

First Congregational Church of St. Clair



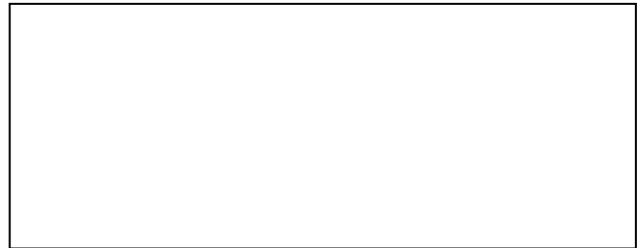
"A Just World for All"

[www.firstcongsc.org](http://www.firstcongsc.org) | 300 Adams Street, St. Clair, MI 48079

810-329-4142

\*ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED\*

# 2018



# NOVEMBER



# THE CHANNEL

We are proud to be a Progressive Congregation

Worship & Sunday School: Sundays – 10 a.m.

Pastor: Reverend Alana Kelley

Communion: First Sunday of Every Month

First Congregational Church of St. Clair  
United Church of Christ  
300 Adams Street  
St. Clair, MI 48079  
(810) 329-4142  
Fax: (810) 329-4420

E-Mail: [firstcongstclair@sbcglobal.net](mailto:firstcongstclair@sbcglobal.net)

Website: [www.firstconggsc.org](http://www.firstconggsc.org)

Facebook: FirstCongregational.UCC.St.Clair

Matthew 6:33 (NRSV)

But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.



Some Thoughts from Pastor Alana

We recently did ALL of our annual staff reviews in one fell-swoop. Six reviews in two days. Whew! Many thanks to Deuane Martin, especially, since he sat in on each one! As Pastor, I was there for each of them, including my own ;-)

As we spent time with Doug Bishop, Christian Education Coordinator; Cindy Frey, Church Custodian; Denise Gregg, Organist/ Accompanist; Anna Moore, Choir Director; Amanda Schwehofer, Bookkeeper and Julie Wendt, Office Administrator, I couldn't help but realize how blessed we have been to have such amazing people working for God as part of the staff at First Congregational UCC St. Clair.

Each person is so gifted in the areas in which they work, and yet they willingly share themselves in so many more ways than their job descriptions require. Each one fits perfectly with the church's values. Each one is devoted to God even though we each come from differing religious backgrounds. Yet, a love of God and God's people seem to guide each person who shares their gifts to make this church the wonderful place that it is.

I feel blessed to be part of this incredible staff. But also, being at First UCC St. Clair, working alongside this exceptional staff, working with a congregation that is so devoted to caring and sharing, being part of the history of this church; all of this and more makes me feel kind of like I've won the lottery!

When God called me to First Congregational UCC St. Clair, I have to confess, it was scary being three hours from Oberlin and David. But when God calls, GOD CALLS. Of course, God was right. I could not be happier than I have been for having answered the call to be at First Congregational Church of St. Clair United Church of Christ. And we're about to celebrate three years together. To say I'm thankful would be an understatement.

I brag about this church very often; maybe a little too often! I boast about all of you! I am thankful to be your pastor and teacher.

November is a month when we become aware of all that we are thankful for as we approach one of the most wonderful (and yummy) holidays on our calendar.

We are blessed. We have an opportunity to offer our thanks as we prepare to celebrate our ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship Service here at First UCC, St. Clair, at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 20th. I encourage you to be here with us to offer God a word of thanks as we celebrate with our neighboring churches.

Soon we'll sit down to our Thanksgiving Dinners and will say a grace that thanks God for the many gifts we enjoy. What more can be said about this except, God is love and God is good. Thank you, God, for the many gifts we receive and the many gifts we share.

With You on the Journey,

*Pastor Alana*



Carol LaVigne, Bonnie Landschoot, Micki Baden,  
Ken Gregg, Penny Malcolm, Phyllis Hirt,  
Karen (Deuane & Mary Ann's neighbor), Phyllis Hart,  
Nancy Martin, Sue Waelens, Pearl Ewart,  
Vicki Kling, Mary Beth Bolla, Margaret Loranger.

Let us also remember

Dakota Hazel, Nathan Distelrath, Edwin Summers  
and all who are serving in the military.



Remember, Newsletter article submission deadline is  
November 20<sup>th</sup>.



