

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

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ST. JOHNS, MI
48879

FEBRUARY

This Month's Highlights:
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



February 2010 The Congregational Connection...

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

150TH ANNIVERSARY FIRST EVENT!

FCCSJ thanks Cayle Beagle, Wendy Sue Earle Kissa and Art Ritter for their attendance and participation, at the January 17th, 2010 worship service. This service was the first celebration being held during the year-long 150th Anniversary of FCCSJ. Each of these ministers spoke of being nurtured while serving at FCCSJ. This nurturing prepared them to go to other churches and continue their ministries. Those in attendance at this service were happy to see and talk to each of these ministers. Some of our former ministers who were unable to attend this service in person, wrote letters of congratulations on our anniversary. Letters were received from David Lord, Mary Ann Sheldon, Chris Richards and Jay Terbush. Dianne (Gearhart) Sever also corresponded on behalf of Gary Gearhart. These letters, along with other memorabilia related to our ministers, are on display in the case in the Carson Center hallway. Be sure to stop by and see these items.

- **Rev. Art Ritter**

Rev. Ritter is currently the Senior Minister at Meadowbrook Congregational Church in Novi, MI. He was called there in 2007 having previously served NACCC churches in Toulon, IL; West Bloomfield, MI; and Salt Lake City, UT. He and his wife, Laura, were married in our sanctuary 25 years ago in December 1984.

- **Pastor Cayle Beagle**

Pastor Beagle was commissioned here in our sanctuary on October 28, 2001. He has since been the Pastor of First Congregational Church of Laingsburg, Michigan. Cayle and his wife, Barb, reside in St. Johns.

- **Rev. Wendy Sue Earle Kissa**

Rev. Earle Kissa was ordained in our sanctuary on September 14, 1997. She was the Associate of Christian Education until May 2000, when she resigned to assume a new position in Connecticut. Wendy Sue and her husband Karl live in East Granby, CT where she is a chaplain for the Institute of Living at Hartford Hospital.



Rev. Art Ritter



Pastor Cayle Beagle



Rev. Wendy Sue Earle Kissa

150th Anniversary Cont.

Rev. Chris Richards is now at Pine Hill Congregational Church in West Bloomfield, MI. Chris stated that he fondly recalls, in sermons and encounters with people, the church that sits on Maple Street, overlooking the downtown area. He was one of the kids that loved going to church, enjoying the lessons in Sunday School, sharing and growing up in a wonderful youth group and sitting in the balcony on Sunday mornings. He still talks about Mildred Countryman and Mabel Meyer creating a biblical world that came to life in his imagination week after week. Although he was not able to attend, he sent his best wishes on this important anniversary date. Chris grew up in FCC and was an Intern here in 1980. Chris is the son of Bill and Jenny Richards, long time members of our church.

Rev. David Lord, who now lives in New Brighton, Minnesota sends his greetings. He stated that it was an honor and privilege to serve as Pastor from 1978 to 1985. Even though they have been gone from St. Johns for 25 years, he and his wife Cindi still maintain friendships among us and hold us all fondly in their hearts.

Rev. Mary Ann Sheldon sent greetings from Miller, South Dakota where she is Pastor of The First United Methodist Church of Miller and Greenleaf United Methodist Church. Rev. Sheldon was an intern here in 1990-1991. She thanked us for our hospitality, kindness and encouragement during her time with us. Her fondest memory was of Easter Sunday when triplet lambs were brought in for the Children's Story.

Rev. Dr. Jay Terbush is the Transitional Senior Pastor at The Storrs Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Storrs, Connecticut. Rev. Terbush stated that it hardly seems possible that almost seventeen years have gone by since he completed nearly eight years of ministry here in St. Johns. This was his first full time ministry position and God used this experiences to guide him to dedicate himself to parish ministry. Rev. Terbush was Senior Pastor here from 1985 to 1993.

Dianne (Gearhart) Sever wrote that being a licensed Lay Minister from F.C.C. meant one thing to Gary; that was to have a better opportunity to share his faith and knowledge of his Lord and Savior with others, leading them to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Although Gary knew he could do that without a title, somehow that title seemed to open doors a little easier and a little wider. When the first Stephen Ministry was offered at church, Gary embraced the opportunity to delve more deeply into the Bible and his Christian faith. Through that study and the many discussions it afforded, Gary began to feel the desire, a need, to spread his love of our Lord and of First Congregational Church into the community. This led Bill Richards, and the Reverends Hugh Banninga, David Lord and Jay Terbush to the idea of licensing Gary as a lay minister of First Congregational. Gary was commissioned in 1985.

