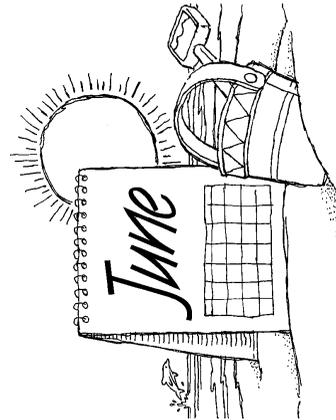


First Congregational Church
100 Maple Street
St. Johns, MI 48879

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This Month's Highlights:
Cover, Pg. 2, & Pg. 3 Graduates for 2011
Pg. 4 Letter to congregation
Pg. 6 Children and Youth News
Pg. 7 June Schedules, Church Records and Dedication
Pg. 9 Member Profile
Pg. 10 Music Ministry

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



1860-2010

JUNE 2011

The Congregational Connection...

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



JAMIE CHEENEY

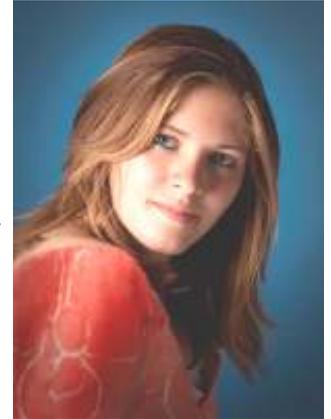
As all of you have seen Jamie Cheeney grow up week by week in this church, we have had the great honor of watching our little girl grow and mature into an inspiring young woman. She loves a challenge, reflected by her academic choices and refuses to disappoint anyone in her life, including herself. In her junior year, she traveled to Spain and has fallen in love with their language and culture, the experience has inspired her to pursue opportunities in the field of international business. She plans to attend Calvin College in Grand Rapids in the fall and she's very excited about living in that Christian atmosphere at college. She has enjoyed playing tennis through high school for the simple fun of it and being able to support her teammates as well, perhaps she'll have the opportunity to enjoy tennis at Calvin. Her involvement with GOOD WINS volunteer club and the National Honor Society was a great joy for her, and something she will greatly miss. I have a very strong suspicion that Calvin College will have a new club-leader in their midst with many plans. Life is going to be different without her in our home every day, we will miss her terribly, but we are so very excited to watch her experience life and see her dreams come true. One of our many memories; it's always been a tradition in our family to have a celebratory dinner after report cards and parent/teacher conferences. Jamie always responds with "Thanks for dinner, Dad!", and we return with, "thanks for being a great kid!".



BROOKE WITCHELL

The First Congregational Church of St. Johns has been Brooke's home since she was two years old. It is where she had her first organized experience, singing with Grandma Fran. In the years since, she has gone from singing to playing saxophone and in seventh grade settling in with the tuba for the remainder of her school years. She has played with the Redwing Marching Band, this past year as section leader. With the band she has traveled to the Thanksgiving

Continued on page 2



Day parade in Detroit and to Hawaii, playing on the deck of the USS Missouri in Pearl Harbor on Easter morning. Each year when marching season was over, she took her seat as first chair tuba in both the symphonic band and symphonic orchestra. She will be featured at the band's Spring concert. She was a member of the 2010-2011 Michigan Youth Ensemble and Symphonic Orchestra at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She has also been active in the National Honor Society, Asset Committee and SADD.

This year will be Brooke's tenth year of church camp, having gone from a camper, sobbing because her parents were making her go, to a counselor, scheduling her summer around it. It is church camp and Pilgrim Fellowship groups where she has made some of her dearest friends. She has participated in state retreats and NAPF, traveling to Boston and Anchorage. She will be in Arizona in June with her NAPF family. It is through her church that she has had the opportunity to travel to Trade, Tennessee and Magoffin, Kentucky as part of ASP team.

Brooke will be attending Lansing Community College for a year and then go into Americorps. Her parents, Bill and Kathy Witchell, invite Brooke's church family to celebrate with us on Sunday, June 12th from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. 210 Church Street, St. Johns.

PHILLIP WITTEVEEN

Phillip Witteveen has always been interested in books, words and ideas. So it is not surprising that he has grown from English to develop interest in other languages, too. His junior year in Sweden set him in the direction of learning about people of Europe and now Russia, where he will spend a few months before starting at the Residential College in the University of Michigan.

At St. Johns High School his extra-curricular activity has included early experiences with the band and electric bass, intermural soccer and MSU judo, and in his senior year boys tennis. He is finishing the spring season as team manager for girls tennis. Most recently he has developed a taste for public speaking, completed the Dale Carnegie course, competed at the national level for Business Professionals of America and is part of the SJHS team at the forensics invitational on Mackinac Island May 20-22.

