

Congregational Courier

THOUGHTS FROM BOB LIVINGSTON SENIOR MINISTER

Dear Friends:

Back in November, I preached a sermon on the topic of generosity as part of our "The Virtue of Character" sermon series. At the conclusion of the sermon, I invited people to do a generous act in the following week and, if possible, to let me know what was done and how it felt. I was honestly moved by some of the things that were done by a bunch of our folk. Let me give you a few examples. One person offered an ill neighbor two hours of volunteer time each week to run errands, or simply visit, which continued for a period of a few years. Another person helped to raise literally millions of dollars for various Ann Arbor area community organizations since his retirement some 20 years ago. Another person enjoyed tipping the guys at the local carwash and slowing down to chat with people at a local Kroger store; she purchased Wendy's gift cards to have on hand for those holding signs on freeway exits and offered her frequent flyer miles to a friend whose daughter was having a particularly stressful time. Two other people prepared 12 shoeboxes full of toys, stuffed animals, socks, and other items for Operation Christmas Child through Samaritan's Purse. And so on! For all of these, the experience of generosity brought joy, satisfaction, and the good feeling of helping and serving others.

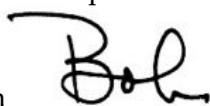
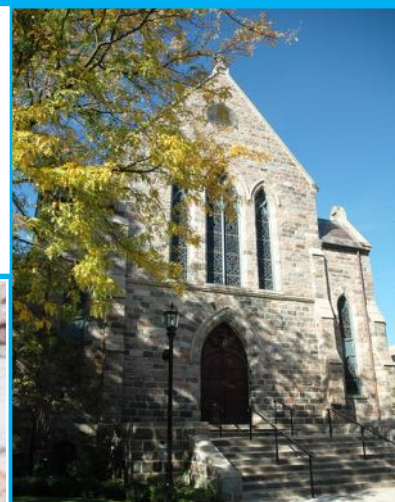
We are now in the season of Advent and Christmas, a time when we rejoice in the generous love of God for the whole world in the birth of Jesus. I have always found these words by Howard Thurman inspiring:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone.
When the king and princess are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flock.
The work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost, to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among brothers and sisters,
to make music in the heart.*

May this month be one of positive expectation and thankful delight, and a time for celebrating God's presence and love.

Blessings,

Bob Livingston
Senior Minister

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*Embracing God's
word and
enriching lives*

Whatever Your Story, You're Welcome Here



DARCY CRAIN MINISTER



This building on Northwestern University's campus probably doesn't strike nostalgia in you. Even if you went to school here. It didn't to me. But the next image certainly did.



It is not an image of Northwestern, per say, but of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary which stands with its beautiful Gothic architecture in the center of Northwestern's growing campus. I attended a conference there this past month and had the opportunity to walk the beautiful shoreline and see the new buildings and developments on campus. Some of it I scarcely recognized. While I was flooded with nostalgia in Garrett's building, which had scarcely changed in the 12 years since I'd graduated, the campus I had known so well was now

home to large glass buildings with giant screens sparkling with pixels visible through the wall to ceiling windows. Where I played frisbee there were now Lacrosse and field hockey fields. At first I was taken aback; I couldn't shake the feeling that I didn't know this new glass shoreline, that I didn't belong. And then I shifted my gaze past the mirrored glass, to the peaks of the gothic architecture, still prominent in the sky.

It was a beautiful image of past and future. I had a taste of nostalgia, but with a promise of a campus that would continue to launch new students to lead a world that changes at a faster pace than a developing campus.

As we gain momentum in our capital campaign we have the opportunity to stand on the shoreline and experience the nostalgia while seeing the new construction that is to be. We can remember with fondness the memories this place holds for so many of us, while resting assured in the promise that we are making changes to insure that we continue to launch faithful disciples who will lead change in a world that desperately needs light and hope. Nostalgia draws from the positive emotions and memories that a place holds; but if we allow it to, it can fuel us to generosity; so that others may experience the stories of a place and a people and faith that always feels like home.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darcy".

RACHEL DUDLEY
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



CHURCH SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Church School Christmas Party - Sunday, December 9

After the 10 a.m. service we will be having our Church School Christmas Party in Pilgrim Hall. Gingerbread house making will be back by popular demand!



**Salvation Army Bell Ringing
Saturday, December 15 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

We will be ringing bells for the Salvation Army at the east entrance of Nickels Arcade, next door to the Bivouac store. Feel free to park at the church and walk over.

Baptism - Sunday, December 16

Another church school kid is getting baptized! Join the celebration during the a.m. worship service. If you are interested in having your child baptized, please contact Rev. Darcy Crain (darcy@fccannarbor.org) or Rev. Bob Livingston (bob@fccannarbor.org) for information.

Rachel

10

Live Nativity - Christmas Eve, December 24, Starting at 4 p.m.

Each year our church is blessed to have live animals as part of our live nativity and our Christmas Pageant. Stop by and say "hi" to the animals before and after the 5:30 pm service on Christmas Eve.

