



# Congregational Courier

## THOUGHTS FROM BOB LIVINGSTON

### SENIOR MINISTER

Dear Friends:

Happy December to you all! What a busy, wonderful, overwhelming, and joyful month this is! I hope you are both surviving it and enjoying it.

This month I want to give you a heads-up about a five-week sermon series on forgiveness we are launching on Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>. I would also like to ask for your help. As most of you know, on Michigan public radio, there is a very popular weekly radio show called the Moth Radio Hour, which is a program dedicated to the sharing and telling of stories. These stories are usually theme-related and are often very personal and inspiring.

It is with the Moth Radio Hour in mind that Darcy and I want to do something similar with storytelling in relation to our upcoming sermon series on forgiveness. We want to invite five people to share a 3-5 minute personal story on forgiveness with the congregation as part of the sermon series. Here are the stories we are looking for:

- \* [Sunday, January 7](#) - Theme: When someone showed unconditional love and forgiveness (following upon the story of the prodigal son).
- \* [Sunday, January 14](#) - Theme: When you needed to show compassion, understanding, and forgiveness to a sibling, but found that it was hard to do (following upon the story of the elder son in the story of the prodigal son).
- \* [Sunday, January 21](#) - Theme: When you received forgiveness, but then found it difficult to forgive someone else (following upon the story of the unforgiven servant).
- \* [Sunday, January 28](#) - Theme: When you needed to forgive yourself.
- \* [Sunday, February 4](#) - Theme: When you struggled with forgiving someone else.

If you are interested in offering a story about one of these five themes, please send me a brief summary of your story. Darcy and I will consider



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***Whatever Your Story, You're Welcome Here***

all submissions and get back to you. Please know we are only able to use one story each week. If you have any questions, please contact either Darcy or me.

I am sure hearing these different stories on forgiveness will be a wonderful and inspiring experience for our congregation in the New Year! Thank you for your consideration!

Finally, please check out our special Advent and Christmas Eve schedule included in your Courier, and please invite your family and friends to join you as we celebrate this festive season together.

Blessings,

*Bob*



***Our Mission: We are a beacon of God's love, hope, and Christian freedom.***

## **MARKETING COMMITTEE**

### **BRIAN CONNELLY**

The Marketing Committee (comprised of Michael Spath, Sarah Outslay, Mike Dabbs, Bob Livingston, Darcy Crain, Renee Bovee, and Brian Connelly), together with the help of our talented consultant, Sean Hickey from PWB, has been meeting monthly with a focus on the following projects:

- ✧ Billboards with our branding message "Whatever Your Story, You're Welcome Here" have been created and are being rotated among various sites around Ann Arbor.
- ✧ New permanent signage for the Chapel entrance was proposed by the committee and has been approved by the Church Council.
- ✧ Two new sandwich chalk boards have been ordered and will be placed near the sidewalks around the church to announce activities.
- ✧ Our new and improved website has been launched.
- ✧ Working on processes to improve internal and external communications.

*Whatever Your  
Story, You're  
Welcome Here*

The committee welcomes input from FCC members so, please feel free to contact any committee member and share your thoughts.

## DARCY CRAIN

### ASSOCIATE MINISTER



#### Wrapped In Love

**"I've never gotten to give my mom a gift before."  
–2016 Wrapped in Love participant, age 7**

This comment is all it took for us to make the decision of whether or not we repeat our "Wrapped In Love" event for 2017. Launched last year in the vision of Sarah Chaffee, this event allows children of single or only-parent families to select gifts for their parent or caregiver. The women in our single moms ministry were involved and helped newcomers to be acclimated to the church for the evening.

This year, we will offer the event on Sunday, December 17, from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. Families will be served a dinner from 5-5:45 p.m. and then children will be taken downstairs to the gift market to select a gift for their parent or caregiver. Volunteers are needed to assist children in selecting a present, wrapping a present, and making a card to go with it. Meanwhile, upstairs, the parents will be offered programming and an interactive gift/craft appropriate to the age level of their child.

Last year our volunteers helped in the kitchen to shop, prepare, and serve the meal and with the children and parents in the gift market. We once again need volunteers and are looking for anyone 8<sup>th</sup> grade and older to assist. Thank you for helping children discover the joy of giving through this wonderful outreach program. Missions and Outreach (M&O) has funded the meal and gift market this year following last year's successful launch! Thank you Pam Dabbs and Missions and Outreach Committee for your generous support!

*Darcy*

## CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

### MARY ANN MARQUARDT

*Wrapped in Love*



The Circle of Friends continues to provide a friend for those experiencing loneliness in a nursing home, an illness, loss of a loved one, and other significant changes in a member's life. On Sunday, November 12th, Sara Eggleston presented an informative explanation as to how she considers multiple factors before purchasing a wheelchair for an individual. Sara explained that it is of the utmost importance to make sure a wheelchair is a comfortable fit for someone

who will spend most of the day confined to a it. Sara is an active member of the church, if you would like to contact her about her services. Our group will be meeting on December 12th in the Mayflower Room to meet and pick up the gifts we distribute to our friends. If you know a church member who could benefit from having a special friend, please call me at (313) 303-1989. We are always happy for new people to join us!



