

THE MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2021

First Congregational Church UCC
412 4th Street Manistee Mi



From The Pastor

Dear Friends,

There have been a lot of things said about our saying goodbye to 2020 and hello to 2021, most of it expresses a certain, "good riddance" kind of attitude. Which for many of us might be putting it mildly. This wasn't the year just about anybody planned on, instead 2020 was filled with challenge after challenge, it seemed that each new month brought about something scarier and more challenging than the one before. As a country we have experienced a lot, a pandemic, countless protests, social unrest, and just to keep things interesting an election. We have seen moments of grief, death, and sickness, cancelled plans, vacations, weddings, birthdays, graduations. Many of us have entered times of isolation and the loneliness that comes with it. It is no wonder we are ready to put this entire year in the rear view and are longing to look towards something new.

As we look forward there are a lot of things to be hopeful about. But before we get too far ahead of ourselves I want to take a moment to pause and think about all the things 2020 was. I am beyond grateful for this church.

I am grateful for the community we share together.

I am grateful for the ways you were all willing to venture into new technology with me.

I am grateful for all the photos, and videos you all sent in to help make our worship services look more like us.

I am grateful for the 10 (yes 10!) brand new church members, and confirming our confirmands.

I am grateful for the many many guests who found our worship online and continue to show up each week, some we have met and some we haven't.

I am grateful for zoom story time with kids.

I am grateful for our amazing staff

I am grateful for porch visits, and cookie drop offs.

I am grateful for the opportunity to try new things for Bible study and worship.

I am grateful for every single text, card, phone call or word of encouragement I received.

I am grateful for board meetings, parking lot votes, and mini bazaars.

I am grateful for youth group hikes and outdoor gatherings.

I am grateful for all the ways we have thought outside the sanctuary and stayed connected as a community.

I am grateful for all of this and so much more.

I like you am very ready for a fresh year, that is hopefully filled with more hope, more light, more love and more blessings than the last. But as much as we wish for it I know that at 12:01 am on January 1st things won't just magically change. There will still be challenges, and hard days ahead. I pray that as we continue to be community we will look forward with hope, but that we can carry with a sense of gratitude not just for the good that is coming, but for the unexpected blessings we found.

With Blessing, Pastor Liz

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From Worship Team

The worship team would like to thank all the many members and friends who contributed to worship, from lighting the advent candles, to sharing their musical talents, to reading scripture. You were all a huge help during a challenging season.

We continue to worship virtually, while we work on plans to return to live worship with the proper technology to maintain our online presence. Please know the worship team is working hard to support Pastor Liz as she works to provide us with an online version of worship each week. The dial in information for worship with Freeconferencecall.com remains the same.

Dial-in number (US): (551) 258-5244

International dial-in numbers: <https://fccdl.in/i/lizziehoy>

Online meeting ID: lizziehoy

Join the online meeting: <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/lizziehoy>

If you have trouble getting into the meeting on your phone, you can text 'Call Me' to the Dial-In number above and you will be called into the conference. Message and data rates may apply.

Worship is also prerecorded and uploaded onto facebook for a premier Sunday mornings at 10:00am through the church facebook page.

Pastor Liz has been creating worship at home mailings for our friends that are not able to connect online. If you would like to receive one or know someone who would and isn't please contact the office or Pastor Liz.

Nanci Swenson and Joanne Cotugno

From Deb and Doug

A heartfelt thanks from Deb and Doug

We have talked on several occasions how fortunate we are to work for the church. Your leadership and generosity during this pandemic has not gone unnoticed and is appreciated.

THANK
YOU

You are a kind,
thoughtful group of people.

Best wishes,
Deb and Doug

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Stewardship Pledge Drive

Dear Friends,

What a year it has been. In the fall of 2019, as we began to look at 2020 pledges and begin planning our budget, we had no idea what kind of year it would be. Despite the many changes to our plans for 2020, we were able to be an active faith community! While we could not gather in the ways we are used to, we adapted in many ways. Now as we approach the end of 2020 and the beginning of a new year, there are many positive things to anticipate and look forward to as we discover the “new normal” path of our life journey.

Your pledges and support make a huge difference in the life of our community. Our church, staff, programs, ministry, and community involvement depend on the support of people like you. The work of our church happens because of the generous financial and volunteer support of our congregation. Our annual campaign provides a chance to think in a particular and prayerful way about the choices we make with our time, talent, and treasure in support of the church. Did you know that we will need about \$140,000/year to support the day-to-day operations of this church in 2021? That figure may appear daunting, but when you consider the fact that we are able to spread this financial commitment out over every member of this congregation it becomes a believable and achievable goal. The key is to insure we can count on everyone to participate and help shoulder the burden. Without YOU it just does not happen!