**Family Service & Christmas Pageant
Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24, at 5:30 p.m.**

The tradition continues this year as the kids prepare for our annual Christmas Pageant! All kids are welcome to join the fun! Sign up to be a sheep, shepherd, or angel by emailing Rachel (rachel@fccannarbor.org). Costumes will be handed out to main characters and speaking roles on Sunday, December 16. All sheep, shepherds, and angels will receive their costumes on Sunday, December 23. There will be a rehearsal for main characters and speaking roles in the sanctuary after church on Sunday, December 23. All who do not sign up for a role will still be allowed to get a angel, sheep, or shepherd costume from the costume closet starting at 5 pm on December 24. As always, all kids are welcome to participate!



We are trying to find a date that we all can participate in an escape room activity here in Ann Arbor, so we can learn to work as a team and develop our skills as leaders and problem solvers. You will receive a "doodle" poll email as we hope to land a date where the highest number of students are able to participate. Please respond to that doodle and stay tuned for the announced date of the event.

Have you ever wondered what the kids are learning in church school? The outline of our curriculum for the 2018-2019 winter quarter is given on page 7. All are welcome to follow along and learn with us as we explore "Journeys with Jesus."

Winter 2018–19: Journeys with Jesus

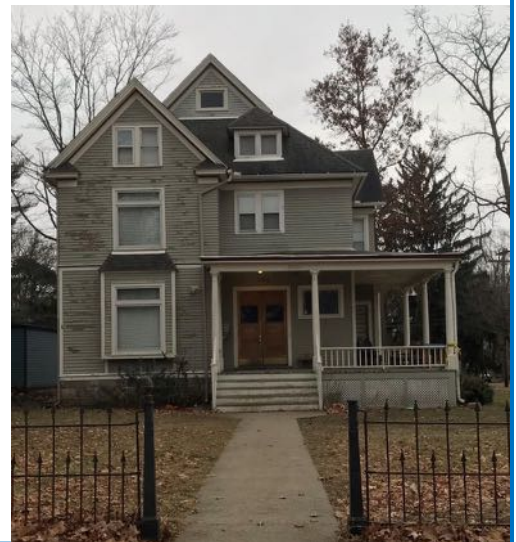
Date	Title	Shine On: A Story Bible	Scripture text	Bible story
1. Dec. 2 <i>Advent 1</i>	The path to God's promise	p. 144	Jeremiah 33:14–16; Psalm 25	Jeremiah shared God's promise of a righteous leader for Israel. The psalmist speaks of God leading the people in paths of love and faithfulness.
2. Dec. 9 <i>Advent 2</i>	Zechariah and Elizabeth	p. 158	Luke 1:5–25, 57–80	The angel Gabriel said Zechariah and Elizabeth would have a son named John. Zechariah doubted the angel and became mute until John was born.
3. Dec. 16 <i>Advent 3</i>	Mary says yes	p. 160	Luke 1:26–56	The angel Gabriel visited Mary. Mary would give birth to God's son, naming him Jesus. Mary was willing and went to tell Elizabeth, praising God.
4. Dec. 23 <i>Advent 4</i>	Jesus' birth	p. 164, 166	Luke 2:1–20	Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to register in the census. Jesus was born. An angel told nearby shepherds of the birth, and they came to see Jesus.
5. Dec. 30	Simeon and Anna	p. 168	Luke 2:21–40	Jesus was named at 8 days old. Mary and Joseph presented Jesus at the temple. Simeon and the prophet Anna acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah.
6. Jan. 6	A visit from the magi	p. 170	Matthew 2:1–12	Travelers from the East followed a star to find the child Jesus to honor him and offer gifts. They returned by a different route to avoid King Herod.
7. Jan. 13	Studying at the temple	p. 174	Luke 2:41–52	Jesus went to the temple with his parents for Passover. They headed home, but Jesus stayed behind to study with the teachers, upsetting them.
8. Jan. 20	Jesus brings good news	p. 182	Luke 4:14–30	Jesus read from Isaiah in his hometown synagogue and preached. His words amazed people, but then they rejected his message and drove him away.
9. Jan. 27	Transfiguration	p. 218	Luke 9:28–36	Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a mountain to pray. Moses and Elijah appeared; God spoke from a cloud. Jesus was transfigured and affirmed.
10. Feb. 3	Mustard seed and yeast	p. 226	Luke 13:18–21	Jesus told the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the yeast. He spoke of the seed growing over time and of a leaven bringing new life.
11. Feb. 10	Come to the banquet	p. 228	Luke 14:1–24	Three accounts describe the welcome at God's table. Jesus said that God's table is set for everyone, but each person must choose to come.
12. Feb. 17	Searching for the lost	p. 230	Luke 15:1–10	A shepherd searched for a lost sheep, and a woman looked for a lost coin. They called their friends and neighbors to rejoice when the lost was found.
13. Feb. 24	The loving father	p. 232	Luke 15:11–32	Jesus told a parable. One son squandered his inheritance. The father welcomed him back with open arms. The older brother was jealous of the father's love and forgiveness.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

BETTY BISHOP

What happened to the parsonage at 1402 Hill St. once Rev. Lloyd Douglas resigned and moved to Ohio? There was no regular minister for 18 months, so the house was rented out for \$75 a month until a new minister could be found. In July 1922, Rev. Herbert Jump accepted the call to come to FCC as the next minister. He did request some repairs to the parsonage, which were made. In October 1923, he asked for storm windows for his study at the parsonage and this improvement was made. Rev. Jump left in 1927.

