

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

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This Month's Highlights:

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



OCTOBER 2012

The Congregational Connection...

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



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

BRING A FRIEND TO OUR
ANNUAL HAY RIDE

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7th

FIRST RIDE LEAVES PROMPTLY
AT 5:00 P.M.

LIVINGSTON FARM
2204 LIVINGSTON ROAD

**COME AND
ENJOY THE FIRE, FOOD
AND FELLOWSHIP**

Rain Cancels

Notes from the Music Ministry Team

Music with a Mission: A Feast of Hymns
Concert to Benefit CROP Walk

Sunday, October 14
 4:00 pm, FCC Sanctuary
 Musical Guests: Bill & Pat Trommeter, Tom and Beth Webb,
 Flaming Arrows, & The Shepardsville Team



On October 17, 1969, a thousand people in Bismarck, ND, walked in what may have been the first-ever CROP Hunger Walk, raising \$25,000 to fight hunger. This year CROP Hunger Walks will share almost \$4 million with food banks, pantries, community gardens, and other local efforts across the U.S. This support is possible because each local CROP Hunger Walk can choose to return up to 25 percent of the funds it raises to hunger-fighting programs in its own community.

CROP Hunger Walks are ecumenical, interfaith, multi-cultural events sponsored by Church World Service and organized by CWS/CROP regional offices across the U.S. Susan Kilmer has organized the St. Johns CROP Hunger Walk for the past 2 years, and FCC members have donated their money and burned calories to provide local and global care through this ministry. On Sunday, October 14, local musicians will share a feast of hymns - old favorites and original songs of faith (and maybe a song or two about food).

Bill and Pat Trommeter (Lyons) performed at folk festivals professionally through the Michigan Touring Arts Agency for about 10 years while also teaching. Bill, who taught electronics at the Heartlands Institute of Technology in Ionia, plays electric bass and guitar. Pat, a 4th-grade science teacher at Carson City Crystal School, plays guitar and banjo. At Lyons-Muir Church, Pat serves as Music Director and Bill leads the Handbell Choir; both lead worship music with the Praise Band. They are always eager to sing with friends Tom and Beth Webb (St. Johns). Singers, teachers, actors, committed Christians, and community supporters, Tom & Beth are always involved in creative ways to serve. Whether supporting a local hospital, forming a community theater group (Homegrown Productions), simultaneously acting, directing, and producing musical shows to preserve an historic performance space and to nurture the arts, or in the FCC Choir loft, follow the music and you will find Tom and Beth.

Henry and Ida Bontrager and family (Ovid) have dedicated the last 15 years of their lives to mission work. Together they established a family business manufacturing storage sheds. From November to March, they close the business and travel to serve. Visit their website (<http://www.godslittlechildren.org>) to read about their international ministry to orphans, widows, and others in Guatemala, Haiti, and India. Each summer, the Bontragers host two concerts, inviting local musicians to share their music as a fundraiser for missions. The Bontrager youth also sing with a local group called the Shepardsville Team, comprised of young people who live in close proximity and share a passion for music and for serving the Lord. Mostly self-taught on a variety of instruments, the group first made music informally, then began to sing at revival meetings, weddings, funerals, and other event. Learn more about the Shepardsville Team (and Like them) on Facebook.

Please join us for an inspirational afternoon of praise, fellowship, and global relief efforts on **Sunday, October 14 at 4PM!** Blessings!

The Music Ministry Team: Susan Kilmer (Chair); Trisha Cheeney; Chuck Graham; Jan Myers; Rachael Short; Guven Witteveen; Teresa Zuker.

COMMUNITY NEWS

BIKE RIDE FOR THE RAILWAY

Sat., October 6th, 9:00 a.m.
 20-40-60 mile trips.

Start and end at the depot in St. Johns, 107 East Railroad Street
 Entry fee: \$20.00.

Good food at the end of the ride.
 Registration day of the ride.

Advance registration forms available at the Art Gallery, 215 North Clinton, St. Johns.



This is a reminder that the congregation is invited to **THE WHEEL INN**, St. Johns on Saturdays and Sundays. Be sure to bring along a copy of our current weekly bulletin. The Wheel will collect those bulletins, attach your bill to it and every quarter they will total those numbers (pre-tax) and make a 5% donation back to our church.

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

Sr. Minister: Rev. Matthew Olson
Moderator: Molly Minnick
Vice Moderator: Lois Graham
Treasurer: Ruth Nihart
Board of Ministry Members:
 David Elms, Tom French, Rod Fuller, Bill Kushmaul, Gary Larsen, Eugene Livingston, Melanie Lounds, Dr. Keith Mino, Jr., Charlotte Shoup

CHURCH STAFF

Church Administrator: Susan Larsen
Financial Secretary: Paul Martis
Chancel Choir Director: Dr. Charles Graham
Hands of Harmony Director: Susan Kilmer
Director of Music Ministry: Rachael Short

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

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 St. Johns, MI 48879
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E-Mail: fccsj@4wbi.net
Web Site: www.fccsj.com
Facebook:
firstcongregationalchurchofst.johns
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.

