

Lakeshore Congregationalist

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

From the Pastor's Desk

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Colossians 3: 1-4



In the early church, the season of Lent was set aside as a time for new believers to prepare their hearts and minds for baptism. On Easter Sunday, part of the day's worship was mass baptisms, where people could experience a literal submerging and raising with Christ. Experiencing for themselves a resurrection. For all of those, who had long since been baptized, it was an opportunity to remember their own baptism and revisit this moment's significance. Easter was a time for all to dwell on resurrection, and to carefully consider what it means to participate in this renewal of life themselves.

I've never participated in a service of mass baptism. Maybe you have, I'd love to hear about it! But as I prepare myself for Easter, I'll still be considering baptism carefully. Wondering: What does the resurrection of Jesus mean for me? And how is my life different today because Jesus was raised? How am I different post-baptism?

In the above reading from Colossians, there is some lovely and complicated theology to stir up our imaginations. But one specific thing that it points us towards is wondering about our morality. Having the mind of Christ as you consider your choices and your relationship with the whole of the cosmos.

Having a "post-baptism" morality is taking on Christ as your new measuring stick for all things. Setting aside the standards of the world, and prioritizing a new standard that is derived from a divine perspective. To have our mind and our heart inhabit a heavenly place. That's what it means to be "hidden with Christ in God" and to trust in a transcendence that is not rooted in the world.

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...And much more!



First Congregational Church
Saugatuck, Michigan

From the Pastor's Desk, Continued...

Colossians talks about this transcendent way as a fact. As something that just is and becomes post-baptism. But, it seems to me more like a discipline. Something that needs to be practiced before it could be understood and "achieved." After all there is nothing magical about the waters of baptism. Our reality and circumstances are not altered, but our perspective should change and become as Christ's as we learn and grow.

In this complicated world - one that is filled with more than it's fair share of moral mine-fields - might our eyes see as God sees, may our mouth speak as God speaks, may our ear hear as God hears, and may we all have great care to dwell on the things that are above.

All together in Christ,
Rev. Sarah Terlouw

Fellowship Hour Birthday Celebrations

Beginning the first Sunday in May, we will be making it a priority to celebrate folks in the congregation who have birthdays during the month ahead. It is the plan, a week ahead, to send out invitations to our birthday folks to encourage them to be at church that Sunday so we can "hip hip hooray!" and sing blessings over them. This effort is part of the church's "Looking Up: Searching for Reasons to Celebrate" annual theme. It is out of hope that these little celebrations become a tradition that we carry on for years to come.

If you sign up to host Fellowship Hour on a first Sunday of the month, perhaps you would like to keep a birthday celebration in mind as you plan your menu. It is not an expectation for the host to provide a cake or candles, but you are welcome to put out birthday napkins from the drawer and use any other celebration resources that are on hand.

*The Family Handchime Choir
will give a special performance
on Easter Sunday.*



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.



Holy Week Schedule

Palms & Passion
March 28th, 10am

Lenten Soup Supper
with Holy Communion
April 1st, 6pm

Community Good Friday
April 3rd, 7pm
hosted at
Douglas Congregational
United Church of Christ

Easter Sunday
A Service of the Resurrection
April 5th, 10am

All are welcome! All are wanted!



Weekly Worship Volunteers

Poet

April 5: Linda Escott

April 12:

April 19: Cathy Brockington

April 26: Cathy Brockington

Fellowship Host

April 5: Kathy Plapp & Vicki Boyce

April 12: Danny Mayer

April 19: Terlouw's & Linda Escott

April 26: Gentry's

Hymn Leader

April 5: Wendy Van Tassell

April 12:

April 19: Pat Gentry

April 26: Kristyn Boyce

Greeter

April 5: Danny Mayer & Nevaeh

April 12: Linda Escott

April 19:

April 26:

Liturgist

April 5: Connie Rusiecki

April 12: Cathy Brockington

April 19: Tom Van Tassell

April 26: Linda Escott

Communion Set Up

Danny Mayer

Missions

Submitted by Vicki Boyce

Our congregation generously donated 31 jars of peanut butter and 2 jars of jelly to Christian Neighbors for the February peanut butter drive. Well done!

