



First Congregational Church

300 Adams Street, St. Clair, MI 48079

"No matter where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here."

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# The Channel

A monthly publication of First Congregational Church of St. Clair, UCC



2022

Some Thoughts from Pastor Alana:

This morning, very early, I went outside into the yard. I carried scissors and a Mason jar half filled with water. As I walked through the gardens, I

clipped flowers: beautiful flowers of all different sorts growing in the gardens around the parsonage. I took them inside and simply admired them as I drank my morning coffee. Each of the different types of flowers was distinctly beautiful. They represent a labor of love from those who planted them and more so from the ONE who created them; the ONE who has provided for creation in so many ways. As I witness in summer thyme, basil, tomatoes, Dahlias and Hostas I realize again the miracle of life and I sense God's love for us and amusement as we observe nature in all of its variety with the awe of a child.

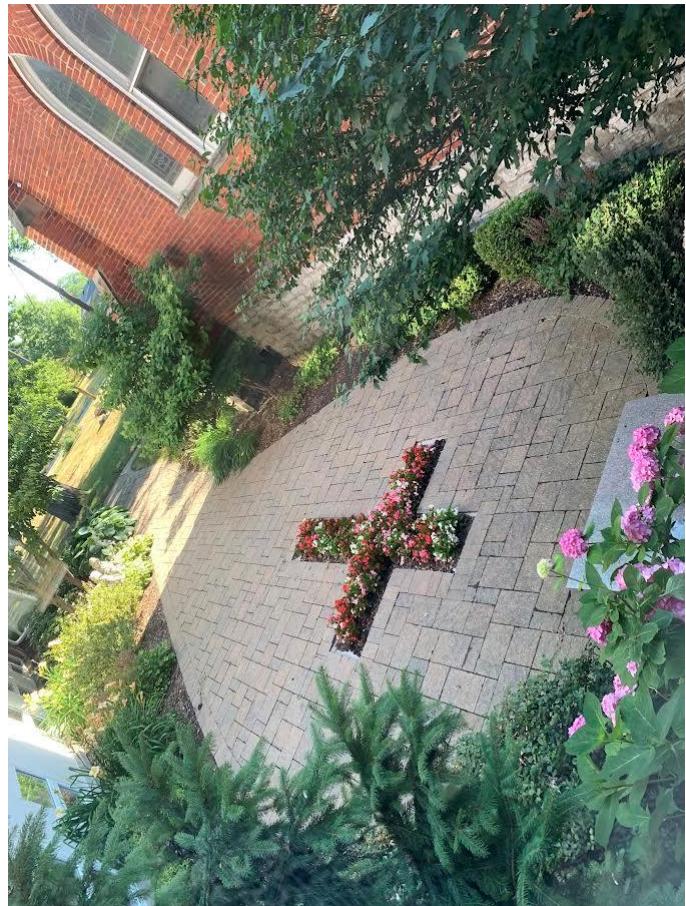
On Sunday, July, 2016, we worshiped in front of a newly christened Peace Garden. If you look at The Peace Garden and spend some time just sitting there, it becomes clear, I believe, that having places like our Peace Garden to go to and just sit for a little bit with God is important. Our lives become very busy and when we sit in the presence of God we slow down: we prioritize self-care and peace in the presence of the God who created us.

This is a difficult lesson for many of us. I mention this often during Sunday worship that Baby Boomers have been raised to be productive and much of that production is manifest by what we do each day. Boomers have worked a lot. Millennials (they are people between the ages of 26-41) have grown up understanding that there is much more to life than working sixty hours a week. And we've noticed that they are not quite so interested in attending church every Sunday, if at all, they are more often than not 'believers' who find themselves experiencing God in communion with nature and in other ways.

The Peace Garden serves as a reminder that there are benefits to our faith formation as we spend time in communion with nature in the midst of flowers and trees and birdsong. The Peace Garden is a wonderful place to sit in appreciation of all good gifts that we receive from our loving God. If you haven't been there yet this summer, I recommend that you do and just sit awhile. I encourage you to do this. The flower show is ever changing there. The beautifully planted cross is bright with color, thanks to Lezlynne and Bob who did all the church plantings this year!

The Peace Garden is truly a blessing to our congregation and to the community of St. Clair.

Yours on the Journey!  
Pastor Alana



Luke 8:4-8 (NRSV)

When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable:

"A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he called out, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"



### **SMALL KINDNESSES**

I've been thinking about the way,  
when you walk down a crowded aisle,  
people pull in their legs to let you by.

