

Congregational Courier

THOUGHTS FROM BOB LIVINGSTON SENIOR MINISTER

Dear Friends:

As you may recall, on October 21 members of your church committee and board leadership met in Pilgrim Hall for a retreat to review our Church’s Mission, Vision, and Core Value statements, which were originally created in 2005. Member Fritz Seyferth was our guide and facilitator.

As the meeting began, I offered some opening comments, focused on the current state of the wider church in our culture today, based on data I gleaned from the excellent book titled, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*, written by Tod Bolsinger, a book recommended to me by Darcy, who had read it as part of her Doctor of Ministry preparations. Here are some of the new realities we are confronting:

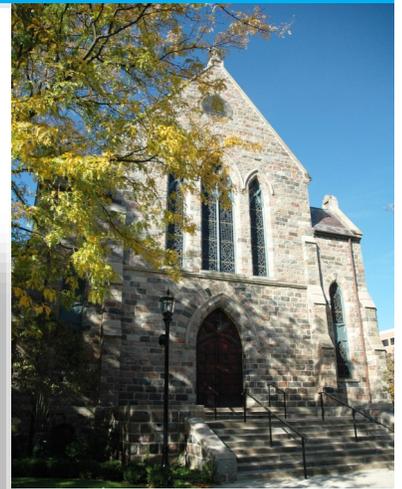


A Completely New Territory for Churches Today.

As you know, the world in front of us is very different from the world behind us. With the onset of new technologies, real environmental challenges, new generational views and experiences, and a heightened sense of being a part of a global village, the mindset and understandings of people has changed drastically in the past 40 years. In this new territory, the Christian, and the church in particular, must be willing to try new things and take risks, while realizing that change is always difficult and there will be those who will try to sabotage the changes we may try to implement.

As a church and as leaders, we must remember that leadership is not about authority. Leadership is about a kind of stewardship. Leadership is about helping an organization fulfill its unique calling from God, both its mission and its reason for being. As leaders, we must try to stay relevant to the current needs of people and then reach out with love, care, and good news. Essentially, being church is primarily about serving, and about finding and filling needs. It is about growing Christians within the context of a pluralistic world and changing environments.

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The Message Is, Adapt or Die:

Leadership guru, Rabbi Ed Friedman, once said, "Conceptually stuck systems cannot become unstuck simply by trying harder." Basically, what the church needs today is a "spirit of adventure." The church today cannot look for some kind of "quick fix." We are called to adapt to a changing world because we are called (by God) to reach that changing world. I believe here at FCC, we must keep our focus on our positive historical legacy of freedom and the valuing of all humankind, as well as our mission, vision, and core values, as we think forward and move toward the future.

We Must Keep Moving Forward:

Our mission, vision, and core values define who we are as a local church and where and how we wish to identify our unique character, distinctiveness, and focus in contrast to other church and religious communities. With those definitions affirmed and in place, we are then able to head out into the adventure of being Christ's disciples mindfully, reaching out to both our congregation and to our community and world in the name of our Living and Loving God. Although we may not always know exactly where we are heading nor the terrain we may face and experience along the way, we must move forward anyway. Trust in God and ourselves and faithfulness is the key.

Finally, we need to remain open and vulnerable to God's leading and be intentional and creative as we move forward . . . honestly willing to take risks, carefully evaluating what does and doesn't work, and believing we will figure it out along the way and make a positive and faithful difference.

So, as you can gather, your leadership at FCC is thinking optimistically and thinking future, while also trying to be thoughtful and realistic. We believe, contrary to what some have suggested, that God, the church, and faith are still relevant and purposeful in our age. Indeed, FCC has faced a Civil War, two World Wars, huge cultural changes (remember the Sixties and Seventies!), significant political changes, economic ups and downs, and more over our 172 years of being and ministry. Yet we have remained faithful and relatable.

My thanks to Fritz Seyferth and to our leaders and staff for their visionary leadership and partnership in ministry here at FCC. We had a good retreat! Candidly, I am so glad to be a part of a church where we try hard to authentically live out our calling to be a welcoming, relevant, and caring community of Christians, bringing light, hope, and love to one another and others. Let's keep moving forward!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DARCY CRAIN MINISTER

No One Likes Advent

“Brace yourselves, we’re going to hit this car!” I yelled with alarm to my boys on our commute home during the early November snowstorm. We fishtailed and missed said car by about 1.5 inches. One of the boys started crying from fear. Apparently, this is not what to tell your children, even if you are about to get into an accident. Note to self: next time be calmer.

