

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

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This Month's Highlights:
Cover, Community Thanksgiving Dinner
Pg. 2 Proposed 2011 Budget
Pg. 3 Ministers Article
Pg. 6 Children and Youth News
Pg. 7 November Schedules, Church Records and Dedication
Pg. 9 Member Profile



NOVEMBER 2010

The Congregational Connection...

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

Please plan to join with others in our community
for a

Community Thanksgiving Dinner

This dinner is offered, free of charge, to members of our community who anticipate being alone on Thanksgiving, who are unable to prepare a meal or are unable to travel to spend the day with relatives. We also invite those who have family members in the military.

Thursday, November 25, 2010

2 seatings will be offered

11:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.



First Congregational Church

100 Maple Street

St. Johns, Michigan

Please call (989) 224-2636 to register
Registration Deadline: November 12, 2010

Sponsored by:

First Congregational Church

First United Methodist Church

St. Johns Kiwanis Club

St. Joseph Catholic Church

With support from: Sparrow Clinton Hospital & Medical Staff, St. Johns High School Good Wins Club, St. Johns High School National Honor Society, Students & Staff of the Wilson Center and Mt. Hope Church of St. Johns.

Interested in volunteering? Contact Molly Minnick at mminnick@gccmha.org

**First Congregational Church
2011 Proposed Budget**

	Approved 2010 Budget	Proposed 2011 Budget	\$ Change	% Change
Current Year Pledges	179,006	179,006	-	0%
Other Collections	22,300	18,600	(3,700)	-17%
Church Use Fees	5,140	5,640	500	10%
Other Income	<u>2,150</u>	<u>1,680</u>	<u>(470)</u>	<u>-22%</u>
Total Church Receipts	<u>208,596</u>	<u>204,926</u>	<u>(3,670)</u>	<u>-2%</u>
Senior Minister Salary & Housing	53,622	54,456	834	2%
Health/Disability Insurance	17,000	17,000	-	0%
Pastoral Expenses	1,500	1,500	-	0%
Music	22,830	23,135	305	1%
Christian Education	11,100	10,100	(1,000)	-9%
Missions	17,901	17,901	-	0%
Administrator Wages	21,747	22,400	653	3%
General & Administrative	32,658	34,299	1,641	5%
Building & Grounds	<u>37,433</u>	<u>37,370</u>	<u>(63)</u>	<u>0%</u>
Total Church Expenditures	<u>215,791</u>	<u>218,161</u>	<u>2,370</u>	<u>1%</u>
Excess Receipts over or Under(-) Expenditures	<u>(7195)</u>	<u>(13,235)</u>	<u>(\$6,040)</u>	

The call for our annual budget meeting will be put out on Sunday, November 7, 14th, and 21st. The meeting will be held after the worship service on the 21st., in the sanctuary.

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.

COAT DRIVE UPDATE

Thanks to all those who supported the Coat Drive with donations as well as your prayers. We collected nearly 100 coats for men, women and children along with mittens, gloves, hats and scarves. The winter clothing has been donated to Russ McCoy who is having a community coat giveaway at the Wilson Center for those in need.

Missions Ministry Team

DONATIONS TO THE FOOD BANK

Next "Throw Down Sunday" is on November 21st. Bring your donation of any canned or boxed food or cash to be donated to Mt. Hope Food Bank here in St. Johns. Need more information? Contact John Fitch at 224-3565.

SPRING MISSION TRIP

EVERYONE CAN GET INVOLVED WITH ONE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION TRIP PROJECTS! This ministry team is conducting several fund-raising efforts for the trip to Puerto Vallarta next spring. This particular project is to bring in your returnable bottles & cans to church to donate them to this great cause. A red box is on the landing for your convince.

CARES AND CONCERNS

If you know of anyone who is in need of a get well card please let this Ministry Team know by calling Bonnie Wickerham at 227-5635.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Heartland Hospice and Hazel Findlay Retirement Community are offering an educational grief support group for anyone in the community who has experienced the death of a loved one. "Seasons of Grief" is an ongoing group offered to provide information as well as professional and peer support to those who are making the journey through grief.

WHEN: The 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month.

