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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

## April 2017

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



### The thriving church...no matter what the size!

At our annual congregational meeting back in January, I announced that the First Congregational Church of Saugatuck had been asked to represent the *thriving* small church at this year's National Association of Congregational Christian Churches Annual Meeting and Conference in June. The organizers of the national meeting have asked a small, medium, and large congregational church to participate in a panel presentation and discussion for a workshop entitled: "Small, Medium or Large. Thriving Congregational churches come in all sizes."

What a joy it was to get the phone call from the NACCC's Moderator asking us to participate in this event! Moderator Jim Waechter mentioned that we came highly recommended from NACCC leadership. It would seem that our Association is pleased at our direction, energy and they clearly think that we have wisdom to offer our sister churches around the country.

I know I'm sounding a little boastful. But I just could not agree more! I'm so excited about our future and it's encouraging to know that our valued partners in ministry *see* our efforts.

I think the last statistic I heard (and this may have changed in recent years) was that 80% of our sister Congregational churches are considered "small"- a worshipping group of 80 or less. We fit firmly into the category. Many small congregations are consumed with being "size self-conscious," their every conversation is focused around the frantic need to grow, and grow fast... lest they dwindle down to nothing or face another year of not meeting the budget.

Continued →

### From the Pastor's Desk continued

But, that is not the case at First Congregational Church of Saugatuck. We have been, mercifully, set free from the frantic, consuming, fear-filled conversation of urgent growth. Praise God for this! As fear-filled/frantic efforts towards growth don't typically lead anywhere...

In our conversations around the fellowship tables and around the leadership meeting table there is a instead a tone of trust in God, a confidence that the Spirit is leading us and will provide - which gets strong and stronger each month.

All in all, we just seem eager to be joyful, and our desire to facilitate opportunities for genuine spiritual growth is evident. There is a need to dream, create, think, serve, grow and do together in our church family. Praise God again!

Perhaps this is because I'm still the newbie (I've been pastoring the church for a year and a half now!) but I have no hesitancy at the description of being "Thriving." I see it! I see it now, and I see it coming into being more and more in the future.

Over the past year we have made some decisive moves regarding our programming, mission and worship style. While there is room to grow and evolve in every area, I hope we can all see the spiritual fruits beginning to grow.

Now, how about you?

Do you think we are a thriving church? Do you see spiritual fruit coming into being?

To prepare for our presentation at the National Meeting, I will be hosting a series of focus groups this April. I would love to talk to you about our future together. This is a time for ideas and dreaming.

### Thriving Church Focus Groups:

Thursday, April 20th @ 7pm  
Saturday, April 22nd, @ 10am  
Sunday, April 23rd @ 11:30  
(luncheon following worship)

We will talk about programming (and deprogramming), missions and outreach, ministry to young families, pastoral care for the elderly and home bound, worship and probably much more. I encourage you to come to a focus group to speak your ideas and give feedback on our collective direction.

Might we all be in tune with the inspiring, calling nature of our God!

All Together in Christ,

Pastor Sarah  
1-989- 640-1487  
rev.sarahgladstone@gmail.com

Pastor Sarah's Office Hours:  
Tues, Weds, Thurs 12pm-5pm &  
Fri 9am-12pm.  
Office Mgr. Kathleen Slawson  
will be in the office  
Tues, Weds, Thurs 9am-11am

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### Continuation of Lenten Mid-Week Study:

April 5<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm

### Holy Week Schedule:

Palm Sunday worship – April 9<sup>th</sup> @ 10am

Mid-Week Study & Service – April 12<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm

Good Friday Worship Service – April 14<sup>th</sup> @ 12pm

at All Saints' Episcopal Church, A service of  
Scripture and Shadows

Easter Morning Worship & Celebration – April 16<sup>th</sup>  
@ 10am

**Holy Humor Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>.**



### Hello Choristers!

Chancel Choir sings the praises of the Lord during the worship service, once a month.

Rehearsals for this month are on **Sundays, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> at 9am** in the Fellowship Hall. The choir will sing during the Easter Sunday Service. For more information contact Cathy Brockington, 269-857-2146.

### Women's Fellowship Circle



On **Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> @ 10am**, the ladies will meet in The Fellowship Hall for a time of fellowship, time in the Word and a time in prayer. All women are invited.