As early as January 1926 the trustees were considering the sale of the parsonage. It is unclear from the records whether any other ministers lived in the house on Hill St. It was rented out at times and there were expenses for maintenance of the parsonage as late as 1935 and 1936. In 1937, struggling with various financial issues and the Great Depression, the church sold the house at 1402 Hill St. to the University of Michigan for \$9000. The money was used to pay off a mortgage on the church which started in 1932 and was finally paid off in 1945. Apparently the mortgage was held by the University of Michigan and had been incurred to make improvements to the church and social hall in the early 1930s.



YOUTH MINISTRIES

SENIOR HIGH

The senior highs have painted two new doors to replace the ones that didn't make it through last season because of the elements. We are continuing our work toward being able to once again display our doors, which welcome all to the worship, ministry, and life of FCC.

We are trying to find a date on which we all can participate in an escape room activity here in Ann Arbor, so we can learn to work as a team and develop our skills as leaders and problem solvers. You will receive a "doodle" poll email as we hope to land a date where the highest number of students are able to participate. Please respond to that doodle and stay tuned for the announced date of the event.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Elected Positions

Church Council Chair: Dick Mitchell
Church Council Vice-Chair: Lynda Norton
Secretary: Chris Vermeulen
Treasurer: Mike Dabbs
Clerk: Peg Jacobs
Historian: Betty Bishop

Remaining Positions Filled by Board and Committee Positions

Board of Deacons Co-Chairs
Board of Trustees Chair
Board of Christian Education Chair
Director of Christian Education
Missions and Outreach Committee Chair
Music Committee Chair
Nominating Committee Co-Chairs
Activities and Fellowship Co-Chairs
Contemporary Issues Committee Chair
Minister

Current Activities

Staffing:

We have a full staff to handle the needs and tasks of the Church. Looking forward to a great year. A personnel committee has been formed to review the current staff handbook.

Review of By-Laws:

A group will be formed to review the By-Laws and make suggestions for updating various sections to meet the current needs of the Church organization.

Safety:

Discussions continue about safety and security of the Church.

Contact Information:

Feel free to contact any member of the Church Council with questions, comments, or concerns. We appreciate your feedback on the activities of the Church.

—Chris Vermeulen, Church Council Secretary

Next Scheduled Meeting: January 21, 2019

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees met on Monday, November 12. The following items were discussed:

The Treasurer reported that we are in good shape for the first third of the year, being at 28.5% of the budget.

The auditors have been busy and met with Mike Dabbs and Nancy Suave on November 27. They will report their findings to the Board of Trustees at their December meeting.

Mike proposed some revisions to the budget to make it more realistic. These will be made following the audit.

The Stewardship Campaign will kick off on April 1, and April will be Pledge Month.

The leak at the front of the church has hopefully been fixed. It will be monitored to be sure there is no more leaking before any further work is done in the sanctuary

Two posts were stolen from the State Street fence over a weekend in November. They will be replaced in the Spring.

Dan Jacobs presented a potential accelerated timeline for the renovations included in the Capital Campaign. Many things will need to happen in a timely manner for this timeline to be possible.

Mike Dabbs reported on the financial progress of the Capital Campaign. The committee is very pleased with the progress and looks forward to a successful conclusion to the campaign by December 31.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for Monday, January 14, 2019.

DEACONS

MITCHELL DUDLEY AND NANCY VERMUELEN

The Board of Deacons is looking for a few new members to join our ranks. Currently, we have six vacancies within the Board. The Board of Deacons' primary role is to ensure that services run smoothly at FCC. We are the ushers, coffee brewers, communion servers, and greeters for each service. Each deacon is asked to serve once every five weeks, so the commitment is easy. Would you like to join us in serving one another? If you are interested in being a deacon or want more information, then please contact Nancy Vermeulen (cnverm@aol.com) or Mitchell Dudley (Mitchell.dudley@gmail.com).

To our current deacons: Thank you for being flexible, for filling the gaps, and for serving the Church! Your service is invaluable!!

STEWARDSHIP

MARK SCHIRMER

As we roll into the final month of 2018—Can you believe it?—and into the Holiday Season, I know many will be in a generous mood and thinking about charitable giving. As we've noted many times before, there are multiple ways to financially support FCC, including the Heritage Society, our current Capital Campaign and the annual Stewardship Campaign, which supports the operating budget for our church. All three help keep FCC strong in our community.