Or how strangers still say "bless you"  
when someone sneezes, a leftover  
from the Bubonic plague.  
"Don't die," we are saying.

And sometimes, when you spill lemons  
from your grocery bag,  
someone will help you pick them up.

Mostly, we don't want to  
harm each other.

We want to be handed our  
cup of coffee hot,  
and to say thank you  
to the person handing it.

To smile at them  
and for them to smile back.

For the waitress to call us honey  
when she sets down the  
bowl of clam chowder,  
and for the driver in the  
red pick-up truck to let us pass.

We have so little of each other, now.  
So far from tribe and fire.  
Only these brief moments of exchange.

What if they are the true  
dwelling of the holy,  
these fleeting temples  
we make together when we say,  
"Here, have my seat,"  
"Go ahead – you first,"  
"I like your hat."

# Arts & Crafts

## AN ART AND CRAFT SHOW IN THE CHURCH

We've talked about it and our plan now is to set up an exhibit of your works on September 8<sup>th</sup> keeping it up through mid-October. If you have works of art or crafts that you'd like to share, we invite you to bring them to the church. We'll provide a form for you to fill out including information about your work. Work can be recent or can be from long ago! We'll need some assistance setting the exhibit up. If you'd like to help with this, please let Pastor Alana or Wendy know. If you have easels you can spare, we plan to exhibit heavier flat works on easels. 3D works will go in the glass case. If you have questions, please talk with Pastor Alana.



Ken Schultz 8/03  
Kim Hazel 8/06  
Caroline Schultz 8/07  
Sue Ann Eames 8/12  
David Scheel 8/12  
Bryan Currie 8/13  
Donald O'Connor 8/23  
Charlene Taylor 8/23  
Liana Cherni 8/31



Kenneth & Denise Gregg 8/12  
Mark & Kenzie Achatz 8/14  
Brian & Vicki Paret 8/21



## August 2022

Sunday Stewart  
David Scheel/Tim Galvin

Communion  
Vicki Kling

Lay Readers  
8/7 – Kathy Cilluffo  
8/14 – Barb Fandrick  
8/21 – Don Rice  
8/28 – David Scheel

### **Power Point**

8/7 – Pat O'Connor  
 8/14 – Kathy Cilluffo  
 8/21 – Jody Skonieczny  
 8/28 – Sam Tricomo

### **Usher Teams**

8/7 – Pat O'Connor & Don O'Connor  
 8/14 – Bob Rood & Karen Galvin  
 8/21 – David Scheel & Tom Pennewell  
 8/28 – Don Rice & Tim Galvin

### **Facebook – Livestream**

8/7 – Don Rice  
 8/14 – David Kelley  
 8/21 – Kathy Cilluffo  
 8/28 – Don Rice



### **OUTDOOR WORSHIP AND CHURCH PICNIC**

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 14TH**  
**WEATHER PERMITTING**

Picnic Church in the church yard  
 is August 14th.

We will have hotdogs.

Bring a salad or dessert to share,  
 if you'd like.

Maker's Trio will be with us to provide music for  
 worship.

Last Sunday outdoor worship is scheduled for  
 September 11th.

(If it's rainy or threatening rain, we'll be inside)



### **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL** **ECUMENICAL** **FOOD PANTRY**

We will be collecting non-perishable food items or  
 monetary donations for the food pantry for the  
 remainder of August. You can bring your food  
 donations to church and place them in the elevator

room on the designated shelf labeled food pantry  
 and place monetary donations in the metal box  
 outside of the office.

Mary Brown said the following items are needed:

Mustard  
 Ketchup  
 Hamburger Helper  
 Boxed Potatoes  
 Cereal  
 Tuna  
 Laundry Detergent  
 Kleenex  
 Paper Towels

If there are additional items that are needed, we will  
 update the list.

If you have any questions, please contact either:  
 Barb Fandrick or Kathy Cilluffo.



### **Ecumenical Food Pantry**

#### **One of our church's missions**

#### **Needed: Donations and Workers!**

How the Ecumenical Food Pantry Operates: The Ecumenical Food Pantry is supported by nine 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 in the Eddy Building.

Here's how it works:

- Around 3:45 pm, team leader(s) arrive 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 4-5 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 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) We may finish early depending on the number of clients.

