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**Our Covenant**

We covenant with the Lord and one with 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, one another through fellowship, and the Saugatuck/Douglas area through simple acts of service. We don't always get it right. But we have fun trying.

# The Lakeshore Congregationalist

## May 2015

A Publication of First Congregational Church of Saugatuck  
Serving our community since 1860

“We take God seriously, not ourselves.”

### Laughing & Dancing!

“The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us.” – C.S. Lewis



I was laughing and dancing the other day. One reason was because winter is over and the earth is brought back to new life. As I am writing this newsletter it is Earth Day. I believe as Christians we are called to take care of the earth. (Genesis 2) But don't worship the earth gods.

Ancient societies worshipped the earth and created many gods and goddesses to pray to and offered sacrifices to bend these gods into conforming to their wishes and desires. In a recent sermon I talked about one such god, Asherah, which was the Earth goddess of fertility. The Israelites adopted this god as a part of their culture.

It was no surprise archaeologist discovered these poles and other pagan idols which were found in Jewish homes and on mountains, an in front of city hall. That is a joke. When the Jewish people saw these poles they would worship at the foot of the Asherah pole. Spooky isn't it.

Then one day a young King of Israel name Josiah was given a new found Book of the Law, which was hidden in the temple. It had not been seen or read for a very, very long time. King Josiah was horrified at what it said. He had no idea they were that wrong about worshipping God.

As it was being read to him, he stood up and began to tear his clothes and wail and cried out to God for forgiveness. Josiah was so moved by the experience he dared to do something no other King of Israel dared to do. He tore down all the Asherah poles and ground them into dust and proclaimed there was only one God and Creator of life.

Continued →

### Pastor Bruce's message continued

During that time the people, also repented, and returned to God. As a result they again celebrated the Passover Feast. And boy did they ever party! It lasted for weeks. If you don't believe me look up it up and read about in 2 Kings 23.

I used the Asherah pole story to illustrate that it no longer is around but the Cross of Christ still is. Each time we see the Cross we are reminded of our new found relationship with our God, who truly loves us, and is the one true Sustainer of all life.

Colossians 1

21 This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. 22 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

Spring is a time which new life begins. Easter is about new life through a man who once lived among us and died for us. Who proclaimed to be the Living God. Who brought his people back into a personal relationship with God.

Oh, and by the way, that is the real reason I am laughing and dancing this spring. I am His and He loves me and will never let me go.

Living A Life of Destiny

Pastor Bruce

### May Activities

#### **Sunday Worship Services – 10:00am**

Nursery Provided

Communion will be served 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month

#### **Sunday School – 10:15am**

#### **Social Hour after Worship – 11:00am**

#### **Blood Pressure Clinic after Worship, every 1<sup>st</sup>**

Sunday of the month, with Parish Nurse, Renna Birkholz or Terri Borgman.

**Pilgrim Fellowship Group meets every Sunday, 4-6pm @ FCC.**

**Chancel Choir Practice: Sundays, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, & 17<sup>th</sup> at 9am,** in the Fellowship Hall, with Cathy Brockington. The choir will sing during worship on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Mon, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm Diaconate Board meeting.**

**Sun, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 11am (after service) Trustee Board meeting.**

**Mon, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 7pm, Prudential Board meeting.**

**Tues, May 12<sup>th</sup>, Woman's Fellowship Circle Bible Study & meeting, 10am.**

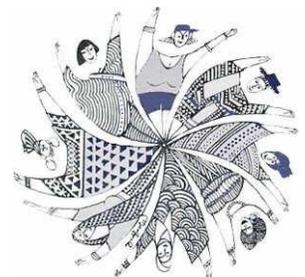
**Mon, May 18<sup>th</sup>, June Newsletter submission deadline.**

**Memorial Day, Mon, May 25<sup>th</sup> – Church office closed**

**Sun, May 31<sup>st</sup>, Sunday School Appreciation Day**

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### Women's Fellowship Circle



**Tues, May 12<sup>th</sup> @ 10am,** the ladies of FCC will meet in The Fellowship Hall, for a time of planning, prayer, and a Bible study taught by Jennifer Wingard. In preparation read Luke 10:25-37. All women, any age, are invited.

### Happy Birthday!

- May 1 – Ryan Vander Molen
- May 2 – Pam Haferman
- May 4 – Daniel Goulooze
- May 6 – Adam Vander Molen
- May 7 – Joe Brockington
- May 8 – Griffin Baker
- May 9 – Jeff Faber
- May 11 – Richard Reyes
- May 13 – Frank Lamb
- May 14 – Sylvia Rudich
- May 16 – Pat Diepenhorst
- May 18 – Emmalin Brink
- May 18 – Vasil Kolev
- May 18 – Daniel Schmitt
- May 20 – Kirk Wingard
- May 20 – Lisa DeBoer
- May 20 – Glenn Bareman
- May 22 – Steve Borgman
- May 27 – Randy Nieusma
- May 29 – Richard Crawford



### Congratulations to our May Anniversary Couple!

May 1<sup>st</sup> – Joshua & Adriane Sagal

If you notice that your birthday or anniversary was omitted, just call the church office (269-857-2929).



**Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup>**

### Volunteer Opportunities Join the Fun!

#### Sign-up Clipboards at the Welcome Desk

What a privilege it is to serve the Lord, in so many diverse ways. Greet, take up an offering, read the Scriptures, take care of a baby or host a coffee hour. Be a blessing to the congregation by signing up at the Welcome Desk, on the clip boards provided, on the Sunday of your choice, in the month of your choice, and in the avenue of your choice. Thank you.



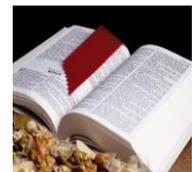
#### Fellowship Host Schedule

- |             |    |                                   |
|-------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| <b>May</b>  | 3  | Frank & Joan Lamb                 |
|             | 10 | Greg & Sheryll Van Portfleet      |
|             | 17 | Gerrit & Tina Sturuss             |
|             | 24 | Marlene Rininger & Joanne Schippa |
|             | 31 | Diana Hoppe                       |
| <b>June</b> | 7  | Linda Kinnaman & Peggy Boyce      |
|             | 14 | Church Picnic                     |
|             | 21 | Dotty Houser & Ruth Ippen         |
|             | 28 | Linda Dine & Janet Hanscom        |

If you have a conflict with the date assigned you please feel free to swap with someone else, however contact the church office with any changes.

#### Scripture Reader Schedule

- May 3** - Pat Gentry
- May 10** - Linda Escott
- May 17** - Dotty Houser
- May 24** - David Edwards
- May 31** - Myrna Dornan



To volunteer for future Sunday Readings, sign-up on the clipboard at the Welcome Desk or speak with Jennifer Wingard.





## Welcome Team Schedule

- May 3 – Vic & Jane Mayer  
 May 10 – Joe & Cathy Brockington  
 May 17 – Brad & Janna Rudich  
 May 24 – Steve & Terri Borgman  
 May 31 – Dan & Connie Rusiecki

The Welcome Team is coordinated by Dan Rusiecki & Dave Edwards.

## Schedule Volunteer's

- |        |                    |
|--------|--------------------|
| May 3  | Karen Baker        |
| 10     | Tina Sturrus       |
| 17     | Peggy Boyce        |
| 24     | Joan Lamb          |
| 31     | Paige Vander Molen |
|        |                    |
| June 7 | Cathy Brockington  |
| 14     | Janna Rudich       |
| 21     | Marlene Rininger   |
| 28     | Tina Sturrus       |

If your assigned date does not work with your schedule, please find a substitute and contact the church office with any changes, thank you.

## Jr/Sr. High Youth Program: Pilgrim Fellowship



The Pilgrim Fellowship group will be meeting **every Sunday from 4-6pm**, when they are able.

For more info contact Kristyn Boyce at (269)857-4113.



In Sunday School we are learning about *God's love for us through Jesus life*. Students are learning about what John wrote about Jesus. They will uncover the truths that Jesus teaches us about who God really is and that believing in Jesus is the one and only way to real life!

### Our lessons for the month of May are as follows:

**May 3 & 10: John 9 "Blind No More"** - God's Word helps me believe in Jesus and live for Him.

**May 17 & 24: John 10: 1-18 "The Good Shepherds"** Jesus loves me and wants me to follow Him.

Our lessons will be taught using various activities drama, art, storytelling, and baking. Each Bible story is taught over a two week period. Students will learn two bible stories a month. Our students will use action pages to help them understand the bible stories while in class. These pages will be sent home at the end of our two week study, so the story can be reviewed with their parents. Also, a **Family Fridge** sheet will come home with them which outlines the week ahead to stimulate bible discussion at home. Parents please help set these stories in your child's memory by reviewing the stories with them.

### Memory Work:

**John 10:27-28** My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.



**Sunday School Offerings:** Sunday School decided to give their offerings from April and May to the Saugatuck Pre-school program. Offerings from April went to sponsor four students for the farm field trip.

**Sunday School Sunday:** On Sunday, May 31 we will recognize our students, teachers and volunteers who have so willingly given of their time and talents to our program. Our students will present parts of the service. Please mark that date and come to celebrate with us.



## Updates

**DNR Mustard Garlic Pull held on April 12<sup>th</sup>:** Thank you to those who showed up to make our natural areas beautiful for everyone else!

