

# Congregational Courier

## THOUGHTS FROM BOB LIVINGSTON SENIOR MINISTER

### Dear Friends:

Greetings! Even with the craziness and uncertainty of Covid-19, and the months of online worship and Zoom meetings and gatherings, it is still hard to imagine that summer will soon be over! Why does summer always seem to go by so quickly? Students will be returning to online or in-building school.

Camping equipment, motor homes, and recreation gear will be put away. Bedtimes and everyday regimens will begin again. And, of course, much of our regular, though distinctly different, church programing will resume!

With this in mind, please take a few minutes and look carefully through the September Courier and see what may be “calling your name” as we begin our exciting new 2020-2021 church program year. Though the church building will remain closed in September (due to Covid-19 safety concerns, and continuing construction that should be completed by late September or mid-October) our church is definitely OPEN!! There is uplifting worship to enjoy on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. (live-streamed from our sanctuary with a small pastoral and technical crew making it happen). Many of our small groups will begin to meet regularly by Zoom once again. Caring outreach and service projects continue. Online devotionals and social videos will be placed weekly on our Website. Every Sunday, beginning on September 13, Church School will be offered, and we will offer weekly “Curbside Communion” from 9 - 9:30 a.m. on the William Street side of the church (simply drive up or walk up to the church entrance on William Street to receive the individually packaged elements). Indeed, there is much for you to consider! Your staff and lay leadership have been working hard throughout the summer to get things ready for fall. I assure you, there is something at FCC for every person



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*Whatever Your Story, You're Welcome Here*

“There is always, always something to be thankful for.”

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and for every age. Simply decide what interests you and then “come to church” and join in. Finally, I want to commend our lay leaders and staff, and you the congregation, for the support and encouragement you have given to FCC these past months! We will certainly keep you updated as to when we may be able to safely gather once again in our beautiful building and sanctuary. I guarantee, you will be “wowed” when you are able to see the results of our collective capital campaign efforts! Until then, please keep in touch, and please let me know how we can serve you best.

I will look forward to “seeing you” and worshipping with you online at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings and welcoming you. If you have any questions, please check out our website ([www.fccannarbor.org](http://www.fccannarbor.org)) and watch for our weekly Friday Email.

If you would like a conversation with me about anything pastoral or practical, please let me know by emailing me at [bob@fccannarbor.org](mailto:bob@fccannarbor.org). Please stay safe and well.

Blessings,



Bob Livingston  
Senior Minister



## DARCY CRAIN MINISTER



### 89-Cent Deals

I was clicking through the daily task of emails and deleting the first 15 that were spam. One of them caught my attention. It was from Staples advertising their 89-cent deal days. Today’s feature was a box of 10 colored pencils. I thought of our backpack drive, which I realized was now over. I thought of my favorite back to school tradition which is shopping for school supplies. I can picture each of the brightly colored tubs of pencils, notebooks, binders, and folders. I remember fondly

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## DARCY CRAIN MINISTER

carefully selecting each subject matter in coordinating colors (obviously), and scrutinizing over which size binder I would need for which subject. With my 0.5 mm mechanical pencils and extra fine precise ink ball pens I felt prepared to take on the world as I packed my precious supplies in my backpack and crossed the threshold of school that first day.

This year has taught me lessons I never wanted to learn at a speed that I had no say in. This year, I will not send my children across the threshold of school with backpacks full of precious supplies. This year I don't buy into the lure of 89 cent deals that will make me feel secure and prepared. This year I am learning the lesson that there are different ways to be prepared for challenges. The way that God has prepared us does not package brightly or neatly. It does not have a deal price because it cannot be bought. God has shown us, through the past months, that we can indeed be prepared for the worst case scenario. We have been prepared through compassion; through the masks made, groceries purchased, cards sent, calls made. Compassion goes further than colored pencils. We have been prepared through our reliance on community. Through drive-by parades for birthdays and for the aging, for the ways that an app on our smart phones can alert neighbors of nearby people who need help. Community, and our willingness to be a part of it, to lean on it, to participate fully within it, has prepared us for the challenges ahead. We have been prepared through grace. Now is not the time to be perfect; it is not the time to be a Pinterest champ or get in the best shape of your life. It is not the time to judge those around you who don't follow the exact same quarantine rules that you do. Now is the time for grace. Grace for yourself, grace for others. Grace will get you a lot further than coordinating colors of notebooks. If you, like me, are heading into the start of this new school year with more apprehension, no new school supplies, and a lot of anxiety, then remember that God has prepared you in ways that are far more effective than 89-cent deals. We have learned the importance of compassion, community, and grace. Now we must exercise the importance of faith. The belief that we will survive another chapter of full time school and full-time work. We will continue to be able to feed our families and nourish our bodies. We have been trained and prepared. Our children will learn, they will feel joy, they will remain hopeful, because through our loving God, we have been equipped with some new supplies for this new kind of start to the school year.



