

First Congregational Church of St. Clair



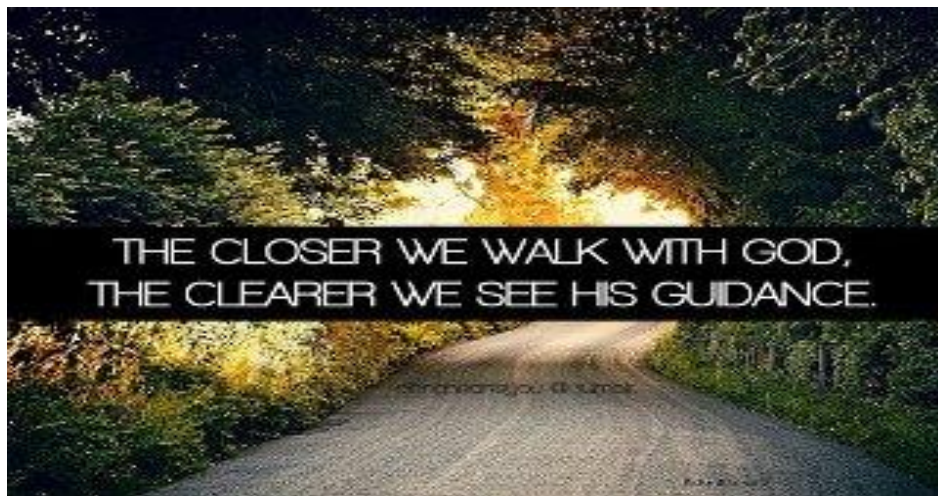
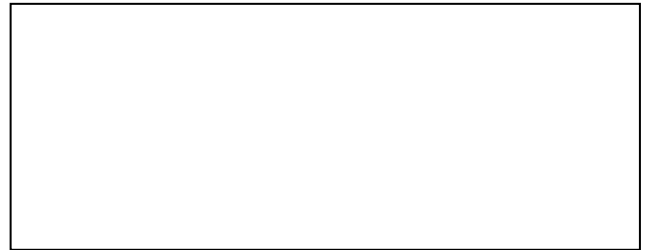
"A Just World for All"

www.firstcongsc.org | 300 Adams Street, St. Clair, MI 48079

810-329-4142

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

2020



AUGUST

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
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St. Clair, MI 48079
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Website: www.firstconggsc.org

Facebook: FirstCongregational.UCC.St.Clair

Some thoughts from Pastor Alana

August, 2020



13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea.²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow.⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil.⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!"

Matthew 13:1-9

We recently read these verses in worship. The images that come to us as we read are images we can easily relate to, and the message in these verses raises some questions:

Is God reckless with the way God scatters seed?

Is God suggesting that we don't need to play it safe when it comes to sharing our faith?

You know I'm fond of saying that God is always with us. Yet we have a difficult time remembering this. I know it is so, because I myself need reminding of this. We forget this when difficulties arise in life. Fight or flight easily kicks in when we're told we need to wear masks because of a pandemic. (Prayers that this is a once in a life-time event and that it will run its course, as long as we carefully follow prescribed mitigation procedures).

Not only does God scatter seed. God wants us to scatter seed, and to do this with abandon, understanding that some of the seed won't grow but some of them will. We're invited to share the Good News, about our beliefs, about the church, about the good deeds done by people who are nurtured by the church; by their faith.

God wants us to scatter seeds, even during a global pandemic. We can do this in many ways. YOU have been doing this in many ways. You've been making sure there's food in our Little Food Pantry. Some of you have baked treats to gift to the essential workers at Mallard's Landing. Some of you have been sending cards and making phone calls to members and friends who are homebound (as we all more or less are for a while.) You came out to celebrate Makayla Malcolm's graduation. You pray for those who need to prayers. You have been casting seeds far and wide, even unawares.

I feel very blessed to be pastor to such a compassionate community. This church exerts so much energy helping other people to grow by letting your faith show clearly. You are constantly scattering seeds. It is a gift and a blessing that there is so much care, and that it is shared in the church and in the community in many different ways.

