is free. Donations accepted for
Wilson Center Auditorium Renovation

THE THIRD ANNUAL MESSIAH SING, "Make a Joyful Noise," will take place on Sunday, December 5th, starting at 3:00 p.m. in the Wilson Center. All singers and listeners are welcome. Scores will be available for those who need one. Soloist and full orchestra will lead the sing. The admission is \$5.00 and will go to the Wilson Auditorium Renovation Project.



NEW CHURCH SECURITY SYSTEM

Over the past couple of months, a security system has been installed in the Church.

There have been several occasions in the past couple of years when the Office Administrator has been alone in the building and people have come in to the office requesting money, gas cards, lodging vouchers, food, or a ride to where they need to go. When told that we don't have those kinds of things in the office, and that they would have to go to the Police Station to obtain their requests, some of them have become very upset. Needless to say that when she is in the building by herself these situations can become very uncomfortable, or possibly dangerous. There have been occasions when people have been found wondering around in the building. The most recent, and most disturbing, situation happened last March. A gentleman was found in the basement and had apparently been there for quite some time. When discovered, he even bragged that "she didn't even know what I was in the building". The following day, we discovered 2 empty 1-quart beer bottles in the men's room at the bottom of the steps in the basement. Apparently he had been in the building for several hours and nobody knew it. That, to me, was a very upsetting, frightening, and potentially dangerous situation.

After that experience, I requested the Board of Ministry to allow me to investigate the possibility of having a security system installed in the building for the safety of personnel working in the building as well as for the security of the building itself. That request was granted.

The security system was approved and has been installed in 2 different phases.

The first part involves a "Buzz In" system which allows all exterior doors to be locked when there is only 1 person in the building. A church member/visitor can be admitted into the church by using the intercom system that has been installed at that door. The Office Administrator can view the person at the door from a monitor at her desk. She can speak to them and then determine if they would be admitted or not. She can also see the person without the individual knowing that they are being observed. The second part of the system involves an "Overnight" monitoring program. When the building is locked down in the evening after all functions have concluded, a motion detection system will be activated. This system is to detect if anyone should break into the building and is to protect our building and contents. It will also detect if someone was hiding in the building when it was locked for the night. This program is wired directly into a monitoring service and local police will also be contacted immediately.

Our "Lock Up Crew" of 6 men, on a rotating weekly schedule, will activate this system when they secure the building for the night.

Because of this "Overnight" monitoring system, it is **IMPERATIVE** that the church office know of any and all meetings, practices, groups, etc, that are going to be in the building. That includes anything that may take place on Saturday. All key-holders will receive training on how to activate and deactivate this system. That training will take place in the very near future.

If the alarm goes off, the police will show up.

It is a sad commentary on modern times and today's society when a church has to be secured in this manner when people need a place to come for help, comfort, counseling, quiet time, assistance, etc. However, to protect the church building and those working here, the Board of Ministry feels it is necessary. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like any more information, please feel free to contact me. **Gary Larsen, 224-3538.**

The 150th Anniversary Ministry Team

It is almost time for the concluding observance of the 150th anniversary of FCCSJ. When the Board of Ministry approved a ministry team in May, 2009 to plan the anniversary, it all seemed a long way off. But now, our last celebration is close. The concluding occasion is SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2011. The 150th Anniversary Ministry Team will host the fellowship hour that day. It is planned to have multitudes of pictures of the history of our church surrounding Wilcox Hall during that fellowship hour. We need your help to accomplish this however. We are asking all members and friends of our church to share pictures, of any size, relative to FCCSJ. For example, these pictures can be Sunday school classes, youth programs, adult classes, spring teas, attic treasure sales, weddings, baptisms, music groups, pageants, cantatas, Easter services, individual members of our church, building projects and any other pictures you may have. So scour your photo albums and sort through those boxes of pictures you have meant to organize for years to see what you can share for this pictorial history. We are looking for pictures from 1860 to present.

Be sure to put your name on the back of all your pictures, so that they will be returned to you. Identify persons in the pictures, as well as the dates. The plan is to have these pictures in chronological order, so dates will be helpful. In order to have this project ready by the concluding event, we need your pictures by FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2010. Mail or bring them to the church office by that date.

At a later date, we also plan to have these pictures on a disc available to our members and friends.

Some of these photos will also be included in a written history of our church, which will hopefully be ready by Spring, 2011. If you have input as to what should be included in that history book, please speak to any of the 150th Anniversary Team members.

So be sure to set aside, SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2011 to attend the worship followed by food, fellowship and reminiscence of our church history.



150th Anniversary Team members:
Gary Carpenter, Ruth Nihart, Mary Ann Ellickson,
Matt Olson, Peg Lehnen, Bonnie Wickerham and
Joann Martis

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

A training and reviewing session will be held on Sunday, January 10th, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., in Mildred Countryman Hall, for all "Children in Worship" and "Follow Me" leaders. This will also be a training session for anyone interested in taking part in the leadership of this children's program in our church.



The group is encouraging parents of children that attend these programs to come to the meeting and see if they are ready to take an active part in this religious education class. If you decide that this is something you would like to try, a schedule will be posted and you will know exactly when you would be leading the children. The lessons are all laid out and easy to follow. For more information contact Molly Minnick at 224-6999 or Beth Olson at 224-4110.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

All ladies are invited to join the Linda Scott Division. This women's fellowship meets on the second Tuesday of each month. The next monthly meeting is Tuesday, December 14th, at 2:00 p.m. at the home of Shirleyan Lake. Please RSVP to Joann Martis at 224-4165 for further information.



2010 MEMBER PROFILES



**MUSIC THERAPY NOTES
BY RACHAEL SHORT**

In my first article about music therapy, I summarized a definition and a brief history of the profession. I love to tell people what music therapists do, to describe who we serve, who we partner with, and where.