Deep breath my friends. Here we go.



**RACHEL DUDLEY**  
**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**



**How is your family going to choose to learn more  
about God this Fall?**

I recognize that this Fall looks different for each family and Church School participation will also look different. The Church School program this Fall will be like an "a la carte" menu. I encourage you to look over what is being offered, pick what will work best for your family, and then sign up! Kids' Fall programming will be kicking off on Sunday, September 13th!

**Church School Fall 2020 Offerings**

- **Bible Story in Sunday Service:** Rachel will be sharing the week's Bible story in the Sunday morning live-stream service during Children's Circle.
- **Classes through Zoom:** Classes will meet through Zoom to stay connected with each other. Zoom meetings will differ in frequency and length; start times and codes will be shared in Google classroom.
- **Church School at Any Time:** Each Sunday morning, new materials for the week will be posted in the church school's Google classroom. Families are welcome to use these materials at any time they desire. The materials will include a variety of the following:
  - Lesson
  - Videos of the Bible Passage/Story
  - Coloring pages
  - Worksheets
  - Music
  - Activity/Game Instructions
- **Activity Books:** Activity books are available for all students this Fall! The books contain activities and stories for each week and may be used along with the lesson, or on their own.
- **Family Activities:** A video introducing each activity will be shared at the beginning of each month. The activities will be set up to be done with your family.

**Let's get started!**

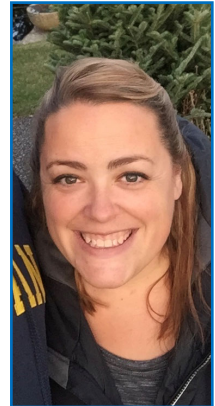
Please read the below information about how to get set up to participate in Church School.

- **Registration:** All kids from birth through 8th grade are invited to participate. (High school students, 9th-12th grade, will receive schedules and registration information from Darcy.) Registration by a parent/guardian is required. Please register by Sunday, September 6th to insure time for delivery of supplies prior to the start of the program.

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## BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION VAL TOWERY

I am excited to lead the Board of Christian Education as chair as we begin one of the most unique and potentially challenging school years yet! As each of our church school families are trying to adjust to virtual homeschool or hybrid school schedules, little to no extracurriculars, and attempting to maintain a job (be it at home or in the office), your Board of Christian Education is hard at work. We have been focused on the social, emotional, and spiritual needs of our FCC children, students, and families. We are working to be creative with our curriculum, modes of teaching, supplies, and family activity opportunities.



Yes, church school will look different for the start of 2020, but we are excited about what we are able to offer. As a parent myself, I know first hand the struggles facing our families. I have grown up in FCC, from the time I was a preschool student (when Dorothy Lenz and Terry Smith were pastors) all the way through Senior High (with Bob leading Boundary Waters and mission trips). My husband and I were married in our beautiful church and are now raising our three children in the faith community which has continued to nurture us. I have learned about the love of God and importance of church family from my experiences at FCC. I am honored to be the BOCE chair during this unprecedented time and am confident in the creativity and ability of our staff and board members to continue to offer quality programming and education as we kick off this Fall season!

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*Register through our church website at: <https://www.fccannarbor.org/church-school-registration/>*

- **Invite:** Are there other people in your “pod” that might be interested in learning about God with you this Fall? Please feel free to invite them to register too!
- **Cost:** There is no cost to participate. Donations of \$10 per student for activity books are welcome.
- **Google Classroom:** A code is required to access the church school’s Google classroom. For security of the participants, this will only be shared with participants who have registered.
- **Supplies Delivery:** Please authorize delivery on the registration form. Not currently local? I can ship supplies. Distance learning about God is welcome!

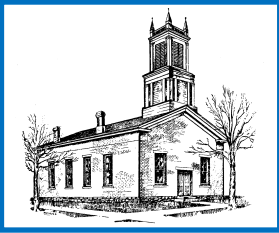
**Questions:** Please email me at [rachel@fccannarbor.org](mailto:rachel@fccannarbor.org).