With any charitable donation, you want to be smart about your tax bill too. And things are a little different this year, thanks to recent changes in the tax code. Change can be scary, we know, so we asked Melissa Joy and Mark Foster, two financial planners in our church, to share a few thoughts on charitable giving and taxes. Here's what we learned.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 will likely reduce the number of Americans who will itemize deductions in 2018 and beyond. The standard deductions with the new policy nearly doubled, to \$12,000 for individual filers, \$24,000 for joint returns. In the past, many people would itemize deduction and receive a tax benefit for any charitable gift. With these new higher standard deductions, it's likely fewer people will be itemizing.

Here are some strategies to consider for maximizing tax effectiveness:

- **Bundle Gifts.** Since your typical annual charitable gift might not be itemized under the new law, evaluate whether bundling multiple years' gifts in one calendar year might effectively lower your tax burden once every two or three years. Donor Advised Funds can help. These are charitable accounts where donors receive a benefit at the time the account is created, and then can designate charitable gifts over time.
- **Qualified Charitable Distributions.** If you're over age 70.5 and own a retirement account, you are likely required to take annual minimum distributions. Recent tax laws made the option of a Qualified Charitable Distribution permanent. When you complete such a distribution, you will not report the income on your taxes like you would be required to do with an IRA or 401(k) distribution. Remember, Qualified Charitable Distributions are for IRAs only.
- **Gifts of Appreciated Stock.** When you invest in a taxable account, your investment gains are typically taxed upon sale as capital gains. Charities do not have to pay taxes when they sell stocks, due to their non-profit status. Rather than liquidating a stock and writing a check, consider gifting stock you've owned more than twelve months directly to the church.

Most importantly though, plan ahead and ask questions. There are CPAs and financial planners in our extended church family, including Melissa and Mark. If you're thinking about making a financial commitment to the church at this time of year or donating in any way, don't be shy with your questions. Reach out for help.

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

Happy Holidays,

Mark Schirmer, Stewardship Chair (1960bird@gmail.com)

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT

MIKE DABBS

On behalf of our Capital Campaign Fundraising Leadership Team, I am pleased to report that as of November 13, 2018, 41 members have made pledges totaling \$753,300 toward our \$2,000,000 campaign goal. Pledge forms were just mailed to all members who made pledges to the Annual Stewardship Campaign. In the near future, an additional mailing will be sent to all other members. We are asking all members to submit their pledges by early December, to allow the Trustees to give guidance to the Capital Campaign Design Team.



Notes from the December 2 Capital Campaign Check-In

A group of 12–15 members attended this meeting, along with representatives from Church Council and the Trustees, and provided the Trustee Design Committee with input on a range of issues.

Access into the building – There was concern about having the entrance on the north and parking on the south. It was shared with the group that putting a ramp on the south would eliminate the very parking needed by those members who are mobile but need a short distance to the building. It was also shared that FCC has shared with the DDA that, as they plan for a bike lane on William Street, we hope that they will provide a drop off space that aligns with our north entry and additional barrier-free parking spaces.

Safety & Security – There was concern that we might be making the church seem like a fortress rather than a welcoming space. After some discussion, the group agreed that we need to provide secure spaces for our office staff during the week and children during church service. They hope that suggestions for securing the sanctuary can be discussed further.

Who came up with the list of things to do? – A few members wanted to know how the list was developed. The list was generated by the congregation. There was a survey taken during the Strategic Planning Process about five years ago and then a follow up survey was done about two years ago, and both surveys supported the same initiatives. From the major categories of Accessibility, Safety and Security, Worship Space, Fellowship Space, and Staff Offices, small groups directly affected by possible changes, such as the church school, were asked about issues they hoped to see included in a Capital Campaign. There was also a congregation meeting held by the church's architect, Kingscott last winter.

What will be the ultimate decision-making process? – After the fundraising portion of the Capital Campaign is complete, the Trustee's Design Committee will prepare a preliminary list of items to be proposed for the campaign. The list will then be shared with the Trustees for their approval. Once the Trustees agree on a list, it will be shared with the Church Council for their review, input, and approval. After both groups have agreed upon the scope

(Continued on page 10)

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CHECK-IN (CONTINUED)

of work to be undertaken, it will be presented to the congregation for their approval. If there are substantial changes along the way, the Church Council and Trustees will be made aware, so that they can officially approve the final scope, which will allow the Design Committee to proceed working with Kingscott to prepare drawings for the various phases. Some work will be done by FCC, but the bigger project will be done by either a general contractor or a construction manager.

Act like a welcoming church – Some discussion occurred, suggesting that we need to act like a welcoming church rather than making structural changes to create a welcoming environment. There were some good ideas expressed, which will be shared with Church Council for their thoughts and discussion. The group was informed that most new churches create spaces like the proposed Welcome Center, and many existing churches are building additions to create that type of space. The proposed Welcome Center will be our front door and first impression for new visitors, as well as a space for members to gather and commune before and after services.