### Fellowship Host Schedule

#### April

- 2 Sue Bohlander & Linda Escott
- 9 Brad & Janna Rudich
- 16 Women's Fellowship Circle
- 23 Ralph, Eric & Laurie Birkholz
- 30 Barb Baker, Cindy Raue & Phyllis Yff

Thank you to everyone who signs up and serves in these varied avenues of ministry; you are greatly appreciated for your acts of love towards others, and on behalf of the church. Thank you!



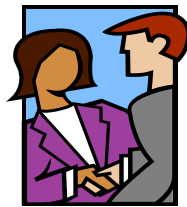
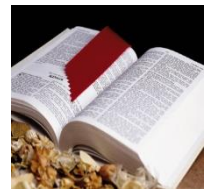
### Workers' Schedule

#### April

- 2 Connie Rusiecki
- 9 Pat Gentry
- 16 Paige VanderMolen
- 23 Cathy Brockington
- 30 Joan Lamb

### Scripture Reader Schedule

- April 2 - Betty White
- April 9 - Cathy Brockington
- April 16 - Linda Escott
- April 23 - Brad Rudich
- April 30 - David Edwards



### Sunday Morning Greeters

#### April

- 2<sup>nd</sup> OPEN
- 9<sup>th</sup> OPEN
- 16<sup>th</sup> OPEN
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Linda Escott, Phyllis Yff
- 30<sup>th</sup> OPEN

To fill open Sundays sign up on the clipboard please, located at the Welcome Desk.



### Quarterly Mission Focus – Kid's Food Basket

**Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2pm** we will participate with other volunteers, in packing "Sack Suppers", at Peace Lutheran Church, located at 389 James St, Holland, MI 49424. These "sacks" are then distributed to hungry children in the area. All donations given through our "Special Easter Offering Envelopes" will go towards assisting this ministry in the purchase of food items, to fill these "sacks".

For more info check out their website at:

[www.kidsfoodbasket.org](http://www.kidsfoodbasket.org)

## APRIL 2017

### First Congregational Church Activity Calendar

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent Communion Sunday 9am Chancel Choir Practice	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 10am WFC's meeting & Bible Study	<b>5</b> 6pm Lenten Soup Supper & Book Study  6pm LCC Sopranos rehearse in Chapel	<b>6</b> 6:30pm Lakeshore Community Chorus (LCC) Rehearsal	<b>7</b> 10am GROOVE Exercise Class	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> Palm Sunday 9am Chancel Choir Practice 2pm Worship Service at Grace of Douglas	<b>10</b> Monday of Holy Week 7pm Prudential Board meeting 7pm District AA meeting	<b>11</b> Tuesday of Holy Week 6:30pm Cub Scouts	<b>12</b> Wednesday of Holy Week 6pm Lenten Soup Supper & Book Study  6pm LCC Sopranos rehearse in Chapel	<b>13</b> Maundy Thursday 6pm Trustee Board meeting	<b>14</b> Good Friday Noon Community Worship Service at All Saints' Episcopal Church	<b>15</b> Holy Saturday
<b>16</b> Easter Sunday 9am Chancel Choir Practice, sing during worship	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> May Newsletter submissions' deadline	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 6:30pm LCC Rehearsal 7pm Focus Group Meeting	<b>21</b> 10am GROOVE Exercise Class	<b>22</b> 10am Focus Group Meeting
<b>23</b> Holy Humor Sunday 11:30am Focus Group Meeting 2pm Pack "Sack Suppers" for Kid's Food Basket at Peace Lutheran Church in Holland	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 6:30pm Cub Scouts	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 6:30pm LCC Rehearsal	<b>28</b> 10am GROOVE Exercise Class	
<b>30</b> 11:20am Diaconate Board meeting						



### What's Happening in Sunday School this month?

April's Focus: The Easter Story

**Parent Homework:** Please review with your child what they did in Sunday School each Sunday.

**Offerings:** From Nov 2016 – May 2017 are going to **The Children's Hunger Fund**. This was the children's choice and each Sunday, when we collect the offering, we also count how many meals the offering will buy.

**Donut Club** (grades 6 - 12) meets downstairs in the Catacombs (also known as the Gathering Room). They have started a new Teen Curriculum. The series takes real life questions breaks them down, allows for classroom discussion and takes a look at what the bible says. The name of the curriculum is *Can I Ask That vol. 1* by StickyFaith. Kathy Plapp will be leading the discussions and guiding the student through the study.