*I'm looking forward to learning about God together this fall!*

*Rachel*

## HISTORIAN'S CORNER

BETTY BISHOP



Rev. Dorothy Lenz was recalling the events which led up to Rev. Terry Smith coming to FCC. Rev. Fred Luchs left in the fall of 1964, and the church appointed two lay ministers to serve on an interim basis. A Pastoral Search Committee was very disappointed that there were few applicants and not one of them seemed just right. They finally decided to choose the best of those who had applied. Velma Coyne, a member of the committee, heads south and ends up attending Sunday services at a church in Columbus, Ohio. The minister preaches a wonderful sermon, and she is greatly impressed. Immediately upon leaving the church, she calls the chair of the search committee to say, "Don't do anything about hiring a minister for our church from the candidates we have interviewed. I have just found the perfect minister for our church." That resulted in Rev. Terry Smith being called May 23, 1965 from the First Community Church of Columbus, Ohio. He started in August 1965 and served 32 years, longer than any other minister at FCC, until his retirement in 1997.

## FCC CORE IDENTITY

### Mission:

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

### Vision:

**We are a joyous spiritual home, welcoming and valuing all people,  
engaging God's Word, and enriching lives.**

### Core Values:

**Compassion** – We are a deeply caring faith community, demonstrating God's universal love and mutual respect.

**Joy and Positivity** – We are a faith community that faces life with open-mindedness, positivity, and a generous spirit.

**Integrity** – We are a faith community that builds trust through a commitment to authenticity and guided by the humility of Christ.

**Courage** – We are a faith community committed to persevere and grow in the midst of challenges and opportunities.

**Inclusive** – Whatever your story, we accept you as you are and believe God's doors are open to all.

## TIMOTHY HUTH AMUSD, ORGANIST



### Divine Harmony

St. Athanasius speaks of the summa of all things as existing in and through the Word,

"Think a musician tuning up. Through her skill she tunes high notes, low and intermediate notes to each other and thus produces music. So, too, the wisdom of God holds the world like a lyre and joins things in the air to those on earth, and things in heaven to those in the air, and brings each part into harmony with the whole. To everything God gives existence and life in accordance with its nature, and so creates a wonderful and truly divine harmony".

Wow. My mind immediately goes to our pipe organ, wherein thousands of pipes from 16' to a few inches long come together to produce endless colors and harmonies—and herein lies the crux; without an organist the organ is silent. As in a choir, as in singing, as in living, as in any music making there is no harmony without us. We who are living on earth now. We who breathe and sing and live our lives. May our ears remain open and may our hearts sing.



## CURBSIDE COMMUNION



Luke 22:19-20

Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'

Beginning on September 13, we will offer weekly "Curbside Communion" from 9 - 9:30 a.m. on the William Street side of the church (simply drive up or walk up to the church entrance on William Street to receive the individually packaged elements). We look forward to celebrating with you.





## CONGRATULATIONS " IT'S A BOY "



On July 8, 2020, FCC Communications Specialist Crystal Harris and her husband Zach Lanier, welcomed son, Samuel James Lanier into the world! Samuel joins his feisty, 3-year-old brother Judah. Judah couldn't be happier to have a little accomplice to teach and play with. Mom and Dad are sleep deprived but loving every moment of it. He's named Samuel after the prophet. The couple struggled with infertility and Crystal was inspired by the story of Hannah, a woman who prayed to God for a child with the promise that she would return him to God. God answers Hannah's prayers and she remained faithful to her promise. The son God gave her went on to become the prophet to Israel's first king, Saul. After a series of losses last year and during a difficult pandemic, Samuel comes as a much-needed rainbow. His name means "God hears" serving as a reminder that God hears when hearts are both joyful and broken.



## A LETTER FROM THE OPENING THE CHURCH TASK FORCE

DATED AUGUST 19, 2020

Dear Friends:

As representatives of the Board of Trustees and the Church Council, and members of the Opening the Church Task Force, a sub-committee of Council, we want to discuss the question you are all wondering about—when will we return to our beautiful church?

Presently the renovations to the church are progressing smoothly. However, due to the ongoing construction on the interior of the building, we are not able to open the building during the month of September for worship or group gatherings, due to code and safety requirements. The renovations should be completed by October. Nevertheless, to determine when it is safe to reopen the church, even after the completion of the construction, the Opening the Church Task Force was established and has met several times in the past months.