SPECIAL GIFTS!

Special Thanks to Audrey Duzek for all of the beautiful floral arrangements she makes for our sanctuary. We really appreciate this special talent of hers! Thank you Audrey.



**MINT FESTIVAL
2012 REPORT**

Once again the First Congregational Food Booth was successful. With the donations of cash we were able to minimize our left over supplies and have less waste. Tom did an excellent job finding the best prices on everything we needed. Even though we are not able to control the weather and we loss sales from Friday night we were still successful. After all expenses and the left over food sold our total profit for 2012 is \$990.08.

Tom Doppke and I want to thank everyone who donated, volunteered or prayed for us during this event. We cannot do this without any of you and are looking forward to next year. If you have suggestions for improvements please let me know. Tom and I are always looking for ways to improve our food booth. Thank you for your support.

Submitted by Barb Sherman and Tom Doppke



**LINDA SCOTT
WOMENS GROUP**

Ladies, you are invited to attend the monthly meeting of "Linda Scott" on Tuesday, October 16th. You will meet at 12:30 p.m. at The Wheel Inn. Please rsvp to Joann Martis at 224-4165.



EXTREME COUPONING

Jeramie Goetschy, who attends our church, is interested in collecting coupons for the Basic Needs Center. If everyone would bring in their unwanted coupons he could help the center stock their shelves. "If we work together we can help people in St. Johns with out recognition from the people but through God." You can drop your coupons off in the front office. For more information contact Jeramie at 989-640-0010.



Don't forget to bring your food items and gently used, clean clothing for the **THIRD SUNDAY THROW DOWN!** All donations go to the "Basic Needs Center" here in St. Johns. They need our support! Our next collection is Sunday, **OCTOBER 21st.** Contact John Fitch at 224-3565, or any Missions Team member for more information.



Needed: A Licensed Ministry Advisory Team Ministry Team

Molly Minnick, Keith Mino, and Denise Palmer have been taking classes as part of the Lay Ministry Training Program. Keith and Denise are close to completing the recommended training to become a Licensed Minister.

Licensed Ministers are laypeople who are authorized by the licensing congregation to represent them in ministry. This usually includes preaching and teaching in that congregation, but might also involve pulpit supply and other ministry outside the local church. The license is granted for a specified period after which it may be renewed. Licensed Ministers are supervised by the Senior Minister of the licensing church.

In congregationalism the granting of ministerial status, including that of Licensed Minister, resides with the local congregation. Typically this involves members of the church, in our case, a ministry team, meeting to review the proceedings that have lead up to the request for granting ministerial status, and then making a recommendation to the congregation as a whole. The congregation then votes to grant or deny status.

The Ministry Team from the congregation would likely proceed as follows:

1. Review the candidate's sense of call to ministry; evidently substantial, thoughtfully arrived at, deeply held.
2. Consider the candidate's gifts for ministry.
3. Make a thorough inquiry as to the candidate's moral, intellectual, and spiritual fitness to be a Licensed Minister. This may include educational, social, and employment history.
4. Review of the candidate's course of study in preparation for serving as a Licensed Minister.
5. Make a recommendation to the congregation.

We are now at the point at which we need to form the Advisory Ministry Team. Won't you consider helping Keith, Denise, and the entire congregation by becoming involved? A minimum of five team members are needed. Please see Matt Olson for details.

Submitted by Rev. Matthew Olson

“Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.” - Psalm 37: 4-6 NIV

The building we pray in, congregate in, and fellowship in is just that... a building. The money in the building endowment can only be used on the building's upkeep and can be used nowhere else. It is quite an experience to hear about where "our money goes" when frustrations set in. Of course electricity is not part of the upkeep on our building. That money comes from pledges, donations, tithing, gifts of love. Still, the Permanently Restricted Building Endowment boasts a large chunk of money in waiting. We as Congregationalists must decide which of our various projects in the building gets first priority. But that debate is not what amazes me. What amazes me is that the building itself is protected, at least for a long, long, long while. It makes me wonder this: is our spiritual commitment protected?

When all else fails, are we working our spiritual faith and giving our energy, our all, despite market trends and economic hills and valleys? What is the justice of our cause as Christians? If I give to a cause that does not fulfill God's cause, all my good intentions may be wasted. Of course, love motivates me to give. Helping my fellow man motivates me to give. If I am really honest, this can be analyzed further.