## RACHEL DUDLEY

### INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Now is a great time to be involved in The First Congregational Church! There are so many wonderful things going on! Have you ever wanted to get involved but didn't know where to start? I'm happy to help you find a place to get connected and involved. Here is a church school related idea:



#### Advent Workshop Volunteers Wanted

Advent Workshop will take place on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, after the 10 a.m. service in Pilgrim Hall. Parents are encouraged to come enjoy the event with their kids. Volunteers are needed to oversee stations at the event.



#### In Search of:

**Directors of Decorations** - Oversee and assist with the paper chain making station.

**Head Cheer Givers** - Oversee and assist with the Christmas card making station. Cards made will be distributed to home bound members of the church.

**Craft Gurus** - Oversee and assist with the crafts station.

**Loving Heart Leaders** - Oversee and assist with the station where kids pack personal hygiene bags to be given to the homeless.

**Frosting Artists** - Oversee and assist with the gingerbread house making station.

**Lunch Chefs** - Setup the food tables and replenish as needed. Pizza, fruit, snacks, and drinks will be provided.

**Advent Coaches** - Float from station to station, helping any kids who need extra help with their projects.

Please email Rachel at [rachel@fccannarbor.org](mailto:rachel@fccannarbor.org) with any questions or to sign-up.

#### Recycle at Church

We are learning to respect and take care of the wonderful earth God created! With the bright idea of Ann Verhey-Henke, one of our dedicated church school teachers, we now have blue recycling bins in all of our classrooms. Please join us in recycling!



Rachel





## TIMOTHY HUTH

### ORGANIST

#### Our Advent Preludes

Seasons greetings to all. It is quite an intense and blustery time these days as both society and church gear up for the great festival of Christmas and the 12 days leading to Epiphany and Jesus' Baptism.

As Christians, Advent affords us a season of preparation, of scrutinizing our heart, of paying attention, of silence and stillness awaiting what is to come ("Drop dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds pour forth the Just One; Let the earth be opened and bud forth a savior." Isaiah 45:8 ) Advent is a

time of deep and joyful expectation as we celebrate Jesus born among us.

During our worship service, the prelude allows us, the community gathered, to prepare heart and mind as we enter into worship.

Here we gather in this early winter as we await the Christ - Christ proclaimed in scripture and song, Christ born in our hearts, Christ experienced in this assembly of the faithful as we go forth to serve a weary and strife-torn world.

For these Sundays our preludes and postludes are thematic, leading us to the great festival of Christmas.

- \* December 2, we go to Poland with 2 'Koledy', Polish carols similar to German 'Cradle songs' singing of the Nativity, the infant Jesus with Mary and Joseph at the stable, the angels, the story, and the stars.
- \* December 10 brings two medieval carols, a French 16c Noel and an ancient Carolingian carol.
- \* December 17, the church proclaims the great 'O Antiphons' (see hymn 'O come, O come, Emmanuel). The prelude and postlude will sing with the violin and organ with a 'Mystery Sonata' by Hans Biber. This sonata is named for one of the 'joyful' mysteries of the rosary, Christmas!.
- \* On December 24 begins the festival, and a joyful Yuletide to all.

#### *Our Core Values:*

*Caring: We are a loving and mutually supportive faith community.*

*Proclaiming the Good News: We believe in a living and loving God.*

*Respect: We embrace openness, diversity, and individual faith journeys.*

*Compassion: We serve and support the needs of others.*

*Fellowship: We celebrate and enjoy life with each other.*



## STEWARDSHIP

MARK SCHIRMER, CHAIR

### Stewardship 2018: The Holiday Season is a Great Time to Give

With Thanksgiving behind us now and the wonderful Christmas season approaching, I think it's safe to say: The holidays are here! It's a wonderful time of year and a chance for all of us to take measure of our good fortune and many blessing and share with each other. We certainly hope you keep FCC in mind.

While our annual Stewardship Campaign won't kick off until the spring, it is important to remember that the calendar year is coming to a close. With this in mind, we asked Melissa Joy, chair of the Trustees and a certified financial planner, to share a few thoughts on year-end charitable giving. She offered these three items:

- \* While the FCC fiscal year brackets 2017-18, the IRS only cares about calendar years. Thus, if you want to prepay any calendar year 2018 donations (either for this church giving year or next year) and receive the tax benefit in your 2017 taxes, we can help.
- \* Some church members have explored making gifts with Qualified Charitable Distribution or appreciated stock. Let us know if you're interested in giving with these methods, but unsure of how. Our staff or members of the Trustees can help guide you.
- \* With tax legislation being debated in Washington, potential changes may increase the value of 2017 charitable deductions. Consider this as you make any gifts prior to year-end.