As we arrived at home, the 11 inches of snow that covered up our unraked leaves sent the boys into full-blown Christmas mode. “Let’s put up Christmas decorations!” they said excitedly after we miraculously made it home accident-free. “We can’t; it’s not even advent yet,” I replied. “Mom, no one likes Advent; they only like Christmas.” Truth.



No one really loves Advent. The hymns that are considered Advent hymns sound somewhat depressing; they are usually written in a minor key, with lyrics like: “return my people, Israel, with penitential tear . . .” Tis the season, right? And so we usually sprinkle our Advent worship services with Christmas hymns to lighten it up. Advent is hard. It’s all about waiting. It’s about repentance and preparation. It’s about watching and hoping and anticipating.

Still, Advent is what we must go through to get to the manger. Without the waiting and the watching and the preparation and the hymns, we bypass the spiritual waiting time and come to the manger unprepared. It’s why many families, my own included, hide baby Jesus when they set out the crèche, until Christmas Eve when he arrives. (It’s also why many families, mine definitely included, lose baby Jesus every other year and find it around Easter hidden behind a can of soup.) We have to wait for Jesus. Wait. Watch. Be patient. Trust me, there’s nothing more important worth waiting for.

This Advent, take the time to wait. Let’s do it together. In fact, we’ll even sing some premature carols while we worship and wait together.

Darcy

RACHEL DUDLEY
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



Simple Christmas Goals

The picture below has quickly become my favorite as we approach Christmas! I find it inspiring! I see joy, focus, and a desire to be inclusive, all in this one image.

Joy The shepherds, and even the sheep, look excited as they point toward the bright star and the manger. As we approach Christmas and the New Year, I would love for all of us to be full of excitement and pure joy.

Focus They are giving their focus and attention to the bright star and the birth of Jesus. They remind us to stay focused on the reason we celebrate Christmas!

Inclusion While still pointing in the direction of the manger, one shepherd is looking back to tell everyone in sight. This Christmas, let's invite those around us to join in! Nobody should feel left out or alone.



Prioritizing these three "simple" Christmas goals may not seem difficult, but to achieve them we must be intentional. Christmas time can easily become overwhelming with "good" things. I encourage everyone to think about what they want their holiday to look like this year and how to intentionally make it happen.

Rachel

BOARD of CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ELLEN RAMBO

Church School Christmas Party

Sunday, December 15

After the 10 a.m. service on Sunday, December 15, we will be having our Church School Christmas Party in Pilgrim Hall. Gingerbread house making will be back by popular demand! All families who participate in the church school program are invited to attend. Please RSVP on our church website at www.fccannarbor.org/connect/featured-upcoming-events.



Salvation Army Bell Ringing **Friday, December 20, 4–6 p.m.**

Volunteers of all ages are invited to be part of this year's bell ringing! Join the group at the entrance of Nickels Arcade, next door to the Bivouac store, to raise money for the Salvation Army. Chris Vermeulen has graciously taken the lead of this event this year. Thank you, Chris!

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 as part of our Christmas Pageant. Stop by and say "hi" to the animals before and after the 5:30 p.m. service on Christmas Eve.

Family Service and Christmas Pageant

Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24, 5:30 p.m.

The tradition continues this year as the kids prepare for our annual Christmas Pageant!



Signup: All kids are welcome to join the fun! Signup to be a sheep, shepherd, angel, or other part on our church website at <https://www.fccannarbor.org/connect/christmas-pageant>.

Costumes: Costumes will be handed out to participants during church school on Sunday, December 15, and Sunday, December 22. Those who are

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unable to pick up their costumes prior to Christmas Eve may stop by the Mayflower Room the day of. Costume pick up on Christmas Eve will start at 5 p.m. Costumes may be returned immediately following the pageant to the Mayflower Room or may be returned the following Sunday.

Rehearsal: All participants with a speaking role, lead role, or who interact with animals, are required to attend a dress rehearsal on Monday, December 23, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Last-Minute Participants Welcome! All who do not sign-up for a role will still be allowed to get an angel, sheep, or shepherd costume from the Mayflower Room starting at 5 p.m. on December 24. As always, all kids are welcome to participate!

Church School Potluck Sunday, January 19, at 11 a.m.

Church school families are invited to a potluck in the church school area on Sunday, January 19 after the 10 a.m. service. Please bring a nut-free dish to pass. All paper products and drinks will be provided. This is a wonderful time to hang out, eat lunch, and get to know others better!