Music therapists work in schools, using music to support academic goals, to stimulate communication and participation, and to promote physical activity or motor skills. Music therapists consult with general music teachers regarding adaptations which will result in successful inclusive music classrooms. Music therapists may participate formally in Individualized Educational Plan (I.E.P.) meetings, and they frequently consult with classroom teachers, physical therapists, school nurses, social workers, etc. as part of an interdisciplinary team.

Music therapists work in medical facilities including hospitals, nursing homes, and mental health treatment centers. Here, music therapists may lead group sessions which include live music performance, group music making, movement to music, and listening to recorded music. Group sessions provide opportunities for self-expression and validation, reclaiming some locus of control, and interaction with others, emotionally and physically. Private sessions provide similar opportunities, with a greater emphasis on the client-therapist relationship, via the musical preferences of a single client. Music therapy goals in these settings may address issues of pain management, relaxation, stimulation, and reality orientation, and more.

Music therapy has applications in the treatment of crisis and trauma, depression, and substance abuse. Music therapists also work in correctional and forensic settings. Some music therapists are self-employed and may be hired on a contractual basis to provide assessment, consultation, and treatment services.

This is not an exhaustive list, but provides an overview of the breadth of this creative field.

**COME AND JOIN OUR
INTERN MINISTER
ON TUESDAY EVENINGS**

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. They will NOT be meeting on December 21st, or December 28th, and will resume on January 4, 2011. For more information contact Kathy Farnum, Intern Minister, at 517-669-5864 or farnumk@comcast.net.

DECEMBER EVENTS!

2010 GIVING TREE

The Giving Tree will be supporting RAVE again this year. It will be located in the Parlor. The tree will be adorned with Christmas tags that are needed by the local RAVE shelter. If you would like to help women and children in need take a tag, purchase the item and then bring the gift UNWRAPPED, with the tag attached, back to the church by December 19th. If there are any questions please contact a member of the Missions Team (John Fitch, Karen Pontius, Jan Myer, Sue Neuder, Sue Gladstone, Barb Sherman & Jennifer Beagle).

Tag Colors:
Blue \$5 and under
Red \$5—\$10
Green \$10—\$20
Yellow \$25—up
Pink—Children's Tree



DECEMBER MUSICAL

*You are cordially invited to
attend the 2010 annual
Christmas Cantata
"Winter's Grace"
By Joseph M. Martin*

The Chancel Choir, under the direction of Dr. Charles Graham, is inviting you to attend this musical event. Bring your friends, family and neighbors and get in the Christmas spirit! The Cantata will be held during the church service on Sunday, December 19th, beginning at 11:00 a.m. The choir will be accompanied by Rachael Short.



PARENTS NIGHT OUT

Need a chance to go shopping? Without the children! Here is your chance! The Senior High Youth Group is having a babysitting drop-off on Friday, December 17th, at 5:00 p.m. with pick up by 10:30 p.m. They will be watching a kid-friendly 'G' movie, playing games, making a craft, and having snacks and drinks. Parents should feed dinner to their little cherubs and then bring them to church. We only request that a donation be made to the youth group, in the amount you see appropriate. Contact the church office at 224-2636 for further information.



Children and Youth News

DECEMBER CHILDREN AND YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Phoenix Gehres
- 11 Keagan Long
- 11 Douglas Lynn Thurston
- 14 Audrey Rademacher



CHRISTMAS BREAK

We will not be having Sunday School on December 26th. Classes will resume on January 3rd, at the regular time. Children's Choir at 9:30 a.m., Sunday School for children and adults and Youth groups beginning at 10:00 a.m.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Come and join the congregation as we watch the 2010 children's Christmas Pageant presentation of "Camel Lot".

The Pageant will be presented on Sunday, December 12th, during the worship service.



Come and join us!

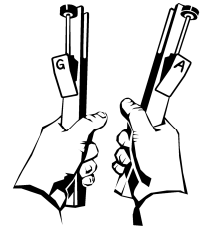
KID'S PRACTICE

CHILDREN'S CHOIR, under the direction of Rachael Short and Denise Palmer, is meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings in the Choir Room. Children of all ages are encouraged to attend. *We will not practice on Dec. 26th.*



HANDS OF HARMONY FOR KIDS

Correction: Unfortunately the 4-5th grade hand chime group won't be performing at Briggs Library for the 3-day holiday festival in early December. The library set their entertainment schedule for this event in mid-October and did not contact the church about this group performing. Hopefully we will be part of this event next year. However, this group will be part of the children's Christmas Pageant on December 12th.



Handchimes

Susan Kilmer

**COME AND JOIN US
AT ANY TIME!
Sunday School, Youth Groups
and Adult Bible Study
10:00-10:45 a.m.**

DECEMBER SIGN UP SCHEDULES

<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Nursery Care</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour</u>	<u>4th Sunday Supper Host/Hostess</u>
5 Linda Fitch	5 Brooke Witchell	5 Linda Scott Division	
12 John & Linda Fitch	12 Stacie Stevens	12 *	* December 26th
19 Mary Faloon	19 Brooke Witchell	19 *	* January 23rd
26 *	26 Brooke Witchell	26 4th Sunday Supper	* February 27th

***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

Weddings:

Chad Campbell and Rachel Gunther, Nov. 6, 2010



Baptism:

Ivan Eli McGee, Nov. 14, 2010, son of Everett & Tanna (Lounds) McGee



**ONE LORD
ONE FAITH
ONE BAPTISM**

THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER DEDICATION



The Congregational Connection is dedicated this month in celebration of the birthday of

Neil Barnhart