

Lakeshore Congregationalist

A monthly publication of the First Congregational Church of Saugatuck, est. 1860 - January 2024



From the Pastor's Desk

Whoever brings blessing will be enriched,
and one who waters will himself be watered."
Proverbs 11: 25

The clipboards are being passed around!

Thanks to some of our diligent "movers and shakers", I've seen sign-up sheets for Fellowship Hour hosts, Scripture Readers and the Welcome Team being passed around the congregation at our fellowship tables. New year, fresh sign-up sheets! While this makes my pastor's heart happy knowing that we are getting organized and I won't have to scramble to recruit volunteers on the fly... it has made me consider addressing what I like to call "seasons of Sabbath and service."

In a family-sized congregation like ours, many of us find ourselves being passed around various leadership and volunteer roles. Sometimes serving in these roles feels empowering, spirit fulfilling and purposeful. But at other times, we might just feel like we are a warm electable body or just another name to fill an open slot on a sheet.

Service in the church isn't about a good soft happy feeling and it isn't about scarcity or necessity either. Service in God's church is about discipleship. In our faith we are called to bless and nurture, to care for this Earth, and to be of service to our brothers and sisters. That's what we do! Look at the passage above from Proverbs, "we water so that we can grow!" To borrow an image from the Psalmist David: to have a cup turned upwards in faithfulness to God means overflowing! We have to have a place for that blessed overflow :)

We are a people of service. There is a calling on all of our hearts and we are assured through the Scriptures that our giftedness will be used for the kingdom of God.

BUT, there are times when our cup isn't exactly turned upward for God to fill. We get overturned somehow - burn out, hardship, trauma... When we feel like our cup has been upended, that is the time to slow down, sabbath, and re-connect to God and community.

We will all have moments in our lives when we need to step back from leadership roles, volunteerism and involvement to create space and opportunity in our lives to reconnect with our God. There are times when our full focus should be on getting our cup turned upward again so that we can one day overflow with God's love.

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...And much more!



From the Pastor's Desk, Continued...

I have a sticky note on my desk-top that says this, "Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in." It's true! If we fit this quote to the church world a bit - getting involved, answering the call of God, being of service to our church/community means that we effect its mission and culture. And that is amazing and very fitting for our Congregational Way!



In this new year, I invite you to consider where you are at with "seasons of Sabbath and service." How is your cup of discipleship? Are you turned upward, overflowing and ready to serve? Then let's figure out how we can work together! Is your cup a little sideways and are you in need of sabbath rest and reconnection to God? Then let's create some space so that you can work on that.

As the sign-up sheets get passed around and as we approach the Annual Meeting, I will start asking for volunteers to fill leadership roles and tasks. Please consider where you are in this time and in this space.

Thank you for all that you do!



As a reminder, this is how the church handles emergency cancellations of worship and other church programming:

- Cancellations are determined by the Pastor and Moderator.
- If worship is cancelled, it will be posted on WOOD-TV 8 and social media. You are also welcome to call the pastor to check.
- If mid-week programming (like Bible Studies) is canceled, the change will be posted to social media and we will try our best to notify the usual participants.
- In this era of COVID, if we have to cancel worship due to an outbreak, you will receive an email with details and we will post the cancellation on social media.
- During the week, if Saugatuck Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, the church office is also closed.

We will do our best this winter to keep everyone in the loop!

Ways to Worship

Each Sunday at 10am.

You are invited to worship with us in person, or online via our Facebook livestream. The video of our worship service is also uploaded every week to our church's YouTube Channel, so you can catch the whole service any time. The church can be found on Facebook and YouTube by doing a simple search for First Congregational Church of Saugatuck. It is also on our church website.

Ways to Serve

In Worship:

There are sign up sheets for Greeters, Fellowship Host, Liturgist, Poet, Tech Helper, and Hymn Leader. Sign ups are open to everyone!

In the Community:

Check out the "Donation Zone" by the handicap entrance of the church. There you will see shelving and baskets to place your in-kind donations for our various seasonal mission projects. We regularly collect requested items for area non-profits like the Christian Neighbors food pantry or the domestic violence shelter. Their needs change often so keep your eye on the weekly worship bulletin for updates.