WHERE: Clinton Commons, 1105 South Scott Road, St. Johns.

TIME: 1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Please RSVP to Johanna Workman, MAFS at 517-244-0404 or 888-670-7448.

ST. JOHNS MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION



The service this year will be held at Eureka Christian Church, 2916 Maple Rapids Road, Eureka, MI. Ministers and priests from many of the local churches will be taking part in this special event. Come and join the congregation for this service at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 23, 2010. For more information call 989-224-7709.

LIFE AS GOD'S PEOPLE: You're Influential Around Here!

Influential? I am? I'm not in a leadership role in the church. How am I influential?

You are influential because you influence other people. You can't help it. Everyone influences other people. You may be a good influence. You may be a bad influence. But you are influential.

Think about the simple act of coming to church. When you come to church on Sunday, your mere presence influences others; you are another faithful Christian attending church, and therefore, an encouragement to them to continue to attend. When you offer a greeting and smile, you are influencing them. You are helping them to feel welcome and comfortable in the worship service. You are saying to them, "I'm glad you are here." When you sing, pray, listen to the sermon, and offer your joys and concerns you are modeling for them how to conduct oneself in worship. People even decide whether or not to stay for coffee hour partly through your influence.

The question isn't; "Do I have influence?" The question is; "What kind of influence am I?"

Rev. Matthew Olson

2011 NEWSLETTERS!

It's time to reserve your special month of the "CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTION" for the 2011 church year. The cost is \$50.00 and is used to help cover the cost of postage. We have ten months available for your special anniversary, birthday, graduation, or "just because". The months of January, May and August are already taken.

Please contact the church office at 224-2636 to reserve your month.

DECK THE HALLS!

If you, your family, or your Ministry Team, are interested in **DECORATING THE SANCTUARY** for the Advent Season please contact the church office at 224-2636. We would like the church decorated by the first Sunday of Advent, November 28th. We have all the trees, lights and decorations you will need.

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

*The 150th Anniversary Ministry Team thanks all who had a part in the dinner/theater event of Sunday, October 10, 2010. The meal was superb, topping even one you might be served in a famous restaurant. Thank you, to John and Amy Cheeney and Jerry and Stacie Stevens for the time you spent preparing the food. Thank you to the youth and their parents for the lovely set-up of the dining room, serving the meal and the clean-up afterwards. The theater portion of the evening has gotten rave reviews for its content and interesting historical facts. Thank you, Jim Gunther, Rachael Short and Guven Witteveen for all your time and thought put into the performance. Thank you to **ALL** the cast for your talents offered to the audience. Thank you to Gary Larsen for setting up and monitoring the sound system. Great job. Thank you to the clean up crew for cleaning up the dining room the following day. Thank you to everyone who is not specifically mentioned here, but had a part in the success of the affair.*

Most of all, we thank God that He has granted us the privilege of covenanting with one another in fellowship to worship Him for these 150 years.

The 150th Anniversary Ministry Team

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
ST. JOHNS, MI



1860-2010

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS



This Missions Ministry Team will be selling these baskets on Sunday, November 14th, at the Fellowship Hour. This is another fund raiser to support the team going to Mexico this coming spring.

Rwanda Basket Company is a program that is working to change the lives of impoverished weavers in Rwanda.

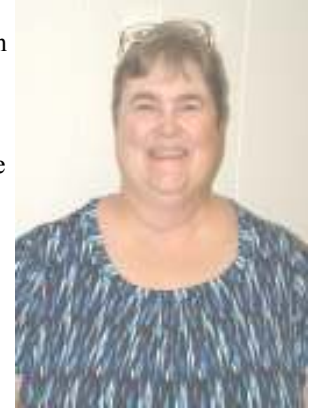
The vision of the Rwanda Basket Company is to empower the impoverished women of Rwanda to rise above their subsistence level existence by providing them with the training, tools and support needed to sell their baskets in the West. The Rwanda Basket Company accomplished this in several ways:

- Providing "Master Weavers" to work with these impoverished women to help them improve and expand their weaving skills.
- Paying the weavers a premium wage directly for each of their baskets.
- Supplying high quality sisal, dye and other materials needed to ensure a quality product.
- Making available to the weavers such life skills training as healing and reconciliation workshops, trauma counseling, and basic medical assistance.
- Opening up multiple markets in the West for the weavers' baskets, thereby ensuring them a much better wage for their products than they could ever hope to receive in Rwanda.

