



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



United Church of Christ – First Congregational Church of St. Clair

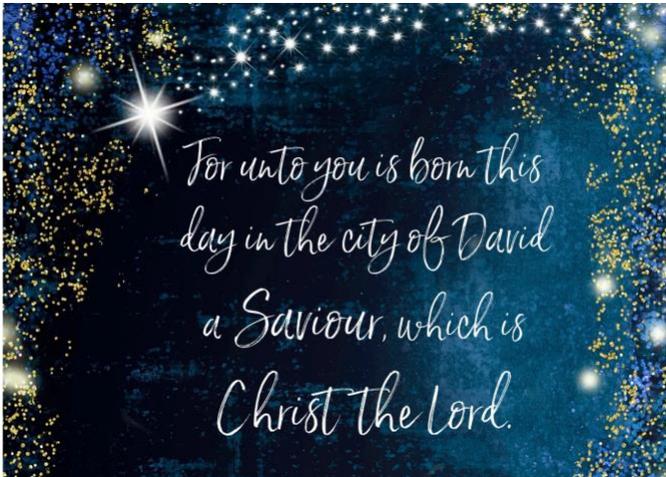
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Facebook/First Congregational Church UCC of St. Clair

(810) 329-4142

December 2023



Near the end of September I heard someone talking about acting. I wrote this down: "People rearrange their lives to watch an actor who touches them."

That's so, isn't it? I've done it and so have you. For what else will people rearrange their lives? Work? Family? Do people rearrange their lives for their church? Sure, some do. For others, though, "Church?! What church?"

How about this one? We take it for granted, you know, and that is dangerous. In this time of near-abandonment of churches and other religious institutions in favor of private and individual spiritual practice, the danger is especially sharp and vivid. No matter your own personal preferences, if you call yourself "Christian" you need a church. As one writer says, "Spiritual maturity means you can endure frustration, negotiate conflict and get to the other side of disillusionment with the capacity to hope." No one does that alone or online.

As you celebrated Thanksgiving, was this church on your mind? As you prepare for Christmas will you be here for worship on Sundays, or just Christmas Eve? In the new year will you rearrange your life? For what? Why?

"Don't be afraid," says the Christmas angel.

I bring you good news of great Joy! To you is born this day in the city of David a savior, who is Christ the Lord!

Good news: great joy! You can change. You can grow. Your spirit, mind, and heart can grow. It's hard, though, awfully hard without discipline and faith, discipline and faith nurtured and strengthened in church.

Time to rearrange?

God is good.

We're open every Sunday. See you then, and bring somebody with you!

Chuck



Interim

Dr. Charles Guerreno

Chuck can be reached at the church Thursday through Friday 10:00 – 4:30,

Saturday 11:00 – 4:30,

and Sunday 8:00 – noon.

Chuck can also be reached at

stclairinterim@gmail.com

and (989) 980-0061.



PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Search Committee invited a prospective minister to tour St. Clair in October. The Conference continues to receive interested applicants. Please contact a committee member with questions and comments as you desire.

The search committee members are:
Co-Chairs: Avery Skonieczny & Don Rice;
Rose Crowley, Mike Kennedy, Don O'Connor, Kathy Rood, Kathy Cilluffo, Sam Tricomo, Vicki Kling and Ash Currie. We are available for your questions and concerns regarding the pastoral search in person or email at: firstcongsc@gmail.com



ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

If you're interested in learning about becoming a church member please speak with Pat O'Connor or Chuck to set up a time to chat. Your questions about the United Church of Christ and this church specifically will be answered.



Altar Flowers

If you wish to donate altar flowers please contact:
Bev Stewart
(810) 329-2147



COFFEE HOUR

Coffee hour is each Sunday immediately following worship. There are several Sundays available to host coffee hour. Please be sure to check out the sign-up sheet on the back table in the sanctuary.



December BIRTHDAYS

- Cathy Mollon – 12/2
- Ryleigh O'Connor – 12/8
- Don Whittaker – 12/8
- Robert Rood – 12/9
- Robert Baden – 12/10
- Vicki Paret – 12/11
- Adelle Schwan – 12/15
- Nancy Kennedy – 12/17
- Jeremy Bishop – 12/19
- Brian Paret – 12/21



Michael & Melissa Malcolm

SUNDAY MORNING
WORSHIP
SCHEDULE

December 2023

Sunday Steward
Don O'Connor

Communion
Kathy Cilluffo

Lay Readers
12/3 – Elsa Pennewell
12/10 – Dave Scheel
12/17 - Kathy Rood
12/24 – Pat O'Connor
12/25 – Jacie Sanders
12/31 – Bonnie Landschoot

Power Point
12/3 – Jody Skonieczny
12/10 – Pat O'Connor
12/17 – Kathy Cilluffo
12/24 – Jody Skonieczny
12/25 – Ash Currie
12/31 – Kathy Cilluffo