Most importantly, please remember to plan ahead and ask questions. It is not too early to begin considering how you will help FCC in 2018. And remember, as January 1st rolls around, our church fiscal year will be halfway through.

Stewardship should be a year-round conversation, a part of our culture at the First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor. We are all stewards of this great church and community. The more we support FCC, the brighter our beacon of God's love, hope and Christian freedom shines.

As always, thank you for your support and commitment to FCC.

Happy Holidays,  
Mark Schirmer  
Stewardship Chair  
1960bird@gmail.com



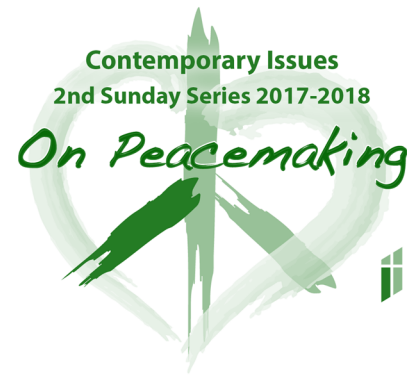


# 2017 Advent & Christmas Eve Schedule

December 3	Combined Change of Pace./Chapel Communion
December 5-7	Congregators Chicago Trip
December 8	Parent's Night Out 5-8 p.m.
December 9	JH Bell Ringing - Nickels Arcade 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
December 10	FCC Bake Sale Special Music Presentation 10 a.m. Service Advent Workshop 11 a.m. Advent Healing Space 7 p.m.
December 13	Glacier Hills Luncheon 12:30 p.m.
December 17	Wrapped in Love 5-7 p.m.
December 24	Change of Pace with Special Music 9 a.m. Chapel Communion 9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship 10 a.m. Live Nativity 4-8 p.m. Christmas Pageant 5:30 p.m. Candlelight Communion Service 8 p.m.
December 25	Merry Christmas! (NO CHURCH SERVICES)
December 31	Happy New Years Eve! (NO CHANGE OF PACE) Chapel Communion 9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship 10 a.m.
January 1	Happy New Years! (FCC OFFICE CLOSED)
January 7	All Church Communion (NO 9:30 Chapel Communion)

## CONTEMPORARY ISSUES—2ND SUNDAY

SARA HOLMES

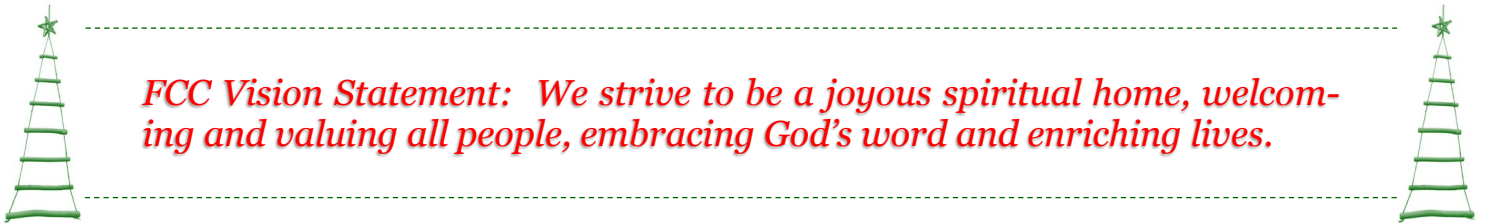


### Mindfulness-Based Forgiveness Program

On Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, Mariko Foulk, a clinical social worker for 24 years at the University of Michigan Geriatric Center, will present a program she designed to accompany older adults in their forgiveness journey. In addition to the traditional use of discussion through which one gains insight, the mindfulness approach creates quiet space inside each participant's psyche, where compassion and non-judgmental awareness may arise over time through meditation exercises.

During our time together, Ms. Foulk will describe how this approach helped people with forgiveness through enhancing their mindfulness skills and by providing a group setting. She'll discuss specific examples of participants who said that mindfulness gave them greater awareness, an ability to handle difficult feelings, and a new perspective. As a result of this group experience, participants said they learned from each other as they reflected on painful experiences while also developing greater compassion for themselves and others.

Please join us on December 10<sup>th</sup> in the Mayflower Room after the 10 a.m. service to learn about this new approach to helping people on their forgiveness journey.



## ANNUAL BAKE SALE

DECEMBER 10, 2017

The annual Christmas Bake Sale will take place on Sunday, December 10, in the Mayflower Lobby after the 9 and 10 a.m. worship services.

