

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

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# SEPTEMBER

**This Month's Highlights:**  
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



## Outdoor Worship



## HOMECOMING PICNIC



## SEPTEMBER 2012

### The Congregational Connection...

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

### HOMECOMING SUNDAY

September 9th

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

12:00 p.m. Pot Luck, Pig Roast Picnic

All at the home of

Wilbur and Leola Thurston

5512 West M-21

Bring a comfortable chair, a dish to pass and your own table service.

We supply the beverages and pulled pork.

Please plan to attend and bring your friends and neighbors.

**MISSIONS TEAM OUTREACH**

We know that it doesn't seem possible, but winter is right around the corner. The Missions Team would once again like to collect coats, mittens, scarfs and winter hats for those in need within our local community. No boots unless they are brand new. We collected over 100 coats and lots of winter paraphernalia last year thanks to your generosity.

We will collect the items on September 16th, 23rd, 30th, 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.

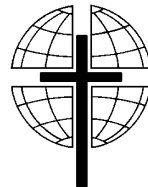
*Submitted by the Missions Ministry Team*



**INTERNATIONAL MISSION TRIPS**

First Congregational has enjoyed a very good history of sending its parishioners on international mission trips. I'm compiling a list of who has been on international trips before, when you went, who you went with, and what you did. Please forward to me what information you may have by September 15, 2012. My e mail is beaglejim@gmail.com, or you can contact me at 989-274-9607.

*Submitted by Jim Beagle*



**CROP WALK 2012**

The 27th annual CROP Walk for Hunger is Sunday, October 7, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. at the City Park Pavilion next to the band shell, with the walk beginning at 2:00 p.m.. The CROP Walk is sponsored by Church World Service and raises money to fight hunger worldwide, provide disaster relief, help small villages obtain clean sources of drinking water, and assist local food relief agencies. Of the funds that are raised, 25% stays in the local community. This year, those funds will go to the new Basic Needs Center food bank (10%), Clinton County Meals on Wheels (10%), and the St. Johns Ministerial Association's emergency assistance fund (5%). FCC will be joining 8 other churches and the Kiwanis Club in this years CROP Walk. The CROP walk will consist of a 5K (3.2mile) route that will start and end at the City Park pavilion. There is a 1-mile route as well. Runners, adults pushing strollers or pulling wagons are welcome on both the 5K and 1-mile routes. However, no bikes, roller-blades, skateboards, or scooters are allowed. If you are willing to walk with others in this community to help raise money for this important event, Sue Neuder of the Missions Team, will be signing up folks to walk during the Sundays in September. Hunger is both a global and local issue and the need is great in this community. If you are not able to participate, please considering donating to one of the walkers.

*Submitted by Susan Kilmer, St. Johns CROP Walk Coordinator*



**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.*

**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.

**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

**COMMUNITY NEWS**

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.

**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  
**Facebook:**  
 firstcongregationalchurchofst.johns  
**Hours:**  
 Monday - Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
 Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
 Thursday—9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
 Closed Friday

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, **SEPTEMBER 16th**. Contact John Fitch at 224-3565, or any Missions Team member for more information.



**“Gathering Grounds”  
Great Coffee-Faithfully Served**

Delicious coffee-sweet treats- cold drinks

Every Saturday during  
the Farmer’s Market  
8:00 a.m.—Noon  
On the church patio



For more information contact Jennifer Beagle at 224-0667  
or Molly Minnick at 989-307-9936

**“Fleet Feet”**

**Running and Walking Club**

All ages and abilities welcome!

When: Saturday morning, 7:30 a.m.—?

Join the fun when ever you are available!

Where: Both routes (short/long course) will begin and end in the church parking lot.

Questions?:

Jim Beagle (989-207-9607)

or Rachael Short - (517-862-0750)



**Would you be interested in hosting a  
FOURTH SUNDAY SUPPER?**

Our first “Supper” for this church year is September 23rd, immediately following the worship service. You would need to be here to turn on the ovens. Coffee, condiments, salt and pepper are all provided in the kitchen. You would be responsible for providing milk, cleaning off the tables and cleaning and unplugging the coffee makers after the supper. You can sign up on the sheet posted in the Wilcox Hall corridor or call the church office.



