

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

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This Month's Highlights:
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May 2010 The Congregational Connection...

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



Vacation Bible School (VBS) this year will be held beginning Tuesday, June 15th, thru Friday, June 18th, from 9:30-11:00 A.M. All children ages 4 to 10 are welcome to attend.

Our theme this year will be "Back Stage with the Bible" which includes lots of singing, dancing, and learning real life lessons about God's word that kids can apply to their daily lives. We will have snack time, crafts, outside activities and Bible study. There is no fee to attend VBS, however we will be accepting daily donations for the local food pantry. We are in need of middle school and high school volunteers as well as any adults willing to help. If you need more information please contact Denise Palmer at 989-227-7397.

We hope to see you there!



WHAT GOOD CHURCH LEADERS DO: SOOTH AND SHAKE UP!

Every church has its own traditions, practices, flavor, but for one purpose; to help people grow in their relationship with God. This is clearly what Jesus, “the Good Shepherd”, was after, and all who serve him as ‘under shepherds’ take the same charge.

It should always be in the back of a church leader’s mind that Jesus’ severest criticism was of the religious leaders of his day. “The Jews”, by which was meant the Scribes and Pharisees, were busy running Judaism as an institutional religion. In due course they developed a complex of rituals and law that governed the lives of the faithful. This allowed the average Jew to have a religious experience that was second hand; one merely had to go through the motions to be a good Jew. One need not encounter God.

Jesus hated this, attacking it directly, accusing “The Jews” of leading the people down the wrong path. Jesus was so upset that he called the religious leaders “Blind guides”, and said to them; “You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.” (Matthew 23:15). In contrast to “the Jews”, Jesus preached a quality of discipleship that broke the bonds of religion and alarmed the traditionalists.

We need to be careful about this today, especially in the historic churches such as ours, where it is sometimes easier to be lulled by stone and stained glass into thinking everything is as it should be. After all, religion can be used to confirm our prejudices, confer status, make us comfortable, and provide predictability. A relationship with a living God, by definition, shakes us up. God has plans for a new world.

To put it another way: If you are completely comfortable with what is going on at church, something is wrong, very wrong.

The role of our church leaders—Board of Ministry members, Ministry Team Leaders, and the many others who lead informally--is to try to keep a balance between the soothing comforts of order and tradition and the challenges of radical discipleship.

This is stressful for church leaders. Let’s be open to their leadership, and support and encourage them in their task.

Rev. Matt 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.

FOOD BANK DONATIONS

1. Next "Throw Down Sunday" is on May 16th.
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.

"CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTION" NEWSLETTER

We would like to thank everyone who has sponsored a newsletter for 2010. We have 2010 completely spoken for! Watch the newsletter later in the year or you can call the church office at 224-2636 to book that special month in 2011.

COMMUNITY NEWS

MEN'S MINISTRY, in collaboration with Dunamia.org, is inviting all men in need of personal support, to meet at Community Christian Church (400 East State Street) every fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. Please call Mike Stedry for further information at 517-449-5349.

The Clinton County Department of Human Services needs safe and caring homes for children of all ages. Especially teenagers in all areas of Clinton County. **FOSTER PARENTS** can make a difference in the lives of children in crisis. Contact Christine Sisung with the Department of Human Services at 989-224-5548 for information packets.

Saturday, May 1st, the Clinton County Chamber of Commerce will hold their **8th 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).

Relay for Life in St. Johns will take place at the St. Johns High School football field from Friday, May 21st, to Saturday the 22nd, from 3:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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.

150th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Commemoration of First Communion and Baptism

Remember Daniel L. Kelly? If you do, you have a very long memory. Daniel was the first person to be baptized in our fellowship. That took place on April 29th, 1860. That same Sunday the church, for the first time, celebrated communion.

In commemoration of these milestones our Worship Service on May 2nd will center on the importance of baptism and communion.

Those wishing to be baptized for the first time, or desiring to rededicate themselves to God through baptism, are invited to do so. Please call the church office for details.

Communion that day will be open to everyone, as is our tradition. You are urged to invite family and friends to share with you in this celebration.

SR. P.F. YOUTH GROUP SPAGHETTI DINNER FUND RAISER

Senior High Youth invites you to a spaghetti luncheon directly after services on Sunday, May 23rd, downstairs in Wilcox Hall. Spaghetti, freshly baked bread, tossed salad, and dessert, along with beverages will be served. Children 5 and under eat free! The price for children 12 and under is \$5.00 and teens and adults \$8.00. Tickets may be purchased at the door or in advance. Call Melanie Lounds at 227-0932 for tickets or if you have any questions. Please join us for fellowship, food, and fun. All proceeds go to the Alaska Adventure and Appalachia Service Project.

THIRD ANNUAL CHURCH CAMPING TRIP

Our third annual Church Camping Trip will be June 11-13th, at River Ridge Campground in Breckenridge, MI. If you haven't camped with us before, but want to, give me a call. Some of us go up Thursday afternoon. The campground has three cabins if you don't have a tent or trailer. Last year we had thirty-one campers so why not come and join the fun. Call Linda Fitch for more information at 224-3565.



