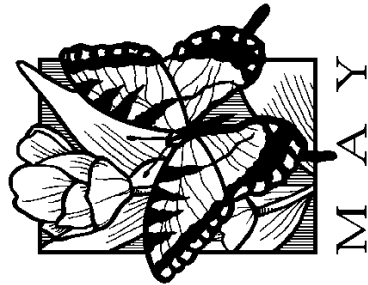


First Congregational Church
100 Maple Street
St. Johns, MI 48879

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This Month's Highlights:
Cover, *Attic Treasure Sale*
Pg. 2 *Article by Rev. Olson*
Pg. 4 *Church Camping Trip, Peru Thank You*
Pg. 6 *Children and Youth News*
Pg. 7 *May Schedules, Church Records and Dedication*
Pg. 9 *Member Profile*

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

MAY 2011



The Congregational Connection...

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

**16TH ANNUAL
ATTIC TREASURE SALE
WILCOX HALL, LOWER LEVEL**

OPEN TO MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS OF FCC.

**Monday, MAY 2, 2011
7:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.**

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Tuesday, MAY 3, 2011
10:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.
(Extended hours)**

&

**Wednesday, MAY 4, 2011
10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

*Dishes, vases, small furniture, glassware, linens, Christmas
items, knick-knacks, toys, books,
older costume jewelry, and much more!*

For more information call Paul and Joann Martis at 224-4165

No clothing.

SEE PAGE 3 FOR ONE OF THE SPECIAL BID ITEMS!

The Fourth in a Series of Articles on the Worth Ship (Worship) of God

Worship is extremely important in our mission to reach the unchurched people of this community. In the 1950's and 1960's it was common for unchurched people to find their way into the life of the local church through a small group, such as a Bible study, men's breakfast, or women's circle. This still happens. Today it is more usual for unchurched people find their place in church through the service of worship. Our corporate worship is increasingly important in reaching people on behalf of Christ.

One of the key factors in an inviting worship service is a sense of grace. As a church that operates on a theology of love, we do our best to show that, when we gather as God's church, all are welcomed and affirmed, wherever they are on their spiritual journey. We come to experience a depth of warmth and engagement that goes beyond being "a friendly church". We come to be challenged, surprised, and made grateful for each other and the time we have shared together before God.

Does this sense of grace and community that we church members share find its way genuinely and authentically to visitors? Visitors do not come to church by accident. They come because they are looking for the presence of the living God. They can find divine life in that sense of fellowship, encouragement, help, and hope that we share, *if we will share it with them.*

Certainly the greeters and ushers are instrumental in setting the tone for a first time visitor. Warm words of welcome and generous handshake convey a sincere appreciation for the visitor's willingness to come into a strange place, amid strange people, in search of a spiritual home. But it is not their work alone. We all have a part to play in helping visitors find what they are looking for. By making it a point to take a few extra steps to greet someone new you are sending a clear message: 'this church is my church, and you are welcome to make it your church.'

Rev. Matthew 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.

Do you have someone graduating this June? How about a special family member getting married? Then why not reserve that month of the “**CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTION**” in honor of this occasion? The cost is \$50.00 and is used to help cover the cost of postage. Please contact the church office at 224-2636 to reserve your month. The months of **JUNE, JULY, OCTOBER and DECEMBER** are still available.

The **2011 FLOWER SCHEDULE** is posted on the bulletin board in the Wilcox Hall corridor. Now is the time to sign up for that special date you want this year. If you can not make it in to church to check on a date please call the office at 224-2636. After the church service you can take your flowers home to enjoy.

Our **CHURCH LIBRARY** is filled with many books, both fiction and non fiction, musical tapes, and the Bible on disc for adults to check out. For children we have the Veggie Tale video series and many great books for them to take home to read.



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 a.m. with time for prayer until 8:00 a.m.

A **SMALL GROUP** is being held on Wednesdays, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor. They are working with the Upper Room Daily Devotional, available on the Literature Rack. You are invited to join them.

Rev. Olson is leading a **BIBLE STUDY/DISCUSSION CLASS** on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. in Wilcox Hall. You can join the group at any time. This is a good chance to meet new people and grow in your Christian faith.

We will not be having a **FOURTH SUNDAY SUPPER** during the summer months (June, July and August). They will resume in September.

The next “**THROW DOWN SUNDY**” is on May 15th. 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.

BID ITEM AT ATTIC TREASURE!

Pictured is one of the very special pieces that will be offered for bids...a must see!

This doll house is made of composition wood and measures 42 inches high, 22 inches wide and 15 inches deep.

Be thinking of that special child or grandchild who would enjoy playing with this unique item. See you at the Sale!

Pictured:
Ruth Nihart and Joann Martis, Attic Treasure Sale Ministry Team Members



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
100 MAPLE STREET
ST. JOHNS, MI 48879
Monday, JUNE 13TH—Thursday, 16TH
AGE 4 THROUGH 10
6:00 TO 7:30 P.M.**

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 fcsj@4wbi.net or at VBS.