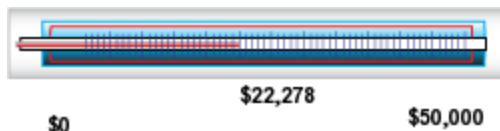
**LINDA SCOTT  
WOMENS GROUP**

Ladies, you are invited to attend the first meeting of “Linda Scott” on Tuesday, September 18th. You will meet at 5:30 p.m. at the home of Arlene Wood, for a planned meal organized by Arlene, Judy Cramer and Shirleyan Lake. Please rsvp to Joann Martis at 224-4165.

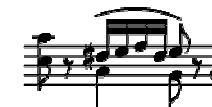


**AIR CONDITIONING UPDATE**

**AIR CONDITIONING UPDATE!** The total estimated cost of this project is \$50,000.00. We now have a new total of \$22,278.30! We will continually keep you updated on our fund raising progress for this church improvement.



**Notes from the Music Ministry Team: *Vibrant Worship***



The Music Ministry Team is ready for another year of vibrant worship at FCC! In this edition, you will find information about each music fellowship group (insert), reflections on a recent Communion service, highlights of our upcoming *Music With a Mission* concert series, and a hint of worship music to come.

**Communion Reflections**

The third Communion in the summer sermon series was different to the standard ones passing the plates (7/29) and passing with words ("the body of Christ for you" 8/5). On 8/12 we were invited up to walk up to the table. It was set and we were the guests, one at a time. I felt this less structured method was liberating; like this was "do it yourself" communion between yourself and the Son of Man himself.

Standing in front of the loaf and the full cup, I realized that there was nobody serving me. And nobody to tell me the significance. We all heard the words spoken ahead of time, but then waiting in line and finally facing the facts I felt empowered: that even someone without seminary training like me can take the cup and the bread and make meaning of it.

Maybe the same realization extends to worship, too: each one of us contributes according to their needs and abilities for the good of us all. The most direct way this happens on Sundays is at the times for singing and speaking together or in response to the call. This "do it yourself" (DIY) insight during the old-style communion made me understand that nobody is a spectator; instead, we are all players on this field. *Hallelujah!*  
~ Guven Witteveen

**Music With a Mission**

Music with a Mission Concert-Sunday October 14th at 4:00 p.m. Mark your calendar for this music concert featuring some local talent to benefit the St. Johns area CROP Hunger Walk. More details in the October newsletter.  
~ Susan Kilmer

**Coming Soon**

Many Christian communities observe a weekly ritual called *The Passing of the Peace*: a Priest pronounces, "The Lord be with you," and the congregation responds, "And also with you." Some Protestant congregations take time to greet one another with these words and a handshake or hug at the beginning of their worship service. Over the summer I was introduced to a lovely musical arrangement of this blessing, and as a team, we have agreed to introduce the song into our worship service for several weeks, beginning in mid-September.

As usual, we will greet our friends and neighbors. As we conclude our greetings, 1-2 people will sing (and eventually lead the congregation in singing) "The Lord Be With You" as a musical transition back into place to prepare for the Call to Worship. We hope that you will receive and be part of this blessing. Take time to feel the presence of the Lord in your spirit. We will earnestly desire your feedback regarding your worship experience, including this new song, its meaning and place in our service. This will help us to discern "if" and "how" to include this in our worship beyond the introductory period. Please talk to any member of the team.

Let us worship together, united in Spirit and in Song!  
~ Rachael Short

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

***PLYMOUTH ROCK***

Originally thought to be about three times the size of the rock currently resting on the shores of Plymouth Massachusetts, and thought to have been about 10 tons of granite-like girth. Over the centuries slices have been made into its cold flesh, as it has been harvested as souvenirs, tokens and memories. And now, almost 400 years, modern pilgrims play witness to what remains of our circumstantially famous landmark...which is now, only about the size of a car engine.