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
Jerry Harte
Gary Larsen
Eugene Livingston
Melanie Lounds
Keith Mino
Denise Palmer
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.

**THE NEXT
FOOD BANK DONATION**

1. Next "Throw Down Sunday" is on February 21st.
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.

It's time to reserve your special month of the "CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTION" for the 2010 church year. The cost is \$50.00 and is used to help cover the cost of postage. The months available for your special anniversary, birthday, graduation, or "just because" are **July** and **August**. Please contact the church office at 224-2636 to reserve your month.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
ST. JOHNS, MI



**150TH ANNIVERSARY
1860-2010**

COMMUNITY NEWS

**CLINTON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
MEDITATION ROOM**

Illness and injury remind us how fragile life can be. This heightened awareness often compels people to seek a quiet place for reflection or prayer. The Clinton Memorial Hospital Meditation Room is such a place. The intent is to offer patients, visitors and employees a safe haven for healing of the mind, body and spirit. This is a goal which reflects the hospital's ongoing commitment to meet the needs of our community. Available 24-hours a day, this room also can be used for visits with clergy and private conversations between family and medical staff.

Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Support Group, 3rd Wednesday of every month, 3:00-4:30 p.m. at Grace Haven Assisted Living, 1507 Glastonbury Drive, St. Johns. Respite Care available on site. Please call ahead at 224-1650.

Transition St. Johns is a non-profit organization serving developmentally disabled adults in our area. This group meets in Wilcox Hall every Monday morning at 10:00 a.m. to practice fine motor skills such as writing.

CHOCOLATE FANTASY, Thursday, February 4th, 6—8 p.m. at the Clinton County Senior Center, 201 East Walker Street. Come and experience over 20 mouthwatering chocolate creations. The cost is \$10.00 per person.

Tough Questions of Faith: Why do we talk about "Stewardship" in the church, when what we mean is "raising money"?

"Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth'" –Deuteronomy 8:17-18

Christian stewardship is not the church's method of raising money. What comes in the offering plate is a secondary issue. Stewardship is God's way of raising faithful Christians.

Stewardship raises Christians by helping them to acknowledge that God is the Lord; owner and provider of all the basic goods of life, material, physical, and spiritual. This acknowledgement makes us grateful for what we have, and responsible to use it for the greater good according to God's will.

Consider the people of the First Baptist Church in Brattleboro, Vermont. According to news reports they agreed to sell the church's 100-year-old window picturing St. John the Divine. First Baptist planned to sell the window to continue funding a much-in-demand homeless shelter in the church. "This Tiffany window—as beautiful as it is—is (just) a material thing," said the pastor at First Baptist.

It took a lot of faithful courage for the church to make the decision that the people it served mattered more than the window it cherished. It would have been easier to close down the homeless ministry, or to wait for funding to somehow materialize from the outside. Instead, the church people acted like Christians.

Fortunately, after First Baptist's story aired on ABC News, pledges came in that appear to have saved the window for the congregation.

First Baptist's willingness to do the hard thing reminds me how often we try to have a passive interest in our partnership with God, waiting for God to do everything for us. Too often we are willing to allow God to do all the giving, forgiving, sacrificing, and loving.

Stewardship is to become active in this partnership, trusting in the purposes of the Senior Partner. Like any endeavor, this requires an intention. The important thing is to begin where we are in our stewardship, practice it consistently, and ask for God's blessing.

Cont. on page 4

Tough Questions of Faith; cont.

Reflect on where you are in your spiritual life. Are you drawing closer to God? Are you drifting away from Him, distracted by other pursuits? Do you have a deepening sense of God's love for you? Are you increasingly alienated from God, perhaps bored with Him? Do you have a sense of being a partner with God in loving, holy work? Do you feel that you have little to do with the furthering of God's Kingdom?

A life of stewardship is dynamic, exciting, rewarding, and sometimes frightening. Are you in?

Rev. Matthew Olson

CHURCH TRIVIA

On April 29, 1860 the first Communion and Baptism were held in our church.

In 1861 the vacant lot just west of the present building was donated by R.M. Steel. The first church building was completed in 1865 at a cost of \$3,500.00.

