

The Lakeshore Congregationalist

December 2018

First Congregational Church – Serving the community since 1860



FCC's Contact Information:

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Saugatuck

Our Covenant

We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all his ways, according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in his blessed word of truth.

Our Goal

The church exists to change lives. That's what we're about. It's simple to say, harder to live. Every single week, we find a way to love God through worship, through one another, through fellowship, and through simple acts of service in the Saugatuck/Douglas area. We don't always get it right, but we have fun trying.



"When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up!" he said, "Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." - Matthew 2:13

Each Advent we let Luke and Matthew lead the way on our study of Scripture. Luke, with his tender story of miracles and surprises, pulls at our heart. Matthew, on the other hand, was a devoted and educated Jew and he wrote his Gospel from the lens of his education. He begins with sharing the genealogy of Christ, linking him all the way back to memorable figures like David, Ruth, and Abraham. Matthew is a nostalgic writer with a deep respect for tradition, yet one that doesn't shy away from recalling times of trial and persecution.

Matthew's Christmas story is riddled with anxiety over the unknown. While Luke's is filled with an overwhelming joy and peace, Matthew's is sometimes leery and careful. So, it is no wonder that in Matthew's narrative Joseph, Mary and Jesus find themselves as refugees fleeing in the middle of the night in search for anonymity and safety.

Below I've included a poem by Ann Weems that offers a look inside Joseph's heart as he seeks to provide and protect during this time of unknown. I cherish this poem as one that pushes me to consider the full breadth of the nativity story, perhaps it will do the same for you. For while Christmas, the incarnation of our God, is glorious and so joyful- not everyone is able to recognize this moment for what it is or they don't have the freedom and security to see the joy.

This holiday season, from Thanksgiving to New Years, as you welcome people into your home and as we step out into our community, I encourage you to consider the struggles of the refugees. Consider the struggle of Joseph, Mary and infant Jesus. Consider the struggles of modern refugees - families who find themselves homeless, people fleeing war and violence making their way to borders, spouses trying to find a way out of an abusive marriage... The lost, the lonely, the overwhelmed, the isolate... Let us be mindful of them.

If there is a way to shine forth welcome, then take it! If you have an opportunity to gift God's love, give it! If you see the possibilities of hospitality and warmth, do what you can to share it!

Sometimes people wear their struggles on their sleeve. But more often than not, that insecurity is deeply hidden. May God help us to be mindful and intentional during this most precious time of year. May God help us to be a safe haven for those seeking security.

All together in Christ,
Pastor Sarah



The Refugees by Ann Weems

Into the wild and painful cold of the starless winter night came the refugees, slowly making their way to the border. The man, stooped from age or anxiety, hurried his small family through the wind. Bearded and dark, his skin rough and cracked from the cold, his frame looming large in spite of the slumped shoulders; He looked like a man who could take care of whatever came at them from the dark. Unless of course there were too many of them, One man he could handle, two, even. . . .but a border patrol, . . . they wouldn't have a chance. His eyes, black and alert, darted from side to side, then over his shoulder, then back again forward. Had they been seen? Had they been heard? Every rustle of the wind, every sigh from the child, sent terror though his chest. Was this the way? Even the stars had been unkind— had hidden themselves in the ink of night so that the man could not read their way, Only the wind. . . . was it enough? Only the wind and his innate sense of direction. . . . What kind of cruel judgment that would be, to wander in circles through the night? Or to safely make their way to the border, only to find the authorities waiting for them? He glanced at the young woman, his bride. No more than a child herself, she nuzzled the newborn, kissing his neck. she looked up caught his eye and smiled. Oh how the homelessness had taken its toll on her! Her eyes were red, Her young face was lined, her lovely hair matted from inattention. her clothes stained from milk and baby, her hands chapped from the raw wind of winter. She'd hardly had time to recover from childbirth when word had come that they were hunted, and they fled with only a little bread, and the remaining wine, and a very small portion of cheese. Suddenly, the child began to make small noises, the man drew his breath in sharply: the woman quietly put the child to breast. Fear . . . long dread-filled moments Huddled the family stood still in the long silence. At last the man breathed deeply again, reassured they had not been heard. and into the night continued Mary, Joseph and the Babe.