Safety and Security in the Church School Area

The Board of Christian Education continues to work on safety and security processes to be incorporated when the Capital Campaign improvements are installed and in working order.

A special thank you to the BOCE Members, the Capital Campaign Committee members, and the Building and Design Committee members for their ongoing work!



HISTORIAN'S CORNER

BETTY BISHOP

Building Our Chapel

As we are wrapping up the current Capital Campaign Drive, it is interesting to look back at a small brochure on the 1952 Building Fund Campaign, which I recently found in the History Room. That campaign was to support the Parish House (later known as the offices, church school, and Pilgrim Hall) and the Douglas Memorial Chapel. The goal was to dedicate these additions to the Church in May 1952 free of debt. The financing of this work was covered by pledges of almost \$130,000, bequests of \$69,000 and loans of \$120,000. The motto for the campaign, created by Rev. Leonard Parr who had been the minister of FCC through the building period, was "We can do it if we will!"

Records indicate that the 1952 campaign was not entirely successful, and the congregation continued paying off the loans for a number of years after the new part of the Church was completed and dedicated. The Rev. Parr completed his 20 years as senior minister at the Church in 1957; at that time, this was the longest term of any minister at FCC. Rev. Parr felt his lasting achievement at the Church was the completion of Pilgrim Hall and Douglas Chapel.



Douglas Chapel

CHURCH COUNCIL

LYNDA NORTON

FCC Leadership Retreat

We were blessed with so many church leaders in attendance at the Leadership Retreat in October. Fritz Seyferth led us through exercises in thinking about what we value about FCC. We shared meaningful stories and came to understand better why each of us are drawn to this supportive community. We agreed on some new core values: compassion, inclusion, joy, integrity, courage.

A working group is being set up to continue this discussion, helping to rework our mission, vision, and core values. Thank you to everyone who attended, and a special thank you to Fritz for sharing his talents with us all.

CHURCH COUNCIL

CHRIS VERMEULEN

Elected Positions

Church Council Chair	Lynda Norton
Church Council Vice-Chair	Bruce Pringle
Secretary	Chris Vermeulen
Treasurer	Mike Dabbs
Clerk	Peg Jacobs
Historian	Betty Bishop

Remaining Positions, Filled According to Role

Board of Deacons Chair	Mitchell Dudley
Board of Trustees Chair	Betsy Petoskey
Board of Christian Education Chair	Ellen Rambo
Director of Christian Education	Rachel Dudley
Missions and Outreach Committee Chair	Pam Dabbs
Music Committee Co-chairs	Michele Johns, Mj Quigley-Young
Nominating Committee Co-Chairs	Kristy Stoneburner, Rich Muhs
Activities and Fellowship Chair	Robbie Sawitski
Contemporary Issues Committee Chair	Sara Holmes
Ministers	Bob Livingston, Darcy Crain

Current Activities

Review of Mission, Vision, and Core Values: A Leadership Retreat was held on October 21 to review the current Vision, Mission, and Core Values of the Church. Fritz Seyferth facilitated the discussion. The retreat was well attended. The next step is to organize the ideas generated in the discussion into possibly new statements and decide whether to change the current wording..

Review of By-Laws: The updated By-Laws are being reviewed by the Church Council. Current plan is to present the revised By-Laws at the 2020 Annual Meeting.

Review of Staff Handbook: A group is reviewing the current staff handbook and will make updates to meet the current needs of the Church organization.

Documentation of Procedures: A rough draft of "Harm Prevention and Safety Guide" was created and a sub-committee formed to continue reviewing the document. The Guide brings together policies and procedures related to various activities in the building into a single document.

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.

Next Scheduled Meeting

Monday, January 20, 2019 *

Council meetings are held at 7 p.m. in the Mayflower Room



2019 Advent and Christmas Events

December 1	No Change of Pace Worship Christmas Decorating Party and Potluck 11 a.m.
December 11	Glacier Hills Luncheon
December 12	Women's Advent Evening 6–8 p.m.
December 15	Christmas Bake Sale Special Music Presentation in 10 a.m. Worship Church School Christmas Party 11 a.m. Advent Vesper Healing Space 7 p.m.
December 20	Salvation Army Bell Ringing, Bivouac, 4–6 p.m.
December 22	Special Music in Change of Pace Worship, 9 a.m.
December 23	Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 10 a.m.–noon
December 24	FCC Office Closes at noon Live Nativity 4–8 p.m. Children's Christmas Pageant, 5:30 p.m. Candlelight Communion Service 8 p.m.
December 25	Merry Christmas! (No Worship Services)
January 1	Happy New Years! (FCC Office Closed)
January 5	NO Change of Pace Traditional Worship, 10 a.m. Church Un-decorating Party and Potluck 11 a.m.
January 12	NO 9:30 Chapel Communion Traditional Worship with Communion 10 a.m. Contemporary Issues 11 a.m.