Please come see what our bakers, canners, and gatherers have been preparing for your holiday tables. This is a fun and festive affair. All kinds of baked goods, candies, soups, mixes, herbs, relishes, jams, and jellies will be for sale. Be a part of the fun by bringing your festive goodies to be sold. Nancy will have fire-starters for sale this year also. 😊

The money earned from the sale is used to cover the cost of the Christmas evergreen roping that decorates the outside of the church and other church activities. Thank you for your support!



## TREASURER'S REPORT AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2017

MIKE DABBS, TREASURER

		ACTUAL 10/31/17	APPROVED BUDGET 7/1/17 - 6/30/18	NOTES
<b>REVENUE</b>				
	Pledges	\$ 157,086	\$ 470,000	Note 1
	Gifts - Operations	\$ 8,850	\$ 55,000	
	Pre-paid Pledges		\$ 12,500	Note 2
	Other Income	\$ 17,878	\$ 20,250	
<b>Total Earned Revenue</b>		<b>\$ 183,814</b>	<b>\$ 557,750</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
	Ministry	\$ 74,225	\$ 227,505	
	Administrative/Office	\$ 94,853	\$ 280,998	Note 3
	Christian Education	\$ 12,096	\$ 45,334	
	Music	\$ 20,461	\$ 70,430	
	Missions & Outreach	\$ 301	\$ 30,130	
	Maintenance & Utilities	\$ 25,990	\$ 104,860	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$ 227,926</b>	<b>\$ 759,257</b>	
<b>NET REVENUE</b>		<b>\$ (44,112)</b>	<b>\$ (201,507)</b>	
<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>				
		\$ 2,379	\$ 57,500	Note 4
<b>TRUST FUND DISTRIBUTION</b>				
		\$ 130,000	\$ 259,443	Note 5
<b>BALANCE</b>		<b>\$ 83,509</b>	<b>\$ 436</b>	

<b>NOTES</b>	
1	2017-18 Approved Budget is amount shown; however, member pledges were \$505,000.
2	2017-18 Pre-paid Pledge balance is carryover from the Gap Year.
3	Increase in 2017-18 Budget due to marketing being included as an operating expense and a reduction in health care insurance for Assoc. Minister
4	2017-18 Capital Expenses reflected in Capital Expense Budget. Major item is the mortgage principal payment. First payment made in October 2017.
5	2017-18 Budgeted Trust Fund Distribution reflects 5% from all investment funds and Endowments including Memorial & Pastoral; plus an additional \$57,500 from the General Investments in order to off-set the increase in operating expenses and the capital expenses.



## YOUTH MINISTRIES

### JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL COOKIE BAKING FELLOWSHIP



## YOUTH MINISTRIES

### HIGH SCHOOL

We will be gathering on December 10 in Pilgrim Hall during the worship service to help set up for the beloved Advent workshop following worship. The workshop includes constructing gingerbread houses, Advent crafts, paper chains, and toiletries project. We need help running these stations, please call, email, or text Darcy if you are interested. For NHS or senior capstone students that need service hours, this is one of many volunteer opportunities in December!



We also are in need of volunteers for Parents Night Out on December 8, from 5-8 p.m. You will be volunteering for childcare. Volunteers need to be at least in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Please volunteer your time and your giftedness in working with children!

The rain didn't keep the spirit of the high school fall retreat down. Students and leaders had a great time. We are looking forward to trying to make the high ropes again next year.



## MUSIC COMMITTEE

### MJ QUIGLEY-YOUNG

In keeping with the Music Committee's overall goal of playing a more active role in our church this year, many folks have stepped forward to generously give of their musical talents. Please note the following list, highlighting our most recent extra musical contributions, both past and future, scheduled for our different services.

- \* Healing Service music for September included Barbara Sturgis-Everett, violin, for October. We were joined by the Threshold Choir, and in November, we were joined by Kathe Johnson on the piano. Special thanks to these outstanding musicians for this major contribution.
- \* Last October, thanks to the creative leadership of Cindy Bylsma, our Hand Chimes Choir joined a cello in a performance during the prelude for World Communion Sunday at our 10 a.m. service.
- \* Throughout Advent, specially prepared preludes at each 10 a.m. service will be presented by our organist, Dr. Tim Huth.
- \* On the second Sunday in Advent, December 10<sup>th</sup>, we will have our annual Special Music Presentation by our chancel choir and full orchestra, conducted by Dr. James Nissen. This year's presentation includes an a cappella work by Benjamin Britten, "A Hymn to the Virgin," and two works with a full string orchestra and organ: the gorgeous Ralph Vaughan Williams "Fantasia on Christmas Carols," and Gustav Holst's "Christmas Day."
- \* On the third Sunday in Advent, December 17<sup>th</sup>, our Hand Chimes Choir will perform. In addition, Barbara Sturgis-Everett, violin, and Tim, organ, will perform the prelude.
- \* Christmas Eve Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, at our 9 a.m. Change of Pace Worship Service there will be an extended music offering with a full Band, under the direction of Terry Farmer.
- \* Christmas Eve Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, at our 8 p.m. service, a string quartet will perform in conjunction with special organ music by Tim Huth. Members of the quartet are Barbara Sturgis-Everett, Mike Overdier, Tamer Hourani, and Mj Quigley-Young.

