



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

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw Jesus, they worshiped him, but they doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:16-20

Some Thoughts from Pastor Alana
October 2022

I've been reviewing my early Channel Newsletter articles to see how far we've come in 7 years. So, here is an edited version for 2022.

Here's a tough question for you, but it is especially significant as we consider as a church how to be even more inclusive and welcoming.

How do you think this church is perceived by those outside of the church?

Those outside the church would be those who have never attended this church, or attended and left to attend other churches, or who walk by, see the building and form an opinion.

All churches describe themselves as 'friendly'. It's the classic self-descriptive word used by church members about the church to which they are members or friends. Those regulars are friendly in most churches, to one another. But they have a tendency to be less inclusive of those who haven't been around for very long.

Church members can recognize this quality in their own church if new people are greeted gladly the first few times they come in, but after a few church visits, they receive little to no attention. Rather, the church's members and friends back to socializing with the people they've always socialized with and give no thought to helping newer members and friends fit in and feel comfortable.

It isn't malicious behavior by any means, neglecting new people. In fact, if members are made aware that someone did not feel welcomed, they are often surprised and even upset. "I talked to her when she came to church." "I invited him to attend the Bible study."

It's hard work to be inclusive ALL the time. But, it's important for every member and friend of the church to remain vigilant, to notice when someone is alone at the beginning and end of worship. It's helpful to learn about the other people who visit the church. Asking questions helps us to initiate conversation.

"Do you live in St Clair?" "Have you always lived in Marysville?" "What a blessing for us that you're here today. What made you decide to give this church a try?" "If you have any questions about the church I'd be happy to answer them."

It's important to avoid making people who visit feel like outsiders of the church because we use phrases like "our church" or "my church". It's God's church and all are welcome, all the time.

Most important is we want to begin forming relationships with new people.

We want to get to know them; really know them.

Vital churches get to know what gifts new people have to share, and then they encourage them to use those gifts. Vital churches learn what someone might be most passionate about. Does that passion fit into a ministry we have in the church? Or might that passion lead to a brand-new ministry of some sort for the church? (An example of this is the "Care-givers Team". Another example is

our support of the family from Latin America being supported by some.)

It's important to learn what a person's gifts and interests are and to make them aware of opportunities here, in this church.

And when a visitor expresses an interest in becoming more involved in the church, we want to be as permission giving as possible. It's important for us to encourage new ideas, even new ways of doing things. It's good for us to think outside the box about what we do here to minister to others.

Doing this creates good, constructive energy and energy is what propels churches into an increasingly vital future. New members and friends bring new eyes and new life. This is very valuable!

Back to my first question. How do you think this church is perceived by those outside of the church? Sometimes we are called "the church that does good in the community". We like hearing this.

Sometimes we are called "That church with the rainbow flag." Some of us fear this sort of comment. It makes us nervous. And yet, in our claiming to truly welcome everyone, we have to let everyone know that we are that church and we DO welcome everyone, even those in the LGBTQIA+ community. Too many continue to falsely claim that these children of God are sinners.

A rainbow flag speaks loudly and clearly to who we really are. Our response to that observation ought to be, "Yes. We ARE the church with the rainbow flag because we understand that God is a God of love who loves everyone deeply, no matter who they love. We are a safe-haven for anyone who

needs us to be a safe-haven. And we are proudly "Open and Affirming." As I see it, this is something we really need to work on.

Think about this. What might we do better to be an extravagantly welcoming and vital church as we do the ministries God calls us to do? We are

called to make disciples who know the acceptance, love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. To do this you need to talk the talk and walk the walk each and everyday.
 Yours on the Journey,
 Pastor Alana



New Vision and Mission for the Church

Every three years or so, churches do well to work on a new vision statement and mission statement. Churches want to be vital enough that they outgrow their vision and mission statements regularly.

A vision statement is our long term hope as we move into the future. The mission statement describes how this will happen. After our conversations, your comments in and outside of church and some tweeking by pastor, this is what we have:

VISION

To Be the Church that welcomes, openly affirms, and engages spiritually; sharing God’s love by caring for community, creation, and one another.

MISSION

With God’s guidance, we are the church as we walk the walk, serve community and the world and welcome everyone.

OUR CORE VALUES

- Welcoming
- Unconditionally Accepting
- Supportive
- Compassionate
- Courageous
- Creative
- Adaptable
- Christ-loving

Your comments are welcome!

SUNDAY MORNING

WORSHIP
 SCHEDULE

October 2022

Sunday Steward
 Tom Pennewell

Communion
 JoAn Kindsvater

Lay Readers

- 10/2 – Kathy Rood
- 10/9 – Barb Fandrick
- 10/16 – Jody Skonieczny
- 10/23 – Kathy Cilluffo
- 10/30 – Paul Lydy

Power Point

- 10/2 – Jody Skonieczny
- 10/9 – Sam Tricomo
- 10/16 – Kathy Cilluffo
- 10/23 – Pat O’Connor
- 10/30 – Ash Currie

Usher Teams

- 10/2 – Dave Scheel & Tom Pennewell
- 10/9 – Don Rice & Tim Galvin
- 10/16 – Cal Eschenburg & Paul Lydy
- 10/23 – Jim Light & Doug Johnson
- 10/30 - Pat O’Connor & Don O’Connor

Facebook – Livestream

- 10/2 – Kathy Cilluffo
- 10/9 – Don Rice
- 10/16 – David Kelley
- 10/23 – Kathy Cilluffo
- 10/30 – Don Rice



I really appreciate your thoughtfulness, you made a BIG birthday FUN!
 Jim & Cathy Light



- Doug Vernier 10/02
- Sean Galvin 10/04
- Kathy Rood 10/08
- Carol LaVigne 10/09
- Phyllis Hart 10/12
- Julie Wendt 10/13
- Jennifer DeBoer 10/14
- Isabella Hazel 10/14
- Theresa Craven 10/16
- Catherine Light 10/16
- Michael Kennedy 10/19
- Jeff Hazel 10/20
- Laurel Lydy 10/30
- Makayla Malcolm 10/30
- Dawn Kindsvater 10/31



MISSION MOMENT

In October we'll collect for Neighbors in Need. NIN is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice providing care throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two thirds of this offering is used by the

UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and service projects through grants that are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. If you'd like to make an offering, please use an envelope and label it NIN.