Take, for example, the many people on street corners I see begging for money. One summer evening, Grace and I were leaving Wal-Mart and two musicians were sitting in the grass strumming a ukulele and a guitar. Their sign read something to the effect of "Needing food...down on our luck." As Grace and I passed by, I had a change of heart. I turned around at Pauli Ford and told Grace to pay attention. Now just about everyone knows I have a soft spot in my heart for music, somewhat analogous to warm butter in a butter dish on an August day. I LOVE MUSIC. Maybe that is what motivated me to give them \$10. Maybe teaching to my daughter how to give and not expect anything in return motivated me. Maybe love for fellow mankind motivated me. Maybe God motivated me. As we gave them the money, they played us a very interesting song that seemed to speak about free love and alcohol. I started to think about Grace and the lyrics she was hearing. Did I fulfill God's cause? I wondered...

Just last week I had some Children's Place Cash to use for winter clothing for my growing trees (Grace and Quintin). Like Kohl's cash if you don't use the "monopoly" money, it expires. A humble man stood at the exit ramp on Lake Lansing Road. I was in the right turn lane, without any cash and on a time limit, and he was near the curb at the far left. I really considered going to the bank, withdrawing money, and walking it over to him, but it was an inconvenience, if I really analyzed the situation accurately. We had thirty minutes to get in the store and out, before we had to leave to pick up Eliana at daycare and speed off to soccer. I looked for him when we left, but he was gone.

Cont. on page 5

OCTOBER SIGN UP SCHEDULES

<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Nursery Care</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour</u>	<u>4th Sunday Supper Host/Hostess</u>
7 Olson Family	7 Hannah VanValkenburg	7 *	
14 Flynn Family	14 Stacie Stevens	14 Flynn Family	Oct. 28 *
21 *	21 Hannah VanValkenburg	21 Kate Livingston	Nov. 25 *
28 *	28 *	28 Fourth Sunday Supper	Dec. 23 *
			Jan. 27*

***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

Friend Death:

Milly Neuder, August 16, 2012, mother of Lou Neuder



Weddings:

Ralph Webster & Alisha Stephens, September 15, 2012
Kevin Leech & Magen Cole, September 22, 2012



THE OCTOBER DEDICATION

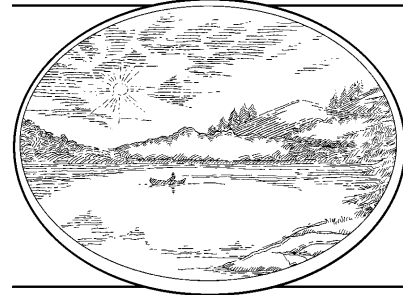
IN LOVING

The Congregational Connection for this month

is dedicated

in loving memory of

Paul Bullard



MEMORY

*Given by Alice Bullard, Barbara Bullard,
Joe and Marilyn Armbrustmacher*

Children and Youth News

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 8 Peter Olson
- 15 Mackenzie Mayes
- 17 Andrew Rademacher
- 24 Quintin Lounds
- 25 Andrew Beagle



JESUS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Get your kids into God’s Word! In our Sunday School program children learn to recognize that the Bible is God’s Word and that God loves and cares for us. Each child will also be actively engaged in each Bible story.

Come and join our Sunday school program at any time. Classes meets at 10:00 a.m. for age 4 through 5th grade. Junior and Senior High Youth groups also meet at 10:00 a.m.



~ Jr. High P.F. ~

The Jr. High P.F. is in full swing and all middle school students are encouraged to join the fun! We meet at **10:00 every Sunday morning** in the room downstairs, across from the nursery. Many awesome things are in the works including service projects, Bible study, lock-ins, road trips and more! Please contact Barb Sherman (292-4029, barbsherman265@gmail.com) or Jennifer Beagle (224-0667, beagle.jennifer@gmail.com) for more information.

MISSION PROJECT FOR ALL AGES!

The Missions Team would once again like to collect coats, mittens, scarfs and winter hats for those in need within our local community. We will still be collecting on Sunday, October 7th and the final day is October 14th. Please put your donation on the coat rack located in the Parlor just behind the sanctuary. Thanks for your continued support.



Submitted by the Missions Ministry Team

I didn’t think much about what he would use the money for; I have been known to give even slightly shoddy characters – who seem slightly inebriated – the money in my pocket. I try very hard not to judge people. But I judge myself. What motivated me to enjoy my life and ignore another’s need? Turning away for a person in need is not God’s love. The Good Samaritan, the crumbs to a dog, the woman at the well... all these Bible stories and more came flooding back to me.

Think about us as a congregation... Is our spiritual commitment protected? Not at all. We are constantly bombarded with temptations. It’s not God that leads us there, no. The only one who can lead us astray is much darker. People need each other to guard and to guide in the ways of righteousness. People need more than a building, they need Christian fellowship. If my God stays in my pocket and never sees the light of day, this little light of mine is only mine. God gifts us every day and expects us to share that gift. We can’t keep him bottled up, personal only to us. We must give the gift away. That is why he gave the gift to us in the first place.