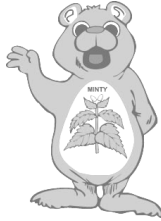
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
ST. JOHNS, MI



150TH ANNIVERSARY
1860-2010

**2010 MINT FESTIVAL
FOOD BOOTH**

First Congregational Church is pleased to announce that Barb Sherman has volunteered to direct the Mint Festival Food Booth for this year. The Mint Festival is being held August 13th, 14th and 15th. You will be hearing from Barb over the next few months as she prepares for this big event. If you are interested in being on her organizational team give her a call at 1-517-242-1234.



YOUR PLEDGE: MAKING IT EASY

Are you tired of forgetting to write that check for the offering on Sunday morning? We have Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization Forms available in the church office. This system makes it very easy for you to keep up with your pledge to the church. You can determine when you want to give and it will automatically be taken care of. Stop in and pick up a form at your convenience.

**INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE
BOARD OF MINISTRY?**

The Nominating Ministry Team, under the leadership of Tom Flynn and Cali Sackrider, is starting to seek members of our congregation who are interested in holding a position on the Board of Ministry. This is a three year commitment and involves preparing our church for today's, and tomorrow's needs. Contact Tom at 224-9372, Cali at 224-9228 or talk to any Board member, (listed on page 11), if you have any questions.

YOUR PLEDGE TO THE CHURCH:

- Helps support the "Children in Worship" and "Follow Me" programs.
- Presents the "Award Bible" to third graders and Sunday School Pins to deserving children at the end of each school year.
- Pays for the candles we use and keeps the Literature Racks supplied.
- Your pledge also supports the Senior Center in St. Johns, Meals on Wheels, the Clinton Health Foundation and Hospice.

ANNUAL MEETING

The 149th Meeting of the First Congregational Church is going to be held on Sunday, May 16, 2010. 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.

2010 FLOWER SCHEDULE

The 2010 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.

FOURTH SUNDAY SUPPER

We would like to inform you that the "Fourth Sunday Supper" is now suspended until the fourth Sunday in September. The Fourth Sunday in May will be a Spaghetti Dinner Fund Raiser for the Senior High Youth Group.



We move to our summer schedule on Sunday, June 6th, with the church service beginning at 10:00 a.m.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS CLASS

Jim Armantrout and Susan Kilmer will be leading a Spiritual Gifts class beginning on Tuesday, May 4th, and continuing on the 11th, 18th, and 25th. The class will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. For more information contact Jim at 224-8767.

**GREETERS &
FELLOWSHIP HOUR**

The sign up schedules for Greeters and Fellowship Hour Hosts are posted in the Wilcox Hall corridor. Please be aware that **you do not need to spend money on cookies or snacks.** The coffee and necessary condiments are always available in the kitchen. If you have any questions, or can not make it downstairs to sign up, please call the church office at 224-2636.

**MEET PATTI, MACKENZIE
AND SKYLAR!**



Patti Mayes was raised in St. Johns, lived for a while in Missouri, then moved back to St. Johns. Patti and her two daughters love bring outdoors, camping, biking and going to the lake. Both Mackenzie and Skylar are involved with playing soccer. Patti works at Bee's Sport as a service writer. Patti, Mackenzie and Skylar like coming to First Congregational because of the warm feeling of family they have encountered here. They also love the children programs! Patti is a leader in the "Follow Me" program and also helps out in the church nursery. We are delighted that the Mayes family is here with us!



CLASSES/SMALL GROUP

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. This class is currently discussing the Book of John.

THE SMALL “Upper Room Daily Devotional” GROUP STUDY being held on Wednesday evenings has finished meeting for the summer months. They will resume meeting in the Fall. Call Jerry Harte at 224-6655 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 a.m. with time for prayer until 8:00 a.m. They are now studying “Angels and Demons”. Come and join them!

The church office will be closed on Monday, May 31st., due to Memorial Day.



LINDA SCOTT DIVISION

Linda Scott Division, a Ministry Team that includes ladies of all ages, meets once a month. The last meeting for the summer months is scheduled for May 11th. Please RSVP to Joann Martis at 224-4165 for the time and place of the meeting.

COME AND JOIN US!

The last meeting of Doublets, Etc. is scheduled for Sunday, May 2nd, at 6:00 p.m. A variety of board games will be available for people to play and pizza will be served. This couples and singles group is open to all. The group will be taking the summer months off and will resume meeting in October. For more information please contact Shirleyan Lake at 224-1870.

CHECK OUT THE BOOKS!

The church has a library that is filled with many books, musical tapes, video tapes, and the Bible on disc. For children we have several video series for them to watch and great books for them to take home and read.

Stop in a visit our Library!