At FCC Phil has participated most in the fellowship, food and outdoor activities, including one of the Appalachian Service Projects to Tennessee. He tried a few rehearsals with choir and paid a visit to the Men's Bible Study, as well, to understand what it is about the Good Book that draws old guys together each week.



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.

Hunger for Direction

I have a long list of thanks for my First Congregational Church family this month. Your prayers are a sustaining force, and a deep comfort. When you share your own prayer requests with me, you welcome me to draw closer to you, and that is a joy. My purpose in devoting one day each week to fast and pray was singular and largely career-oriented, but the experience has grown into something much bigger.

These Sabbath days are unique: some days I feel an urgency to practice piano or organ, some days to clean, and (oddly) some days to cook; some days I need to go for a run or a long walk, and other days I read for hours. Throughout the day, I dedicate everything to God, and though our itinerary may change, I find this day to be the most creative of the whole week, perhaps a weekly day of revelation.

Some ideas relate to my life as a piano teacher or as a music therapist; many revolve around our life as a worshiping church. Through consultation with the Music Ministry Team and with Matt, we have implemented a few ideas, such as incorporating music into the Pastoral Prayer, and closing worship with songs reflective of our worship focus. We view the summer months as an opportunity to continue trying new things, such as singing more songs during worship and exploring an increasing variety of musical styles.

We always crave feedback from you, even more so in the coming months. Please talk to any member of the Music Ministry Team and let us know about your worship experiences. Our efforts are guided by the mission statement listed below.

The mission of the Music Ministry Team:

- ~ to support and sustain a creative atmosphere that supports worship for each member;
- ~ to encourage active participation for the purpose of worship;
- ~ to proactively develop musical worship experiences that are varied, meaningful, and personal.

Music Ministry Team Members:

Chris Harris (Chairperson), Jaime Cheeney, Chuck Graham, Rosemary Green, Marianne Harris, Mary Ann Ellickson, Susan Kilmer, Ruth Root, Rachael Short.

TYLER HORTON

Tyler is the son of Scott and Michelle Gilhouse. While a student at St. Johns High School Tyler also attended college class through Lansing Community College. As a junior his focus was on automotive repair and as a senior he focused on heavy equipment operating. Tyler was active in BMX racing throughout high school. He was ranked among the top ten racers in his class for the State of Michigan. Tyler also participated in the design and building of the Mint City BMX Track. In Middle School Tyler assisted with Vacation Bible School at FCC and this year has been an active member of Senior High PF.



Tyler has enlisted into the United State Marine Corp and has spent a great deal of time during his senior year training. On July 18th he will ship to Camp Pendleton in San Diego, California to begin boot camp.

COME AND JOIN THE FUN!



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
 100 MAPLE STREET
 ST. JOHNS, MI 48879
 Monday, JUNE 13TH—Thursday, 16TH
 AGE 4 THROUGH 12
 6:00 TO 7:30 P.M.
 NO COST

Come and join the fun! We will be traveling through the Old Testament as well as the New Testament to learn about several attributes of God. From Adam and Eve, to the Pass-over, to the building of the tabernacle, to Jesus on the cross, you will learn that God's holiness and views of sin have never changed. Churched and unchurched kids alike will hear and understand the Gospel in a whole new way!

Lessons, Music, Crafts and Games!
 Come and bring your friends!

To register call the church at 224-2636, e-mail at fccsj@4wbi.net or at VBS.

Dear First Congregational Church family,

As my internship year draws to a close, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for welcoming me into your church family over this past year. I have learned so much. It was good experience to be part of a church whose structure of governance was so much different from my home church.

I appreciated having the opportunity to be part of Sunday school and participate in the children's worship service. Thank you to Beth Olson and the Sunday school teachers who welcomed me to the Sunday school teacher meetings and gave me the opportunity to teach.

Organizing the Women's Bible Study and the Workshops for Aging Adults was a positive experience during which I learned about the concept of forming a Ministry Team. I'd like to thank the women who attended the Bible study for their patience as I learned the best way to organize and lead this group. Thank you also to Marilyn Newman without whose help the Aging Workshops would not have been so successful.

I'd like to thank Matt for giving me the opportunity to preach and to participate in the special services: Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, and Maundy Thursday. I also appreciate the time he gave up to meet with me on a weekly basis and for sharing his guidance and wisdom learned from his years in ministry. I also appreciate his willingness to travel to Detroit to meet with my Professor and be part of my Ministry Committee Interview.