Will there be another meeting? – Yes. In January we will hold another Check-In meeting; however, in the meantime, if you want to contact one of the Design Committee members, please reach out to Peter Sandretto, Scott Allen, Jane Thomson, Joe Denay, or Dan Jacobs.

—Dan Jacobs

TREASURER'S REPORT MIKE DABBS

We completed the first four months (one-third) of our Fiscal Year on October 31. Pledge payments received remained on pace with the annual budget, which was a big help for our cash flow. Thank you to all members for your payments! We have received payments from a few members for the Capital Campaign, which are reflected in the report. These funds will be transferred to our new BOAA account for the Capital Campaign before the end of the calendar year. The Gifts and Other Income Category stayed slightly behind the annual budget. Expense categories are staying less than the budget, with the exception of Christian Education's total expenses, which are slightly greater than budgeted. However, Christian Education ran Vacation Bible School and had start-up expenses for the fall program year during these first four months, which appears to have caused this overage and should balance out prior to the end of the year.

The audit firm UHY, LLP has completed their work at the church and are preparing the Financial Review that will be presented to the Trustees at their December Meeting. For members who are interested in their report, a copy of it can be obtained by contacting Nancy Sauve (nancy@fccannarbor.org) or Michael Dabbs (mfdabbs10@gmail.com) after the holidays.

TREASURER'S REPORT

MIKE DABBS

First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor 2018–2019 SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

October 31, 2018

		ACTUAL 10/31/18	APPROVED BUDGET 7/1/18 - 6/30/19	NOTES
REVENUE				
	Pledges	\$169,224	\$525,000	1
	Capital Pledges	\$75,600		2
	Gifts - Operations	\$10,474	\$48,000	
	Other Income	\$9,571	\$33,250	
	Total Earned Revenue	\$264,869	\$606,250	
EXPENSES				
	Ministry	\$62,853	\$229,900	
	Administrative/Office	\$99,752	\$323,160	
	Christian Education	\$21,542	\$56,950	
	Music	\$18,098	\$69,200	
	Missions & Outreach	\$68	\$34,500	
	Maintenance & Utilities	\$28,634	\$92,050	
	Total Expenses	\$230,947	\$805,760	
NET REVENUE		\$33,922	\$(199,510)	
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES		\$29,860	\$40,000	3
		\$9,816		4
TRUST FUND DISTRIBUTION		\$ 27,500	\$240,000	5
	BALANCE	\$21,746	\$490	6

Notes

- 1 2018–2019 Actual Pledges Total was \$523,246.
- 2 Capital Campaign Funds received are temporarily being held in Operating Account pending establishment of BOAA Capital Campaign Account. New account has been opened and funds are expected to be transferred before December 31.
- 3 2018–2019 budget includes Capital Campaign expenses and mortgage principal payments. Capital Campaign will contribute \$40,000 for costs of capital expenses, mortgage principal payments, and maintenance and repairs.
- 4 Mortgage Principal Payments. 2018–2019 Principal Payments will be \$30,231.
- 5 2018–2019 Budget distribution is 5.5%, but a lower absolute amount than last year.
- 6 If additional funds are received from stewardship, they will go to reduce trust fund withdrawals, add to office staff, and increase funds for Missions and Outreach, in that order.

MISSIONS AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

PAM DABBS

We have reached the finish line in collecting 106 gifts for the children represented by CAN who live in the Hikone, Green Baxter, and Mitchell neighborhoods. Every single gift tag has been signed out and in record time! Once again, you have proven to be a most kind and generous group of Congregationalists, and it makes everyone on our committee *proud to be members alongside each one of you!*



In November, Missions & Outreach worked on selecting organizations to receive grants from the church in 2018–2019. Our theme for this year is: Nourishing Our Neighbors Through Health and Wellness Needs. Ten organizations have been identified to receive the grant awards. We are in

the process of notifying them and will let you know who they are very soon. Once again, we will have "Mission Moments" before church services two times per month, starting in January and going through April. Mission Moments have turned out to be a great way to focus on each of these worthy organizations and for you to find out just how our grant funds are being used.

We appreciate all the coats you have donated this season. All of the coats have gone to *The House by the Side of the Road*. Coats you have outgrown or you have replaced are treasures to others—and so many of the coats you have donated are in great condition, providing needed warmth to those who are outside during the winter months far more than most of us. Thank you so much for caring and for going to your closets to find desperately needed warmth to send to others!

We have been delivering food and personal items to the Jewish Family Services Food Pantry for two years. We thought you might like to know a bit more about the food pantry and how your donations in the lobby box are helping others.