Our special offering for Easter Sunday is ChildVoice, which is a new mission partner of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC). Their partnership means that ChildVoice has been vetted and undergoes regular review to assure stewardship of the donated funds.

ChildVoice is a 20 year old mission serving Uganda, South Sudan, and Nigeria. It is dedicated to helping war-affected youth by providing psychosocial trauma intervention services; psychosocial and spiritual counseling; capacity building, life skills training, and vocational skills training. It provides aftercare through long-term coaching, counseling, business training, and more. For more information and to see how your donation can impact these youth, visit www.childvoice.org.

ChildVoice))



Vickie Boyce

Moment For the WHOLE Family of God



This Lenten season, we renewed our effort to incorporate our youngest worshippers into the worship service. We are now beginning our service with the children in the sanctuary, where they are experiencing congregational singing, prayer and engagement during our Moment For the Whole Family of God. Part way through the service students are dismissed to head to the nursery with Ms. Kim. There they read a book (something that compliments what the adults are experiencing in "big church") and have time to play together.



Financial Snapshot

Submitted by Janna Rudich, Treasurer

- As of 02/28/26 we have \$8,288.69 in our General Fund Checking.
- Heritage fund - YTD gain/loss, transfers & expenses has our unrestricted balance down \$5,749.
- YTD money market transfers \$20,000 02/28 Unrestricted Heritage Fund Balance \$108,179.38.
- February expenses are \$14,409.17, Collections \$6,980.03.
- YTD Expenses are \$7,532 under budget, collections are \$769 under budget .



Treasurer
Report

CONGREGATIONAL

ORNER

Aid us in gathering supplies for our 2026 Intergenerational Mission Project in support of NACCC global mission partner Seafarers' Friend! Seafarers' Friend, has many needs. You may recall a couple of years ago our church organized a collection of goods for them, which Tom and I delivered when we went out to Boston to help a handful of Brits tour around sites of Congregational significance.

Throughout the months of April and May, a large container will be near the donation zone where we regularly collect needed items for our own church's quarterly mission designees. Specific consumables requested by Seafarers' Friend include: shampoo, soap, razors, shaving cream, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand lotion, hand sanitizer, ChapStick, deodorant, body wash, baby powder, Q-tips, vaseline, pocket Bibles, playing cards, and crossword books. It has been suggested that you approach your dentist for a contribution of toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss.

If you are more of a hands-on person, the mission welcomes hand-made hats, scarves, balaclavas, or ditty bags. Patterns and instructions can be found on their website, www.seafarersfriend.org.

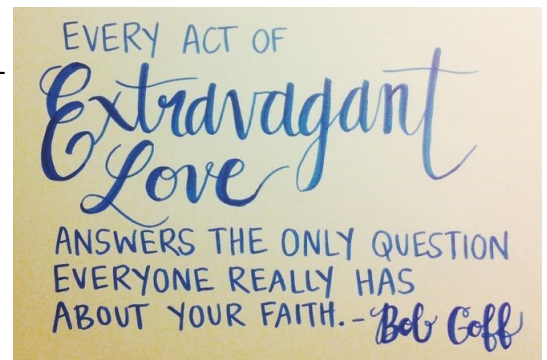
Let's be extravagant in our giving to this mission, which is a ministry committed to meeting the spiritual, social, practical and emotional needs of the New England Maritime Community, serving the ports of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine.

The 72nd Annual Meeting & Conference of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches will be held in **Springfield, Massachusetts, from June 27-30, 2026**. Tom and I will be traveling with Mike and Judy Fales in an Olivet University van to Massachusetts, so the materials can easily be transported.

Thanks, in advance, for joining in the effort!