2019–2020 SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT
OCTOBER 31, 2019

	ACTUAL 10/31/19	APPROVED BUDGET 7/1/19 - 6/30/20	NOTES
REVENUE			
Pledges	\$126,271	\$535,000	1
Capital Pledges			
Gifts - Operations	\$11,695	\$53,500	
Other Income	\$5,078	\$31,457	
Special Funds Trans-	0	\$24,701	2
Total Revenue	\$143,044	\$644,658	
EXPENSES			
Ministry	\$73,257	\$240,975	
Administrative/Office	\$92,277	\$325,738	
Christian Education	\$17,871	\$53,080	
Music	\$15,721	\$73,121	
Missions & Outreach	\$2,495	\$36,075	
Maintenance & Utili-	\$21,603	\$93,915	
Total Expenses	\$223,224	\$822,904	
NET REVENUE	(\$80,180)	\$(178,246)	
TRUST FUND DISTRIBUTION			
	+\$50,000	+\$186,964	3
	+\$1,800		4
BALANCE	(\$28,380)	\$8,718	

Notes

- 1 2019–2020 Actual Pledges Total anticipates \$18,000 increase over previous year.
- 2 Pastoral Fund distribution of \$12,500 and Memorial Fund distribution of \$12,201 will be made for designated programs and activities.
- 3 2019–2020 Budget projected distribution from trust and endowment funds is 6%.
- 4 Special one-time distribution from Sink Fund
- Capital Campaign Note 2019–2020 Mortgage Principal payments will be \$31,698. Capital Campaign will contribute \$30,000 for Principal payments and \$40,000 for capital repair expenses. None of these expenses are reflected in the Annual Budget.

TREASURER'S REPORT MIKE DABBS

October 31, 2019, Financial Statement

We have completed the first four months of the 2019–2020 Fiscal Year. Pledge revenue is behind our budget projection. A significant portion of this decrease is attributable to nearly \$33,000 more in pre-paid pledges being received last year compared to this year. The Trustees ask all members who have made pledges for the current year to please stay current with your payments. As we approach the end of the calendar year, it may be necessary for the Trustees to review the budget and possibly adjust it, if revenues continue to fall short of our projections. The staff, boards, and committees have done a great job so far this year with keeping all expenses within the projected budget numbers.

Members Making Pledge Payments through Investment Firms

We appreciate receiving your pledge payments from your investment advisor's firm and would like to urge you to instruct them to notify Nancy Sauve, FCC Bookkeeper, nancy@fccannarbor.org, that a payment is being sent from their firm on your behalf. If they are not able to do so; it would greatly assist Nancy if you would call or email her to let her know that such a distribution is being made and whether it is for your annual Stewardship Pledge or Capital Campaign Pledge. Needless to say, we want to properly record your payment, and notifying Nancy will be of great assistance.

Capital Campaign Fundraising Committee

We have entered the final stages of our efforts to raise the \$2,000,000 needed to make the improvements to our historic building. I am pleased to report that we have received three additional pledges and two increases in previously made pledges, which has resulted in an additional \$15,000. Our current total, from 152 members, is \$1,866,745!

Our committee is now making calls to members to ensure all members have had the chance to participate in the campaign. By the end of November, we plan to bring the campaign to an end. Let me urge any member who needs information about the campaign or is interested in increasing their pledge to contact me, Michael Dabbs; or any member of our committee: Debbie Bourque, Judy Hallberg, Dan Jacobs, Ken Nisbet, or Jean Wedemeyer; or Nancy Sauve, FCC's Bookkeeper



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

DAN JACOBS

The Trustee Design Team has been busy over the last few months working on both Design Team-led projects and the Kingscott-led, 2020 Project. Spring 2020 will be a busy time at FCC. Start date for the 2020 Project will be under the control of Mother Nature, as exterior work on the south entry will begin once the ground is thawed out. The 2020 Project will continue into early fall.