Each month the food pantry collaborates with Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels to deliver food and personal items to the homebound and disabled. Many of these clients are referred from the University of Michigan and St. Joseph Hospitals. Many have been classified as complex care and will receive continued support depending on their recovery. Because we have identified canned tuna and oatmeal for November and December, each client served by JFS and Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels will receive these items on their delivery day. In addition, the food pantry on State Street is open on Tuesday and Thursday for drop-in clients. Thank you to all who have assisted. Your support is greatly appreciated.

UPCOMING ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

- Dec 2 11:00 a.m. Capital Campaign Check-in, Douglas Chapel
 11:00 a.m. Deacons' Meeting, 3rd–5th-grade Classroom
 11:00 a.m. Hand Chimes rehearsal, Meeting Rm
- Dec 3–5 CHICAGO TRAIN TRIP
- Dec 5 8:30 a.m. Text Breakfast, Classic Cup Café
 10:15 a.m. Mind and Spirit, Mayflower Room
 6:30 p.m. 20–40 Group, Meeting Room
- Dec 6 6:00 p.m. Advent Women's Evening, Pilgrim Hall
- Dec 9 CHRISTMAS WISH TREE GIFTS DUE
 10:00 a.m. Special Music during traditional worship service,
 Vivaldi's "Magnificat" with choir and orchestra
 11:00 a.m. Church School Party, Pilgrim Hall
 11:00 a.m. Hand Chimes rehearsal, Meeting Rm
 11:00 a.m. Second Sunday Series: The Threshold Singers, Douglas Chapel
 11:00 a.m. Church School Christmas Party
- Dec 16 9:00 a.m. Special Music program during Change of Pace worship service
 11:00 a.m. Bake Sale, Mayflower Lobby
- Dec 23 9:00 a.m. Change of Pace, Pilgrim Hall
 9:30 a.m. Douglas Chapel Communion Service
 10:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service, Sanctuary
 11:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant rehearsal for speaking parts, Sanctuary
- Dec 24 OFFICE CLOSING AT NOON
 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES
 4:00 p.m. Live Nativity Outside until 8 p.m.
 5:30 p.m. Children's Christmas Pageant with Live Animals
 8:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion Worship Service
- Dec 25 OFFICE CLOSED
- Dec 26 OFFICE CLOSED
- Dec 30 NO CHANGE OF PACE WORSHIP SERVICES
 9:30 a.m. Douglas Chapel Communion Service
 10:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service, Sanctuary
- Jan 6 NO CHANGE OF PACE WORSHIP SERVICES
 10:00 a.m. Worship Service with Communion
 11:00 a.m. Church Undecorating Party

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES—SECOND SUNDAY SERIES

SARA HOLMES

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Sunday, December 9 | Threshold Singers:
Bedside Songs for Hospice and Healing
Karen Chalmer |
| Sunday, January 13 | Interfaith Wisdom:
Women Creating Alliances for Friendship and Peace
A panel of five women from different faith backgrounds |
| Sunday, February 10 | Carbon Fee and Dividend:
Effective option for addressing climate change
Steve Kolk, ACAS, MAAA, climate actuarial expert, Evan Murray, UM BS-Climate & Atmospheric Science |
| Sunday, March 10 | Cass Community Social Services in Detroit:
Tiny houses and more
Rev. Faith Fowler, M.Div., M.P.A. Pastor of Cass Community United Methodist Church and Executive Director of Cass Community Social Services. |
| Sunday, April 14 | Ann Arbor's Bicycling/Walking Infrastructure:
Now and In the Future
Raymond Hess, City of Ann Arbor Transportation Manager |

20-40 GROUP

Our small group will meet twice in the month of December. The first meeting, on December 5, will occur at our usual time, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. and will include a presentation on the capital campaign with Mike Dabbs. As we think of saving for down payments, paying for daycare, saving for college, and just barely thinking about retirement, what does an increased level of giving to the church look like? We will talk about the capital campaign and how we might be able to participate in a friendly, open, and honest way.

On December 12, we will have our annual Christmas party with our white elephant gift exchange, cookie exchange, and potluck. The Dec 12 event will begin at 6 p.m. so we have ample time to celebrate!

Childcare is provided for both events. Email Darcy (darcy@fccannarbor.org) if you have more questions.



ACTIVITIES AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

ROBBIE SAWITSKI

The magic of Christmas has officially taken over at FCC. The holiday spirit is evidenced by the splendid decorations everywhere we look. Many heartfelt thanks go out to all our wonderful and talented volunteer elves, who truly “decked the halls” of our beloved church.

What goes up must come down. We will “undecorate” on Sunday, January 6, after the 10 a.m. worship service. A tasty lunch will be provided for all helpers. Please mark your calendars and plan on spending some quality time with our church family. If you would like to help with the undecorating and need childcare, please let Rachel (rachel@fccannarbor.org) know.

Your AFC would like to wish everyone a Blessed and Merry Christmas, safe holiday travels, and a Very Happy New Year!!