Sometimes, according to Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Johnson, "we play it safe, sowing the word only where we are confident it will be well received, and only where those who receive it are likely to become contributing members of our congregations. we hold tightly to our resources (our time, talents and treasure), wanting to make sure that nothing is wasted. Jesus' approach to mission is quite at odds with our play-it-safe instincts."¹

May we continue our brave and generous scattering of seed as we help people who need Christ in their lives, see Christ in us.

Yours on the Journey,

Pastor Alana

¹ Elizabeth Johnson. Working Preacher. https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=978

IN NEED OF PRAYER

Tommy Galvin, Tommy Galvin's daughter Patty, Collette Carlsen, Rennie Fandrick, Erik Nguyen, Shirley Paret, Holly Weatherford, Barbara White, Brian Paret, Jr., Cal Rock, everyone fighting the virus and the families of those who have lost that fight.

Also, remember Edwin Summers, Cameron Coverly, Dakota Hazel, Nathan Distelrath, all who are serving in the military, first responders, medical personnel, and our elected officials.

Be kind to one another.



Remember, Newsletter article submission deadline is August 20th.

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

WELCOME

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Ken Schultz – 3rd

Kim Hazel – 6th

Brooklyn Mahaffy – 7th

Caroline Schultz – 7th

David Scheel – 12th

Sue Ann Eames – 12th

Breer Putney-Ernst – 22nd

Donald O'Connor – 23rd

Charlene Taylor – 23rd

Matthew Salinas – 29th

Natalia Salinas – 29th

Samuel Salinas – 29th

Sofia Salinas – 29th

Liana Cherni – 31st



Debra & Brad Maxwell – 7th

Robert & Charlene Taylor – 9th

Kenneth & Denise Gregg – 12th

Mark & Kenzie Achatz – 14th

Brian & Vicki Paret – 21st

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
Custodians:
Dale & Cindy Frey



OPEN AND 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.



YOUR LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE...

Please feel free to contact any member of the Committee with any questions, comments or concerns. Serving alongside the Pastor are...

Pat O'Connor - Moderator

Nancy Rice - Vice Moderator

Don Rice - Treasurer

Dave Scheel - Church Clerk

Don O'Connor - Inside Maintenance

Randy Kling - Outside Maintenance

Brian Paret - Tech & Events Coordinator

Jody Skonieczny - Memorials

Marge Guinther - Missions



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION UPDATE

Families will continue to receive updates via Facebook and mail weekly. Although we are unable to gather in person, we still have a fantastic opportunity to learn and grow with each other virtually. Please continue to check the churches Facebook page for updates regarding Christian education summer curriculum.



PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS...Nancy Rice, Carroll Simmons, and Barb Arevalo serve on the Pastor Parish Relations Team to support Pastor Alana in her ministry. The group meets quarterly. While you are encouraged to speak directly to Pastor Alana about concerns you have with her, sometimes it's easier to speak with a member of the PPR Team. Those Team members are available to hear your concerns and will share them with her.

We are now accepting donations for an updated Audio/Visual Equip. Ctr.



The A/V Team has begun researching various means of projecting and sharing our Worship Service during our gatherings and outside the walls of the church, and would be happy to hear your suggestions and/or ideas. If you would be able to donate to this project, please mark your check or envelope "A/V Equipment".

Any questions, please speak with Don Rice or Brian Paret.

AUGUST DUTIES

TECHNOLOGY: David Kelley,

Don Rice, Brian Paret

MUSIC: Denise Gregg, Anna Moore

READERS: Fantastic Volunteers!

Online Giving
is simple and easy!

The option for ONLINE GIVING has been established through a program called Tithe.ly. A link has been posted on our Facebook page, on our web site, and through our weekly E-News. Please remember our stewardship of the church during this unusual period.

Ecumenical Food Pantry - One of our church's missions

*****Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the normal procedures will be altered. Announcements will be made via the E-news, or you can call me. Stay tuned..... Micki Baden 586-457-0457 or email Micki.baden@gmail.com .**

Workers: September is our month to staff the Ecumenical Food Pantry. We expect to need workers for **Tuesday and Thursday** evenings from 4:00-7:00 PM. If you are able to volunteer for one or more evenings, please call me, Micki Baden, at 586-457-0457 or email micki.baden@gmail.com. The maximum number of workers needed each evening is four. Food will be distributed using the curbside pickup technique to eliminate as much contact as possible.