Changing Lives One Basket at a Time

MEET LINDA WEINBERGER

Linda has lived all over the mid Michigan area. She has two children. Jesika who is married to Kevin Sprague and they have two children, Caleb age 8 and Joshua who is 4. Jesika works at Bay City Medical Center in the Cardiac Rehab Center. Kevin works and is going to school to be an elementary school teacher.



Linda's son Ethan recently relocated to Gaylord from Orlando, FL, to work with Gordon Food Service. He was the Regional Culinary Specialist and traveled the eastern half of the United States to keep an eye on all things "Smokey Bones".

Linda enjoys counted cross stitch, knitting, music (making, much more than listening), puzzles, games (she still uses a deck of paper cards to play solitaire), gathering wisdom (wise sayings and one-liners), and most of all, treasuring friends and family.

Linda works in the Business Office at Thomas M. Cooley Law School. She keeps track of the money coming in and out and she gets to harass law school students as a bonus.

Linda is a certified massage therapist and hopefully will be able to expand her practice soon. Linda came to F.C.C. as a newly divorced woman 17 years ago and needed a new church home. She tried several churches in the area. Muriel Gilson ALWAYS greeted her and welcomed her when she came to FCC. She found out about the handbells and she was hooked.

The next time you see Linda tell her how glad we are to have her with us!



STEPHEN MINISTRY

Recruitment has begun for training of the next class of Stephen Ministers here at FCCSJ. The Stephen Ministry program was started in 1975 by Kenneth Haugk, PhD. Dr. Haugk is an ordained Lutheran minister, as well as a clinical psychologist. He found over and over in his clinical practice that his patients needed someone to listen to them and demonstrate that they were cared for. This is the basis for the development of this ministry. Since 1975 there have been thousands trained to be Stephen Ministers. This training was first offered here at FCCSJ in 1990. In these twenty years our church has sent six people to be trained as Stephen Leaders, who in turn have come back and trained twenty-one lay people to be a Stephen Minister. This program asks for a two year commitment to be a Stephen Minister. Initially trainees attend weekly classes learning the skills of a Stephen Minister. After these fifty hours, they are commissioned and are ready to be assigned to a care receiver. While they are a care giver, bi-weekly supervision continuing education classes are attended. If you have been feeling the Holy Spirit stirring within you to commit to a purpose for your life, the Stephen Ministry may be for you. Inquire of Jerry Harte, Cali Sackrider or Rachael Short, our most recent trainees, their thoughts on the training. They will be happy to share their experience with you. Ask Ruth Nihart, Stephen Leader, for an application so that you might be considered for this next class to start in November. Her telephone number is 989-224-4471.

Submitted by Stephen Ministry

WORD OF THE WEEK

Are you interested in receiving an introduction to the sermon text the week prior to it being delivered to the congregation? You can sign up by calling the church office. We would e-mail, or mail, the "Word of the Week" to you each week. Please call 224-2636.

READING MATERIAL

The racks at the back of the sanctuary are filled with materials on a variety of subjects. They range from children's books to books on dealing with grief. They are for you to enjoy then pass on to others who would benefit from the literature.

DECEMBER MUSICAL

"Winter's Grace"
A CANTATA FOR CHRISTMAS
By Joseph M. Martin

The Chancel Choir, under the direction of Dr. Charles Graham, is inviting people to come and join the choir for this holiday event!

The Chancel Choir welcomes people who enjoy singing. Reading music is not a necessary requirement.

The choir meets on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. Contact Dr. Graham for more information at 224-8596 or see him after church on Sunday.



NOVEMBER EVENTS!

4th SUNDAY SUPPER

The next supper will be held, Sunday, November 28th, immediately after church in Wilcox Hall. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Coffee and milk will be provided. This "Supper" is held on the fourth Sunday of each month during the church year. The sign up sheet for hosting the Supper is on the board in the Wilcox Hall corridor. Hosting consists of making coffee, providing the milk and cleaning up after the meal.