I also wish to thank my Lay Committee: Hila and Darwin Beaufore, Tom Flynn, Chris Harris, Melanie Lounds, Ruth Nihart and Bill Richards. I thank them for giving up their Sunday afternoons to provide me with their guidance during these past nine months. They've helped me more than I can say. A special note of thanks goes to Melanie for chairing the committee and for keeping us on track. I appreciate also that she took the day off work to attend my Ministry Committee Interview in Detroit. I was glad she was there.

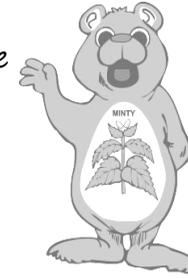
Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank Sue Larsen for all of her patience and help during this past nine months. Without her I think the walls of the church would fall down!!

In closing, I want to thank each and every one of you for your support, for your kindness and for the words of encouragement you've given me. Words cannot adequately express how helpful you've been and how much I've appreciated this time with you.

God Bless You.
Kathy Farnum

MINT FESTIVAL 2011

It's that time of year to begin thinking of the Mint Festival Food Booth. If you are interested in helping to organize this exciting event I would love to hear from you. I am looking for a few good people to assist with the organization and set up. If you are interested I can be reached at 517-242-1234 (cell), 989-292-4029 (home) or via email bsheman265@yahoo.com



Thanks! Barb

"BAD GIRLS OF THE BIBLE"

The Women's Bible Study Group is concentrating on the "Bad Girls of the Bible" by Liz Curtis Higgs. This study is being held on Tuesdays from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Parlor and will continue to meet weekly, covering one chapter per week. Books will be made available or you can choose to get a copy on your own.

For more information please contact Kathy Farnum, Intern Minister at 517-669-5864.

MEMBER PROFILE



Meet Darwin and Hila Beaufore from Owosso! Both Darwin and Hila grew up in St. Johns, and graduated from Rodney B. Wilson. They were married here at FCC in 1955 by Dr. Clyde Wilcox. Their first two daughters were baptized in our church. In 1960 they moved to Owosso and transferred their membership to FCC in Owosso and had one more daughter. Darwin worked for Premarc Corp in Durand and retired 19 years ago. Hila retired 13 years ago from Memorial Healthcare, in Owosso.

In addition to their three daughters they have nine grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. When Hila was a child she sang in the children's choir and attended Sunday school here at FCC with Mildred Countryman and Mable Maier as teachers. Rev. Cogswell was the minister and Hila Bross the organist.

They are both Detroit Tiger fans, enjoy reading and plant a garden every year. In the early years of their retirement they spent a lot of time traveling. Darwin has been a woodworker since his 4-H and shop class days. Hila was a Respite and Hospice volunteer for 10 Years.

In 2010 Darwin and Hila transferred their membership back to FCC St. Johns. Hila stated that "They are happy to be back home". I know that we are happy they are back home!

New Early Service Being Offered for the Summer!

The Board of Ministry is pleased to announce plans to offer an early morning worship service at 8:30 a.m. beginning June 12, 2011 and continuing until September 4, 2011. The purpose of this early morning service is to offer members and friends of First Congregational Church a choice of worship services during the summer months. The 10:00 a.m. service will continue to be available and will be conducted in the same manner as in past summers.

In contrast, the early service will be an informal service with a shorter message and a variety of music. It will be conducted by volunteers including lay ministers, visiting ministers, Steven's Ministers and possibly members of our youth programs. In addition, our Senior Minister will participate in the rotation of those conducting the service. No child care will be offered. Families will be able to enjoy worshipping together.

In order to continue to offer all members of the congregation a chance for fellowship around the morning worship service, coffee fellowship will be offered at 9:30 a.m. Those who come for the early morning service can stay after their service and those planning to attend the 10:00 a.m. service can come early.

Upon completion of these services in September the Board of Ministry will review the attendance and will seek to find out how members of FCC liked this early morning option. This will assist with future planning for worship at First Congregational Church.

Our hope is also to use this early morning service as a way to promote our church in the community. We will send out press releases announcing the availability of this new service and will promote it through mailings to our members and friends.

Please plan to join us at 8:30 a.m. on Sundays this summer!



35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"- Gospel of Mark, 4:35-41.

As I sit here listening to the wind howl outside my kitchen window, the wind chimes blowing frantically in the breeze, my three children asleep in their beds, and my husband snoring softly, I take a moment to get quiet. Getting quiet and finding that place where I can just be with the Lord is something I have trouble doing – not because I don't have a personal relationship, but because silence in my life is not very easy to come by. I am, first, an extrovert (and a loud one at that) and secondly, I am the type of person who believes I'll get plenty of sleep when I am dead. Why stop go-go-going?