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

The Board of Ministry is interested in identifying individuals who would use transportation services for Sunday morning worship if they were made available. If you would like a ride to church on Sunday mornings, or know of someone who would like a ride, please contact Sid Lounds at 989-640-6981. Every effort will be made to recruit drivers and coordinate volunteers within our church family to meet those needs.

HELLO CAMPERS!

June will be here soon! The 4th annual church camping trip is June 9th —12th. You can make your own reservations at River Ridge Campground in Breckenridge, MI by calling 800-647-2267.



Family Camp

Same location. Ice cream social Friday night. Pot luck Saturday night and church on Sunday. I think Pastor Kushmaul is preaching this year. Any NEW ideas? Do we have new campers in the church we want to encourage to come? Let me know your thoughts. We will go up Thursday afternoon.

Thanks, Linda Fitch
989-224-3565

NEW CLASS FOR WOMEN

The Women's Bible Study Group is changing their study focus and their meeting time. The group will be concentrating their Bible study on the book, "Bad Girls of the Bible" by Liz Curtis Higgs. This new 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.



Excerpts from the back cover: "Liz's unique brand of girlfriend theology has helped women of all ages experience God's grace anew. Let ten sisters show you why studying the Bible has never been more fun!"

MISSION TRIP

The International Mission team would like to thank everyone who supported our recent trip to Peru. We appreciate all the prayers and financial assistance that you provided. We saw over 550 patients, and gave out 200 backpacks while in Peru. It was a great trip! Thanks for all your help.



WHEEL INN, ST. JOHNS

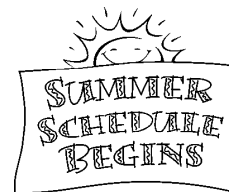
John and Pam Foster would like to invite our congregation to visit The Wheel Inn (in St. Johns) on Saturday's and Sunday's and bring along their current weekly bulletin. They will keep the bulletin and attach your paid bill to it and once every month they will total those numbers (pre-tax) and make a 5% donation back to the church. They hope that these monies will assist in supporting our favorite mission in these economic hard times. This program will go on indefinitely.

ANNUAL MEETING

The 150th Meeting of the First Congregational Church is going to be held on Sunday, May 15, 2011. The meeting will convene at the Fellowship Hour immediately following the church service. Annual Reports from various Ministry Teams will be presented and members will be elected to the Board of Ministry. All participants and members are encouraged to attend this important part of our church life. Only members can vote on the candidates for the Board of Ministry. Child care will be provided.

SUMMER HOURS

We will be switching to our 10:00 a.m. worship hour on June 5th.



MEMBER PROFILE



Meet Shirley Warstler! Shirley moved to St. Johns when she was eleven years old from Lansing. Here she met and married her husband Donald. Don's parents were members of F.C.C. and invited them to a few of the Congregators meetings. They enjoyed the people and decided to join the church on April 10, 1952. Shirley, who is a widow has four children; Sue, who lives in St. Johns; Tom who lives in Escanaba; John who is in Boyne City and Nancy in Whitehall. Shirley retired from the Clinton Bank in 1988 after working there for fifteen years. She likes reading, knitting and really enjoys swimming and exercising in the high school pool. Shirley is also a member of the Linda Scott Women's Ministry Team, of which she has been a member since the group was formed. Monthly meetings with former classmates is also on her busy schedule. Shirley is a really special lady! We are very lucky to have here in our congregation.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

PILGRIM UNITED METHODIST is hosting "The Big Event" for local teens, grades 6-12th on Saturday, May 21st, from 6—10 p.m.. They are expecting over 300 teens to attend this amazing outdoor event. It will be held in their church parking lot, with inflatables, live music, food, laser tag, raffles and much more. The Teen Activity Center is open every Saturday throughout the school year to give teens a "safe haven" in our community. We are providing them with a safe and fun atmosphere. The Saturday attendance is about 180 kids!

If you would like to help defray the cost of this community event or make a donation of gift certificates, T-shirts, hats, etc. it would be greatly appreciated. Your name/organization will be displayed at the event. Please send donations to Pilgrim United Methodist church or items can be dropped off in their church office, 2965 West Parks Road or call 224-6865 at any time.

CHAMBER NEWS

Saturday, May 7th, the Clinton County Chamber of Commerce will hold their **9th Annual Touch a Truck and Home and Business Show** from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the CC RESA Building (1013 S. US 27).

The church will be closed Monday, May 30th.



AGING ADULTS WORKSHOPS

The dates and topics for the Caring for Aging Adults Workshops in May are:

May 1: Open forum with Whitney from the Alzheimer's Association.

May 16: Community Resources and Caring for the Caregiver.

All workshops will begin at 7:00 p.m. here at the church. All adults in the church and community are welcome. These are the last two workshops scheduled at this time. For more information contact Marilyn Newman at 517-331-3457 or Kathy Farnum at 517-669-5864.