—Robbie Sawitski



CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

MARY ANN MARQUARDT

The Circle of Friends will meet on Sunday, December 9th at 9 a.m. in the Mayflower Room. We will be distributing the gifts that we will give to our friends. It will be a time of fellowship before the holidays, and we will set our goals for the New Year. There will be no meeting in January. Our group usually gathers for a luncheon at the Cottage Inn in February. Please come to our December meeting if you are interested in helping a member of our church who has been ill or is now unable to attend church services or needs additional support due to a significant loss in their lives or other personal issues. We need new members so that we can make sure anyone in need has support. You may call me on my cell phone at 313-303-1989. A very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



MUSIC COMMITTEE MJ QUIGLEY-YOUNG

The Music Committee met on Nov. 4 and discussed ongoing projects and events for this year and beyond. "Music is so important to our worship" (quote from Bob Livingston), and, as a committee, we are committed to support, plan, encourage, and create all things music at our church. Here are some upcoming events:

Dec. 9, 2018: On the second Sunday in Advent, the Chancel Choir and orchestra, under the direction of Shohei Kobayashi, will present *The Magnificat RV611* by Antonio Vivaldi for our 10 a.m. worship service. The soloists will be from our choir membership: Maya Ballester, soprano; Maitri White, soprano; Tori Darnell, mezzo soprano; Betsy Hill, alto. This event is being advertised to the general public by our Marketing Committee, headed by Brian Connelly. Thank you, Brian and your committee!

Dec. 24, 2018: Our 8 p.m. Christmas Eve Service will include music by our Hand Chimes Choir, directed by Cindy Bylsma, and our String Quartet and Chancel Choir, with our Wilhelm Organ being played by Dr. Timothy Huth. The String Quartet includes three church members: Barbara

Sturgis-Everett and Mike Overdier on violin, and Mj Quigley-Young on cello, with special guest, Carolyn Tarzia, on viola.

January, February, and March, 2019: We hope that our gifted young people will share their musical gifts with the congregation more and more often. The months of January and February (District Solo and Ensemble Festival) and March (State Solo and Ensemble Festival) offer our gifted young people the opportunity, not only to serve God with their gifts, but also to experience a "practice" performance for Solo and Ensemble Festival. If you and your child would like this experience, please contact Shohei Kobayashi, Tim Huth, or Mj Quigley-Young.

We look forward to more frequent performances by our Hand Chimes Choir under the direction of Cindy Bylsma. Plans for a regular rehearsal schedule are being made, with volunteer Randy Webb assisting Cindy with the music preparations and rehearsals. If you are interested in participating, stay tuned for more details.

A HOLIDAY NOTE FROM YOUR ORGANIST TIMOTHY HUTH

Greetings to the good people of FCCA2.

And, all best to you and your families in this cold holiday season! May our song, compassionate hearts, and God's love warm us all up for the great festival of Christmas.

I am glad to share with you that First Congregational has received a unique and special gift—a small, mechanical-action pipe organ by JW Walker and Sons* for our chapel. This is a very well-built organ that will serve our needs well for many years, allowing us to expand our own music ministry in the form of special services and more and more varied concert offerings, as well as enhance our already strong ties with the U of M Department of Music and local arts organizations. A giver gives the gift its sparkle, and indeed this is a gift from Marilyn Mason, our beloved Organist Emeritus** This organ belonged to Dr. Mason and is well seasoned by her hands. We are graced and blessed.

We are grateful to the thoughtful and systematic work of the Music Committee and the American Center for Church Music (Timothy Huth, Director) in the procurement, moving, and storage of this instrument. It will be put into place in the Douglas Chapel after our upcoming building renovations. We also give thanks to the Steiner family who gave us the current electronic organ, which, after a long life of good service, is failing.

May the sparkle of the Christmas star shine forth in the work of all our hands, we who are called to shine “like the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3)!

*J.W. Walker and Sons, Pipe Organ Builders and Tuners by appointment to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

**Dr. Mason, with Michele Johns and our Music Committee, also led us to our most excellent Karl Wilhelm Organ in the sanctuary.

HEALING SPACE

A monthly meditation service where music, meditation and prayer meet

On Sunday December 16th, Healing Space will be a candlelit Vespers Service in the sanctuary, at 7 p.m. Please join us for moments of calm and reflection, with music by Tim Huth and an Advent reflection by Darcy Crain. For additional information, please contact Gail Haynes (gehaynes@aol.com).



PLEASE DONATE TO THE FESTIVE HOLIDAY BAKE SALE

Our annual Christmas bake sale, whose funds provide the evergreen roping that adorns the inside and outside of the church, will be on Sunday, December 16, in the Mayflower Lobby, following both the 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. services. Donations of all kinds of baked goods, jellies and jams, soup and herb mixes, relishes, and candies are needed. Please remember our nut-free policy: no nuts or products containing nuts should be brought to the sale.



NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION BRUNCH RESCHEDULED

Due to scheduling conflicts, the new member orientation brunch has been rescheduled for January 27th. Please put this date on your calendar if you are considering membership in FCCA2. We hope you will join us. At the brunch, you will have the opportunity to hear about various ministries and opportunities at FCC and get to know others who are joining as well. It is a fun and informative gathering.