Challenge yourself this year to give your heart, your time, your love, your charity to those in need. They may be right by the side of your car or even in a building that continues to stand regardless of market trends. Be sure to share God’s love and shine like the dawn, and never let dark doubt tear you from your commitment to the Lord. Shine his glory forever and for always. Amen!

Yours in Christ, Melanie Lounds

CHANCEL CHOIR DIRECTOR THOUGHTS



It’s hard to believe, but summer is over and the choir has started its 2012 fall season. We are looking for more individuals, both men and women, to join us to sing God’s praise on Sunday mornings. If you like to sing and can carry a tune we would like you to try us for a while on Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. for rehearsals. The choir has every 3rd Sunday off while the Hands of Harmony ring their hand bells. Reading music is not a requirement, but is helpful. Remember, singing the Lord’s praises in choir on Sundays is like praying twice! If interested contact myself or Rachael Short. I am looking forward to a great season!

*Submitted by,
Chuck Graham, Director Chancel Choir
First Congregations Church of St. Johns*

Gathering Grounds Coffee Bar

Great Coffee ~ Faithfully Served

It's a Hit!



If you've been to the St. Johns Farmers Market this year, you've seen the bright red umbrella, the big First Congregational Church banner, heard the music and sampled the delicious Fair Trade coffee, cold drinks and terrific baked goods of Gathering Grounds!

This brand new project, which started in mid-June and runs through the end of October, was conceived in response to the Board of Ministry's plea for some new ideas that would make our church more visible in the community...and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive!

Each Saturday morning, our FCC volunteers serve the community and invite them to sit down to relax at the eye-catching café tables and chairs (generously on loan from the Clinton County Arts Council). Folks can enjoy their purchases, peruse the church newsletter and visit with our friendly volunteers. Everyone, including the other vendors, have been appreciative of having our restrooms available, too. In addition, the awesome Gathering Grounds volunteers have offered tours of the sanctuary, talked about our faith and invited people to come back for Sunday worship.

We are grateful to the many, many volunteers (5-8 each week) who help with set-up, preparing food, serving customers and tear-down. It's a lot of fun, but a lot of work! A special thanks to those who help out week after week: Janet & Dennis Scott, Matt & Gretchen Olson, Jim, Andy & Sam Beagle and Dave Minnick. All our volunteers are *very* much appreciated! Thank you!

On behalf of Gathering Grounds,
Jennifer Beagle and Molly Minnick

There's still time!

Stop by Gathering Grounds
Saturday mornings 8:00 - Noon
at the Farmers Market.

Last day is October 27th!



DOUBLETS, ETC

Doublets, Etc. Meeting on Sunday, October 14th

The first meeting of the year for Doublets, Etc will be on Sunday, October 14th, at 6 pm in Wilcox Hall. Please note that this is a change from our normal meeting date (first Sunday of the month), due to a scheduling conflict with the church hayride which has been scheduled for October 7th at the Livingstons.

At this meeting, we will be making blankets to give to nursing home residents and shut-ins, as we did last year. Members are asked to bring 3 yards of fleece blanket fabric, if possible, but additional material and supplies will be available at the meeting. Barb Sherman and Janet Scott are the hosts for this meeting.

Doublets, Etc members are encouraged to attend the "Music with a Mission" concert, scheduled for October 14th at 4 pm in the sanctuary, prior to the Doublets, Etc meeting.

If you have questions, please contact or call: Dick and Charlotte Shoup, President Couple - 224-6986.

Dennis and Janet Scott, Vice President Couple - 224-2601.



Pictured are Jenny McCampbell & Shirelyan Lake with a blanket made last spring.



Let me introduce the Lounds Family! Nathan grew up in St. Johns and is now a web designer for Michigan State University. Melanie was raised in DeWitt and moved to St. Johns in 2nd grade. She is now an English teacher at Owosso High School. Nathan and Melanie were married in our church in 2001.

They have three children Quintin, Grace and Eliana.

They are one of the busiest families I know with Nathan enjoying basketball, video games, reading, golf, playing poker, softball and Fantasy Football. He is also a member of the Praise Team, Chancel Choir and the Silo Singers.

Melanie enjoys traveling, down hill skiing, dancing, shopping, reading, yard work-growing flowers, writing, swimming, biking, mentoring youth, Fantasy Football and rearranging furniture in rooms. She is a member of the Praise Team, the Senior High Youth Group Advisor and on the Board of Ministry.

Nathan was baptized in this church and has attended off and on since birth. Melanie came to our congregation in 2001. We are delighted to have this wonderful family in our congregation!