Ways to Give

Make a Donation:

Your financial gifts to the church remain vitally important to keeping our building functioning for the community, keeping our staff paid, and keeping our ministries active! Thank you for your ongoing support.

You can mail your checks to:
First Congregational Church
PO Box 633
Saugatuck MI 49453

Or you can give online via the Tithe.ly platform. Scan this QR code to get connected.



Weekly Worship Volunteers

Poet

January 7: Danny Mayer
January 14:
January 21:
January 28:

Fellowship Host

January 7: Frank & Joan Lamb
January 14:
January 21:
January 28:

Hymn Leader

January 7:
January 14:
January 21:
January 28: Connie Rusiecki

Greeter

January 7:
January 14: Sue Nelson
January 21:
January 28:

Liturgist

January 7: Connie Rusiecki
January 14: Danny Mayer
January 21:
January 28: Linda Escott

Have You Considered Joining the Board of Ministry?

In a small church like ours, we all chip in with our various gifts to keep the wheels of ministry going! Have you considered stepping into a leadership roll? Leaders within our church, who sit on the Board of Ministry (BOM), are called "Captains". The team is the congregation as a whole (of course), but our Captains make sure we are organized, moving forward and that everyone gets an opportunity to stretch their ministry skills and grow as disciples. There are several open positions on the BOM this year. Perhaps you could consider the roles and pray over what you have to offer your church family in the year ahead as:

Congregational Way Captain

This individual assists with nurturing the congregation's awareness of the Congregational Way. They help with leading membership classes and confirmation classes. Also, they serve as the official delegate of the church in our various fellowship associations: The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, Michigan Conference of Congregational Christian Churches, and the West Michigan Association of Congregational Christian Churches. This person can help us stay in contact and foster fellowship with our neighboring Congregational churches.

Building Captain

Our beautiful Meeting House has seen lots of changes and additions over its 160+ years of ministry, and it needs our careful stewardship. Our Building Captain works closely with our Office Manager (Sandra) and the Moderator to make sure repairs and upkeep are seen to. They also help to coordinate our seasonal congregation wide clean up and work days.

Christian Education Captain

Our Christian Education Captain is charged with making sure we all have opportunities to grow in our knowledge of the Bible and can come together in fellowship for spiritual growth. We do not currently have a children and youth Sunday School program, but we do offer adult book studies and Bible studies throughout the year. It is important that our Christian Ed Captain be flexible with the every changing needs of our church body.

Missions & Stewardship Captain

This individual keeps us connected with our annual missions. There are many practical tasks that need doing throughout the year, for example: dropping off canned soup and other food donations to Christian Neighbors, spreading the news about a noisy offering, reviewing and selecting missions to support in the coming year, assisting Pastor Sarah with the Love Fund. This is a role with very specific tasks.

Worship Arts Captain

Music, chancel design, shaping liturgy, coordinating guest speakers... This captain's role is all about creativity, vision and hospitality. This individual works closely with Pastor Sarah to prepare for our Sunday Worship services and cultivate a robust worship atmosphere at the church.

The Board of Ministry meets on the second Monday of the month at 6:30pm. We try hard to keep our monthly meetings to an hour and a half. Together we pray, discuss, and set the direction for the church body as a whole. Consider joining our Board of Captains!

Missions Update

Submitted by Tim Terlouw & Pastor Sarah

"Thank you all so much for supporting the Love Fund at Christmas Eve Worship! Together we raised **\$591.00**.

The Love Fund is a program with the church that offers financial assistance for those in times of need. Often, the funds help with utilities, medical costs, rent, or groceries. However, the program is also flexible, that when the Spirit brings a need to our attention, we can usually find a way to help.

If you are ever in need of financial assistance when the ends don't seem to meet, talk to Pastor Sarah. The church may be able to help!"