Musical plans are well under way for Lent, Palm Sunday, and Easter Sunday, all to be announced at future dates.

It is our hope that more church members, both adults and students, will share their musical gifts more frequently throughout the year. In addition, the committee is seriously exploring future projects that will support and enhance our church. If you are interested in more information, please email MJ at [mjquigley@gmail.com](mailto:mjquigley@gmail.com).





## HISTORIAN'S CORNER

BETTY BISHOP

### Christmas Traditions

Several traditions have existed at the First Congregational Church in terms of Christmas celebrations over the years. The oldest probably is having a special choir music performance in the weeks leading up to Christmas. This has taken many different forms including various cantatas and choral pieces and several performances of "Amahl and the Night Visitors." For most of the past 40 or more years, church members have decorated the church, both inside and outside, at the beginning of Advent. This has included evergreen roping and wreaths as well as several colorful Christmas trees. Often a bake sale has been held to help cover the cost of the decorations. For quite a few years recently there has been a living Nativity outside on Christmas Eve, sometimes including a camel as well as sheep and sometimes a donkey. There has been a pageant on Christmas Eve, involving many children and often some live sheep.



### Healing Space

Where music, meditation, and prayer meet.



Have you ever experienced an Evensong or Vespers service? Their history as an evening service dates back to early Christians who continued the Jewish custom of prayer when daylight faded and lamps were lit. Connecting our present worship with this deep history is a powerful experience.

Healing Space on Sunday, December 10 will include music from this liturgical tradition provided by organist Timothy Huth in a candlelit sanctuary. This being the second Sunday of Advent, the focus of the reflection and meditation time will be on the theme of waiting.

In the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, come and experience a time of spiritual peace and renewal.

## GREAT LAKES SCRIP

NANCY SAUVE

Have some red flags popped up around credit cards? Excessive spending, credit card fraud, and don't some of those chip readers take forever? Maybe an alternative plastic payment option can ease your worries, which is why I'm talking about scrip gift cards today.

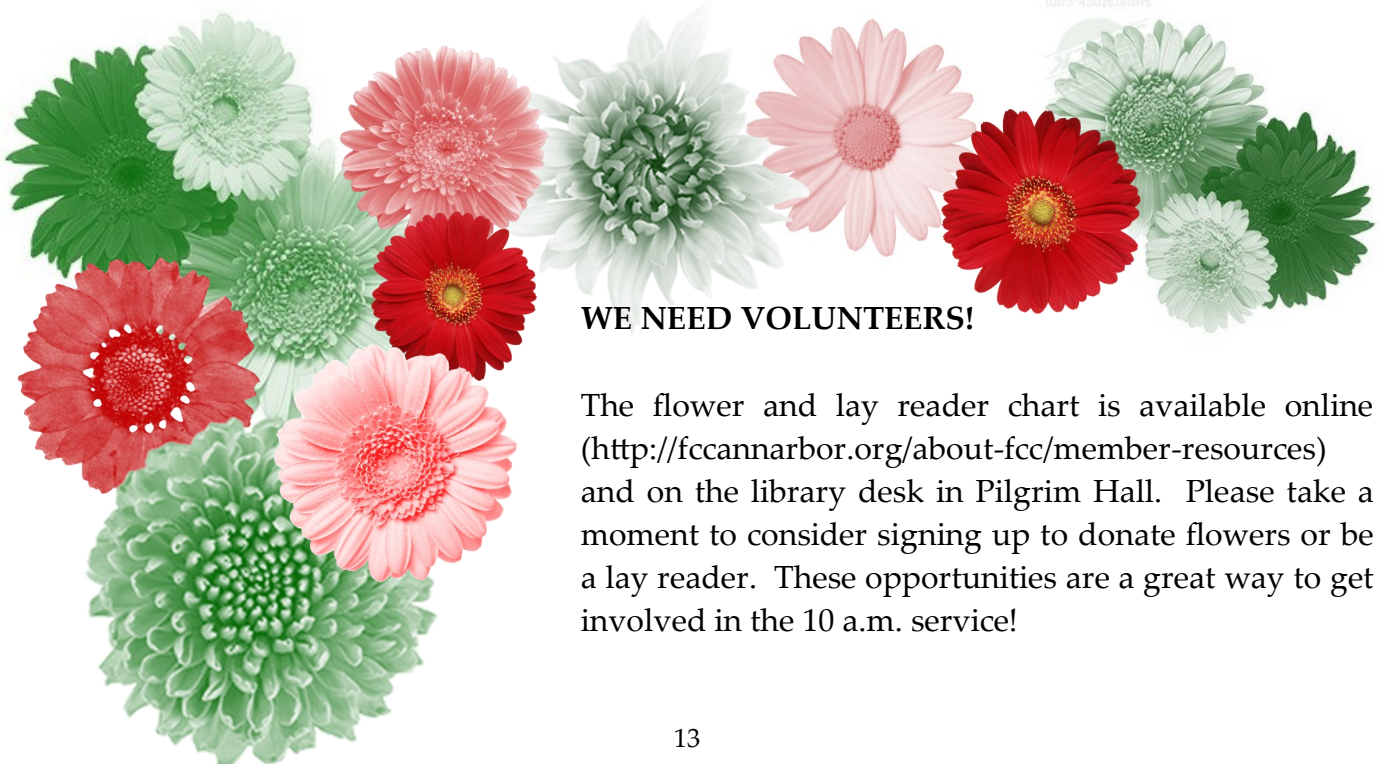
The beauty of a gift card is there is a set amount of money on it already, and once it's gone, it's gone. So it's impossible to overspend with a gift card if you only use that to pay for presents, food, or decorations. A lot of people don't like the environmental impact of spending and disposing of a gift card, though, but ShopWithScrip has got that covered.