In 1920 F.W. Redfern, one of the oldest living Civil War veterans, was chairman of the Board of Trustees.

FEBRUARY 150TH EVENT

The second celebration of the 150th anniversary of FCCSJ is the marriage vows renewal service. This renewal will be part of the regular worship service on Sunday, February 14, 2010. This will be an opportunity for married couples to recommit themselves to each other. This renewal is not only for members of FCCSJ but to anyone interested in rededicating their marriage to God. It is also a service for friends and family of those renewing their vows to be witnesses to this renewal.

Following the service, a reception will be held in Wilcox Hall hosted by the 150th Anniversary Ministry Team.

The Ministry Team is asking anyone who was married at FCCSJ to share their photos of their wedding for display. We would like many pictures of the couples and also pictures that show the changes to our church over the years. Please have your pictures to the church office by Sunday, February 7, 2010. Be sure to have your name on your pictures so they are sure to be returned to you. Great care will be taken of your items.

Ruth Nihart



FOURTH SUNDAY SUPPER

We are starting 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 and make sure that we have milk for the children. Coffee, condiments, salt and pepper are all provided in the kitchen. You would be responsible for cleaning off the tables, cleaning and unplugging the coffee makers after the supper, and locking the kitchen door to the parking lot when leaving.

A sign up sheet is posted in the Wilcox Hall corridor. This program will run just like the Fellowship Hour; if no one signs up at least a week ahead, no Supper will be held. You can sign up on the schedule or call the church office.

The next Fourth Sunday Supper is February 28th. with Shirleyan Lake as our host.

CAMPING!!

Our third annual Church Camping Trip will be June 11-13th at River Ridge Campground in Breckenridge, MI. Last year we had approximately thirty campers attend. There are three cabins for rent for the people who don't have a tent or trailer but want to come. Some campers start arriving on Thursday, so mark your calendars. More information to follow in April.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

We start the Lenten season this year with Rev. Olson leading a special service on February 17th, at 7:00 p.m. Please plan to attend.

MEET THE DEROSIAS



Our profile this month is of Ben, Kelly and Abigail DeRosia. Kelly started attending F.C.C. with her family, Gary and Sue Larsen and sister Erin, when she was in second grade. She never missed Sunday School, was active in Pilgrim Fellowship, and was confirmed in 1993. Kelly's hobbies are reading, camping and enjoying Abby. She works as a receptionist for Dr. David Minnick at St. Johns Family Health Center. Ben has been attending church at F.C.C. since he started dating Kelly. He joined our church in 2004. Ben teaches 8th grade math at Central Montcalm Public Schools. He loves coaching basketball, watching and playing sports, and cheering on any U of M team.

Kelly and Ben were married in our sanctuary in August 2001 by Rev. Olson. Abby, who is two and a half and a very busy girl, loves dancing, camping and fishing with her grandpa. She really enjoys coming to church to see her special friends Keith Mino and Paul Martis. We are very lucky to have the DeRosia family in our congregation.



CLASSES/SMALL GROUP

You are invited to join Rev. Olson on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. in Wilcox Hall for a Bible Study/Discussion/Fellowship time. You can join the group at any time. This is a good chance to meet new people and grow in your Christian faith.

A “**BIBLE IN 90 DAYS**” class is being held at 6:30 p.m., Sundays in the Parlor. Chris Harris and Keith Mino are leading this class and are looking for participants. Chris can be reached at 227-7327 for information.

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.



ARE YOU INTERESTED in a class titled “Read the Chronological Bible in a Year”. It is being held at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings in Countryman Hall. You can contact Marianne Harris at 227-7327 or Denise Palmer at 227-7397 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 with time for prayer until 8:00 a.m. They are now discussing the Holy Spirit. Come and join them!

LINDA SCOTT DIVISION

All ladies are invited to join the **LINDA SCOTT MINISTRY TEAM** for their next meeting on February 9, 12:30 p.m. at The Mint. Please RSVP to Joann Martis at 224-4165.

COME AND JOIN US!

Are you interested in learning more about Clinton Transit “Blue Bus”? Come to the next Doublets, Etc. meeting on Sunday, February 7th, 7:00 p.m. at church. Call Shirleyan Lake for more information at 224-1870.

CHECK OUT THE BOOKS!

Our church library is filled with books for people of all ages. For adults we have the Bible on disc, music cassettes for you to enjoy, and a variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction. In the children’s section we have videos and many, many books to choose from.