As part of our charge, the task force has studied recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and the Governor's Executive Orders and Briefings regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. We have surveyed the status of other churches, locally, statewide and nationally. We have surveyed our own church members. We have reviewed best practices. Please know all of our decisions are and will be data driven, using the most current scientific data and recommendations available to us.

The goal of the task force is not to rush to reopen the building. Our primary concern is the safety and health of everyone attending services and meetings, and those working in the church. So, even though we are aware that there are exceptions for restricted attendance religious services, and even though we know some churches have reopened, and then have had to reclose, the task force does not recommend reopening under conditions we believe are overly restrictive and/or unsafe. As a task force, we choose to be conservative with our decision to open the church for group gatherings and thus to err on the side of caution and safety.

By the way, the current Michigan Safe Start guidance on indoor social gatherings is 10 or less people while wearing a mask and maintaining a minimum 6 foot distance from one another.

Now, we all know it has been too long since we last met and worshipped together, and we all miss the fellowship, music, sermons, prayers and the joyful noise of the children. Bob, Darcy and the staff have done a wonderful job with the online live streaming of services and have kept the church family up-to-date with the Friday Newsletter, Website updates, weekly devotionals, and periodic videos on topics of interest. We are very blessed with the leadership and efforts of all the ministers and staff.

We will keep you informed of our ongoing recommendations. If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns, please contact a member of the task force: Bob Livingston, Darcy Crain, Rachel Dudley, Lynda Norton, Rick Reid or Bruce Pringle.

Please remember, the church is not a building, it is the people. Please stay safe and healthy, and please continue enjoying our Sunday ministry through our Sunday morning livestream worship at 10 a.m. on Facebook and YouTube (you may go to our FCCannarbor.org homepage and click-on the tab to join us).

On behalf of the Opening the Church Task Force,

Rick Reid, Board of Trustees – (734) 904-1121 - rreid@tssbulletproof.com

Bruce Pringle, Church Council – (734) 476-9679 – bpringle@umich.edu

## GREAT LAKES SCRIP PROGRAM

### NANCY SAUVE, FCC BOOKKEEPER

The Scrip program is alive and well! Many thanks to those of you who have remembered our sales spot in the Mayflower Lobby and have reached out to order and purchase Scrip cards in absence of the Sunday morning table. Thank you to the Mission and Outreach Committee, too, for the \$2,500 order for Amazon cards to supply CAN with backpacks.

There is a newly designed app for your phone from Shop with Scrip. RaiseRight is available through your favorite app store. Sign in with your ShopWithScrip username and password. Access your cards right away. Check out with payment information already saved to your account. Easily find every Scrip card available. If you have not signed up online with ShopWithScrip, please contact [nancy@fccannarbor.org](mailto:nancy@fccannarbor.org) for information you need to join. Please help us keep the program alive with online shopping. The difference between the retail value you purchase and the amount we pay for the card is deposited directly into our account at the church.



All profits benefit First Congregational Church's future mission work trips.

*Thanks again for your support!*



## ROUTINE IN A PANDEMIMC

### RACHEL DUDLEY

Has anyone else found that their routine has gone right out the window with the changes that came from Covid-19? One way to help make this Fall, and returning to school, more structured and organized is to form a schedule and routine. My husband and I are currently working on figuring out what our new routine will be for the new school year. This includes what time the alarm clock will be going off, what time we will both be available for dinner together, weekly social engagements, and church.

Ever since I was a kid, going to church on Sunday morning was part of my family's routine. This weekly event was part of the structure and routine of my family's schedule. As many of us have an opportunity to form new routines this school year, I encourage your family to make the choice to first add church to the weekly schedule on Sunday morning. Let your other family members know that taking care of your spiritual health is a priority and set the example for the younger ones who are watching and learning.



## INSPIRATION

### The Road Not Taken

Robert Frost - 1874-1963

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;



Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.



**Thank you!**



## COMMUNION TABLE FLOWERS AND LAY READERS

The need for communion table flowers and lay readers has been put on hold until the group guidelines for the COVID-19 pandemic is relaxed and we are able once again to resume public worship services. Though we have no idea when we will actually return to the sanctuary, *hope springs eternal*. You will be the first to know when we are, once again, in need of lay readers and flowers. Please look to the Friday Emails and the church website for updates. Your willingness to participate in the worship service in these ways is greatly appreciated.