All together in Christ,

Wendy Van Tassell
Congregational Way Captain



April 3rd, 7pm
Douglas Congregational
United Church of Christ

After a long hiatus, the Community Good Friday worship service is back. Hosting this year is Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ. We will gather at 7pm. Participating this year is First Congregational Church of Saugatuck, All Saints Episcopal Church, and DUCC. This service will be a mosaic of beautiful music, contemplation and the reading of the Passion story. All are welcome to this important time as we prepare our hearts for Easter.

Friends of Christian Neighbors Spring Benefit

Formerly The Arthur Frederick Legacy Benefit for Christian Neighbors
Food and drinks provided by Friends and Sponsors

\$75 donation requested

All proceeds benefit Christian Neighbors (501c3)
All payments: please write memo line "2026
Spring Benefit." Checks can be written to
"Christian Neighbors" at the event or mailed ahead
of time to: DUCC PO Box 19 Douglas, MI 49406
Online payment Options:
www.christianneighborsdouglas.org/donate

Sunday May 3rd, 2026 1-3 pm The Saugatuck Yacht Club 15 Park Street Saugatuck MI

Women's Fellowship

Bringing women together for service, fellowship, and spiritual growth.

Women's Fellowship has been busy planning for the summer and fall fundraising projects. Bake sales at Saugatuck's Music in the Park have become a tradition. We hope to extend our efforts by participating in the Douglas summer socials as well. Also, we've started a craft project: making colorful pansy shaped coasters to distribute to the residents of the The Orchards at Douglas Cove.



Please Join us at our next meeting at 10:00am on April 1st in the Fellowship Hall. The next Wine @ 5 will be on April 22nd at the What Not Inn, Fennville.

Pat Gentry
President

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, April 22nd
5:00pm



Wine @ 5, was hosted at The Southerner in March. What a great time of togetherness!

Pastoral Relations Committee Meeting

There will be a Pastoral Relations Committee Meeting on April 24th at 11:30am. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Vicki Boyce,

Sue Nelson or Linda Escott

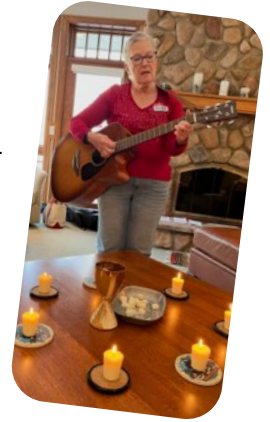


Community Life

Submitted by Myrna Dornan

KNOWN IN SOLITUDE I AM KNOWN BY LOVE

The church Quiet Day Retreat was held on February 14, 2026. We had three sessions: Invitation, Challenge, and Gift with time between for discussion. It began with nine of us enjoying beverages and Big Apple Bagel bites in Frank Lamb's lovely kitchen. Our introduction to solitude and silence was led by Pastor Wendy Van Tassell. She gave us skills to communicate and commune with the One who is always present even when our awareness has been dulled by distractions.

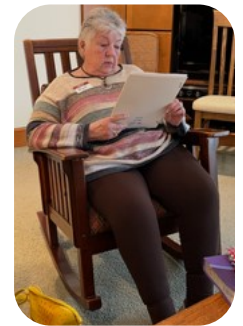


After a short discussion, we were given time to find a quiet place to ponder. Pondering can be done while using crayons to draw or color. You may also want to take one of the books available to read, or just look out the windows at nature where deer were grazing along the creek in the back yard. We returned to share the feelings we experienced while in solitude. Many of us felt such a sense of relief as to just have a day from noise, politics, and responsibility.

My first session with solitude was focused with a book titled, "Praying In Color." I learned to look at a box of 48 crayons in the Crayola box as stadium seating-a little altar. "Praying in Color" is a way to expand your repertoire you may already have. Many times as we age we lose our words but a visual memory in color or one you draw can be the way suited to your personality and learning styles.



We had lunch at noon, sub sandwiches from Scooters. Our day was concluded with song,



What's your favorite music style?

Hip Hop? Rock & Roll? Country Western?

Grunge? Gregorian Chant?

This year's Holy Humor Easter Celebration will be a journey of "Music Through the Ages."