Over 180 retailers that are partnered with ShopWithScrip offer reloadable cards. That means that before your next shopping excursion, you could just load up your gift card with only the amount you have budgeted to spend, and you'll be good to go without any plastic waste! Additionally, over 390 retailers offer ScripNow eCards that you can purchase and redeem from

your mobile device with MyScripWallet, enter the codes when you're shopping online, or print them off to use in store. (The code information can be given to you at the Scrip table in the Mayflower Lobby on Sunday mornings or call/email Nancy at [nancy@fccannarbor.org](mailto:nancy@fccannarbor.org) or 734-926-0560.)

If you're worried about missing out on credit card rewards, scrip gift cards are your solution. With scrip, you'll earn a rebate on every card you purchase, anywhere from 2-16%. All of those rebate earnings will go to help fund our mission/work trips. You could be earning significantly more with scrip than you would with your credit card, and you'll be raising money for a cause you care about at the same time! See how much you can earn on everyday purchases by watching this fun 12 Days of "Scripmas" video! And, as always, thank you so much for your participation in the Scrip program at First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor! Merry Christmas!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uybbdM2wBV4>



### WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

The flower and lay reader chart is available online (<http://fccannarbor.org/about-fcc/member-resources>) and on the library desk in Pilgrim Hall. Please take a moment to consider signing up to donate flowers or be a lay reader. These opportunities are a great way to get involved in the 10 a.m. service!

# CHURCH COUNCIL

## DICK MITCHELL

FCC has seen an increase in requests from our members and non-members to take action or articulate a position on social justice and humanitarian issues. To ensure that our public positions reflect the broader church community, and to ensure that our efforts and resources are used most effectively, we need an open and consistent process to discuss and weigh these requests.

Church Council has been discussing what such a process looks like, and our proposal is described below.

Members serving in FCC positions, as prescribed by our by-laws, will consider advocacy requests over the years and will all do so by applying the same criteria. The goal is a consistent process that reflects our mission, vision, and core values:

### **Social Justice Advocacy Request** First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor

#### Proposed Decision-making Process Updated based upon comments made by Church Council on 10/16/2017

Following upon the prophetic tradition of the Hebrew scriptures and the teaching, preaching, and modeling of Jesus, the First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor (FCC) seeks to be sensitive to the social/cultural issues of our day. This characteristic corresponds directly to our Church's history, mission, vision, and core values.

Periodically, members of FCC request advocacy or action from the church body in response to a specific social need or issue. Often such calls are simple and straight forward (i.e. responding to the aftermath of a natural disaster or feeding the hungry in our community). However, sometimes such calls for action or advocacy are complex, and confusing, and potentially controversial (i.e. when drafting the "Resolution Reaffirming Our Commitment to Inclusion, December 11, 2016).

It is with this reality in mind that Council recommends the following sequential decision-making process and criteria for consideration when such calls for advocacy or action are brought forth:

The Executive Committee, when presented with such a request, will use the criteria below to vet whether the particular request warrants further exploration, consideration, and potential action by the church:

Does the request . . .

- Align with our understanding of the Gospel within the framework of the Hebrew/Christian traditions?
- Align with the history and legacy of FCC?
- Align with the FCC Mission, Vision, and Core Values?
- Align with the FCC Strategic Plan?



- Create a strain on the FCC budget?
- Include a timeline that provides for periodic reviews?
- Compromise the safety and security of our members or families?
- Potentially endorse illegal action by FCC or any member (may require legal consultation)?

If the request is clearly within the purview of a standing committee, the Executive Committee may defer the response to that committee.