Usher Teams
12/3 – Jim Light, Jacie Sanders
12/10 – Pat O'Connor, Don O'Connor
12/17 – Nikki Perry, Tim Galvin
12/24 – Dave Scheel, Tom Pennewell
12/25 – Don Rice, Tim Galviin
12/31 – Jim Light, Jacie Sanders

Livestream
12/3 – Kathy Cilluffo
12/10 – Don Rice
12/17 – Jacie Sanders
12/24 – Don Rice
12/25 – Kathy Cilluffo
12/31 – Don Rice

Please remember if you are unable to fulfill your worship duty, please be certain to find a substitute.



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.

Do you remember
the story of December?
The guiding light?
The holy night?

Jesus's birth
defines our worth.
We must be aware
of others' despair.

December food pantry needs
Cereal
Canned Chicken
Canned Tuna
Canned Pasta w/Meat
Peanut Butter
Spaghetti
Spaghetti Sauce (canned)
Hearty Soups

December holiday extras
Canned Fruit
Muffin/Biscuit Mix
Cake Mix/Frosting Tub
Cookie Mix
Candy

Please leave donations in the elevator room on any one of the shelves labeled LITTLE RED FOOD PANTRY.

If you have any questions, please call Nancy Kennedy (810-329-3790).



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Poinsettia time is approaching. If you'd like to contribute to the purchase of a poinsettia plant to decorate our church during Advent, please contact Beverly Stewart when you see her at church or call 810-329-2147. You may also use the poinsettia envelopes that are on the table at the back of the Sanctuary. Place them in the collection plate. Please include your name and phone number so we can get information on those you are honoring or remembering.



We have received our list of adopted families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We have 3 families, consisting of 5 adults and 6 children. We will send each family a gift card for Thanksgiving, and a gift card and presents for the children for Christmas. The Giving Tree is set up in the lounge, with tags for Christmas gifts for the children. Please remember to sign up on the white papers, corresponding to the number(s) of

your tags. These gifts (wrapped, no bow, please) need to be returned to church by December 10, to the marked shelves in the elevator room. They will be delivered by Karen and Tim Galvin and the delivery team. Thank you for your generous spirit; any questions, please call Cathy Light, (810) 329-4875.



9 STEPS TO ENSURE A STRESS-FREE HOLIDAY

Plan Ahead

Between co-workers, friends, and family, it's inevitable that some commitments will end up on the same day. Make sure to plan on what you can attend in person or virtually. If you're hosting the holidays, create a menu to help you stay organized and make grocery shopping easier.

Say No

With holiday commitments, it is okay to say no to a few or all of them. It also will help relieve stress. Try sharing your to-do list with other family members.

Plan Spending

The holidays mean spending money. Make a budget and stick to it. Spending money on your loved ones is important, but it's also important to pay your energy bill. Don't buy gifts that you'll be paying off for the rest of the year.

Create Relaxing Surroundings

Turn on some music, light some candles or open the windows on a sunny day.

Research has found that listening to music and the scent of citrus can boost feelings or well-being, and vitamin D is always a happiness booster.

Maintain Healthy Habits

The holidays are notorious for ruining healthy habits. A short workout each morning will help your decision-making throughout the day. Encourage your family to try snowshoeing or sledding to get in extra exercise. Eat healthy snacks like fresh fruits or vegetables throughout the season and fill up before a dinner party or celebration with tempting, but unhealthy food.

Share Feelings

Spending a holiday after a loss in the family can be difficult. Accept your feelings and open up about them to others. It may make you feel better to share. Try to switch up old traditions to ease the loss.

Respect Differences

Family members will have different viewpoints than your own. Try your best to forgive and forget this holiday season. Focus on your similarities, and replace tension with something productive.

Be Realistic

You are only one person, and you can only do so much. Be realistic with how much you can handle this season. Forget about perfection, and relax and enjoy the company surrounding you.

Take A Break

Don't forget about your own needs. Take a nap, go for a short walk, read a book or watch a funny movie. Laughing relaxes the whole body, and can relieve physical tension and stress.

Holidays are meant to be fun, enjoyable time with friends and family. These tips can help ensure you truly enjoy your holidays when stress starts to set in.



BLUE CHRISTMAS

Blue Christmas Service
Sunday, December 17, 2 p.m.
Holy Family Episcopal

Ecumenical Service:
First Congregational Church UCC,
St. Peter's Lutheran, and
Holy Family Episcopal

Recognizing that this is not a season of joy for everyone, when memories of past experiences and the pain of present reality, can become overwhelming. We can acknowledge the sadness, sorrow, and loneliness we feel. We pray that all of us will find hope and comfort in knowing that we are not alone. Please join us.