Kaylie O'Connor – 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Ann Whittaker – 10<sup>th</sup>  
Richard Malcolm – 10<sup>th</sup>  
Donald Curtis – 11<sup>th</sup>  
Michelle Baden – 11<sup>th</sup>  
Kenneth Gregg – 12<sup>th</sup>  
Elsa Pennewell – 16<sup>th</sup>  
Breanne Paret – 19<sup>th</sup>  
David Kelley – 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Rachel O'Connor – 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Nancy Rice – 27<sup>th</sup>  
Michael Malcolm – 30<sup>th</sup>

“No matter who you are or  
where you are on life’s journey,  
you are welcome here!”

**WELCOME**

Be the Church gathering is set for the fourth Tuesday of every month. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, November 27th, at 7pm, following the Community Meal – 4:30-6pm.



THE LITTLE FOOD PANTRY NEEDS NON-PERISHABLE DONATIONS. PLEASE HELP SUPPORT THIS WORTHY MISSION.



#### STAFF LISTING...

Pastor:  
Reverend Alana  
Kelley  
Organist:  
Denise Gregg  
Vocals:  
Anna Moore  
Bookkeeper:  
Amanda Schwehofer  
Office Administrator:  
Julie Wendt  
Christian Ed Coordinator:  
Doug Bishop  
Nursery Staff:  
Olivia Carlsen/Lori Lewis/  
Robin Gilbert  
Custodians: Dale & Cindy Frey

MALLARD'S LANDING SERVICE takes place the third Thursday of every month. Please join us as we provide a much-appreciated communion worship service for some of the residents. You will enjoy getting to know 'the regulars' and seeing the members of this church who live at Mallard's, too! This month's service is on Thursday, November 15th, at 9:15am.



**ECUMENICAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE:** Our First Congregational Church of St. Clair, along with St. Peter's Lutheran, First Methodist, and Holy Family Church will once again offer an Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service to the St. Clair community. The service will be held on Tuesday, November 20, 2018 – 7:00 p.m. here at First Congregational.

### YOUR CHURCH COUNCIL...

Please feel free to contact any member of your Church Council with any questions, comments or concerns.

Lisa Hughes - Moderator

Robert Rood - Vice Moderator

Ken Schultz - Treasurer

Caroline Schultz - Church Clerk

Deuane Martin - Trustee & Finance

Kathy Rood - Worship & Music

Mary Ann Martin - Mission & Ministry

Penny Malcolm - Christian Education

Pat O'Connor - Member at Large

Alana Kelley - Pastor

Called to  
*Serve*

Daylight Savings Time ends November 4<sup>th</sup>. Remember to set your clocks **BACK** one hour.



Children's Christmas Program will be held Sunday, December 9, 2018, during worship at 10:00 a.m. There will be a rehearsal on Saturday, December 8, 2018, from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.



Please mark your calendar for our Congregational Budget Meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018, immediately following worship.

VETERANS DAY IS  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER  
12<sup>TH</sup>. PLEASE REMEMBER  
TO SAY "THANK YOU".



Our sanctuary is decorated for the Christmas season through Epiphany. We are using poinsettias around the altar area and ask for your contributions to purchase these poinsettias. Poinsettia Envelopes are located on the back table in the sanctuary. Please mark your contribution towards poinsettias in honor of family members or friends or in memory of a loved one. Place the envelope in the offering plate, or mail it to the church office. Your gift will be acknowledged in the Christmas Eve bulletin and in the January issue of The Channel.



### **OPEN & AFFIRMING INCLUSIVE CHURCH COVENANT**

The members of the First Congregational Church of St. Clair, United Church of Christ, declare that we are a fully inclusive, open and affirming congregation. We affirm the life and teachings of Jesus Christ

and believe that all people are children of God. As such, we welcome to the community of faith all people of diverse race, physical and mental abilities, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, and socio-economic status. We covenant to provide to all a safe, loving, nurturing and compassionate community.

**FRIDAY MORNINGS AT  
NEIMAN'S CAFÉ..**

Every Friday, 10:30 a.m-12:00 p.m.

You are welcome to stop by for a chat with Pastor Alana, enjoy some good coffee, or just appreciate a relaxing end to your week!



The Alzheimer's Support Group will meet the fourth Thursday of the month at First Congregational Church. All are welcome. The meeting in November will be Thursday, November 15th, at 1pm. For further information, please call the church (329-4142) or Mary Ann Martin (326-0798).