Upcoming Meetings

Dec. 4 – Women's Fellowship, Tues 10am
Dec. 4 – Trustees, Tuesday, 12:00 pm
Dec. 9 – Diaconate, Sunday, 11:20 am
Dec. 12 – Prudential, Wednesday, 7:00pm

Fellowship Hosts Janna R. 269-857-5763

Dec. 2 – Women's Fellowship
Dec. 9 – Trustees
Dec. 16 – Choir
Dec. 23 – Diaconate
Dec. 30 – Prudential

Scripture Readers

Kristyn B. 616-218-7276

Dec. 2 – Brad Rudich
Dec. 9 – Cathy Brockington
Dec. 16 – Connie Rusiecki
Dec. 23 – David Edwards
Dec. 30 – Linda Escott

Welcome Team

Signup needed for December

CALL: Pat G. 616-355-8720

Children's Story-Time Leader

Signup needed for December

CALL: Connie R. 616-990-0997

Special Services in December



Communion Sunday
December 2



GRACE OF DOUGLAS

SERVICE

DEC. 9TH, 2:00

Please join Pastor Sarah and our "home"-bound friends at Grace of Douglas for a 2:00 service!



December 16 will be the
Children's Program



Come to Grace of Douglas for an All-Churches,
Community Carol Sing Dec. 20th at 6:30 pm

Dec. 21st – "Longest Night"
prayer service for those who
are grieving during this
season. Opens at 5 pm.



Sunday, December 23rd, the Choir will
sing "Lessons and Carols"



On December 24th there will be a traditional candle light
service beginning at 6:30 pm.



CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Are you looking for a special gift for a family member or friend this holiday season? Come to the **Annual Christmas Bazaar** of the Women's Fellowship! Many of your favorite vendors will be returning along with some new favorites from jewelry to crochet/knitted items...even an author! Take a break from shopping to enjoy a delicious lunch that features our famous barbecue sandwich!

Don't forget to check out our baked goods and our "Cookie Table"! You're sure to find scrumptious choices to make your celebrations merry! So join us:

Saturday, December 1st
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

What a wonderful way to bring in the festive month of December! Don't forget to bring a friend or two! **(All proceeds go to support various building projects and missions.)**



Christian Neighbors Christmas Hearts

Check out the mini Christmas tree in the narthex. Each tag on the tree lists an item needed for the annual Children's Christmas Party on December 8th. ***Pick a heart, purchase your gift, and bring it (unwrapped and un-bagged) to the church by December 2nd.*** Gifts will be displayed for parent(s) to choose a gift for their child.

We will be delivering these to Christian Neighbors on the 3rd.

Poinsettia Orders

It's that time again! Check the bulletin over the next 2 Sundays to place your order. This year we have the option of small 6" (\$11), medium 8" (\$22), or large 12" (\$30) in red only.