But despite the dwindling size of this understated chunk of earth, the Plymouth Rock remains one of the most lasting figures for oral history in our culture. We are all taught about the story of the Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620, as school children. We regularly hear the story of the Thanksgiving gathering with the local Wampanoag people. An event that we still celebrate annually, both as a commemoration of perseverance and friendship, and also as the kickoff to the holiday season. And within the Congregational community, the stories of the Pilgrims have a special role as our ancestry, our heritage.

But, putting aside that which our ancestors have attributed to the Plymouth Rock, it is at the end of the day, just a rock. An unassuming ten-ton chunk of granite. Stationary, lifeless, unmoving, purposeless in and of itself. But yet, God is still able and willing to bring forth life from such an object.

**Numbers 20: 2-11**

*“Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup> They quarreled with Moses and said, “If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the LORD! <sup>4</sup> Why did you bring the LORD’s community into this wilderness, that we and our livestock should die here? <sup>5</sup> Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!”*

Cont. on page 5

**SEPTEMBER SIGN UP SCHEDULES**

<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Nursery Care</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour</u>	<u>4th Sunday Supper Host/Hostess</u>
2 *	2 Hannah VanValkenburg	2 *	<b>Sept. 23 *</b>
9 Paul & Joann Martis	9 No nursery	9 Church Picnic	<b>Oct. 28 *</b>
16 *	16 Hannah VanValkenburg	16 *	<b>Nov. 25 *</b>
23 *	23 *	23 *	<b>Dec. 23 *</b>
30 *	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.

**Friend Death:**

Delbert Duzek, August 13, 2012, brother of Jim Duzek  
James Dedyne, August 14, 2012, brother of Bob Dedyne



**THE SEPTEMBER DEDICATION**

*The “Congregational Connection”  
for this month is in honor of  
**ALL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**  
as they return to school for a successful year.*



*Given by Art & Arlene Wood*

**Children and Youth News**

**SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

- 13 Rachel Rademacher
- 23 Brecken Simon
- 23 Hannah Scranton



**RALLY DAY 2012**

**Sunday, September 16th**

Hallelujah Children's Choir at 9:30 a.m.  
 Sunday School age 4 through 5th grade,  
 Junior High and Senior High Youth  
 Groups all meet at 10:00 a.m.



More Jesus!  
 Classes filled with creative  
 Bible story presentations.  
 Engaging music and videos.  
 We are getting excited  
 to see you all again!

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL MISSION PROJECT**

The missions project for Vacation Bible School was to raise money to purchase mosquito bed nets to protect children in Mali, Africa from malaria.

Each net costs \$6.00, covers two children and is good for up to four years. The Vacation Bible School kids raised enough money for 40 bed nets. The congregation generously donated money for another 40 nets. Thanks to everyone who donated. You care helping to save children's lives.



*Submitted by,  
 Gretchen Olson and Sam Beagle*

**SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

Welcome back to our team of Sunday School teachers and P.F. Youth Leaders!

- Jerry and Stacie Stevens, Tom and Ellen Doppke, Dave and Michele Elms, Rod Fuller, Barb Sherman,



Jennifer Beagle and Melanie Lounds.  
 You are truly a blessing to the children and youth in our church. Thank you.

**PLYMOUTH ROCK CONT.**

<sup>6</sup> Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the tent of meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. <sup>7</sup> The LORD said to Moses, <sup>8</sup> "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink."

<sup>9</sup> So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. <sup>10</sup> He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" <sup>11</sup> Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank."

This passage looks upon the Israelites in a moment when God's intervention is urgent. They are angry and scared. They are perishing under the intensity of the desert climate, and they are weary of having little assurance that their journey will ever end. When moments seem to be at their most desperate God gives them a rock. This is a bleak moment, when even Moses' faith is tested. And God intervention comes in the form of a still, purposeless, unmoving, lifeless rock.

After months of journeying in the desert with only their fickle faith and desire to live comfort them, God offers them a rock with a belly full of live giving water.