**Progressive Dinner held on April 18<sup>th</sup>:** It was a great time had by all!

**Church Spring Outdoor Clean-up held on April 25<sup>th</sup>:** Thanks to all who showed up to help, Boy Scout Troop 29 for lending some youthful, helping hands, and to Ted Drooger, of T&S Enterprises for donating the wood chips that were spread. The church grounds look great!

**Douglas Elementary PreK Snack Program:** Thank you to all of those who signed up to bring healthy snacks during the month of May. Thank you to the Women's Fellowship Circle for donating money during the month of April, to purchase healthy snacks. Thank you to our Sunday School kids for donating enough money to sponsor four students, so they can attend an upcoming Farm Visit Field Trip. The kids' offerings during May will also go towards the PreK snacks. So many generous people, of every age, making a difference in the community!

Every act of kindness, every encouraging word, every outstretched hand in help does Make Our Month Matter...Keep up the good work!

## FCC's Contact Information:

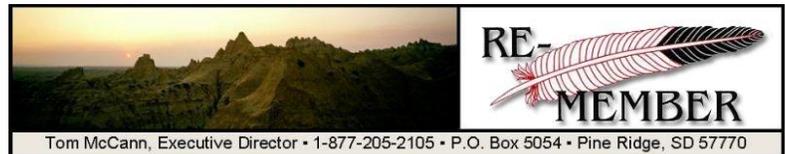
Church Address: 296 Hoffman St,  
PO Box 633, Saugatuck, MI 49453

Interim Pastor Bruce VanDer Kolk  
Office Hours: M-T-W 9am-1pm  
Cell: 312-504-2468

Office Mgr: Mrs. Kathleen Slawson  
Church Office – M, T, W 10am-2pm, 269-857-2929,  
after hours it will go to our answering machine.

Email: office@1stcongregational.net  
Website: www.1stcongregational.net  
Facebook: 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Saugatuck

## May Mission Emphasis



RE-MEMBER is a non-profit organization which works with the Oglala Lakota Nation on the Pine Ridge Reservation, in South Dakota.

### Purpose

Guided by the aspirations of the Oglala Lakota Indian communities they serve, RE-MEMBER seeks to improve the quality of reservation life through relationships, shared resources and volunteer services. Through site visits and cultural immersion, they continue to develop a growing circle of advocates standing in solidarity with the Indian people of Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

### Re-Member is a personal part of our Church

Ric Gillette was a member of Re-Member's Board and for several years Ruth Ippen, Jane Mayer, Janet Hanscom and Cathy Gillette have done volunteer work in South Dakota. So Re-Member has been a very personal part of our Church's history.

### How you can help.

Make a donation by check, made out to "First Congregational Church", designated to RE-MEMBER, and we will mail them a check the beginning of June.

**Indian Trails Mission update:** During March & April generous donations were given so over \$650 was mailed out to support their mission work.

### News from the Pews



- We extend our condolences to the family members & friends of Anna Diepenhorst, who passed away on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Rev. Robert Hanna has been so wonderfully, lovingly cared for that he has been transferred back to Lakeside Vista, Bldg 2, Rm 20, 340 W. 40<sup>th</sup> St, Holland, MI 49423. Cards, visits & prayers are always welcomed!

- Two year old Colton Reese, the son of Katie Mayer & Anthony Reese, Phyllis Yff's grandson, on Jan 19<sup>th</sup> was diagnosed with tumors of the eyes. He underwent



laser surgery to remove his left eye on April 27<sup>th</sup>, which he came through wonderfully. He will have chemotherapy treatments next, to save his right eye. This is a rare form of cancer with a 97% cure rate, so the family is extremely hopeful. A recent fundraiser held at the Holland Moose Lodge, was well attended, and generous donations were made, that the family was greatly blessed by. Your prayers would be appreciated for his continued health journey. You may mail notes of encouragement to Katie & Anthony at 1139 Lincoln St, #131, Holland, MI 49423. For more information or to assist with the ongoing, additional expenses go to: [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org).

### ~ Mark Your Calendars ~

The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches' 2015 Annual Meeting & Conference is scheduled for June 20-23 in Salt Lake City, Utah. A registration brochure, along with other information as it becomes available, can be found on the NACCC's website: [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org).

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Sunday, July 19-Friday, July 24, hosted by YMCA Camp Copneconic in Fenton, MI, Director Todd VanGrouw. For any student that has completed 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. A 2015 Camper Information Packet and Registration Form are available in the church office or call Mary Sklba at (989)643-7317.

### Church Chuckles

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible: Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter. Ricky was excited about the task, but he just couldn't remember the psalm. After much practice, he still could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite the psalm in front of the congregation, Ricky was nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know!"