The 2020 project includes: the barrier-free improvements of a new, ADA-compliant north entry off William Street, including required-width doors, a code-compliant interior ramp, and an exterior sloped walk; the improved south entry with new porch and remotely controlled door access; updated toilets; a new second-floor toilet; improvements in the Douglas Chapel and Change of Pace (Pilgrim Hall) worship spaces; upgrades to the Pilgrim Hall kitchen; upgrades to the Pastoral Suite; and the new Smith Welcome Center.

Design Team-led projects include: new doors and hardware on the lower (CE) level doors, completion of repairs to the sanctuary, grates over window wells, Annex and Chapel exterior repointing, reroofing of Pilgrim Hall, and replacement of the entry walkway to the west door of the Chapel.

Projects completed or nearing completion include: new windows on the lower level of the Annex, exit ladders from lower level rooms, security systems, sanctuary ceiling fans and lights, and structural repairs to the Chapel floor at the west entry.

Once the dust settles on the 2020 Project, we will be able to determine what other items on the FCC Wish List can be undertaken. Our thanks to all the members who have assisted in focus groups, work groups and the Design Team to champion this project.

FCC GREEN TEAM

SOLAR PV SYSTEM

The Green Team championed organizing a group of FCC members who have agreed to invest in FCC by providing a 17.25 kW solar PV system to be installed on the Pilgrim Hall (Annex) roof. It was our hope that the panels would be operational this winter, but Mother Nature threw a wrench in those plans with the recent, heavy snowfall. The solar system will provide 25% of FCC's current electrical needs on an annual basis. Our thanks to the five members who agreed to set up Soulful Solar LLC to fund this project and show FCC's commitment to being good stewards of the environment. Other Green Team efforts will be announced in the spring.

OUR NEW MEMBERS

The congregation welcomed Nadine, John, and Linda into our membership on Sunday, November 17, 2019. Blessings to the three of you!



CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
2nd SUNDAY SERIES
2019-2020

Mayflower Room
11:10 a.m.

Sunday, October 13	Affordable Housing: Understanding the Issues and Opportunities. Jennifer Hall, Executive Director of Ann Arbor Housing Commission
Sunday, November 10	Issues of Acculturation and Adjustment for Refugees and New Immigrants Alina Makin, Director of the Intensive Russian-language Program, Residential College, University of Michigan
Sunday, December 8	The Innocents Movement Ashley Tingstad, Ann Arbor attorney, FCC member
Sunday, January 12	Sustainable Agriculture for the 21st Century Richard Andres, Tantre Farm owner
Sunday, February 9	Travels through Israel Rachel Dudley, FCC Director of Children's Ministry
Sunday, March 8	Museums and Forgiveness Bradley L. Taylor, Ph.D., Associate Director, Museum Studies Program, University of Michigan
Sunday, April 19	Sustainability in A2: Where we've been; where we are; and where we are headed, Missy Stults, Ph.D., Sustainability and Innovations Manager, City of Ann Arbor

MUSIC COMMITTEE

MARIJEAN QUIGLEY-YOUNG AND MICHELLE JOHNS

The Music Committee has been quite active this year already. Our committee's Mission Statement is being finalized, and our Music Patron proposal to financially support our large music presentations at both the contemporary and traditional worship services is under consideration by the Church Council.

"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:

Throughout the **Advent season**, Dr. Timothy Huth, our organist, will present traditional Advent and Christmas hymns, carols, and chants, as well as Polish Koledy, compositions by contemporary and ancient composers.

Dec. 1, 2019: First Sunday in Advent: Marijean Quigley-Young will present cello music, accompanied by the organ during the 10 a.m. worship service.

Friday, Dec. 6, 2019: The Marilyn Mason Memorial at 7 p.m., in the sanctuary, is being planned by Marilyn's son, Chris, and the U-M Organ department. This service will feature many of her former students performing on our Wilhelm Organ in tribute to our great lady. A reception will follow in Pilgrim Hall. Music Committee members will be greeters.

Dec. 15, 2019, Third Sunday in Advent: the Chancel Choir, with soloists and orchestra, under the direction of Shohei Kobayashi, will present *Magnificat* by John Rutter for our 10 a.m. worship service, and Dr. Barbara Sturgis-Everett will present a variety of Christmas music for violin and organ.

Dec. 22, 2019: Christmas Sunday

Change of Pace Service: special Holiday Music with the full-flavored Chand of Pace Band, led by Terry Farmer, includes the band's trademark innovative arrangements of well-known and eclectic songs mixed with new favorites.

Traditional Service: The Hand Chimes Choir, directed by Cindy Bylsma, will perform "Christmas Bells" for the prelude, as well as perform with our Chancel Choir, directed by Shohei Kobayashi, for the anthem "Christmas is Coming."

