

February 2014



The Congregational Connection...

Our connection to the family and friends of the First Congregational Church

Chili Cook-off Winner!



Medium-high heat the following 3 min. till soft:

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 1/2 cups chopped yellow onions
- 1 cup chopped red, yellow, or orange bell peppers
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 2 to 3 serrano peppers, stemmed, seeded, & minced, depending upon taste
- Add and cook 6 more min. till edges browning:
- 1 medium zucchini, stem ends trimmed and cut into small dice
- 2 15 oz. cans corn (drained)
- 1 package baby Portobello mushrooms, clean and cubed

Add and cook 30 seconds:

- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 1/4 teaspoons Kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne

Add, stir well, cook 30 min. on medium-low/simmer:

- 2 Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1 lg. ball jar homemade stewed tomatoes
- 2 ginormous cans black beans and pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (29-ounce) can tomato puree
- 1 box (32 oz.) vegetable stock



Remove from the heat & stir in 1 Tablespoon dried cilantro (1/4 cup fresh). To serve, place 1/4 cup of brown rice in the bottom of each bowl. Ladle the chili into the bowls over the rice. Top each serving with a dollop of plain yogurt and spoonful of avocado. Sprinkle with Essence and green onions and serve.

Emeril Lagasse's ESSENCE Creole Seasoning (also referred to as Bayou Blast):

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 1/2 tablespoons paprika | 1 tablespoon cayenne pepper |
| 2 tablespoons salt | 1 tablespoon dried oregano |
| 2 tablespoons garlic powder | 1 tablespoon dried thyme |
| 1 tablespoon black pepper | 1 tablespoon onion powder |

Per Serving (based on 6 servings): Calories: 311; Fat: 7g (Saturated Fat: 0.5g); Protein: 15g; Carbohydrates: 51g; Sugar: 15g; Fiber 12g; Cholesterol: 0mg; Sodium: 1,040mg



February Highlights

- 3rd Sunday Throw Down:** Feb. 16th, at 11 a.m.
- Community Fun Night:** Feb. 28th, 6:30-9 p.m.
- 4th Sunday Supper:** Feb. 23rd, after the worship service.



Scrappin' March Madness



Mark your calendar for the March 1st scrapbook fundraising event at FCC!

Cost is \$35 and includes a table to work on, a delicious breakfast, lasagna & salad luncheon and snacks throughout the day.

Silent auction & door prizes too!
Knitters & other crafty friends invited.

Committee: Beth Webb, Molly Minnick, Jan Hebekeuser, & Lois Graham.

Make checks out to the First Congregational Church of St. Johns.

RSVPs needed so we know you are coming and can plan for tables, work spaces and food.



HOW TO BE PART OF A CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The third in a Series (following October and November, 2013) on the identity of the church, church membership in scripture, our church membership practices, and how we can more completely be God's church.

INTRODUCTION

As discussed in previous articles; (1) the church is a people called by God to be an outpost of his heavenly kingdom on earth. (2) Church membership is evident in the New Testament, and (3) early Christians, as well as later Congregationalists, considered membership in the church very important in walking with Christ (4) the church is united in its covenant (4) our By-laws describe some of the ways members are to live in the covenant.

OUR CHURCH PRACTICES

Unfortunately, in many ways, our church culture and practice of church membership is modeled more on membership in secular institutions than it is on the biblical church in covenant.

We often present our church--and membership in it--as an invitation to some sort of ecclesiological buffet; take what you like, as much as you like, leave the rest, everything is optional. This misrepresents the gospel, lacks fundamental integrity, and severely limits the likelihood of growing into maturity in Christ.

Our Perspective and Practice	Biblical Perspective and Practice	
Voluntary association	Spiritual discipline in obedience to God (Like praying, fasting, etc)	Instead we can present church membership as a step in becoming more of who we are to be, and showing the kingdom of God in the world. Church membership may hurt because growth in godliness can hurt. As one pastor puts it, "...as I interact with others in my own local body, my own slothfulness in zeal is exposed, as is my lack of patience, my prayerlessness, and my hesitancy to associate with the lowly (Rom. 12:11-16). Yet this interaction also gives me the opportunity to be lovingly confronted by brothers and sisters who are in the trenches with me, as well as a safe place to confess and repent."
Name on a list	Part of a body	
Give to support institution	Give to worship God	
Concerned with survival	Concerned with living the gospel	
"Church shopping"	Called to by God	
Church accountable to me	Church accountable to God	
Based on popular support, like a service club or sporting league	Based on the Holy Spirit of God who is at work in the world	
Low expectations, easy to join	High expectations, difficult to join	
Saints	Sinners	
Serves our needs	Serves God's purposes	
Participate when convenient	Participate as a sacrifice of praise	
Consumer mentality	Servant mentality	
Private matter	Public matter	
Stability and predictability valued	Growth and maturity valued	
Should be no hassle, and not demanding. Church membership should be a pleasing experience.	Should cause us to wrestle with what is most important and make hard decisions as we take up our cross.	