ALL LADIES ARE INVITED!

All ladies are invited to join the Linda Scott Division. This women's fellowship meets on the second Tuesday of each month. The next meeting is Tuesday, November 9th, 12:30 p.m. at The Mint. Please RSVP to Joann Martis at 224-4165.

ELECTION DAY

First Congregational Church of Laingsburg, 401 East Grand River Avenue, Laingsburg, telephone 517-651-6741, **ANNUAL ELECTION DAY TURKEY DINNER**, November 2nd, 5:00 p.m. - ? Ages 11-Up \$8.00, Ages 5 -11 \$4.00, Under age 5 free. A **SMALL GROUP** is being held on

UPPER ROOM

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.

COME AND JOIN OUR

The kick-off meeting for the **WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY** group will take place on Tuesday, November 2, at 6:00 p.m. in the Church Parlor. This will be an organizational meeting to determine the length and frequency of the meetings as well as the content of the Bible Study. If you have any questions or would like to provide input but cannot attend this initial meeting, please contact Kathy Farnum at 517-669-5864 or farnumk@comcast.net. **DOUBLETS ETC.**, a singles and couples social group, will be meeting, Sunday, No-

CANDY MAKING!

vember 7th, at 5:00 p.m. here at church in Wilcox Hall. This will be a soup supper and they will be making Christmas candy as a fund raiser for the group. Come and join the fun!



CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS

REMEMBER TO "FALL BACK" ON SATURDAY NIGHT, NOVEMBER 6TH.

Children and Youth News

NOVEMBER CHILDREN AND YOUTH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Damion Gehres
- 1 Robert Barron
- 2 Natalie Palmer
- 6 Spencer Howell
- 7 Grace Palmer
- 14 Abigail Schuelke
- 23 Garrett Smith



COME AND JOIN US AT ANY TIME!

Sunday School, Youth Groups and Adult Bible Study
10:00-10:45 a.m.

Leaders for Age 4—Preschool:
Randy & Cynthia Howell

Leaders for Kindergarten & First Grade:
Tom & Ellen Doppke

Leaders for Second & Third Grade:
David & Michele Elms

Leaders for Fourth & Fifth Grades:
Rod Fuller

Junior High Youth Group Advisors:
Barbara Sherman & Jennifer Beagle

Senior High Youth Group Advisors:
Melanie Lounds, Guven Witteveen & Molly Minnick

Adult Bible Study: Rev. Matthew Olson

KID'S PRACTICE

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.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT REHEARSALS

Rehearsals for the 2010 Christmas Pageant will begin on Sunday, November 7th, from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. For more information see Rachael Short after church on Sunday.

HANDS OF HARMONY FOR KIDS

Susan Kilmer will be working with the 4th and 5th graders who are interested in playing a few Christmas songs with the chimes. Practice will begin on Sunday, November 7th at 9:30 a.m. before Sunday school. Practices will be held on the 7th, 14th, and the 28th (no practice on the 21st). The group will perform at Briggs Library for the holiday festival on evenings of Thursday, December 2nd, and Friday, December 3rd. The group will also perform during the Christmas Pageant service. Contact Susan Kilmer if you have any questions at 224-2950.

NOVEMBER SIGN UP SCHEDULES

<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Nursery Care</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour</u>
7 Wilbur & Leola Thurston	7 Stacie Stevens	7 150th Ministry Team	7 150th Ministry Team
14 Paul & Joann Martis	14 Stacie Stevens	14 Ushers	14 Jane Jolly
21 *	21 Stacie Stevens	21 Stephen Ministry	21 Stephen Ministry
28 *	28 Stacie Stevens	28 Doris Swatman & Fritz Thurston	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 dedication of our monthly newsletter.

CHURCH RECORDS

Weddings:

Shanna Bond & Andrew Hiebert, October 10, 2010
 Michaela Bond & Paul Lucas IV, October 23, 2010



4th Sunday Supper Host/Hostess

November 28th
 *
 December 26th
 *

THE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER DEDICATION



The Congregational Connection this month is dedicated to

All Veterans

Given by Neil Barnhart