Come dressed inspired by your favorite genre and prepare to have a lot of fun as we worship our Risen Lord! Remember to invite a friend to this meaningful and joyful celebration.

Set-up for this special worship service will be on April 9th, at 10am.

If you are available to help make the sanctuary festive, talk to Pastor Sarah.



Prayer Requests

- For Gerrit Sturuss who is rebuilding strength following a stroke.
- For Betty White, for her health and vitality.
- For the war in Iran. And all of our service members
- For Kevin - the Rusiecki's grandson currently stationed with the Marines in South Korea.
- For all the expecting mothers: Megan, Lelaina.
- For The Terlouw Family's adoption journey.
- For Kimberley "Alex" DeBoer who moved into a new apartment.
- For Sue (Robert Moore's sister) who is recovering from surgery.
- For those who mourn: for the family of Rev. Steve Tucker, for the family of Rev. Patrick Shelley, for the Rusiecki family as they grieve the passing of Trish, the family of Don Beery, the family of Russ Davis, Don and Letha Glas (the passing of Don's mother).
- For those swamped with financial concerns, seeking employment, and needing safe/affordable housing.
- For those healing and strength: Aunt Betty (Pat Gentry's Aunt), Sue Nelson, Cindy Raue, David Brockington, Tom Schippa, Aunt Marcia, Jack (Robert Moore's Dog), Brad Rudich, Adam Schafer, Ron Edwards.
- For caregivers.
- For Don Brake, who is seeking safe housing.
- For those needing encouragement: Joel, Zac, Brandon, Norm, Sam and Natalie.
- For those navigating cancer: Rocky, Kay Price, Arleen, Trish, Vicky, Sharon, Cheryl Kaletka, Jedd, Wayne Yff, Nancy, Larry, Rainna and many, many more.
- For all those with Dementia or Alzheimer's. That God might bring them peace and clarity of mind.
- For the leaders of our nation - that they might be able to discern the ways of peace and love.
- For the ministry of Christian Neighbors.
- For those battling addiction.
- For those wrestling with their faith.
- For all those struggling with depression.
- For families navigating political tensions
- For all those detained by ICE.
- For our hurting planet, that we all might be motivated to take better care of our earthy home.
- For all of those dealing with diabetes, and seeking to make significant life changes.
- For all of those recovering from COVID and enduring long COVID symptoms.
- For an end to gun violence.



Thank you all for joining in our Lenten Soup Supper series. The soup was delicious. And our study of the Sermon on the Mount was rich and fulfilling!



The Orchards at Douglas Cove Worship

April 12th, 2:30pm




On second Sundays of the month at 2:30pm, we host a worship service for the residents of The Orchards of Douglas (our local nursing and care facility). Friends from the church are always welcome! You could be of encouragement to a resident and help raise our prayers and praise! We meet in the Great Room, towards the back of the building. A big thank you to Linda Escott, Sue Nelson and Danny Mayer for joining in this important worship experience over the last several months.

April Birthdays

Jennifer Wingard, 4/4	Paige Vander Molen, 4/19
Rev. Tom Van Tassell, 4/15	Sandra Lauer, 4/20
Cindy Raue, 4/17	Linda Escott, 4/23
Isla Terlouw, 4/18	Rebecca Brockington, 4/30

APRIL

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Weekly Recovery Groups Schedule Tuesdays: AA, 12pm Wednesdays: AA, 12:30pm Thursdays: AA, 7pm Thursdays: Al-Anon, 7pm		<u>LCC</u> Thursdays, 6pm <u>Kitchen Rental</u> Fridays, 5pm <u>Boy Scouts</u> Sundays, 6pm <u>Cub Scouts</u> Wednesdays: 6pm	1 Women's Fellowship 10am Lenten Soup Supper 6pm	2	3	4
5 	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Holy Humor Sunday	13 District AA 6:30pm	14 Board of Ministry 6:30pm	15	16	17	18 LCC Board Meeting 10:30am
19	20	21	22 Wine @ 5 What Not Inn	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



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

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