DISCUSSION

In moving toward a more disciplined, focused church, with a more disciplined, focused membership we are hampered by traditions of weak accountability, spiritual anarchy, and a secular mindset. A major obstacle is the 50 percent or more of people who are members, and sometimes attend worship, do nothing else. They don't know that this is wrong, that there is a problem, because they don't know enough of the gospel, what a church really is, or our church covenant, to know that integrity is an issue. They don't have any point of perspective.

Our present series of sermons and studies on Ephesians, called "Building a Community in Christ", is meant to help us develop a clearer sense of what God intends his church to be like. I urge every person who participates in our church to become involved as we begin to discern what the Spirit is leading us to become as God's people.

¹In "The Cost of Discipleship", p. 68, Dietrich Bonhoeffer claims that without obedience faith is not possible.

²Mark Driscoll, Blog

Fundraising Committee

Calling all fundraisers... We have a lot to raise this year. Our goal is to raise \$8,000.00. We can do this but I can't do it alone. We need your help.

I will be the main contact person and the organizer of the Mint Festival Rummage Sale. Last year in only one day we raised almost \$2,000.00. Imagine what we can do in two days with more help.

If you have an idea for fund raising please contact me to share your idea and confirm there is not another event scheduled. The office will also need to be contacted to make sure there are no scheduling conflicts. If you have an idea, gather a team willing to organize and run the event after dates are confirmed, and have fun.

Here are some of the ideas that have been brought to my attention that may be of interest to you. Please contact me if you would like to take on one of these events or if you have another idea.

- 5k Race
- Bowling Fundraiser
- Softball Tournament
- Car Wash

Thank you for your support.

God Bless You!

Barb Sherman

517-242-1234 cell

989-292-4029 home





Deadline Reminder

All articles for the newsletter should be submitted by the 21st of each month. Bulletin announcements are due by Thursday.

Editors Wanted

Read the ministers' life stories in church library. Give your corrections, additions, typos and other feedback to author Alice Murphy or church office.

Mission Team 2013 Year at a Glance

We had several mission events in 2013
 Safe Center Giving Tree & Single Family of one child
 Typhoon Relief Donation of \$556.00
 Helped a family with a deer - a deer was shot, a freezer purchased and delivered to a family in need.

Collections and Disbursements
 10% of Plate income (pledged, unpledged, plate & electronic) \$17,323.77

Total payments of \$13,970.00
 Local \$5800.00 - 12 different organizations
 State \$1650.00 - 3 different organizations
 National \$6020.00 - 7 different organizations
 International \$500.00 - 1 organization

The Mission Ministry Team is always looking for new members. Please contact one of our members if you would like more information or would like to join our team.

Kathy Kushmaul, Kate Livingston, Sue Neuder, Sue Gladstone, Susan Kilmer, and Barb Sherman

Want to Lead?

We are looking for leaders & greeters for our Children in Worship and Follow Me programs. Both programs meet after the Children's Story each Sunday. Interested in helping with Children in Worship? Please contact Ellen Doppke at 810-287-3682. Contact Patti Mayes at 989-307-9026 for Follow Me.

Church Office

Let's communicate as effectively as we can. Questions and concerns can be submitted with your contact information by email, phone, or by leaving a message in the drop box outside the office door.



Nursery volunteers needed for Sundays during the worship service.

Background for EPHESIANS

The Small Groups are taking lessons from the experiences of the early church in Ephesus on the coast of today's Turkey. To see the town of today, as well as ruins from the time that Paul wrote his letters to his brothers and sisters in Christ during the Roman occupation, go online and click the links at <http://tinyurl.com/paulwrote>

Check it out!

Check out *The Upper Room* located on the literature rack in the back of the sanctuary. Great source for daily reflection and prayer. Check out, "Eat Dessert First" (p. 46). Also, take a look at, "Dance to God" (p. 65).



Staying Connected

Helen Johnson/Jane Knight/
Maxine Kushmaul
Grace Haven Assisted Living
1507 Glastonbury Drive
St. Johns, MI 48879

Bruce MacRae/Colleen Naru
Hazel Findlay Country Manor
1101 South Scott Road

It's Time to Reserve

Your special month for the 2014 "Congregational Connection." The cost is \$50.00 and used to help cover the cost of postage. Please contact the church office to reserve your month. Your dedication and donation is appreciated!

Sign Up!

New sign up sheets available in the lower level. You can host coffee hour or the 4th Sunday supper, provide flowers for Sunday service, and even lead Children's Story.

Cares and Concerns

Volunteer needed to continue Cares and Concerns. Duties include mailing get well and sympathy cards. For more information, please call Bonnie Wickerham at 989-227-5635.

