



# January 2014

The Congregational Connection...

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

## January Highlights

**3rd Sunday Throw Down:** Jan. 19th, at 11 a.m.

**Community Fun Night:** Jan. 24th, 6:30-9 p.m.

**4th Sunday Supper:** Jan. 26th, after the worship service.

## Plan on Joining us...

**Projections of God** resumes January 19th, with the short series, "Who is This Jesus: Is He Risen?" Sunday evenings from 6:30-8 p.m. This is an inspiring hour-long documentary from Coral Ridge Ministries Hosted by D. James Kennedy, Ph.D. and Dean Jones. The late Dr. Kennedy presents an interesting and memorable look at Jesus and his ministry.

Come and join us for this special evening at the church.

## Get Your Chili On!

This holiday we saw snow and ice and tree limbs and power outages. If you did not get your chilly on, there is a second opportunity... Get your CHILI on this January by helping the youth with the Chili Cook-Off!

Plan to bring your appetites and an offering after services Sunday, January 19th. Try several chilies: venison chili, spice chili, vegetarian chili, and secret recipe chili. We need mouths and votes to select the best chili this chilly season. All proceeds will help fund the Appalachia Service Project.

As our first fund-raiser to help the senior high youth group, we pray for God's blessings to help those without adequate housing in West Virginia this year. We pray this ministry is what He has planned for the youth. Last year's ministry was a great reflection of God's love and power.

If your ministry team would like to enter a pot of chili for the event, please contact the church or Melanie Lounds at 989-227-0932. Thanks and we are looking forward to serving.

## Join us for a Faith Adventure!

Our congregation is on a great God directed adventure to lead children to Jesus and help our children experience God in their daily lives. Sunday School is now called Faith Adventure for that reason. Each Sunday is a wonderful opportunity for our leaders to relate to our children in a loving personal way forming relationships with them so they know and feel God's love. We are also working at building relationships during the week through cards, phone calls, texts, and emails and in our outreach Community Fun Night. Our goal is to follow God's spirit in transforming children's lives, so they can become the people that God created them to be. God desires for each of them to be a daughter or son in His family so that His love can be in them and surround them. In Mark 10:14, Mark writes, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." No matter what difficulties or joys they encounter Jesus is there and so is their Christian community. They are never alone. Each child needs to feel loved, valued, enjoyed, needed, understood, and wanted. This is God's plan.

But we need your help! Our aim is to have all adults in the church involved supporting our mission. You can be involved in several ways. We will be asking each Faith Adventure class to select a Youth Companion or a couple to be Youth Companions. A Youth Companion is someone who will form a relationship with each child by praying daily for them and their families, and maybe calling them to see how they are doing, sending them cards, baking them cookies, coming to Community Fun Night, or helping them with their homework. Whatever God directs you to do. So if you are asked, prayerfully consider this call.

Other ways to be involved are praying for our Youth Leaders, praying for 2-3 children in our Church, praying for the families/individuals without a church that you know, inviting families in your neighborhood or relatives to join us for our Worship Service, a Bible study, Community Fun Night, Faith Adventure, Children in Worship, or Follow Me, Devotion in Motion, Youth Worship, Junior High or Senior programs (See church calendar for all the dates and times). God will hear your prayers and you can make a difference in our community. "The prayers of a righteous man availeth much" James 5:16.

Begin praying now that you will be open to God's call and join us on this God led Faith Adventure.

Beth Olson





## Making a Joyful Noise – What’s that Sound?

The Hands of Harmony Bell Choir has a diverse selection of music in their library. Some songs are written or arranged specifically for Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter while others can be used any time of year. The tempo and mood can be anything from soft, gentle, and contemplative to loud, fast and furious. The bell music is often written with different ‘stop’ techniques. Examples of these techniques include the “mart” which is executed by lightly punching the bell into the table pad which makes sort of a *clunking* sound. The “mart lift” is conducted by first “marting” the bell into the table pad and then quickly raising the bell so the sound carries. The “thumb damp” is usually performed with the smaller bells by wrapping your gloved hand around the bell and ringing it so the clapper inside *thuds* against the casting. The ‘pluck’ is performed, usually on the larger bells, by picking up the clapper with your fingers and flinging it against the casting as the bell is laying on the table. We also use mallets, when the music calls for it. Malleting can be performed with the bell on the table or on a suspended bell, depending on how the composer has written the music. The Hands of Harmony also has a 4-octave set of hand chimes, which have a very unique sound of their own.

In January, the Hands of Harmony will play “God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens (Brethren We Have Come to Worship)”, arranged by Cathy Moglebust. Cathy Moglebust has developed and directed handbell music programs since 1983, and has played bells since childhood. With her dynamic, positive approach and skilled conducting, she is in national demand as a handbell clinician and festival conductor. As one of today’s most popular handbell music composers, she has numerous published compositions and arrangements to her credit, many of them reaching bestseller status. Her music has been described as “pure joy to ring and listen to, having a uniquely delightful sense of melodic and rhythmic interaction, with elegant form and style.”

“God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens” uses several stop techniques. The song opens with all of the bells performing a series of “marts” and “mart lifts”. The melody starts in the middle and upper bells and later moves into the lower base bells. In the middle of the piece, the upper treble clef (smaller) bells have some “thumb damps”. All the bells have “mart” and “mart lifts” towards the end of the piece and the second to last measure of the song has the larger bells “plucking” and upper bells doing “thumb damps”. Come up to the bell tables after the service on January 19<sup>th</sup> if you would like to get a closer look at the bells and see how we perform the stop techniques. We hope this upbeat song brings you closer to God and that you feel his love through music.