## CHURCH COUNCIL

### CHRIS VERMEULEN, CHURCH COUNCIL SECRETARY

#### 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 Co-Chairs	Jane DeLancey, Michael Makin
Board of Trustees Chair	Mark Schirmer
Board of Christian Education Chair	Val Towery
Director of Children's Ministry	Rachel Dudley
Missions and Outreach Committee Chair	Pam Dabbs
Music Committee Chair	Paul Fossum
Nominating Committee Co-Chairs	Rick Muhs, Kristy Stoneburner
Activities and Fellowship Comm. Chair	Robbie Sawitski
Contemporary Issues Committee Chair	Sara Holmes
Ministers	Bob Livingston, Darcy Crain

#### Current Activities

##### **Task Force for Opening the Church:**

- A group was formed to look into planning how and when the Church will be opened after group-sized regulations are relaxed.

##### **175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in March 2022:**

- Forming a group to start planning several events that will culminate in a celebration of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Church in March of 2022. The group will be led by Betty Bishop.

##### **Review of By-laws:**

- The updated By-laws are available on the website for review by the Congregation. Currently, the plan is to present the revised By-laws for approval at a special meeting once the building is reopened. The By-laws Committee, appointed by the Church Council, met several times and had discussions with ministers, officers, and the Church Council. Most of the changes are clarifications, so the By-laws are aligned with the operation of the Church. Following is a summary of the changes recommended:
  - ◇ Clarification of membership status (see Section 3.1)
  - ◇ Combining employment matters into one section (see Section 5.1.c)

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## CHURCH COUNCIL

### CHRIS VERMEULEN, CHURCH COUNCIL SECRETARY

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- ◇ Clarification of responsibilities of Church Council (see Section 5.2.a)
- ◇ Clarification of the annual audit (see Section 6.4.b)
- ◇ Clarification of the budget process (see Section 6.4.c)

If you have questions, please contact Chris Vermeulen, Church Council Secretary.

Please 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 Meetings:

September 21

October 19

### FCC CORE VALUE STORY on Joy and Positivity

#### ROBBIE SAWITSKI



On Wednesday, August 19, several members of our church gathered with many other friends and loved ones of our dear member and former Chancel Choir soprano, Suzanne Hopkins, to celebrate her with a joy-filled, 15-car, “We Love You” parade. Suzanne is in hospice care in Rochester Hills, MI. Present were FCC members, Threshold Singers, Alma College alumnae, Suzanne’s Sisterhood group and many other beloved friends. Suzanne was surrounded by family who recorded a video and took lots of pictures. We truly are a faith community that faces life with open-mindedness, positivity, and a generous spirit. It was a perfect day, praise God!



*If you have a story that you would like to share that reflects an aspect of our FCC Core Identity, please submit it to [office@fccannarbor.org](mailto:office@fccannarbor.org). This is who we are...let's share our stories together!*



## TREASURER'S REPORT

### MIKE DABBS

#### First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor 2019 – 2020 SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT - *Pre-Financial Review* June 30, 2020

	ACTUAL 6/30/20	APPROVED BUDGET 7/1/19 – 6/30/20	NOTES
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Pledges	\$533,213	\$535,000	1
Gifts – Operations	82,141	53,500	
Other Income	35,723	31,457	
Special Funds Transfer	<u>12,500</u>	<u>24,701</u>	2
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$663,577</b>	<b>\$644,658</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Ministry	\$242,510	\$240,975	
Administrative/Office	267,412	325,738	
Christian Education	51,442	53,080	
Music	59,776	73,121	
Missions & Outreach	35,990	36,075	
Maintenance & Utilities	<u>78,005</u>	<u>93,915</u>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$735,135</b>	<b>\$822,904</b>	
<b>NET REVENUE</b>	<b>(\$71,558)</b>	<b>(\$178,246)</b>	
<b>TRUST FUND DISTRIBUTION</b>	<u>+\$170,000</u>	<u>+\$186,964</u>	3
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>\$98,442</b>	<b>\$8,718</b>	

#### Notes

- 1 2019-2020 approved budget pledges 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%.
- 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. Neither the principal payment, nor the capital repair expenses are reflected in the annual budget.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