I was reminded by several people recently how very important it is to get still and know God. My mother continually reminds me, and The Holy Mamas have shared this reminder with me. Even our intern minister Kathy Farnum has reminded me. On this windy night after our last meeting, I am awake at 11:30 pm on a Sunday night typing up her last evaluation. Her internship questions seem to lead me to another place... and while these questions pertain to how often our group met and what Kathy worked on throughout her journey with us at FCC, they also seem to speak to that quiet time we should all be sharing with God. There are questions on the evaluation I start asking myself. 1) How often do I meet (with God)? How many meetings have I had (with God) this year? What is the average length of the meetings (God and I had)? What is included in my usual agenda (with God)? Of course I begin thinking about how much time I spend in prayer, how much time I spend asking for guidance, what topics I bring up and what topics I avoid. I wonder how each of us would answer these types of questions if evaluating ourselves at the end of the year.

Another interesting question was 2) How have you called forth His gifts he gives you for ministry of our fellow lay people in our church? I figure I am doing pretty good on that one as I have many "irons in the fire" as an old colleague once told me. Many of us could use our gifts at work as well as at church. Hopefully we constantly have an eye open to using our gifts daily with all walks of life. But am I really "all there" if I have so many "irons in the fire" as they say? I can devote more time to my Senior High youth group, and I am looking forward to our summer business in Arizona at the National Association of Pilgrim Fellowship. I am excited in developing a sermon after Appalachia Service Project, as well as developing one more meeting per week starting in August for those that want to read the New Testament in under a year.

Finally, 3) How have I received and made use of feedback (from others or from God)? Definitely this is an area where I need to be still and listen. As I have said earlier, many people tell me to find a quiet place to be still and know my God, listen and hear what He would have me do. I nearly laughed when The Holy Mamas suggested I go to my garden or a quiet place to be still. After I stopped laughing on the inside, I had to ask myself: Is there a quiet place in my life? I am committed to finding some. I need to make space for the most important One in my life. For thirty minutes that it takes for me to drive to work, I am going to be still and listen to God. I also have that same thirty minute drive home. Opportunities are everywhere! I just need to be intentional and follow through. This is definitely an area I will need "to continue working on" in my walk with Christ.

I encourage you to do an end-year evaluation. It might surprise you and encourage you on your walk with Christ. There are actually twelve questions on the full evaluation... like a twelve step program... or the twelve disciples... whatever metaphor floats your boat, and I pray that whatever windy seas you find yourself in that you are able to be still and know that He is God. -- Peace, joy, and love, *Melanie Lounds*

Children and Youth News

JUNE CHILDREN AND YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Cody Hyde
- 8 Madrid Nihart
- 11 Ian LaBar
- 16 Kendall Gunther
- 16 Emmah Nelson
- 16 Emma Simon
- 20 Lauryn Nelson
- 23 Alexis Carpenter
- 27 Alexander Barron



SPECIAL THANK YOU!

We would like to thank the Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, "Children in Worship" and "Follow Me" volunteers for their time and efforts this last school year. They are, Randy and Cindy Howell, Tom and Ellen Doppke, Dave and Michele Elms, Rod Fuller, Barb Sherman, Jennifer Beagle and Melanie Lounds. Trish Cramer, Ellen Doppke, Kathy Farnum, Holly and Dani Flynn, Camille LaBar, Chris Leasher, Nichole and Meagan Leasher, Patty Mayes, Molly Minnick, Molly Carol Minnick, Beth Olson, Denise Palmer, Cali Sackrider, Barb Sherman, Bob and Carri Simon, Stacie and Jerry Stevens, Becca and Buddy Stevens, Hannah VanValkenburg and Guven Witteveen.

Thanks to all of you!

CHURCH SUMMER CAMP

The dates for camp for this coming summer have been set. It will be held Sunday, July 31st, to Friday evening, August 5th. 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. All applications are due by July 23, 2011. They have limited space, so they are encouraging the campers to register as soon as they are able.



JUNE SIGN UP SCHEDULES

| Altar Flowers | Nursery Care | Fellowship Hour | Newsletter Dedication |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 5 Barb Salters Bonnie Wicherham | 5 Kelly DeRosia | 11:00 a.m. Fellowship 5 * | *July |
| 12 * | 12 Stacie Stevens | 9:30 a.m. Fellowship 12 * | *October |
| 19 * | 19 Stacie Stevens | 19 * | \$50.00 for the dedication of your choice. |
| 26 * | 26 Stacie Stevens | 26 * | |

***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

New Member:

Kathleen Livingston, daughter of Eugene and Carole Livingston

THE JUNE NEWSLETTER DEDICATION

In Honor of the 55th Wedding Anniversary of our parents

Art and Arlene Wood

Thank you for the example of your lives.

From all your kids,
Teresa, Larry and Zachary
Erin, Mark, Chris and Meg
Greg, Pam, Ian, Nathan and Emma
Cameron and Heather