Donations:

There will not be a food drive this year. The Ecumenical Food Pantry managers (St Vincent de Paul) are requesting only donations of money. If you are able to give, please write your check to First Congregational Church and mark it for the Ecumenical Food Pantry. Cash is acceptable too, you can put it in an envelope so marked. We will make sure you get credit and take care of sending the money on to the pantry.

If you don't know how the Ecumenical Food Pantry operates:



The Ecumenical Food Pantry is supported by eight local churches and serves clients in the city of St. Clair and the townships of St. Clair, China, and East China. The pantry is located on Orchard Street near 9th St., across from St. Mary's School. The Pantry is open Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Clients call ahead and are assigned a time to arrive at the Pantry, beginning at 5:00 PM and scheduled every 10 minutes, until 7:00 pm. The normal procedures will be altered but should follow this general process:

- Around 3:45 pm, the Team Leader arrives at the pantry with a list showing how many clients we will be serving that evening.
- At 4:00 pm, our church's volunteers arrive.
- Between 4:00 and 5:00 PM we pack bags with a week's worth of food for each family on the list; the amount packed depends on the size of the family.
- At 5:00 PM the first family will arrive to pick up their food and may receive soap, toilet paper, etc. if they need it.
- Clients arrive every 10 minutes until the last one has been served, but no later than 7:00 PM. (Depending on the number of clients, we sometimes finish early.)

To volunteer to staff the pantry in September, please call me or email me.

Micki Baden (586-457-0457), micki.baden@gmail.com

**WE ARE MEETING IN THE CHURCH YARD
ON SUNDAY'S AT 10AM UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.
WE WILL CONTINUE TO LIVE STREAM
THROUGH OUR FACEBOOK PAGE
AND THE LINKS PROVIDED
IN THE WEEKLY
E-NEWS.**



Please mark your calendars for a **Congregational Meeting** that will take place after worship on Sunday, August 16, 2020. This meeting is being called to make you aware and have you vote to accept changes

made to our By-Laws, Resolution to Amend the Endowment Fund, and the Resolution to Amend the Barbara Moore Fund. The proposed changes are attached to your weekly E-News, are available for viewing on our website (firstcongrsc.org), or you may pick up a hard copy after Sunday worship. The proposed changes are listed below:

DOCUMENT CHANGES – JULY 2020

BY-LAWS: Article I, Paragraph 3 was added; (Open and Affirming Inclusive Church Covenant)

RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE BARBARA WESTON MOORE FUND AND THE ENDOWMENT FUND OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, U.C.C. ST CLAIR, MICHIGAN:

Purpose of the Fund:

4. To support Mission and Outreach programs, we would tithe quarterly 10% of the Fund to be distributed to Mission.

- Would be changed to:

Purpose of the Fund:

4. To support Mission and Outreach programs as prescribed in the Distribution of Funds.

Distribution of the Fund:

Paragraph 3. would be added to read –

3. 10% of the quarterly distribution shall be tithed to Mission.

Current Paragraph 3. would become 4.; Current Paragraph 4. would become 5.; Current Paragraph 5. would become 6.

RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE ENDOWMENT FUND

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC ST. CLAIR, MICHIGAN:

2. **Administration of the Trust**

a. **Board of Trustees** – The fund shall be administered by a Board of Trustees consisting of six (6) persons.

- Would be changed to:

2. **Administration of the Trust**

a. **Board of Trustees** – The fund shall be administered by a Board of Trustees consisting of six (6) persons that also administers the Barbara Weston Moore Fund following those same guidelines.

~ AND PEOPLE STAYED AT HOME ~

And people stayed at home

And read books

And listened

And they rested

And did exercises

And made art and played

And learned new ways of being

And stopped and listened

More deeply

Someone meditated, someone prayed

Someone met their shadow

And people began to think differently

And people healed

And in the absence of people who
Lived in ignorant ways
Dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
The earth also began to heal
And when the danger ended and
People found themselves
They grieved for the dead
And made new choices
And dreamed of new visions
And created new ways of living
And completely healed the earth
Just as they were healed.

~by Kathleen O'Mara~

This poem was written in 1869 and reprinted in 1919 during the Spanish Flu Epidemic.