LITURATURE RACKS

“The Shape of Living” by David Ford offers spiritual direction for everyday life. We live in a “culture of distraction” where we are constantly overwhelmed by experiences of love and pain, grief and joy and a fear of the future or dread of the past. In this eloquent and reflective book, Ford recounts his own spiritual journey using examples from scripture and wisdom from his spiritual mentors to suggest ways of overcoming distraction. This book, and many more, are available, free of charge on our literature racks at the back of the sanctuary.

SPRING TEA

All ladies and girls are cordially invited to attend the Annual Spring Tea, on Saturday, March 20, 2010

1—3 p.m. in Wilcox Hall

At First Congregational Church

Wedding Gowns from participants of our congregation, wedding pictures and albums will be on display.



The Bridal Tea will include a fashion show with models wearing many of the Bridal Gowns.

The show will be followed by a wedding reception featuring wedding cake and assorted confections.

So invite your family and friends to this special Wedding Event.

Adults \$10.00 and children \$5.00 Tickets will be available in March.

We hope to see you. The Spring Tea Committee

DID YOU KNOW?

The youth that completed the Confirmation Class, led by Rev. Olson, will be confirmed on Sunday, January 31st. This will take place during the 11:00 a.m. worship service which they will be leading.

Thanks are extended to Ruth Nihart who had the grandfather clock in the Parlor repaired.

The Junior High Youth Group is planning a Baked Potato Bar / Nachos Fund Raiser on Sunday, March 7th, during the Fellowship Hour. The cost is \$5.00 for a baked potato (with assorted toppings) and \$3.50 for Nachos. Proceeds will be divided with half going to UNICEF for Haiti and the remainder to Jr. High Youth Group Activities.



The Missions Ministry Team collected \$600.00 on Sunday, January 17th, to be sent to Christian Services International for Haiti.

Don't forget the 15th Annual Attic Treasure Sale on April 19th—21st during this our 150th Year. Remember that when you start your Spring cleaning, save those “Treasures” for this annual church fund raiser. Call Paul and Joann Martis at 224-4165 for more information.



Children and Youth News

FEBRUARY CHILDREN AND YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

- 11 Kaitlynn Doss
- 16 Bradley Cramer
- 17 Ella Scranton
- 18 Jada Palmer
- 22 Becca Stevens
- 24 Jordan Shoup
- 24 Mary Grace Billips
- 27 Brynn Ann Lucas



JOIN CHILDREN'S CHOIR!

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.

SUNDAY SCHOOL/YOUTH

Children age 4 through the 5th grade and Junior and Senior High youth are encouraged to invite friends, neighbors and relatives to join them on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. Sunday School and the Youth Groups are a great way to learn about God and his love and form lasting friendships.



EAGLE SCOUT

Congratulation to Bradley Tooker, son of Ray and Karen Tooker, who will be receiving his award on Sunday, February 28th.

Having completed the requirements for and have been examined by an Eagle Scout Board of Review on December 17, 2009, Bradley R. Tooker was found worthy of the rank of Eagle Scout. In honor of this achievement his family has scheduled an Eagle Scout Court of Honor in his honor on Sunday, February 28, 2010, 3 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, St. Johns. There will be refreshments served after the ceremony in Brand's honor. This will be the time for you to congratulate him on his honors and achievements. All members of the church are invited to attend this special event.



HEY KIDS!

Did you know that in the year 1897 the field stone for the outside of the new church was hauled in to town by sleigh during the winter?

FEBRUARY SIGN UP SCHEDULES

<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Nursery Care</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour</u>
7 *	7 Stacie Stevens	7 *	7 Jr. High P.F.
14 *	14 *	14 150th Event	14 150th Event
21 *	21 *	21 *	21 Sr. High P.F.
28 *	28 Stacie Stevens	28 Fritz Thurston & Doris Swatman	28 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

CHURCH RECORDS

Member Death: Helen Kohls, January 7, 2010, wife of Dick Kohls, mother of Karen Pontius.

Friend Death: David Risselada, January 22, 2010, father of Heather Risselada.



4th Sunday Supper Host/Hostess

FEBRUARY
Shirleyan Lake

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

THE FEBRUARY DEDICATION

The Congregational Connection for this month is in celebration of the 95th Birthday of



Alice Bullard
on February 22nd.

It is given by her family
Barbara Bullard, Joe and Marilyn Armbrustmacher