Workers: September is our month to staff the Ecumenical Food Pantry. We expect to need workers for Tuesday evenings from 4:00-7:00 PM. There will be a sign-up sheet on the table at the back of the church. If you have not worked the Pantry before, please consider it—an experienced worker will always be working with you, so lack of experience shouldn't hamper your desire to

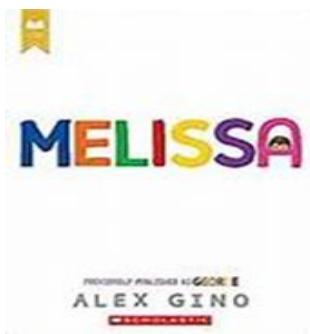
volunteer. There will also be a space to sign if you would be available as a last-minute substitute. If you have any questions, please call me, Kathy Cilluffo at 810-289-8032 email: kcilluffo57@yahoo.com or Barb Fandrick at 810-919-3873 email: barbfandrick@gmail.com. The maximum number of workers needed each evening is 4. Donations: Bring non-perishable items to our church in the elevator room, the first set of metal shelves marked for the pantry opposite entry door. You may also donate cash or check to the church, marked for the Ecumenical Food Pantry.

**Greatest Need:**

Canned meats  
(beef, tuna, chicken)  
Canned Beef Stew and Roast Beef/Corned Beef  
Hash Chili  
(with meat, vegetarian, or no beans)  
Canned fruit & applesauce

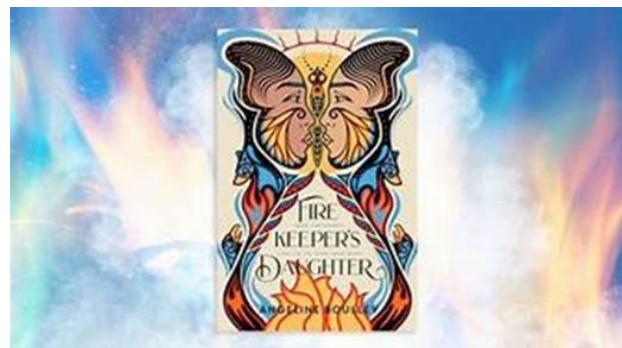
**Other items that are always in short supply:**

- Canned Pasta (ravioli, spaghetti, Spaghetti-O's, etc.)
  - Spaghetti noodles
  - Spaghetti sauce
  - Meal Helper Kits
- Packaged dry potato and rice dishes
  - Canned or bottled juices
  - Canned vegetables
  - Canned tomatoes
  - Cereals
- Pancake mix & Syrup
  - Powdered Milk.



**All-Church Read**

We're reading a book along with the other churches in the Michigan Conference. It's a Youth read titled *Melissa* by Alex Gino. We'll have a conversation about it on at a date to be determined, in the Lounge. Publisher's Weekly describes *Melissa* as "Profound, moving and radiant, this book will stay with anyone lucky enough to find it".



We are reading  
**Fire Keeper's Daughter**  
we will have a discussion on  
August 24, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.



**AUGUST IS NATIONAL WELLNESS MONTH**

This August celebrates National Wellness Month. This month focuses on self-care, stress management, and creating healthy routines. If you are looking for an excuse to make a change, start this month in support of National Wellness Month.

Self-care is an important part of well-being for us as well as those around us. It can take 21 days for something to become a habit and 90 days for it to be a lifestyle change. Practicing self-care, managing stress, being mindful, practicing self-compassion, and focusing on proper nutrition and exercise are all things you would work towards incorporating into your daily routine. Here are some simple self-care habits to start including into your daily routine to help improve your well-being.

**DRINK MORE WATER**

Staying hydrated is one of the best things you can do for your overall health. Water helps give you energy, flushes toxins from your body, improves concentration, and can even help with weight loss.

**STRETCH OR PRACTICE YOGA**

If you are on your feet all day, or sitting at a desk most of the day, stretching daily can help improve

your posture, heal back pain, as well as ease your mind.

### **TRY SOMETHING NEW**

Whether it be a new bike route, exploring a new restaurant, or volunteering. Doing something new can help improve your mental outlook and make you feel good overall.

### **PRIORITIZE EXERCISE**

There are so many benefits to exercising including pain management, letting stress out, boosting confidence, as well as increasing strength, and so much more.

### **PAY ATTENTION**

If something is making you feel overwhelmed or stressed, pay attention and act. Go take a walk, try a breathing technique, talk to a friend, find something to help alleviate the overwhelming feeling, and give yourself the opportunity to slow down.

### **MAKE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES**

Food can impact the way you feel. Having a balanced diet and good nutrition will help nourish your body and lead to good overall health.

Take this month dedicated to wellness as your chance to begin creating and incorporating healthy routines into your daily life. Adding one or two of these habits daily or weekly lead to big changes over time.