There are a lot of different ways people decide how to give to the church, and all of them are good and holy. If you choose to pledge because you are member of this congregation, because you consider us your spiritual home, or because you see yourself as a community supporter, your contribution makes a huge difference in the life of this congregation. The stewardship team invites you to prayerfully think about how you cultivate a practice of abundant generosity, as you fill out your pledge card for this season. If you choose to pledge a set amount, a one-time gift, or a portion of your total income we pray that you make the best choice for your family and current financial situation.

We hope that as you consider your giving for the coming year, you will take a step towards greater generosity in your pledge. Please use the enclosed card to make your pledge and return it to the Church Office using the address above as soon as possible.

All pledges and gifts to our congregation help strengthen who we are and what we can do together. Because of you, our church shares God's love.

With gratitude,

The Stewardship Team

For Church Records

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

I am ☐ A Member ☐ An Associate Member
☐ A Spiritual Seeker ☐ A Community Supporter

I plan to give \$ _____ each ☐ week ☐ month

Beginning _____ Annual Total \$ _____

I understand that this commitment can be changed at any time by giving
 notice to the appropriate church officer

Signed _____ Date _____



For Your Records

Date _____

Along with the others in this
 community of faith I pledge to give
 as I am able, for the ministries of the
 church

I plan to give \$ _____

Beginning _____

Each ☐ Week ☐ Month

Annual Total \$ _____

Happy First Quarter Birthday!



January

Jan. 8 - Chere Ohman
 Kate Thomson

Jan. 1 - Taylor Myers
 Jan. 2 - Don Jones
 Jan. 4 - Bill Weiner

Jan. 10 - Cecilia Postma
 Jan. 11 - Carl Diesing
 Jim Goodwin

Jan. 19 - Andy Amstutz
 Jan. 24 - Jean Rowe
 Jan. 29 - Michael Ault

February

Feb. 1 - David Vande Vusse
 Feb 6 - Liz Hoy
 Feb 16 - Alice Amstutz

Feb. 21 - Mary Hoffrichter
 Feb 22 - Betsy Rosenow
 Feb 24 - Anne Baker

Feb. 25 - Pam Weiner
 Feb 26 - Phyllis Thorsen
 Feb 28 - Jeannie Lewis

March

March 4 - Barb Ilgen
 John Gumper
 March 7 - Kevin Postma
 March 8 - David Ohman
 March 10- Leah Wachlin
 March 12- Nancy Goodwin

March 13 - David Holmer
 March 16 - Dan Ilgen
 Phyllis Cowden
 March 18 - Evan Germanese
 March 19- Adriana
 Persenaire

March 20 - John Simoneau
 March 24 - Kristen Kimm
 March 25- Sally Schreiner
 Ann Bifoss
 March 28- Sally Mason
 March 31- Meredith Rose

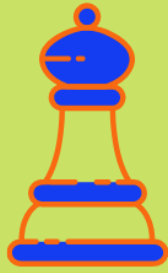


Happy First Quarter Anniversary!

January 1 - Rev. Steve and Laurie Lashbrook
 January 8- Geoffrey and Jackie Burkhart

January 10 - Renee and Chris Myers
 January 27- Ron and Phyllis Cowden

March 31 - Dave and Chere Ohman



POSTPONED UNTIL SPRING

CHURCH GAME NIGHT

Thursday night games have been postponed until spring time. See you then!

Contact David Holmer if you have any questions.

Thank you Doug!

Doug has been hard at work repainting the Sunday School rooms. They look amazing!

Thank you to Doug for all his hard work.

Lent Begins February 17

Ash Wednesday will be on February 17th. The worship team is not going to have an in person worship like we have done in the past.

**MORE
INFORMATION
COMING
SOON**



However ashes and a blessing will be made available. Stay tuned to your email, facebook and worship for more information on how and where to receive ashes.

GOD GOT A DOG...

A 4 week study of poetry and finding the Divine in the ordinary.

**STARTING TUESDAY JANUARY 12
AT 7:00PM ON ZOOM**

Join Pastor Sara and Pastor Liz, as we explore some of the poetry of Cynthia Rylant. We will explore what it might look like to meet God in all the ordinary day to day things we do and the people we meet along the journey. To participate please let Pastor Liz or Pastor Sara know.



**Zoom
Study**

**All
Are
Welcome**

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United Church of Christ
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