Payment must accompany your order. *Thanks!*



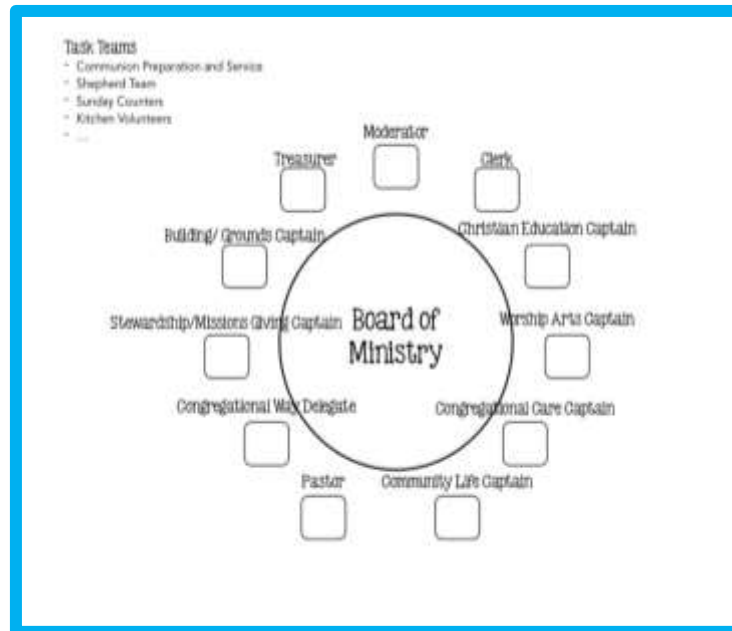
Cookie Tins

This year Women's Fellowship will put together "Tins of Gratitude" for our staff and "Tins of Love" for our homebound and hospitalized members on **Dec. 4th at 10**

We are humbly asking for cookies, candies, and new or used tins for this important project. Please leave your donated items on the back counter in the Fellowship Hall **by December 2nd**.

Thank you for your help!

Single-Board Governance Model Question & Answer time following Worship on Dec. 9th



A Special Thank You from Women's Fellowship

We would like to thank the congregation for their support of our work this year! If you gave us ideas for Pastor Sarah's shower or helped to decorate, thank you! If you donated items for our garage sale, helped set it up, attended or bought things. We thank you! If you donated baked goods, helped set up the Bazaar, helped with advertising, gave us names of vendors or attended....we again, thank you! Did you donate tins? Thank you! Did you donate cookies? We thank you! If you prayed for us and our work, gave words of encouragement, we thank you! We so appreciate all the things this congregation does and the many ways you assist us with our work for the Lord and for our church! God bless you all!
- Linda Escott



Christian Neighbors Winter Mission:

- Thanksgiving Project: We collected 50 bags of sugar!
- December is the Christmas Hearts Program. ***Unwrapped/un-bagged*** gifts must be delivered by ***December 2nd to the Church.***
- Dec. 25th donation envelopes will go toward this organization as well. If you do not have an envelope, you may use the pew envelopes and write "Christian Neighbors" on the front.



Fall Mission Project Recap

Thank you to the Women's Fellowship contributing \$250, Thanksgiving collection was \$85, and \$150 in supplies was delivered in November

You are invited to join us on **Tuesday, Dec. 4th**
at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.



GROOVE! EXERCISE CLASS

Fridays, 10am at the church.

Instructor: Heather Winia

Cost: \$7/session



Advent Devotionals have arrived and are in the Fellowship Hall! Cost is \$3 and may be put in the offering plate on Sunday or my in-box next to the office door. Please enter "Devotional" on the donation envelope (if cash) or for check in the memo.



Sunday School

Special thanks to these
Sunday School leaders:

- Kathy Plapp
- Linda Kinnaman
- Joan Lamb

Dec. 2: Sprouting Leaves

We begin Advent, a season of waiting, longing, promise, & preparation, with Jeremiah's promise of a "righteous branch," & with our eyes focused on God's reign breaking forth in the world.

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Dec. 9: Sound of a Promise Kept

Zechariah's silence & song draws us into the dramatic moment when this priest, once filled with doubt, comes alive with overflowing praise.

Luke 1:68-79

Dec. 16: Collide with a Promise Kept

We watch the people scramble to get ready, as John the baptizer preaches repentance, offers practical advice, encouragement to act, & proclaims the promised Messiah is coming.

Luke 3:7-18

Dec. 23: Welcoming the Goodness of God

As we look toward Christmas, we join with Mary & Elizabeth in welcoming God's blessings, & we celebrate God's compassion & mercy in the anticipated gift of a child.