November Financial Snapshot

Submitted by Phyllis Yff, Treasurer

- As of 11/30/2023 we had \$22,160 in our General Fund Checking compared with last year's \$12,924.
- Heritage fund - YTD gain/loss, transfers & expenses has our unrestricted balance up \$5,420.
- YTD money market transfers \$25,000, 11/30 Unrestricted Heritage Fund Balance \$79,203.
- November budgeted expenses are \$11,297, Collections-\$7234, Capital Campaign-\$980 (\$41,877 YTD).
- YTD Expenses are \$25,394 under budget, YTD collections are \$11,410 under budget.
- Parking lot donations through November are \$13,076.

Women's Fellowship

Submitted by: Pat Gentry, President

Thank you to Wendy Van Tassell for hosting the Wine & Winter Wonder at her home. We enjoyed holiday munchies and mulled cider followed by Christmas Carol Singing accompanied by Carol Garvelink.

The next Women's Fellowship meeting will held on Tuesday, January 2nd. Join us as we continue our bible study of "That's not in the Lectionary" stories. We will also elect officers and plan activities for the year.

The next Wine @ 5 will be Wednesday, January 17th at the Butler.

All Women of the Church



Gather with others for a time of relaxation and fellowship. Drink or eat whatever you like and pay your own tab.

Wednesday, January 17th
5:00pm

The Butler

Searching for Shepherds

Submitted by Cathy Brockington & Connie Rusiecki

The church is in need 2 new Shepherds to help watch over our flock! The Shepherd Program is a long standing tradition of the congregation. The entire membership of the church is broken down into small groups. Each group has a shepherd to assist them with support when it is needed and to keep in touch with them throughout the year. For example, when a member of a shepherd's flock needs a helping hand following a surgery or illness - the shepherd is the first to circulate the meal train list or visit at the care facility.

Also, Shepherds send greeting cards for Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, congratulations upon retirement, becoming a grandparent, graduating from school, and other important life events. A Shepherd's task is to encourage and uplift our members and friends by letting them know that they are loved and a part of our group.

If you think you have the gifts to be a Shepherd for the church, reach out to Connie Rusiecki.

Email: connie.rusiecki@gmail.com

Community Life

Submitted by Pat Gentry, Community Life Captain

Happy New Year! As we go into the new year we reflect on the last year and thank God for all the blessings that we have received. Throughout 2023 our congregation has been busy with many activities and celebrations.

On February 18th, we had a Movie Trivia Night with classic theater snacks and candy prizes. On March 5th, the Van Tassells' hosted us for a viewing of the movie "Women Talking" followed by discussion and dinner at the Village Inn. The Lenten Soup Supper and Study Series were well attended in March and April.

The congregation helped Women's Fellowship from June through August by providing cookies and other sweet treats for the weekly bake sales at Saugatuck's Music in the Park. At Saugatuck's Fourth of July Parade, members handed out bottled water with a tag that said, "Come Park with Us." The all church picnic and potluck on July 16th was a success at Fellinlove Farm. On August 13th, we welcomed Isla Maxine Terlouw with a baby shower. On August 19th, a few of our members attended a West Michigan Whitecaps baseball game at the LMCU Ballpark in Comstock Park.

"Come and See" Sunday on September 10th was followed by an Ice Cream Social. On October 26th, we held a Halloween Candlelight Concert to raise money for the Capital Campaign. November 19th was our annual Heritage Sunday Potluck. On December 2nd, members participated in Saugatuck's annual "Whoot-ville" parade where they donned fun costumes and handed out candy cane worship invitations. An all church cookie exchange was held on December 10th in anticipation of our Christmas Celebration. Whew! What a lot to be thankful for!

Mark your calendars for a Leap Year Celebration on Thursday, February 29. We will be having a game night celebration of some sort. Suggestions for gaming activities are welcome!