**Just as a reminder:** The first Sunday of every month the Donut Club will worship with the congregation and celebrate communion. Pastor Sarah will also have our youth helping with the service, making the service a time for worship and a time for learning. The Upper Room class will have Children's Church in the chapel on the first Sunday worshipping and celebrating communion together, after we go to the Sunday School room for class.

**Visitors:** Visitors are always welcome to join us, no matter your age.

### April Celebrations



- April 4<sup>th</sup> – Kelsie Mayer
- April 4<sup>th</sup> – Jennifer Wingard
- April 5<sup>th</sup> – Janet McDermitt
- April 12<sup>th</sup> – Makenna Van Raalte
- April 14<sup>th</sup> – Diana Theilgaard-Hoppe
- April 16<sup>th</sup> – Jane Mayer
- April 16<sup>th</sup> – Richard McDermitt
- April 17<sup>th</sup> – Cindy Raue
- April 18<sup>th</sup> – Brooke Nieuwma
- April 19<sup>th</sup> – Paige VanderMolen
- April 23<sup>rd</sup> – Linda Escott
- April 25<sup>th</sup> – Alexis Resseguie
- April 26<sup>th</sup> – Bruce VanDer Kolk
- April 28<sup>th</sup> – Laurie Schmitt



- April 1<sup>st</sup> – David & Casey Lokker
- April 20<sup>th</sup> – Jack & Patty Root

If you notice that your birthday or anniversary was omitted just call the church office (269-857-2929) and update our records. Thank you!

### News from the Pews



- **Prayers requested** on behalf of Henry Hoppe, our Sunday School Director, Diana's husband, as he battles health issues.
- **GROOVE Exercise Class** continues here at the church at 10am, every Friday. You are invited!

*Need a Ride?*



63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting & Conference of the NACCC, Sat. June 24 – Tues. June 27, 2017.

Hosted & held at Piedmont College, Demorest, Georgia Here is a link to access information & the registration packet: <https://files.acrobat.com/a/preview/f7cb6236-59fc-43cb-9742-2bfcba183bbd>

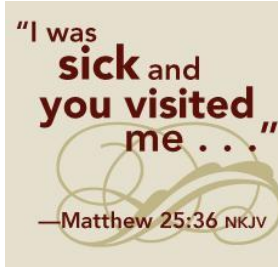
Cathy Brockington & Peggy Boyce will be driving down to attend the conference, and have 2 open seats in their vehicle, if you want to “hitch a ride”! Due to housing being in Piedmont College’s dorm rooms, costs are a lot more affordable to attend, so give the gals a call at (269)857-2146, if you want to join in the fun!

**FCC’s Contact Information:**

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

Church Phone: 269-857-2929, after hours it will go to our answering machine.

Email: [office@1stcongregational.net](mailto:office@1stcongregational.net)  
Website: [www.1stcongregational.net](http://www.1stcongregational.net)  
Facebook: 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Saugatuck



**Pastoral Visits**

Due to strict privacy laws, hospitals are not allowed to inform the Church Office if you are admitted for treatment. Sometimes the Spiritual Care Office will inform the church if specifically requested, but we shouldn’t count on this happening. Please call us if you are ill so that we can be in touch and offer our good wishes and prayers.

Pastor Sarah makes pastoral calls at homes and hospitals by need and request, so please contact her or the Church Office and she would be happy to visit with you.

Also, if you have an upcoming procedure or know you will be off your feet for a while our Shepherds are happy to help coordinate meal delivery. Just stay in touch with Pastor Sarah!



**MICHIGAN CONGREGATIONAL SUMMER CAMP  
JULY 9-14, 2017**

MCSC is moving to a new camp this summer ... Camp Ohiyesa in Holly. They will have some of the same activities along with some fun new ones! There will be zip lines, giant swing and gaga ball along with a giant water slide, a voyageur canoe, and the option of horseback riding. MCSC is open to any child who will have completed grade 3 through 8 by the summer 2017. The cost is \$315 for early registration (by June 1). If you would like to learn more about camp, there is an informational packet in the church office or visit the website at: [www.michigancongregationalsummerncamp.org](http://www.michigancongregationalsummerncamp.org).