Volunteers make up FCC's various committees. If you would like to participate in the stewardship of the church, or have any questions or concerns about what the committees do, please reach out to the committee chairs:

Administration: David Scheel

Altar: Adelle Schwan & Liana Cherni

Altar Flowers: Marge Guinther

Christian Education: Penny Malcolm

Inside Maintenance: Don O'Connor

Memorials: Caroline Schultz

Mission & Ministry: Mary Ann Martin

Open & Affirming: Pat O'Connor

Outside Maintenance: Randy Kling

Parish Nurse: Mary Ann Martin

Parsonage: Don Rice

Pastoral Relations: Bob Rood, Nancy Rice, Carroll Simmons

Remembrance: Karen Galvin

Treasurer: Ken Schultz

Ushers: Tim Galvin

Worship & Music: Kathy Rood





**NOVEMBER, 2018**

**Mission Moments**

Are you ready for the holidays? We have so many opportunities for you to share your gifts, time and talents to help make the holidays merrier for so many people! Cathy Light is “making the list” and “checking it twice” for our adopted families! Sign up for Thanksgiving food this November to provide a beautiful holiday meal for our designated families! Then keep your eye out for the Christmas giving tree and the Christmas meal to top it off!

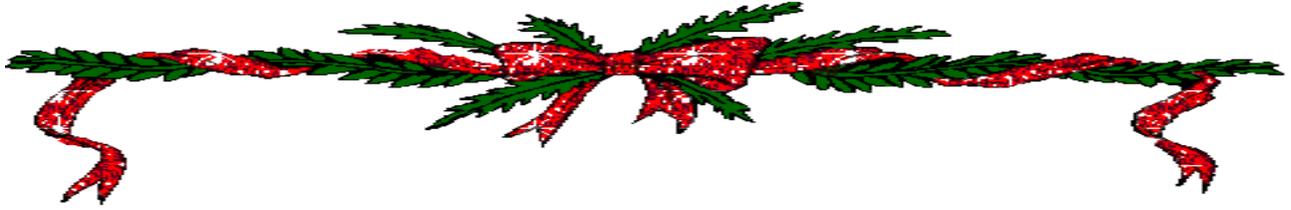
Ye Olde Christmas Shoppe will happen on **November 20**—so please help us sort and display all the donations to Harbor Ministries on **NOVEMBER 19** beginning at 9:00 am. Lunch will be served and we hope to wrap up around 2 or 3 pm. Then you can come back on the 20<sup>th</sup> and see the delighted faces as our Harbor guests “shop” in our Shoppe to make their Christmas brighter! We need your help! Come for as long as you’re able, even if it’s only for a couple of hours.

Our Mission and Ministry Team is busy and amazing in their dedication and commitment to serving our community in so many ways. Come join us as we continue our journey! You’ll be glad you did!

Peace and joy,

Mary Ann Martin, Chair

Mission and Ministry Team



### A Holiday Progressive Dinner:

a festive occasion involving a four-course dinner (appetizer, salad, entrée and dessert). Participants transport themselves or car pool from home to home during the event, socializing with a new group at each location.

The First Congregational Church of St. Clair would like to invite you to our First Annual Holiday Progressive Dinner on Friday, December 7, 2018, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Make plans now to join us for an evening full of great food and fellowship. We will begin with our appetizer course at the church. We will then draw names to see where and to whose house we travel for the salad course and the main entrée course. Couples can stay together if they are hosting, but all other couples will be tossed into the hat as individuals. We will then meet back here at the church for coffee and dessert.

If you would like to host a salad course or a main course, please tell us how many people you can accommodate and which course you would like to serve. Menu choice is totally up to you as hosts. If you would like to set the table for 8 then do so, or if you would like to have 12 people eating on their laps, that would be great, too. All those not signing up for hosting in their home will be asked to bring either a dessert or an appetizer to the church. These will be assigned and hosts will be notified after we see how many people sign up. We are hoping for at least 30 people, but this plan can accommodate lots more, so let's have some fun and fellowship!!! Deadline to sign up is November 25<sup>th</sup>. The sign-up sheet will be on the back table of the sanctuary, or call Julie in the office to reserve your spot. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Rood at (810) 357-4297.



## **NOVEMBER IS AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH**

I'm sure that each and every one of you is familiar with diabetes and has a member of your family or a friend who is affected by this disease. I hope you will take the time to examine your lifestyle and do what you can to help prevent Type 2 diabetes. I'm going to start with prevention—that can apply to all of us—whether we're at risk or not, that can help us make healthy choices not only to prevent diabetes, but to improve our overall health in so many ways and to help prevent complication.

Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition that affects the way your body metabolizes sugar. Your body either resists the effects of insulin (a hormone) or doesn't produce enough insulin to maintain a normal glucose level. Unlike Type 1, where the body doesn't produce insulin, Type 2 is more common in adults but increasingly affects children as childhood obesity increases.

To help prevent type 2 diabetes:

- Eat healthy foods. Choose foods lower in fat and calories and higher in fiber. Focus on fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Get physical. Aim for a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day.
- Lose excess pounds. Losing 7 per cent of your body weight can reduce the risk of diabetes. its. Motivate yourself by remembering the benefits—healthier heart, more energy and improved self-esteem.

How do you suspect you might have type 2 diabetes? It can develop slowly—in fact, you may have it for years and not know it! Look for:

- Increased thirst and frequent urination.
- Increased hunger.
- Weight loss.

- Fatigue.
- Blurred vision.
- Slow-healing sores or frequent infections.
- Areas of darkened skin.

See your primary care professional as soon as you notice any signs of type 2 diabetes. Some risk factors cannot be changed—i.e. family history, race, age, gestational diabetes, or polycystic ovary syndrome. So, work on the modifiable factors such as weight and inactivity to prevent developing type 2 diabetes.

Why? Although long-term complications of diabetes develop gradually, they can eventually be disabling or even life-threatening. Some of the potential complications of diabetes include:

- Heart and blood vessel disease.
- Nerve damage (neuropathy).
- Kidney damage (nephropathy).
- Eye damage.
- Foot damage.
- Hearing impairment.
- Skin conditions.
- Alzheimer's disease.

Source: MayoClinic.org

Please see me if you have any questions, concerns or need any assistance in maintaining good health.

Your Parish Nurse,

Mary Ann Martin, RN, BAS, FCN



**GIVING ENVELOPES** are a part of our budget and need to be accountable for every year. In order to streamline this expense, we are asking that anyone who would like to CONTINUE to receive envelope boxes, please call/email the office. Along those same lines, we would like anyone who DOES NOT NEED their envelopes to please advise of that as well. The number of people using their envelopes has decreased and it would be a substantial savings to reevaluate the count. Please be advised, once we have the new count in, new account numbers will be assigned.

**ECUMENICAL FOOD PANTRY...** The final numbers are in. During our month of supporting the Ecumenical Food Pantry, we were able to deliver 988 pounds of food to the pantry. We served 47 families, of which 16 were single adults, and 8 were families of 5 or more people. There were several large monetary donations given to the church for the pantry; almost all of it was spent on meats, milk, eggs, and canned or boxed food; any remaining funds will be spent before the end of 2018. Many thanks to all who gave time and/or donations!



Micki Baden – Ecumenical Food Pantry Chair

## SUSTAINING CREATION



### 48 STEPS TO LIVING SUSTAINABLY—ACTIONS WE CAN ALL TAKE

We are finishing the “Toe-Dipping” Steps for sustaining creation by looking at what we can do with Advocacy. Remember, these are the starting measures, to be followed by “Getting in Deeper” with the different categories.

Advocacy Steps:

14. Call your congressional representative and say you believe global warming to be an issue significant enough to affect how you vote.
15. Actively pressure your local government to install renewable systems such as public car charging stations.
16. Get involved—join Citizens Climate Lobby to actively lobby for a carbon tax or join one of the groups such as 350.org that are working hard to get colleges, churches, etc. to divest from fossil fuel companies.

Source: [www.SustainingCreation.org](http://www.SustainingCreation.org)

To a greener and healthier future,

Mary Ann Martin, Chair

Missions and Ministry



October 2018

Dear Church Friends:

## **Praise God from whom all blessings flow!**

### **Our blessings**

Looking back, we are thankful for the amount of giving and sharing that proceeds throughout the year. As we witness God's grace, spilled upon those who attend First Congregational Church, we continue to be grateful for all of HIS blessings. Therefore, we have responded by following God's teaching to love one another. We demonstrate this through our outreach to so many others within and outside of our church family. Metaphorically our Church family is a perpetual "Wheel of Fortune" in constant motion, propelled by the energy of giving back.

It is with this spirit of giving that the Stewardship Team is asking you to focus on October, November and December for sacrificial giving and commitment. As we prepare for Pilgrim and Stewardship Sunday, on **November 11** you are invited to share a pot luck luncheon after worship.

