

First Congregational Church of St. Clair



"A Just World for All"

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

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

2020



September

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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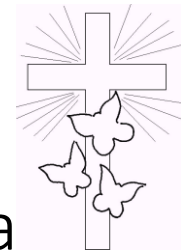
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Some thoughts from Pastor Alana

September 2020



Greetings to You!

We are under a lot of pressure lately; because we have concerns about becoming ill with COVID 19; because of political turmoil; because of worries about the environment; because of worries about job loss causing life changes causing a lack of financial security. I can easily say that God walks with us on the most difficult journeys. But when you are trying to decide which bill to pay because you can't afford to pay both, somehow the reminder that God is there doesn't quite provide the comfort that more tangible solutions might bring. If God would suddenly right now put an end to COVID 19, many of our other concerns would cease to be. And God is trying to help us with this. But, too many of us are simply unwilling to listen.

Medical professionals remind us constantly to keep a safe distance, wash our hands often, and wear a mask. They are conveying a message from God about what we need to be doing for each other. And yet so many people, because the virus hasn't touched them directly, or because they simply aren't concerned, are ignoring the advice we've been receiving from professionals, even infectious disease specialists. Sometimes, I picture the God image of my childhood just sitting in a huge golden filigree chair, up in the sky, long white hair and beard (or am I thinking of Santa?) and looking down upon us from the heavenly realm, saying, "Tsk tsk tsk. When will these children of mine ever learn?" We refuse to do what we are being told to do, and do the very things we are told not to do, then we wonder why it is taking so long for everything to go back to "normal". We can't force other people to do the right things, but we can continue doing the right things to set an example and make a difference.

Human beings are a stubborn bunch, and because of it we get ourselves into all sorts of self-made messes. But there IS good news, and that is that God understands us, God is, I'm guessing, awed by us, and God is pulling for us because God has faith in us. If we were ALL to decide at the very same time to do all the things we're supposed to be doing to stop the spread of COVID 19, especially not creating crowds of people no matter what we're doing, it would take approximately six weeks for the virus to finally be staunched so that our lives would return to a semblance of normal. But, we would ALL need to do this for one another. As Christians our solemn vow is to love God and each other. Our vow is to care for one another at all times, even if that

means that we need to make sacrifices. But we make sacrifices for love. And when we do this, we are making sacrifices for God. It's simply a given.

With You on the Journey,
Pastor Alana

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

13 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. **3** If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, [a] but have not love, I gain nothing. **4** Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant **5** or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; [b] **6** it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. **7** Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **8** Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. **9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part, **10** but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. **11** When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. **12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. **13** So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

We continue to pray for ~

Tommy Galvin and his daughter Patty, Collette Carlsen, Rennie Fandrlick, 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 September 20th!

Virtual Support Group

Happy September, everyone! You know we miss seeing you face to face, but we keep all of you, near and dear to our hearts and minds! Hopefully, we'll be together soon!

I am very pleased to announce that the Alzheimer's Association has arranged for us to hold our Alzheimer's Support Group virtually via Zoom. I am training next week as I write this and will be ready to get it started at our regular September time, 1:00 pm on September 24, 2020. I will be sending the dial-in information after my training, so stay tuned.

Remember, this group is for the community at large-for anyone caring for a patient with dementia or Alzheimer's. We meet every 4th Thursday at 1:00 pm. We provide knowledge of resources, discuss educational breakthroughs, and just have an informal gathering to support each other and discuss options and offer suggestions.

We convene at 1:00 promptly and end at 2:00. We are currently a small group but welcome all to join us! Any questions, please call Mary Ann Martin at 586-863-7236 or email me at stclairmam@sbcglobal.net.

Peace and joy,
Mary Ann Martin, RN
Alzheimer's Support Group Coordinator



Callan Eschenburg, Jr. – 3rd

Olivia Cheney – 4th

Anne Moore – 5th

Lucas Whittaker – 8th

Lindsay Baden – 9th

Andrew Skonieczny – 10th

Zoey Hildreth – 12th

Amanda Schwehofer – 15th

Deuane Martin – 16th

James Light – 18th

Janiene (Hirst) McCartney – 18th

Amelia Hirst – 19th

Douglas Johnson – 22nd

Diane Johnson – 24th

Stephanie Shapiro – 24th

Whitney Whittaker – 24th

Madison Montroy – 27th

Timothy Green – 27th

Shannon Johnston – 29th



Calvin and Julie Rock – 7th

Andrew and Jody Skonieczny –
12th

Carlos and Barb Arevalo – 22nd

Ann and Donald Whittaker – 9th

Cody and Jenner DeBoer – 17th

Dan and Karen Hudolin – 26th



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.



Church Staff

Pastor: Reverend Alana Kelley
Organist: Denise Gregg
Vocals: Anna Moore
Bookkeeper: Amanda Schweihofer
Office Administrator: Denise Medrano
Christian Ed Coordinator: Doug Bishop
Nursery Care: Olivia Carlsen
Custodians: Dale and Cindy Frey

Your Leadership Committee ~

Please feel free to contact any member of the committee with any questions, comments, or concerns.

Serving alongside Pastor are...