Helping Hands Needed

"Friendly Service Ministry Team" needs on call help! We are seeking able-bodied women and men to help with set-up and clean-up as we continue to serve meals following funerals or memorial services.

The long time members of this team have aged and feel the need for more help so they can continue this valuable service to our members. For more information, please call Joann Martis at 989-224-4165.

Sarah's Ordination Celebration

Hampshire Colony Congregational Church invites you to celebrate the ordination of Sarah Gladstone on February 8th, 2014 at 4 p.m.

Hampshire Colony Congregational Church
604 South Church Street
Princeton, Illinois 61356

Community Fun Night

Friday February 28th
6:30-9 p.m.

First Congregational Church



Lost but now is Found

Lost something? We might have found it! Items found are in the church office.



The ABC's of LOVE

Use this alphabetical list of love-in-action verbs as a reminder of the many ways to reflect Christ's love:

Accepts
 Behaves
 Comforts
 Defends
 Empowers
 Forgives
 Grows
 Helps
 Invests
 Joins
 Kneels
 Listens
 Mentors
 Notices
 Overlooks
 Provides
 Quiets
 Rejoices
 Supports
 Tries
 Understands
 Volunteers
 Welcomes
 expects
 Yields
 adds Zest to life!

Brain Buster

One theme of Epiphany is to share the Gospel with others and lead them to faith. To whom did Jesus say, "Go therefore and make disciples"?

- A) Peter, James and John (his "inner circle")
- B) The women at the empty tomb
- C) A crowd, beside the Sea of Galilee
- D) The 11 disciples (Judas had committed suicide) (See Matthew 28:16-20) (D)

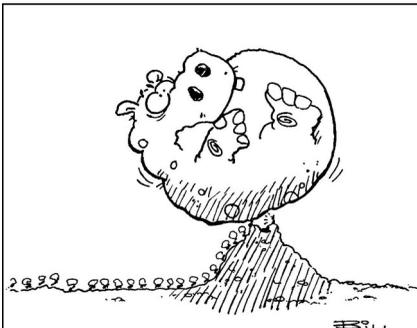
Thank You Notes from the Altar Ministry Team

The "Spread the Light" Christmas votive project raised \$615.00 for the Basic Needs Center. Thanks to all who donated.

Thank You to Paul and Joann Martis and Bob and Rosemary Green who helped decorate for Christmas. A note of thanks to Matt Olson for figuring out the Advent Wreath puzzle. It's a big job to get things looking beautiful for the Christmas season.

Thank You to those who helped to take decorations down and get them back to the barn. Those helping were Paul Martis, Lois and Holly Graham, Ray Tooker, Matt Olson, Susan Kilmer, Rachael Short, Shirleyan Lake, Sid Lounds, Melanie and Nathan Lounds. It was done quickly with such great help. Please for give us if we forgot your name.

The Altar Ministry Team,
 Jan Myers, Arlene Wood, Teresa Zuker



"Mahoney!! Don't you remember what God told Moses?! Just gather enough for today!!"

Devotion with Motion

Starts back up the
 first Sunday in
 February

Meets in the
 sanctuary from
 12:30-1 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 revealeth 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.



First Congregational Church

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St. Johns, MI 48879

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E-Mail: fccsj@4wbi.net

Web Site: www.fccsj.com

Facebook: [firstcongregationalchurchofstjohns](https://www.facebook.com/firstcongregationalchurchofstjohns)

Hours:

Monday-Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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

Closed Friday

Sunday Service 11:00 a.m.



Senior Minister: Matthew Olson

Director of Music Ministry: Rachael Short

Church Administrator Interim: Holly Graham

Office Staff: Guven Witteveen

Treasurer: Tom Webb

Financial Secretary: Paul Martis

Chancel Choir Director: Dr. Charles Graham

Hands of Harmony Director: Susan Kilmer

Custodians: Faith Hazard & Shirleyan Lake



The Board of Ministry

Moderator: Shirleyan Lake.....989-224-1870

Vice Moderator: Bill Rockwell.....517-214-4636

Board of Ministry Members:

Tom Doppke.....810-241-6794

Dave Elms.....989-227-2865

Tom Flynn.....989-992-8138

Rod Fuller.....989-224-3961

Jeramie Goetschy.....989-640-0010

Lois Graham.....989-224-8596

Melanie Lounds.....989-227-0932

Marilyn Newman.....517-331-3457

Board of Ministry Joys and Concerns

~Prayers of recovery for Shirley Warstler.

~Prayers for our members in Grace Haven: Helen Johnson, Maxine Kushmaul, and Jane Knight.

~Prayers for our members in Hazel Findlay: Bruce MacRae, and Colleen Naru.



Let all that you do
be done in LOVE