The apostle James talks about the blessings WE receive by our giving and reminds us that we have been given much by God. As stewards of the church and one another, we are called to care by our stewardship and outreach. Pledging represents the commitment we make to God to BE the stewards God expects us to be. As the Body of Christ, if we don't take on the responsibility, it does not get done.

James wrote:

**Every generous act and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the God of lights; with God there is no variation or shadow cast by turning.** – James 1:17

The bonus is this: Our generosity enriches us as much as it does the church and others.

### **Our commitment**

This is stewardship season, so we will also be asking for financial support and volunteerism now and into the future. In order to keep all of our

wonderful ministries and dedicated staff in place, we need to financially support them.

### **Our financial situation**

Volunteerism has grown significantly in the past five years. However, our congregational giving, which excludes foundation allocations, endowment income, and special bequeaths, has continued to fall in the past five years. If we add up just congregational giving to the General Fund, the total amount in 2014 was \$136,962; in 2017 it dropped to \$116,385; **a decrease of 15%**. If we are to maintain our current General Fund budget, our anticipated expenses by year end 2019 will be about \$180,000, a slight increase from this year.

Due to the wise investment trust and church leadership, the BW Moore Fund, we will be able to use some of those earnings to continue with many of the Mission and Outreach projects that have been ongoing this past year. However, we had to supplement our General Fund with a \$10,000 transfer from the Moore Fund to substantially reduce an anticipated expense deficit.

### **Spinning forward into next year**

Going into next year, we plan to continue the great ministries and volunteerism that we support and in which we participate.

Some of the goals we met this year:

- To enhance and grow our children's' Christian Education program, we hired a part time Coordinator of Education, Doug Bishop, to plan and develop methods to improve our Christian Education programs and activities. Blending our kids with children from St. Peters Lutheran, our summer education was a grand success.
- We will continue to support "Harbor Impact Ministries" in Port Huron Township both financially and through a substantial corps of volunteers from our Church who serve thousands each year.
- We hope to contribute financial support to "Kids in Distress", a very successful and organized local treasure providing clothing and other needs to local families.
- Our church will continue to provide a substantial gift of Time, Talent and Treasure to the local "St. Clair Ecumenical Food Pantry" by helping many working families supplement their grocery needs. Our church is part of a seven-church consortium supporting this year-round mission.
- On October 23 we will invite the neighboring community to our first Community Meal. We hope that the attendance will be substantial enough to continue this outreach in the future.

### **Making the best of good times**

Our economy is on the upswing and the future looks bright. However, we find working families in our community still trying to make ends meet. We ask all of you who have benefited from the blessings of God during these good economic times to increase your support for next year and into the future. Please **pledge** your annual gift, as this helps your church leaders to plan and budget more effectively. A pledge is **your target for giving**. If you cannot achieve it in full by year end, you will not be billed for it.

As we approach Stewardship and Pilgrim Sunday, we ask each of you to support the church by continuing to volunteer in the many community outreach efforts and missions; and just as importantly, increase your financial gift.

### **Let us celebrate!**

Our church family is filled with great and generous people who demonstrate God's Grace in so many ways, to each other and to the community at large. Our wheel of fortune is great. Let's keep it spinning for others as well.

Please join us at the celebration luncheon to be held after worship service on **Sunday, November 11**.

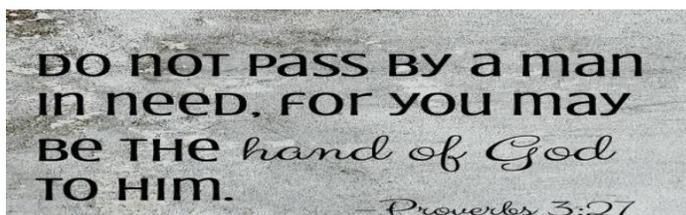
Your Stewardship Team,  
Ken Schultz, Deuane Martin, Lisa Hughes

The Christian Education students and I will be creating a Thankful Tree during the month of November. Students will be encouraged to share things they are thankful for, and we will post them in the hallway on the tree for everyone to admire.