Susan Kilmer  
Director – Hands of Harmony Bell Choir

### Epiphany's significance

The church season of Epiphany begins on January 6th each year. The name comes from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, meaning "to appear, to show or to manifest." The ending date of the Epiphany season is determined by Ash Wednesday, which is determined by the date of Easter.

Traditionally, Epiphany Day marks the arrival of the Magi, or wise men, to worship the infant Jesus. The significance of Epiphany for Christians is that it symbolizes the first recognition of Christ by Gentiles, or non-Jews.

The season of Epiphany emphasizes the divine nature of Jesus, the light of the world. Symbols for the season include light, a star and the color green, which represents life, growth, hope and eternity.

### Steeple

Steeple are a remnant of Gothic church architecture of the Middle Ages, marked by high open spaces and pointed arches that direct one's attention heavenward. Nowadays a steeple atop a church small or large serves the same function. Typically topped with a cross, it designates a Christian house of worship. Steeples sometimes double as bell towers, sending a call to worship out high above the surrounding land.



### 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.

### We need your help!

Nursery volunteers needed for Sundays during the worship service.



"Millions of fish begging to be caught, and we only brought two worms."

### Staying Connected

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

Bruce MacRae  
Hazel Findlay Country Manor  
1101 South Scott Road  
St. Johns, MI 48879

### 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!

### Give your all

There are plenty to follow our Lord halfway, but not the other half. They will give up possessions, friends and honors, but it touches them too closely to disown themselves. ... Commit your lives in unreserved obedience to [God].

—Meister Eckhart

### Missing Something?

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

### 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

## Community Fun Night

Friday January 24th  
6:30-9 p.m.

First Congregational Church

### For everything a season

Wanting his sons to learn not to judge too quickly, a man sent each, in turn, on a quest to look at a pear tree far away and report what he saw. The first son went in winter, the second in spring, the third in summer and the fourth in fall. Finally, the father gathered the young men together. "What did you see?" he asked.

The first son reported seeing an ugly tree, bent and lifeless. The second disagreed, saying it was budding with fresh new life. The third son reported finding a tree laden with sweet-smelling, beautiful blossoms, while the fourth insisted it drooped with ripe fruit.

The father said his sons were all correct, for they'd seen the same tree, though at different seasons of its life. "Don't judge a tree — or a person — based on just one season of life," he counseled his children. "Who they are can only be known at the end, when all life's seasons have been lived.

"Furthermore," he added, "don't give up on your own life if you experience a hard season, such as winter, or you'll miss out on the renewal of spring, the joy of summer, the fulfillment of autumn."

### Brain Buster

The book of Revelation is addressed to seven churches. Which city in the United States shares the name of one of those churches?

- A) St. Paul
- B) Philadelphia
- C) Oconomowoc
- D) Orlando

B) See Revelation 3:7-13.

### Fun Fact: Where's your Ebenezer?

The words of the well-known hymn "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" were written in 1757 by pastor and hymnist Robert Robinson. While most of the lines resonate with singers and listeners, the reference to "Ebenezer" may prove confusing:

Here I raise my Ebenezer;  
Here by thy great help I've come.

In 1 Samuel 7:12, Ebenezer, Hebrew for "stone of help," is what Samuel names a stone memorial he erects to God after Israel wins a battle against the Philistines. (Similarly, the name Eliezer appears several times in scripture, meaning "My God, [my] help.")

If you were to "raise [your] Ebenezer" in memory of a place where God helped you, where might it stand? Maybe it's at the scene of a car accident you survived, or on a college campus where your faith was challenged or molded. Maybe it's a peaceful spot in nature where you sensed the Spirit's presence. Or maybe it's simply in your heart, where a figurative Ebenezer monument can remind you of the Lord's constant care and love.



The annual three-day Calvin Symposium on Worship attracts pastors, worship leaders, artists, musicians, scholars, students, and interested worshipers from all over the world. They convene at Calvin College (Grand Rapids) to fellowship, to worship, to develop gifts, to encourage each other, and to renew their commitment to the full ministry of the church.

The worship focus for the 2014 symposium is Exodus. Worship services, art exhibits, and featured publications and worship resources will reflect this theme. Bible commentator Terrence Fretheim asserts that the Book of Exodus does not just follow the Book of Genesis in the Bible—Exodus is actually the *sequel* to Genesis. Whereas Genesis traced the history of a creation spoiled by sin, Exodus shows God’s earliest moves in restoring that creation back to the glory he desired in the beginning.

This is a marvelous blessing for those who are involved directly in worship ministry. However, you don’t have to be a worship leader to attend. Please visit the symposium website (<http://worship.calvin.edu/symposium/>) and read about the workshops, art exhibits, and worship services. Is God calling you to attend? For more information, or if you have questions, please talk to Rachael Short or others who have attended in the past: Matthew Olson, Chuck Graham, Melanie Lounds, Nathan Sherman, Guven Witteveen.

## 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

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:** 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

Barb Sherman.....517-242-1234

## Board of Ministry Joys and Concerns

~Staff evaluations are finished, and the board plans on participating in a service day project on January 26th, 2014.

~Congregation voted on Dec. 8th to approve the budget.