Please contact Laura Livingston (laural88@att.net) if you have any questions.

GREAT LAKES SCRIP

Many thanks to all those who are using the Great Lakes Scrip program! There's a new shipment of gift cards with many low denominations, perfect for teacher gifts, hostess gifts, any gift. We have cards for every occasion, restaurants, retail, gas, groceries, Amazon and Visa. Please stop by the Scrip table located in the Mayflower Lobby near the elevator on Sunday mornings or call the office during the week. All profits go toward mission/work trips from FCC!

TEXT BREAKFAST

We gather every Wednesday morning at 8:30 a.m. with Bob Livingston at the Classic Cup Café (4389 Jackson Road, Ann Arbor) for a lively discussion of the week's sermon text (s). We wrap up our morning about 10 a.m. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesdays!



KNIGHT'S LUNCH GROUP

We meet on the fourth Monday of each month with Bob Livingston and other FCC friends. This month, since the fourth Monday is Christmas Eve we won't meet. Please join us on January 28 at 11:30 a.m. at Knight's on Dexter Rd. Our lunch gatherings are highly informal and lots of fun, with welcoming and wide-ranging conversations. Everyone is welcome!

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 read books that deal with spiritual or social justice issues. Our book for the Fall is *God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine* by Victoria Sweet. The book group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 10:15 to 11:45 a.m. in the Mayflower Room. Our December meetings will be on Wednesday, December 5 and 19. Questions? Please contact Gail Haynes (gehaynes@aol.com)..

TUESDAY NIGHT STUDY GROUP

Please join us for the Tuesday Night Study Group, which meets from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Mayflower Room. We are currently viewing a potpourri of videos by a variety of lecturers.

TNS will resume after the holidays, on January 8, 2019. All are welcome!



DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday, December 9, Second Sunday in Advent

- 10:00 a.m. Special Music program during traditional worship service:
Vivaldi's "Magnificat" with the FCC Chancel Choir and Orchestra,
- 11:00 a.m. Church School Christmas Party, Pilgrim Hall

Sunday, December 16, Third Sunday in Advent

- 9:00 a.m. Special Music program during Change of Pace worship service

Sunday, December 23, Fourth Sunday in Advent

- 9:00 a.m. Change of Pace, Pilgrim Hall
- 9:30 a.m. Douglas Chapel Communion Service
- 10:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service, Sanctuary

Monday, December 24, CHRISTMAS EVE

- 4:00 p.m. Live Nativity Outside until 8 p.m.
- 5:30 p.m. Children's Christmas Pageant with Live Animals
- 8:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion Worship Service

Sunday, December 30

NO Change of Pace Worship

- 9:30 a.m. Douglas Chapel Communion Service
- 10:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service, Sanctuary

Sunday, January 6, EPIPHANY

NO Change of Pace Worship

- 10:00 a.m. Worship Service with Communion



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FCC Office Hours

Mon. — Fri.
9 a.m. — 3 p.m.

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*Whatever Your
Story, You're
Welcome Here*

REGULAR 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. service)
- 11:00 a.m. Friendship Time, Pilgrim Hall

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH DECEMBER 2018 CALENDAR

- Dec 2 11:00 a.m. Capital Campaign Check-in, Douglas Chapel
- 11:00 a.m. Deacons' Meeting, 3rd–5th-grade Classroom
- 11:00 a.m. Hand Chimes rehearsal, Meeting Rm
- Dec 3–5 CHICAGO TRAIN TRIP
- Dec 5 8:30 a.m. Text Breakfast, Classic Cup Café
- 10:15 a.m. Mind and Spirit, Mayflower Room
- 6:30 p.m. 20–40 Group, Meeting Room
- Dec 6 6:00 p.m. Advent Women's Evening, Pilgrim Hall
- Dec 9 CHRISTMAS WISH TREE GIFTS DUE
- 11:00 a.m. Church School Party, Pilgrim Hall
- 11:00 a.m. Second Sunday Series: The Threshold Singers, Douglas Chapel
- 11:00 a.m. Hand Chimes rehearsal, Meeting Rm
- Dec 12 8:30 a.m. Text Breakfast, Classic Cup Café
- 6:00 p.m. 20–40 Group Christmas Party, Meeting Room
- Dec 15 11:00 a.m. Salvation Army bell ringing, Nickels Arcade,
- Dec 16 11:00 a.m. Bake Sale, Mayflower Lobby
- 11:00 a.m. Hand Chime Rehearsal, Meeting Room
- 7:00 p.m. Healing Space, Sanctuary
- Dec 24 OFFICE CLOSING AT NOON
- Dec 25 OFFICE CLOSED
- Dec 26 OFFICE CLOSED
- Dec 30 No Change of Pace Worship Service
- Jan 6 No Change of Pace Worship Service
- 11:00 a.m. UNDECORATING PARTY