Pat O'Conner – Moderator
Nancy Rice – Vice Moderator
Don Rice – Treasurer
Dave Scheel – Church Clerk
Don O'Conner – Inside Maintenance
Randy Kling – Outside Maintenance
Brian Paret – Tech & Events Coordinator
Jody Skonieczny – Memorials
Marge Guinther - Missions



I hope this finds everyone well. As this Covid-19 pandemic drags on, we are starting to experience pandemic fatigue, that feeling of it is ever going to end. While we can only control so much, such as following the guidelines, taking care of our other healthcare needs will keep us stronger in the meantime.

I have included a chart that lists recommended vaccines for adults over 18 years of age. Many are age specific, and some are recommended for us all. While we wait for a Covid-19 vaccine, these are safe and effective vaccines to protect us now.

Adult vaccines checklist

Plan ahead for your next doctor visit

Take this checklist with you to your next doctor visit. And ask which vaccines may be right for you.

- Influenza vaccine. Annual immunizations are the best way to prevent the flu.

- Tdap or Td vaccine. Tdap protects against tetanus (lockjaw), diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). Td protects against tetanus and diphtheria.
- MMR vaccine. Protects against measles, mumps and rubella (German measles).
- Pneumococcal vaccines. Protect against illnesses such as pneumonia.
- Hepatitis A and B vaccines. Protect against serious liver diseases.
- Hib vaccine. Protects against a dangerous bacterial disease called Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib).
- HPV vaccines. Protect against human papillomavirus. Certain types of this virus cause cervical and other cancers. The vaccines are recommended for preteens. But young adults may still need them if they didn't get vaccinated as kids.
- Meningococcal vaccine. Protects against meningitis and blood infections. It's particularly important for college students who will be living in residence halls and people with certain health conditions.
- Varicella vaccine. Protects against chickenpox. You may need it if you haven't had chickenpox before or weren't vaccinated as a child.
- Shingles (zoster) vaccine. Protects against a painful skin rash. It's generally recommended for adults 60 and older. (Note: Most plans don't cover it before age 60, but there are some exceptions.)

As we develop this Health Care Ministry, we encourage you to let us know what might be of interest to you. If you have questions and need help with resources, please ask Elsa, Avery or myself. We are here to assist.

Peace and good health,

Bonnie Landschoot, RN



August 17, 2020

Dear Families,

Recently the Christian Education team met to discuss a roadmap for the CE program, and bringing children back to church safely. Below outlines our strategies, efforts, and plan(s) for doing so:

- Rally Day will be pushed back until Sunday September 27th. Traditionally we have held an ice-cream social after church. This year we will be using ice cream bars instead of bowls of ice cream and toppings to minimize the amount of contact with food distribution. Also, this event is subject to change as we assess data from our school systems regarding potential Covid-19 cases and how they are impacting children both in the state, and locally.
- Starting September 27th, we will be conducting in-person CE activities bi-weekly including Sunday school and Nursery services. We will be conducting most of our activities in the basement. The Sunday school students will sit at their own tables as a family unit. The nursery will be a 1:3 staff/student ratio, and will also hold activities in the basement.
- Students/Staff will be required to wear a mask, and staff will be checking temperatures prior to the start of Sunday school/nursery activities. If your child is sick, please keep them home.
- We will be following CDC cleaning guidelines and disinfecting areas before and after classes.
- We will be following the State of Michigan MI Safe Schools plan and guidelines:
 - Phases 4-5 - We will conduct in person CE activities as outlined above (bi-weekly)
 - Phases 1-3 - We will **NOT** be conducting in person CE activities
- We will continue to provide CE lessons via US Mail and Facebook on the weeks we do not meet in person.
- We will continue to monitor both adult and child Covid-19 cases locally, in the state, and nation. This information will be used to further make decisions.

If your child, or a member of your household has come in contact with a person who is presumed to have or has tested positive for Covid-19, please contact Doug Bishop or Pastor Alana Kelley. This information will be kept confidential. If you have any questions regarding our CE roadmap, please contact Doug Bishop.

Douglas Bishop BA, MS
Christian Education Coordinator



Hello! My name is Denise Medrano and I am serving as your new church Office Administrator. I have chosen to go by the name "Dee" here at church, to avoid any confusion with our other "Denise".

I have lived in the Blue Water area all my life. I married my high school sweetheart, Ray in 1985 and we currently reside in North Street. We have 3 biological children and were blessed with the opportunity to foster, then adopt 7 additional children, bringing our grand total to ten! Our children are all now adults and while I enjoy parenting, I find my role as a "Grammy" most rewarding. We have three grandchildren, Anya Jeanette (4 years), Jamison (3 years), and our newest addition, Calleigh (3 months).

I enjoy learning new things and my goal is to learn a new skill each year. I have taught myself how to crochet, do machine embroidery, and my most recent acquisition...a Cricut cutting machine, that allows me to make gifts and t-shirts for, you guessed it, my grand babies. I also think volunteering in the community is very important. I have volunteered for Girl Scouts, PTA, Head Start, YMCA, Toys for Tots, Port Huron Recreation, the Hemophilia Foundation of Michigan and my church choir. My favorite volunteer position was as a baseball and softball coach for 20 years (it took that long to work all our children through the system). Of everything I miss "pre-Covid", it is the cancellation of the Little League World series I am disappointed by the most this summer.

I am very grateful to be working here at First Congregational. As a Christian, I understand how important a church home is, especially during this time in our history. I am here to facilitate communication between the church and its members. I look forward to meeting each member and I appreciate the members who have stopped by to introduce themselves. I feel very welcomed!