Dec. 24, 2019, 8 p.m. Christmas Eve Service: members of our church are invited to sing with our Chancel Choir presenting special Christmas Eve Service music; an instrumental ensemble will perform incidental music throughout the service, featuring our own church member, Dr. Barbara Sturgis-Everett, on the violin.

January, February, March, 2020: 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 the Solo and Ensemble Festivals. If you and your child would like this experience, please contact Shohei Kobayashi or Tim Huth or Mj Quigley-Young.

ACTIVITIES AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE ROBBIE SAWITSKI

Decorating for Advent and Christmas

Our beautiful church glows during the holidays, and we need all of you to help make this happen. Everyone is cordially invited to join us on Sunday, December 1, as we get ready to embrace the Christmas spirit. Please feel free to wear your work clothes to church. Following the worship service, we will gather together to share a tasty lunch. AFC will provide mac and cheese, our famous kale salad, a gluten-free dessert, and a vegan dessert. Please bring a dish to pass. Last names beginning with A–M, bring a side dish, N–Z bring a dessert. Your AFC has this decorating business mastered, thanks to our chief decorating elf, Dave Steiner. Everything will be ready for us to jump in and start decorating. When the work is done, we will gather for some festive caroling in the Mayflower Room. This will be a truly special kick-off for Christmas at FCC. Please join us!

SPECIAL NOTE: *We ask that everyone who brings a dish to share also provide a list of the ingredients to display with the item. Many of our members have specific allergies or food sensitivities, and we want to make it as simple as possible for people to discern what foods they can safely eat. And as always, please remember, no nuts or nut products.*



Advent Women's Evening

The Advent Women's Evening is coming right up! On Thursday, December 12, from 6 to 8 p.m., Pilgrim Hall will be sparkling with Christmas decorations, and Simply Scrumptious Catering will provide a wonderful dinner buffet that will include vegan and gluten-free options.

In addition, Dr. Timothy Huth, our church organist, has graciously offered to festively tickle those ivories for us throughout the evening. Seating is limited to 80 women. The cost is \$20.00 per ticket. Childcare and a children's dinner will be provided, by reservation only, at no additional cost. If you would like to attend and the cost is an obstacle to your participation, please contact Darcy Crain (darcy@fccannarbor.org). Several seats were pre-paid just for you! We still need hostesses. If you have any questions, would like to sign up to attend, be a hostess, or need childcare during the event, please contact Robbie Sawitski at [517-888-3342](tel:517-888-3342) or robbiesawitski@gmail.com.

AFC Upcoming Events

December 1	Church Decorating Party
December 12	Advent Women's Evening
January 5	Church Un-Decorating Party

MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

PAM DABBS



The Christmas Wish Tree went up on November 17, and the tags are almost, if not all gone by this *Courier* edition. It is always so wonderful to see families gathered around our "wall" tree, trying to decide which tags to take and fulfill. This "Wish" tree is such a great way to help our children see the needs of others and then take action to help . . . just a wonderful tradition and a magical part of Christmas at our church!

In mid- to late-January, we will be gearing up for the Daytime Homeless Warming Shelter at our church. The shelter will be open Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays. We will be sending to our members a Sign-up Genius in order to volunteer at the shelter and another one to aid with gathering food and supplies. We soooooo appreciate all the wonderful support our members give to this mission project!

CIRCLE of FRIENDS

The Circle of Friends met in November to review how are our Friends are doing and to plan Christmas gifts for them. Our December meeting will take place on December 8, when we will be picking up the gifts to be distributed and plan our meeting for January. The group usually enjoys a luncheon at Cottage Inn in January, date to be announced.

If any church member knows of someone who is housebound by illness or age or could use support after a loss, please let me know. My phone number is 313-303-1989.

—Mary Ann Marquardt

GREAT LAKES SCRIP

The Scrip table is up and running every Sunday morning after the 10 a.m. service in the Mayflower Lobby near the elevator. It's a terrific fundraising program where you purchase gift/cards for face value after the church purchases them at a discount. What we earn, the difference between the discounted amount and the face value, goes to support mission and work trips here at the First Congregational Church.

Scrip cards may be purchased "cash and carry" and may also be ordered at the Scrip table or online at shopwithscrip.com. Please take a moment to look at the ShopWithScrip website. I'm sure you'll find that it's the easiest fundraiser that appeals to all. When purchasing online, you are able to use a credit cards. The profit we make is not affected by credit card fees.