LITERATURE RACKS

“High Calling” is the courageous life story and faith of space shuttle Columbia Commander Rick Husband. This book, written by his wife Evelyn Husband, leads you on Rick’s journey, from a childhood dream, through the heart of the American space program, and into the vastness of space itself. This book and many more are available for you to take free of charge.

150th ANNIVERSARY NEWS

Sunday, May 2nd, the 11:00 a.m. worship service will include communion and baptism. Both of these are being held in observance of the first communion and baptism held after our church was organized in April, 1860, one hundred and fifty years ago. It will be a time to reflect on the struggles and hardships the founders of our church endured to start a new church in a new country that offered freedom of religion. This communion and baptism is open to all, member of FCC or not. The baptism is for adults and children. If you as an adult have never been baptized, or were baptized as an infant and want to renew the promises made for you or if you have a child that has not yet been baptized, come and be part of this memorable time. Call the church office (989) 224-2636 to let Matt know you will be participating in this baptism.

May 2nd is also the first time the 150th anniversary commemorative crosses will be available for purchase. These crosses were constructed by Gary Carpenter from the glass from the windows that had been in the basement of our current church structure. When the original basement were replaced with energy efficient ones in 2005, those old windows were salvaged and had been stored until this year. The 150th Anniversary Ministry Team felt it appropriate to use that glass as a keepsake. These crosses have a hook for use in hanging in a window. Each cross cost \$10.00. Even though May 2nd is the first time they are available, they can be purchased for the rest of this year.

The 150th Anniversary Ministry Team is requesting an individual, or group, to take on the responsibility for our church’s float for the mint Festival Parade on Saturday, August 14th. A theme needs to be decided on; decoration for the float planned and type of transportation arranged. This is a one-time, short-term project, so if you have an interest in doing this, please call Ruth Nihart at (989) 224-5571.

Be sure to take time to view the items in the display case located in the hallway of Carson Center. This case has been featuring different facets of our church history since January, 2010 and will continue to do so until the end of this year. The May display focuses on items of our church structure. Many members of our congregation have been very generous in sharing ideas, pictures and items related to FCCSJ’S history. We appreciate this very much.

Ruth Nihart, 150th Anniversary Ministry Team

Children and Youth News

MAY CHILDREN AND YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Jacob Pearsall
- 3 Christine Shoup
- 7 Eliana Lounds
- 7 Max Leasher
- 8 Avery Scranton
- 11 Noelle Cramer
- 12 Zachary Zuker
- 14 Abigail DeRosia
- 17 Cacey Hyde
- 22 Hailey Elms
- 25 Gretchen Olson



2010 ASP TEAM NEWS

The 2010 ASP Team is gearing up to go to work in Inez, Kentucky. Team members are John Fitch, Jamie Cheeney, Trisha Cheeney, Katie Root, Brad Tooker and Zach Zuker. They are generously funded by our church Mission Fund. Donations are also greatly appreciated. They also pay a portion personally and do fund raising to help cover their expenses. This year's fundraiser was a RADA cutlery sale. We wrapped up our sale in April and would like to thank everyone who supported this endeavor. If you missed out and would still like to take a look at a catalog, see any of the team members and we will place a late order. The ASP Team would like to thank all of those who support us in every way including your prayers for a safe and beneficial trip; not only for us but for those we serve.

AWARDS DAY

Reminder that May 16th is the last Sunday for Sunday School and Youth Group classes until September 19th. Awards and third grade Bibles will be presented during the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service. We look forward to seeing you at this special church service.

GRADUATION 2010

If you have someone graduating from high school or college, please send a wallet size picture and a brief article to church by May 24th. We would like to feature all 2010 graduates in the June "Congregational Connection". If you have any questions please contact the church office at 224-2636.

SUMMER CAMP

The dates and site of the summer camp for this coming summer have been set. It will be held Sunday, August 1st, to Friday evening, August 6th. It will be held at the YMCA Camp Copneconic in Fenton, MI, Genesee County. 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 with a deadline for early registration being May 1st. They have limited space, so they are encouraging the campers to register as soon as they are able. Please let the office know if you are applying to attend camp.

MAY SIGN UP SCHEDULES

<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Nursery Care</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour</u>
2 Suzanne LeVeck	2 Stacie Stevens	2 *	2 150th Anniversary Team
9 DeRosia Family	9 Stacie Stevens	9 *	9 *
16 Otto & Fritz Thurston	16 Shanna Bond	16 *	16 Board of Ministry
23 Olson Family	23 Stacie Stevens	23 Fritz Thurston & Doris Swatman	23 Dinner/Fund Raiser
30 *	30 Shanna Bond	30 *	30 *

***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

Weddings:

Courtney Shaffer and Zack Sickles, April 24, 2010

4th Sunday Supper Host/Hostess

The 4th Sunday Supper will resume on September 26th.

THE MAY NEWSLETTER DEDICATION



The Congregational Connection for this month is in celebration of the third birthday of

Abigail DeRosia

It is given with love by her grandparents
Gary and Sue Larsen