If a response by the church seems warranted, the Executive Committee will ask Church Council for its input, recommendation, and approval.

Depending upon the nature of the request and if, in fact, the request could be deemed potentially controversial, the Council will then determine the venue for sharing its recommendation with the congregation, which could include such things as forums, focus group discussions, a congregational survey, a special congregational meeting, etc. as a way to ensure that members of our congregation have a chance to be heard, mutually respected, to give input, and to be included in decision-making.



**The First  
Congregational  
Church** of Ann Arbor

[fccannarbor.org](http://fccannarbor.org)

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Bob Darcy Nancy  
Staff Rene Rachel

The FCC Staff would like to wish you all a  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

FCC Office will close at NOON on  
Friday, December 22 and Friday, December 29.

FCC Office will be closed  
Monday, December 25 and Monday, January 1.

## MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

PAM DABBS



The first day of our Christmas Wish Tree, November 12<sup>th</sup>, was an amazing success. The tree was full of star tags, each with a child's wish for a Christmas gift. Our members selected 80 out of the 120 tags on that first day! It is truly heartwarming to see our members rally every year for such a good cause! The best part of standing next to the tree as a Mission and Outreach Committee member was seeing how often star tags were selected because the child was the same age or gender of their own children or grandchildren. What a wonderful way to teach giving from the heart! We all thank you for making Christmas special for so many children in the Hikone (red tags), Green Baxter (green tags) and Mitchell (yellow tags) neighborhoods.

Looking ahead to January, we will be organizing this year's Warming Shelter to be held at our church on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in February. We are always looking for ways to occupy the shelter participants. We are not asking you to teach a class, but rather to sit at a table and do your craft with the idea that anyone is welcome to join you because you just happened to bring extra materials with you! It's a fun way to bring people together in the room! Another way to draw people into conversation is to bring one of your

favorite games and invite others to join you. Any way you like, we would love to have you join us to help make the shelter not only physically warm, but full of human warmth and kindness. From our past few years of experience, our FCC members and their friends are very good at supporting this cause in every way possible.

If you are unsure about coming to help at the warming shelter but would like to be involved, please call Pam Dabbs at 734-668-4884. She will walk you through how you can help and, if you would like, she will be there to help you with any project you'd like to bring. Please look for sign-up materials via email or our website in January to volunteer to be at the church and/or to supply food for meals and snacks. Your generosity helps with the costs involved and the people power needed!

From the Mission and Outreach Committee to our membership: Thank you for all you do! Without your help, our committee couldn't accomplish anything! You are important!

## COOKIES FOR OUR NEIGHBORS



Do you remember those college days; the end of the school term, the holidays close at hand and, final exams? Our next door neighbors, the students living at Betsy Barbour and Helen Newberry Hall, are experiencing those days right now. Eight years ago, we began a beautiful tradition of bringing home-baked cookies to the students during their study days. The notes of appreciation they send back to the church tell us that this is a tradition worth keeping. Study days and exams begin December 13. If you would like to be part of this tradition, please bring your home-baked goodies to the *Mayflower kitchen* at FCC by December 12, and we'll make sure the kids get them! Thank you!



# Check out our Small Groups!

*Mind & Spirit*  
(1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month)

*20/40*  
(Wednesdays at 6:30 pm.)

**TNS**  
(TUESDAYS AT 7 P.M.)



**Knight's Lunch Group**  
(4th Monday of each month)



**Text Breakfast**  
(Wednesdays @ 8:30 a.m.)

*Circle of Friends*

## **SMALL GROUPS—TEXT BREAKFAST**

We gather informally with senior minister Bob Livingston every Wednesday morning at 8:30 a.m. at the Classic Cup Café (4389 Jackson Road) for lively discussion. We discuss the scripture for the upcoming Sunday sermon, sharing our understanding, insights, and questions. We wrap up our morning about 10 a.m. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesdays! Please join us. By the way, we will NOT meet on Wednesday, December 27 or Wednesday, January 3.

## **SMALL GROUPS—KNIGHT'S LUNCH CLUB**

Please join us on the **FOURTH** Monday of the month for monthly lunch get-togethers with Bob Livingston and other FCC friends. We will not meet on December 25, but will meet again on Monday, January 22nd at Knight's on Dexter Avenue. Our lunch gatherings are highly informal and lots of fun, with welcoming and wide-ranging conversations. Everyone is welcome! We hope you can join us!

## **SMALL GROUPS—TUESDAY NIGHT SERIES (TNS)**

The TNS group will recess for the holidays until a new series begins on Tuesday, January 9. More details will be included in the January Courier. Please come and join us then if you can!