TEXT BREAKFAST

This regular group gathers every Wednesday morning at 8:30 a.m., at the Classic Cup Café (4389 Jackson Rd, Ann Arbor) with Rev. Bob Livingston. Our lively discussions include sharing our understandings, insights, and questions about the scripture for the upcoming Sunday sermon. Please join us on Wednesday mornings! Text Breakfast will not meet on Christmas Day or New Year's Day.



KNIGHT'S LUNCHEON

This group meets every fourth Monday, September through May, for very informal, welcoming, and wide-ranging conversations that hopefully result in the nourishment of both the mind and body. Hosted by Bob Livingston, these luncheons are held at Knight's Restaurant at 2324 Dexter Avenue in Ann Arbor. With a holiday break in December, our next meeting will be January 27.

MARILYN MASON MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

A memorial service for Marilyn Mason, whose teaching, performances and joie de vivre are cherished world wide, will be held

December 6,
7:00 p.m.

at the

First Congregational Church,
Ann Arbor, MI.

The Rev. Bob Livingston will preside and music will be presented by some of her former organ students.

The public is invited.

A reception will follow.

"Eat, sleep and practice.
Never give up."



Photo by Rafael Ferreyra

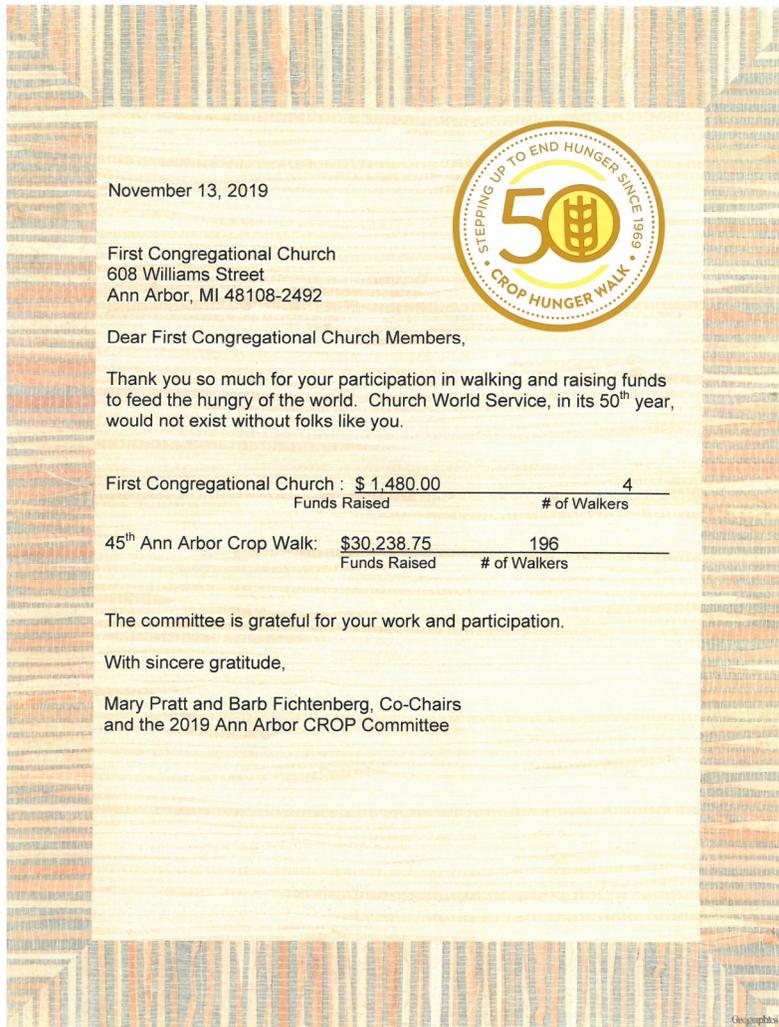
WEDNESDAY NIGHT SMALL GROUP

Formerly known as 20/40, we are a group of friends who are 'up and coming' in life. We are growing in our careers and our families. Some are married, some are not; some have children, some do not. We gather weekly on Wednesday nights from 6:30 to 8 p.m. The group will not meet December 18, 25, and January 1. Childcare provided with advance notice. Contact Darcy (darcy@fccannarbor.org) for more details.

TUESDAY NIGHT STUDY ~ TNS

Please join us on Tuesday evenings from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Mayflower Room for TNS. Each week TNS views a video of contemporary theological relevance. All are welcome!