Doug Bishop - Christian Ed Coordinator



Get Ready! Pastor Alana hopes to do a Lock-In at the church. HAS SHE TOTALLY LOST IT? Tentative dates are Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, just before Pilgrim Sunday or Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, coupled with church decorating before the first Sunday of Advent. Let Pastor Alana know which date works best for you! 6<sup>th</sup> graders and older are invited. Friends are always welcome. Permission forms are a must. Pick one up on the back table in church. Watch a movie! Eat popcorn! Play sardines in the dark! Bible crafts! Fun! Sleep a little! We'll need at least one more adult chaperone to pull this one off. The last Lock-In we did in the church was a blast!



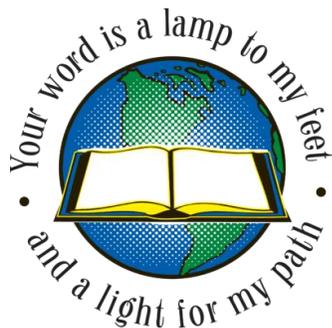
### **ADOPTED FAMILIES...**

Our Thanksgiving food item sign-up sheet will be posted in the long hallway by Sunday, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>. Please bring your food donations to the church library no later than Sunday, Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>. Monetary donations are needed for Neiman's gift cards for a turkey and other fresh food items. Please mark your envelope "Thanksgiving Families". Thank you for your support! Any questions, please feel free to contact Cathy Light – 329-4875.



Sjögren's ("SHOW-grins") is a systemic autoimmune disease that affects the entire body. Along with symptoms of extensive dryness, other serious complications include profound fatigue, chronic pain, major organ involvement, neuropathies, and lymphomas. With upwards of 4,000,000 Americans suffering from Sjögren's, it is one of the most prevalent autoimmune diseases. Nine out of 10 patients are women.

Much can be learned at a support group meeting, including patient-to-patient sharing and coping skills as well as dealing with day-to-day living with Sjögren's. We invite you to attend the upcoming support group meeting: Saturday, November 3, 2018, 1:00pm – FCC – Oak Room. Please RSVP to Barbara Skovran, Support Group Leader – 810-637-8129



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS** for a Christmas Stories Bible Study beginning every Thursday, November 29<sup>th</sup> - December 20<sup>th</sup>...1pm-2pm. Everyone is welcome!

## November 2018 at First Congregational

1	Thursday	Garden Club Choir Practice 11:00am-12:30pm
2	Friday	Neiman's Café 10:30am-12:00pm
3	Saturday	Weight Watchers 8am Sjogren's Support Group – 1pm Goubert & Stoner Wedding – 3pm
4	Sunday	<b>WORSHIP 10:00am / Communion / Choir Sings / All Saints Day / Daylight Saving Time Ends</b>
6	Tuesday	Election Day
7	Wednesday	Amanda Here 9am-12pm War Water Beer Witness 6-7pm Reports due for Trustee Meeting
8	Thursday	Worship & Music Mtg. 9:30am
9	Friday	Neiman's Café 10:30am-12:00pm Chime Choir Practice – 10am St. Clair Santa Parade 6-8pm
10	Saturday	Weight Watchers 8am
11	Sunday	<b>WORSHIP 10:00am / Stewardship-Pilgrim Sunday / Pot Luck / Cong. Mtg. Dec. 2</b>
12	Monday	Veterans Day
13	Tuesday	Endowment Fund Mtg. 1:30pm Trustees Meeting 4pm
14	Wednesday	Amanda Here 9am-12pm Food Packing at Pantry – 1pm War Water Beer Witness 6-7pm Reports due for Council Meeting
15	Thursday	Mallard's Landing Service 9:15am
16	Friday	Neiman's Café 10:30am-12:00pm Chime Choir Practice 10am
17	Saturday	Weight Watchers 8am
18	Sunday	<b>WORSHIP 10:00am / Thanksgiving Sunday / Cong. Mtg. Dec. 2</b>
19	Monday	Harbor Impact – Set up Christmas Shoppe – 9am
20	Tuesday	Harbor Impact Day/Christmas Shoppe Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service – Here – 7pm Channel Deadline
21	Wednesday	NO Beer Witness NO Ladies Lunch
22	Thursday	Thanksgiving Day!

24	Saturday	Weight Watchers 8am
25	Sunday	<b>WORSHIP 10:00am / Cong. Mtg. Dec. 2</b>
27	Tuesday	Community Meal – FCC – 4:30pm-6:00pm
28	Wednesday	Amanda Here 9am-12pm
29	Thursday	Choir Practice 11:00am-12:30pm Christmas Stories Bible Study 1pm-2pm
30	Friday	NO Neiman's Café Chime Choir Practice 10am