NOTE FROM THE HANDBELLS

The Hands of Harmony bell choir have enjoyed being part of the worship service during this past season. We had a great year and were able to participate in the holiday concert at the Wilson Center last December, the mission team's fundraiser concert, and attended the spring festival of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers. The choir will be taking a break during the summer, and will return for the new season in September. We would very much like to add a few more people to our choir. There is a box of beautiful base bells that seldom get played because we just don't have enough people. Over the summer, please consider joining this ministry team in the fall. The bell choir is for everyone; men, women, and teens – there is a place for you! The Hands of Harmony wish to thank the congregation for their support and encouragement, it means a lot to us!

Susan Kilmer, Director

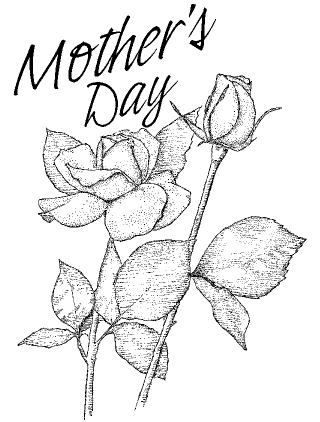
Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast Sunday, May 8, 2011

All you can eat with choice of blueberry, pecan, or chocolate chips, sausage and bacon, milk, orange juice, and coffee.

Just \$6.00 each with kids 8 years old and under free!

We will be serving starting at 9:00 a.m. with the last orders taken at 10:30 a.m. Come celebrate moms!

Sponsored by the Senior High Youth Group.



Oh Lord, Hear My Prayer ...

For the past month this refrain (a prayer response) has been playing over and over in my head:

Oh Lord, hear my prayer. Oh Lord, hear my prayer.

When I call, answer me.

Oh Lord, hear my prayer. Oh Lord, hear my prayer.

Come and listen to me.

Without a specific prayer in mind, I didn't know why I would mentally sing this throughout the day. In Peru, I was amazed and inspired to see lives dedicated to faithfully follow God's call, to alleviate the physical suffering of the most vulnerable, to reflect the love of God like the brightest mirror, and in so doing to allow lives to be transformed. I returned with many questions about my own life:

- am I truly following God's call in my life?

- how am I using my recent music therapy education?

- what is my vision for musical life at First Congregational Church?

- is there mission work for me to do (locally, nationally, internationally)?

As I examined my life, I discovered that I don't spend much time in earnest companionship with God. So I decided to dedicate a 24-hour period (Sunday night through Monday night) to fast, pray, and just be with God. I plan to do this indefinitely, as I listen for direction.

I share this with you because I'm weak. I ask for your partnership in prayer for strength in fasting, and for courage to follow the direction of the Holy Spirit when it comes. Further, I want to pray for the joys and concerns that are on **your** hearts. Please drop by the organ any time and write a note about how I can pray for you. Writing supplies will be provided.

I believe that maybe the Holy Spirit reminded me of this prayer response before I even knew what my prayer should be. Let our prayers be as one. With loving thanks,

- Rachael Short

Children and Youth News

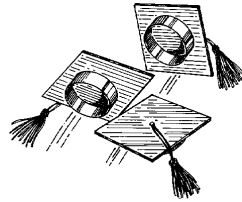
MAY CHILDREN AND YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Christine Shoup
- 7 Eliana Lounds
- 7 Maximus Leasher
- 8 Avery Scranton
- 11 Noelle Cramer
- 14 Abigail DeRosia
- 17 Cacey Hyde
- 22 Hailey Elms
- 25 Gretchen Olson



2011 GRADUATES

If you have someone graduating from high school or college, please send a wallet size picture and a brief article to church by May 21st. We would like to feature all 2011 graduates in the June "Congregational Connection". If you have any questions please contact the church office at 224-2636.



REMINDER: The last Sunday for Sunday School classes and the Youth Groups is May 15th. The Sunday School, Youth Group pins and Award Bibles will be awarded during the Worship Service that morning.

HEY KIDS, SUMMER CAMP INFORMATION!

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.



MAY SIGN UP SCHEDULES

<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Nursery Care</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour</u>	<u>4th Sunday Supper Host/Hostess</u>
1 Teresa Zuker	1 Stacie Stevens	1 *	May Board of Ministry
8 DeRosia Family	8 Stacie Stevens	8 *	
15 Fritz Thurston	15 Stacie Stevens	15 *	
22 Olson Family	22 Kelly DeRosia	22 BOM	
29 *	29 Kelly DeRosia	29 *	

***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

Member Death:

Pat Phelps Smith, March 25, 2011
Georgene Hecht, March 30, 2011, mother of Jan Quist

Baptism:

Dawson Gregory Segraves, April 23, 2011, son of Gregory and Jennifer Segraves

THE MAY NEWSLETTER DEDICATION

The "Congregational Connection"
For the month of May
is dedicated in honor of the 4th Birthday of our granddaughter

Abigail Lynette DeRosia

"Love you to pieces!"
Grandpa Gary and Grandma Sue Larsen