Luke 1:39-45

Dec. 30: Universal Glory

On the 1st Sunday of the Christmas season, we sing of the love that binds the universe together, joining sun & moon, men & women, mountains & fruit trees, & even sea monsters in a seamless garment of praise.

Psalms 148



Book Study for Advent

Wednesdays, 7:00 pm

To Live Again: An Advent Journey using the Christmas Classic, It's a Wonderful Life,

by Sheila Jacobs. Books are available for \$10 each and can be picked up in the office or on Wednesday night.

Not able to make it? This book is designed for self-study as well as group. Feel free to pick up a copy for your own use during this advent season.



Reminder for tax season: Charitable giving for tax purposes in 2019 will be changing! Contact your accountant or CPA to discuss maximizing your giving this year!





Claire Van Grouw	12/05
Alison Van Grouw	12/06
Kimberley DeBoer	12/06
Jon Van Raalte	12/07
Ty Van Raalte	12/09
Marc Waugh	12/15
Donald Brake	12/23
Lelaina Boyce	12/28
Tom Schippa	12/28



Pastoral Care

Pastor Sarah makes pastoral calls at home and hospitals by need and request. Feel free to contact her if you or someone you know would appreciate a visit: 989-640-1487 or rev.sarahgladstone@gmail.com. Please be aware that hospitals and care facilities will not contact clergy if someone is being admitted. Our Shepherds are also happy to help coordinate meal deliveries.



Frank & Joan Lamb	12/02
Tom & Kristi Van Howe	12/14
Henry & Diana Hoppe	12/21
Barry & Kathy Johnson	12/22



BRIDGE LESSONS ANYONE?

Last year we played bridge on a few Saturdays afternoons at the church, even though some of us didn't know how or had become a bit rusty. I'm willing to set up some bridge sessions for winter if anyone wants to participate. Let me know—Betty White, 857-1096.



Choir Rehearsal Schedule

- Dec. 4 – Practice @ 9am
- Dec. 9 – Practice @ 9am
- Dec. 16 – Practice @ 9am
- Dec. 23 – Practice @ 9am;
performance Advent Sunday
- Dec. 30 – No Practice



WE NEED YOUR HELP ON SUNDAYS!

Story-Time Leader:

Connie Rusiecki (Connie.Rusiecki@gmail.com)

Fellowship:

Janna Rudich (JRudich@fbzcpa.com)

Welcome & Scripture Reading:

Kristyn Boyce (KristynBoyce@yahoo.com) or

Pat Gentry (Pat.Gentry22@gmail.com)

December 2018

First Congregational Church Activity Calendar

Sunday Worship Services – 10:00am (Nursery Provided)

Communion 1st Sunday of the month

Sunday School – 10:15am

Social Hour after Worship – 11:00am

Office Hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs – 10:00-2:00

DEACON OF THE MONTH: ALL DEACONS!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday 1 WFC Christmas Bazaar!!
2 Communion ***	3	4 WFC 0am Trustees Noon	5 Book Study 7:00pm	6	7 Groove 10	8
9 Diaconate 11:20 Grace of Douglas 2:00 +++	10 District 3AA 7 pm	11	12 Prudential 7 pm Book Study 7:00pm	13	14 Groove 10	15
16 Children's Program	17	18 Cub Scouts 6:30	19 Book Study 7:00pm	20 Carol Sing ###	21 Groove 10 Longest Night Prayer Service 5 pm	22
23 Choir Sings!	24 Christmas Eve Service 7pm	25 	26	27	28 Groove 10	29
30	31 New Year's Eve					

Advent Book Study: Wednesdays, at 7:00 PM.

*****Gifts for Christian Neighbors Christmas Hearts due!!!**

+++ Q & A re: leadership structure FOLLOWING Worship Service

All-Churches Carol Sing at Grace of Douglas 6:30 pm

Longest Night Prayer Service for those who are grieving – drop-in beginning at 5 pm.