TNS will not meet in December; we will resume the regular schedule on January 7. We will be focusing on the theology of Marcus Borg for the first six weeks of the new year.



MIND AND SPIRIT BOOK GROUP

The Mind and Spirit Book Group is a community of women of all ages who enjoy reading and sharing our lives. On December 4, we will be completing our reading of pediatrician Mona Hanna-Attisha's *What the Eyes Don't See*, a book about the Flint water crisis. On December 18, we will revisit the timeless *Gift from the Sea* by Anne Morrow Lindbergh, followed by our holiday luncheon at a nearby restaurant. Beginning in January 2020, we will be discussing *Inspired* by Rachel Held Evans.

This group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 10:15 to 11:45 a.m. in the Mayflower Room. In January, because of when New Year's falls, we will meet on the second and fourth Wednesday at the usual time. We will resume our usual, first and third Wednesday schedule in February. If you have questions or would like to be on our email list, please contact Gail Haynes (gehaynes@aol.com).

HEROIN/OPIOID OVERDOSE TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

FCC will host a program given by the Community Mental Health Partnership of Southeast Michigan on Sunday, January 19, at 11:15 am., in the Mayflower Room.

If you or a loved one is struggling with opioid use, we want you to know that you are not alone. Through this training you will learn the signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose, the importance of calling 911 immediately, how to perform rescue breathing and how to administer NARCAN (Naloxone), the overdose reversal medication. In addition, attendees will receive a free Overdose Prevention Kit, including NARCAN. Please join us as we continue to make FCC a beacon of safety, love, and care for all.



HEALING SPACE

The December Healing Space will be held on Sunday, December 15, with an Advent Vesper Service in a candlelit sanctuary at 7 p.m. Come and participate in the meditative practice of Bible reading called Lectio Divina dating back to the 300s. Advent music will be provided by Timothy Huth. There will be time for silent and guided meditation as well as prayer. During this oftentimes busy and stressful time of year, come and experience this group practice of God's presence in our lives. Healing Space is held on the third Sunday of each month.

New time and location! In 2020, Healing Space will move to the Douglas Chapel. It will still be on the third Sunday, now at 11:15 a.m. Our hope is that this will be a more convenient time during the winter months.



Mark your calendar for January 19, when we will focus on our church's and our own mission statement!



The First
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DECEMBER 2019–JANUARY 2020 CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Dec 1		No Change of Pace Worship
	11 a.m.	Church Decorating Party and Potluck
Dec 6	7 p.m.	Marilyn Mason Memorial Tribute
Dec 8		Christmas Wish Tree Gifts Due
		High School Discussions
	11 a.m.	Contemporary Issues, Mayflower Rm.
Dec 9	6 p.m.	Trustees, Meeting Room
Dec 12	6 p.m.	Advent Women's Evening, Pilgrim Hall
Dec 14	9 a.m.	Special Music Rehearsal
Dec 15		Christmas Bake Sale, Mayflower Lobby
	11 a.m.	Traditional Worship with Special Music
	11 a.m.	Church School Party, Pilgrim Hall
Dec 16	1:30 p.m.	Marketing, Mayflower Room
Dec 20	4 p.m.	Salvation Army Bell Ringing, Bivouac
Dec 23	10 a.m.	Christmas Pageant Rehearsal
Dec 24		Christmas Eve, Office closes at noon
	4–8 p.m.	Live Nativity
	5:30 p.m.	Children's Christmas Pageant
	8 p.m.	Candlelight Communion Service
Dec 29		No Change of Pace Worship
Jan 5, 2020		No Change of Pace Worship
	10 a.m.	Sanctuary Worship
	11 a.m.	Church Un-decorating Party and Potluck
Jan 7	7 p.m.	TNS resumes
Jan 8	7 p.m.	Confirmation Class begins
Jan 12		NO Chapel Communion
	10 a.m.	Confirmation Commissioning
	10 a.m.	Sanctuary Worship
	11 a.m.	Contemporary Issues, Mayflower Room
Jan 13	6 p.m.	Trustees, Meeting Room
Jan 19	11 a.m.	OWL, Meeting Room
	11 a.m.	Church School Potluck
	11 a.m.	Healing Space, Douglas Chapel
Jan 20	7 pm.	Church Council, Mayflower Room
Jan 23	7 p.m.	Missions and Outreach, Meeting Room
Jan 26	7 p.m.	BOCE, Meeting Room
Feb 3	9 a.m.	MWF Warming Shelter Begins

Embracing God's word and enriching lives