## **SMALL GROUPS—CIRCLE OF FRIENDS**

Circle of Friends connects church members who are experiencing life transitions, such as moving, a job change, retirement, caregiving, divorce, grief, injury, illness, surgery, and decreased mobility with other church members in a one-to-one relationship. Friends get together with friends once a month to share a caring connection and to deepen their relationship. We value caring at FCC, and we take that value seriously! Questions?

Our next meeting is on December 13th at the Glacier Hills Luncheon where Santa will distribute Christmas gifts to our friends.

If you would like to join us, please call Mary Ann Marquardt at [313-303-1989](tel:313-303-1989).

## **SMALL GROUPS—MIND AND SPIRIT BOOK GROUP**

The Mind and Spirit Book Group is a community of women of all ages. We enjoy reading and sharing our life stories as a means of personal and spiritual growth. We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 10:15 -11:45 a.m. in the Mayflower Room. December 6 is our annual lunch at Cottage in after our discussion. For December, we will be reading Kisses From Katie, a story of relentless love and redemption by Katie Davis Majors and Beth Clark. Please bring your own copy. For further information contact Janet Chen at [a2janetchen@gmail.com](mailto:a2janetchen@gmail.com), or 734-996-3856.

## **SMALL GROUPS—20/40 GROUP**

We have completed our study of Ecclesiastes and have moved on to Sustaining Creation, a faith journey for small groups that examines how environmental justice is a response of our faith. Our discussions are richly grounded in scripture and feature insights and commentary from outstanding environmental faith leaders around the country, as well as action steps for living sustainably. Join us Wednesdays from 6:30 – 8 p.m. in the Meeting Room to be a part of the discussion. Our schedule is as follows:

December 6	6:30 p.m. @ FCC	Final Sustaining Creation
December 13	6:30 p.m. @ FCC	White Elephant & Potluck Christmas Party



The First  
Congregational  
Church of Ann Arbor

[fccannarbor.org](http://fccannarbor.org)

608 E. William Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
(734) 662-1679



**FCC Office Hours**  
**Mon. — Fri.**  
**9 a.m. — 3 p.m.**

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*Whatever Your  
Story, You're  
Welcome Here*

**2018**

## SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- 8:30 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room
- 8:45 a.m. Continental Breakfast, Pilgrim Hall
- 9:00 a.m. Change of Pace Service, Pilgrim Hall
- 9:30 a.m. Communion Service, Douglas Memorial Chapel
- 10:00 a.m. Traditional Service, Sanctuary  
(Church School during 10:00 a.m. worship service)
- 11:00 a.m. Friendship Hour, Pilgrim Hall



## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH DECEMBER 2017 CALENDAR

- December 1-4 Men's Rotating Shelter Continues
- December 3
  - 9:00 a.m. Change of Pace in Chapel
  - 9:30 a.m. Chapel Communion, Douglas Memorial Chapel
  - 10:00 a.m. Traditional Worship, Sanctuary
  - 11:00 a.m. Friendship Time, Mayflower Room
  - 11:00 a.m. Safety Meeting, Meeting Room
  - 11:00 a.m. Intergenerational Service Trip Meeting, Chapel
- December 5-7 Congregators Chicago Trip
- December 6
  - 8:30 a.m. Text Breakfast, Classic Cup Café
  - 10:15 a.m. Mind and Spirit Book Group, Mayflower
  - 6:30 p.m. 20/40 Group, Meeting Room
- December 8 5-8 p.m. Parent's Night Out
- December 9 11-3 p.m. JH Bell Ringing, Nickel's Arcade
- December 10 FCC Bake Sale
  - 9:00 a.m. Change of Pace, Pilgrim Hall
  - 10:00 a.m. Special Music Presentation, Sanctuary
  - 11:00 a.m. Friendship Time, Pilgrim Hall Lobby
  - 11:00 a.m. Advent Workshop, Pilgrim Hall
  - 11:00 a.m. Second Sunday Presentation, Mayflower
  - 7:00 p.m. Healing Space, Pilgrim Hall
- December 13
  - 8:30 a.m. Text Breakfast, Classic Cup Café
  - 12:30 p.m. Glacier Hills Luncheon
  - 6:30 p.m. 20/40 Group Christmas Party, Meeting Rm
- December 17 5:00 p.m. Wrapped In Love, All Church
- December 18 6:15 p.m. Trustees Meeting
- December 20 8:30 a.m. Text Breakfast, Classic Cup Café
- December 24
  - 9:00 a.m. Change of Pace with Special Music, Pilgrim Hall
  - 10:00 a.m. Traditional Worship, Sanctuary
  - 4-8 p.m. Live Nativity, William Street Grounds
  - 5:30 p.m. Christmas Pageant, Sanctuary
  - 8:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion Service, Sanctuary
- December 31
  - 9:30 a.m. Chapel Communion, Douglas Memorial Chapel
  - 10:00 a.m. Traditional Worship, Sanctuary
  - 11:00 a.m. Friendship Time, Mayflower Room