Prayer Requests

- For the Board of Ministry as they plan for the Annual Meeting.
- For Isla Terlouw! Her adoption was finalized on December 14th.
- For Nancy Nyland who is dealing with considerable health issues.
- For the family of Ethel Zwemer (Nancy Nyland's mother) who recently passed at 104 years old.
- For those grieving, overwhelmed or exhausted during the holiday season. May God's love bring joy to their hearts.
- For Russ Wilkinson and the whole family as they grieve the loss of his son.
- For Aurora (Joanne Schippa's great grand daughter).
- For Rocky (Joanne Schippa's son) who will be having back surgery soon.
- For Sherry, a neighbor who has had a series of mini-strokes.
- For a friend named Jon who is in his final season of life.
- For Marie (Coworker of Phyllis Yff), in her cancer journey.
- For Scott (Coworker of Kristyn Boyce), who is making strides in his healing from a motorcycle accident.
- For Stu, recently diagnosed with stomach cancer.
- For Rick Bauer (teacher at Saugatuck), healing from a fall from a tree stand while out hunting. He has several broken discs in his back.
- For Sara Van Doornick, who is navigating some hip challenges following a replacement surgery.
- For Gerrit and Tina Sturrus who are both dealing with some health issue.
- For Jim and Nyla Hensley. Jim had surgery recently and is currently at MediLodge of Holland.
- We pray for all care givers.
 - Nyla, Lee, Angela, Angie, and many more
- For Robert Moore's sister Hennritta as she recovers from a fall.
- For Marth Nell (Linda Escott's Aunt) who is healing from a fall.
- For Lelaina Haner's National Guard Unit, they lost another soldier to mental health struggles in November.
- For Dan Haadsma & Dee Wingard (family of Kirk and Jennifer Wingard), who are now at Douglas Cove.
- For our hurting planet, that we all might be motivated to take better care of our earthy home.
- For Adam Schafer (Mike and Pat Gentry's grandson) for his health, vitality and joy as he manages Muscular Dystrophy.
- For Mike Gentry as he deals with back pain.
- For Doris Hicks, our previous Office Manager, as her mother's Alzheimer's advances.
- For all of those recovering from COVID and enduring long COVID symptoms.
- For those in treatment for cancer: Tess, Mikey, Terry, Patty, Dave, Mike, Brenda, Marie, Stu and many many more.
- For our military folks who are serving around the world: Andrew Rudich and Chris Raue.
- For truth, wisdom and justice - and for the Holy Spirit to heal places of deep hate.
- For all those experiencing homelessness.
- For all of those struggling with depression.
- For those just emerging from prison and trying to build a new life.
- For those in seasons of recovery from addiction.
- For the health and psyche of our nation.
- For an end of gun violence.
- For an end to the war in Ukraine.
- For God's peace in the Middle East.
- For Abigail who was recently recovered as a hostage in Gaza. We pray for all those who remain detained.

News from the Pews



On December 14th, the adoption of Isla Terlouw was completed!

Here she is pictured between the judges banging the gavel as the courtroom proclaims together "It is now declared!"

163rd Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church



JANUARY 21, 2024

AFTER WORSHIP,
APPROXIMATELY 11AM

.....
In person and via zoom

**The Board of Ministry will be hosting a special
coffee hour to fuel us for our meeting.**

January Birthdays



RALPH BIRKHOLZ, 1/11
GERRIT STURRUS, 1/11
MIKE CAMAROTA, 1/19
ROBERT BOYCE, 1/22
VIC MAYER, 1/23
NANCY NYLAND, 1/28
KIRK RAUE, 1/28



January



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 WFC Bible Study & Mtg, 10am	3	4 Lectio @ Lunchtime, 12:30pm	5	6
7	8 Board of Ministry 6:30pm District AA 6:30pm	9	10	11 Lectio @ Lunchtime, 12:30pm	12	13 Un-Deck the Halls 10am
14	15	16	17 Wine @ 5, The Butler	18 Lectio @ Lunchtime, 12:30pm	19	20
21 163rd Annual Meeting (after worship)	22	23	24	25 Lectio @ Lunchtime, 12:30pm	26	27
28	29	30	31		<u>Weekly Recovery Groups Schedule</u> Mondays: AA, 7pm Tuesdays: AA, 12pm Tuesdays: AA, 7pm Wednesdays: AA, 12:30pm Thursdays: AA, 7pm Thursdays: Alanon (7:00pm)	

296 Hoffman - PO Box 633 - Saugatuck, MI 49453 - 269-857-2929
 1stcongregational.net - Office Hours: 8:30am-12:30pm, Tues-Thurs - office@1stcongregational.net

Worship with us every Sunday at 10am! In-person and online.