And likewise, after months of journeying at sea with only their hope and desire to pray without fear of repercussions to sustain them... our Pilgrim fathers and mothers, were offered a rock that symbolizes the promise of a *new* way of life. A new way of faith. A free way of faith.

Sometimes a rock is just a rock. But with God involved, a rock can be the giver of life, the landmark of freedom, and a gathering table to offer up thanksgiving.

*Submitted by Sarah Gladstone*

**FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION:  
A VIDEO PROJECTION SYSTEM FOR THE SANCTUARY**

We are people who have become increasingly dependent on visually displayed information. Consequently many churches use a video presentation system to help convey the message during worship services. Such a system is being contemplated for our sanctuary.

Advantages of a video projection system:

- Words of Songs: Congregational singing becomes louder as heads are raised rather than bowed. Everyone is singing the same verse (We would still have hymnals available). There would be less bulletin inserts.
- Sermon Notes: People retain what they see in writing much longer than information only received by hearing. Sermon points and Scripture can be clearly portrayed making the sermon easier to follow.
- Announcements: The congregation can have announcements presented in a slide show as they wait for the service to begin. This reduces spoken announcements and bulletin inserts.
- Pictures: Through still pictures or video the congregation can be given information that illustrates and informs. "One picture is worth a thousand words."
- Visually Impaired: Those who find the small print of the hymnal or bulletin find the projected image easier to read.
- Presentations: Through the presentation of pictures from Mission trips and Youth events, etc. it would be easier to update the congregation regarding these events.

In our church it would not be necessary to set up screens; the white walls on each side of the front of the sanctuary make good surfaces for projected images. The projectors, which are small, would be mounted on the walls.

A system like this costs \$16,000. A member of our congregation, who sees this system as a real need for our church, has pledged \$10,000 to the project. That leaves a funding gap of \$6,000. The Board of Ministry would like to know what you think of our church enhancing worship through use of a video system. On Sunday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, the bulletin will include a two question survey: (1) Are you in favor of our church proceeding with a video projection system? (2) Are you interested in contributing money to finance video projection system. If yes, then in what amount? Please respond to this survey on the 16<sup>th</sup> or the following Sunday.

*Submitted by Rev. Matthew Olson*

**ATTENTION MINISTRY TEAMS!**

Are you looking forward to a new year and wondering how you can grow your team? There are several avenues at your disposal. Remember the Board of Ministry is always available to you. (1) Consider talking to one of the members or coming to a Board meeting. We would love to hear what your team is doing and providing assistance and information for which you may be looking. (2) Consider inviting new people to your team. This can be done in a number of ways. Having your current team make an announcement in church really gets the word out. Personally inviting people you know who may not be coming to our church is also a great way to get those involved. Others may be drawn to FCC because they love your team's activity and serving their community. (3) Consider writing an article for the newsletter. You do not have to have a writing degree from a university to share what your team is doing. And remember, team leaders are not the only ones that can share what the group is working on, what the goals for the year are, or what success stories you have had in the past. Thank you for the valuable work you do for our church, for our community, and for God's world.

*Blessings,  
Melanie Lounds, Board of Ministry*



We would like to introduce a mother and daughter who have a long history of being members here at F.C.C.

First and foremost is Hazel Worrall. Hazel and her husband Richard (who has passed away) had five children; Gary, Judy, Linda and Dennis. Their son Doug passed away three years ago. Hazel worked at the D & C Store (now Main Street Café) in downtown St. Johns. Richard's parents were members of our congregation, so when Richard and Hazel were married they stayed in our church. Hazel joined our congregation in 1944. Judy Worrall Hackett joined our church in 1960, but has been attending since she was a small child. Judy and her husband Robert have three children; Jeff, Theresa and David.

Judy was a day care provider for twenty-five years.



She now enjoys traveling and sewing. The Worrall/Hackett families have been an important part of our congregation for many years.

Now when you see these two ladies sitting on the North side of the sanctuary you will appreciate their history here in our church. Be sure to go over and say Hello!