ARTIST'S RECEPTION

The Art exhibit will be on display through the 7th of October. Artist Reception with hors d'oeuvres will be held on 10/1 - 4 - 5:30 p.m. Please come!!!



BIBLE STUDY IS BACK

Bible Study in the Lounge resumes at 10:30 on Wednesday mornings. We'll meet to discuss our favorite passages; passages that we find perplexing, and we'll discuss what was going on in the world at the time those passages were written. Learn about this book we rely on so heavily! PLEASE COME!



ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

If you're interested in learning about becoming a church member, there will be a meeting after worship on Sunday October 2nd and Sunday October 9th. Pastor Alana will provide information about the United Church of Christ and this church specifically. We will celebrate those joining on October 16th.



SUNDAY - OCTOBER 9th

This year's pet blessing will be in the church yard on Sunday, October 9th during 10 a.m. worship. If it rains, we'll be in Friendship Hall.

Plan to bring your well-behaved dogs and other pets to church that morning. If you have a senior pet, you may bring a photograph.



ECUMENICAL FOOD PANTRY DINNER

First UCC St. Clair will be hosting Ecumenical Food Pantry Churches and volunteers for a dinner October 24th at 5 p.m., in Friendship Hall. Information will be given to churches then about Thanksgiving and Christmas families needing assistance.



THE LITTLE RED FOOD PANTRY

This small pantry is a community outreach program sponsored by The Mission Team of this church. It is stocked twice-weekly with non-perishable food.

Donation requests may change but the need to feed does not.

It's officially fall.

The nights are cold.

Give food and share the warmth you hold.

OCTOBER PANTRY NEEDS:

Canned green beans & corn, canned fruit, mashed potato pouches, PEANUT BUTTER.

Halloween treats would be nice, too!

Please leave your food donations in the elevator room on the shelves labeled LITTLE RED FOOD PANTRY.

Any question? Please contact Nancy Kennedy at (810)-329-3790.



CHILD FUND UPDATE

Our adopted boys are growing up! Especially Rizki...he is 18 years old now and has finished high school. This means he is no longer eligible for financial support provided by our church for the past 12 years. His binder now is located in the church library and is open, showing the latest photo we have of him. The binder contains all the letters we've shared about his life in Indonesia. Paulo lives in Brazil and is 17 years old now. He will be 18 in April, 2023. Please enjoy reading about him, too.

His photo and binder will remain on the piggy bank table until next Spring.



Sanborn Gratiot
MEMORIAL HOME

The Sanborn Gratiot Memorial Home, Inc. provides residential assisted living for the elderly with a mission to serve lower income seniors who are semi-independent and seeking a secure and affordable residence. It is located on 2732 Cherry Street in Port Huron. The home was founded in 1944 by five Christian women with generous financial support from others in the community.

During the month of November, the Mission Team would like to collect items for Bingo prizes and personal care. The following items are suggested.

Small packages of snacks/cookies, lotion, crossword puzzle books, figurines, small puzzles, notebooks, pens, calendars etc. There is a tray of items in the elevator room. Items brought to the church can be added to the shelf. These will be given to the home at the end of November.

Thank you for supporting this Mission project.



SIX FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Bullying directly affects student's ability to learn.

According to the Center for Disease Control students who are bullied are more likely to experience low self-esteem and isolation perform poorly in school, have few friends in school, have a negative view of school, experience physical symptoms and experience mental health issues.

Bystanders can be powerful allies.

More than half of bullying situations (57 percent) stop when a peer intervenes on behalf of the student being bullied. With that statistic, students have a unique power to prevent bullying.

Bullying is not a "rite of passage" but a serious threat to student safety and well-being.

Some say bullying makes children tougher and is not a serious problem, but the reality is that students who are bullied are more likely to report

increased negative effects to their emotional and physical health.

Anyone can bully, and anyone can be bullied.

Students can have multiple roles: they can be the ones subjected to bullying and the one who bullies.


Strategies that focus on holding students accountable for their behavior but also empower them to change that behavior are more effective than punitive punishments and peer mediation in bullying situations.

Bullying isn't about resolving conflicts; bullying is about control.

In conflict, children self-monitor their behavior and generally stop when they realize they are hurting someone and are satisfied by a feeling of power and control.

Effective bullying prevention efforts includes students, parents, teachers and community members.

Involving community members such as law enforcement officials, faith organizations, community action groups, and other allow school officials and parents to address the bigger issue of disrespect, bias, and violence that can contribute to bullying issues in schools. A community-wide effort shows students that adults care what happens to them and that they are not alone.



Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Week
September 25 - October 1, 2022

Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer syndrome affects all genders, increasing the risk of breast, ovarian, pancreatic and prostate cancers, especially at an early age. Sharing your family health history with a health care provider can help determine if you would benefit from genetic counseling and/or genetic testing to manage risk.

For more information, visit:
Michigan.gov/HereditaryCancer
or call the MDHHS Hereditary Cancer Hotline:
866-852-1247