### MIKE DABBS

- We were greatly surprised by both the annual stewardship pledge payments and gifts received during the last four months of the fiscal year. You may recall, during these months I shared with you in the Friday Email that we expected significant shortfalls for both annual pledges and gifts due to the pandemic and its impact on us by not allowing members to have in-person church services. However, members responded with payments of their annual pledges and we received a couple of additional gifts that caused us to end the year within \$1,800 of our budget for pledges. This was the best year in recent memory of actual pledge payments nearly equaling our budget! Likewise, gifts actually exceeded our budget amount! What a phenomenal response by our members for which we are deeply, deeply appreciative!
- While it does not show on this Financial Statement Summary, let me mention that FCC received a federal government, CARES ACT, PPP Loan of nearly \$85,000. We received this loan with the assistance of FCC's bank, The Bank of Ann Arbor. The Loan's instructions were for businesses to use this loan for employees' salaries, wages, and related personnel benefits, utilities and mortgage interest payments. It is anticipated that this loan will be forgiven – that is, not required to be repaid; however, we are still waiting on final guidance by the federal government.
- Due to the reduced programs and church activities, our expenses were significantly less than budgeted; hence, we ended the fiscal year in extremely good financial shape.
- UHY has begun their annual financial review of this past fiscal year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020), which is the earliest we have started due to Nancy's excellent preparation. We anticipate UHY's report to the Trustees by October. As soon as this report is received and accepted by the Trustees, we will make it available to any interested member.
- Please be aware, we are concerned about our new fiscal year, which began on July 1. Members approved our projected Annual Budget at the Annual Meeting in June, in which we attempted to anticipate the impact of the pandemic on our church. Again, all of you responded by not only meeting our annual stewardship pledge budget of \$500,000; but exceeding it by \$21,000, which hopefully will allow us to lessen the amount of funds needed from our investments and endowments. However, until we get a better idea of how the U.S. economy recovers, and when the church is able to return to in-person services, we have asked the staff, boards and committees to limit all discretionary spending.

*Thank you for your support!*

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### MARK SCHIRMER, CHAIR

The new fiscal year, which began on July 1st, is off to a good start. The church's finances are in solid shape thanks to a lot of hard work from Treasurer Mike Dabbs, everyone in the church office, and all the Trustees. With two new members—Trevor Towery and Jim Miller—the Board of Trustees is focused mostly on managing the annual budget and supporting the ongoing capital campaign improvements.

We have three updates:

1. The annual budget is in solid shape. And, as the stewardship campaign exceeded expectations by approximately 5%, we hope to be able to reduce our draw on the trust funds to support necessary operating expenses for the current fiscal year. If you recall, this year's approved budget called for a higher level of trust fund withdrawal to offset expected lower revenues. As this anything-but-usual year unfolds, all of us will need to be careful with our spending.
2. The capital campaign finances remain on track. In August, the Trustees finalized the paperwork to secure a line of credit from the Bank of Ann Arbor to help manage cash flow during the capital campaign work. We also in August authorized that 12% of the existing Memorial Fund (approx. \$25,000) be used to buy all-new furniture for the Welcome Center and Mayflower Room. It will look fantastic when we are back at church.
3. As Dan Jacobs confirms in his Courier note, work at the church is moving along quickly. As the project nears completion, there remains a few additional "Wish List" items that are not currently funded. These projects—ranging from new church pew cushions to an AV monitor for the choir—are nice-to-have items that can be finished after the main build is complete. The Trustees are supportive. If you can support in any way, please reach out to the Design Team (see Dan's note) or the church office.

As always, if you have any questions about the church's finances or business operations, please reach out to me at [1960Bird@gmail.com](mailto:1960Bird@gmail.com). The Trustees would be happy hear from you.



## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DESIGN COMMITTEE

### DAN JACOBS, CHAIR

The 2020 Project is now heading down the path towards completion. Hopefully all of the surprises have been discovered and we can have clear sailing from here on out. The good news is that members have continued to donate since the fundraising portion of the campaign ended two years ago and we are close to \$2M now of donated funds. The challenging side has been that



two significant maintenance projects have taken a large portion of the additional funds. Along with this, we were able to add renovating the lower level toilets (\$100K+) into the 2020 Project scope of work.

The drywall is going up, and we are getting ready to install finishes. One of the last projects will be the South Entry, as access to the parking lot has been critical to progress. The North (William Street) Entry exterior work is going to be happening over the next month as the new walkway is done and the north porch is enclosed to create the main entry vestibule. Walkway improvements are happening at two other entry walkways as slabs have shifted or settled enough to not meet code any longer.

The new doors and hardware into the classrooms are wrapping up, making them more secure and safe for children and staff, along with the new windows and egress ladders. There are also changes happening to Pilgrim Hall. When the dust settles, the Pilgrim Hall kitchen will be ADA accessible and will meet commercial kitchen requirements. Pilgrim Hall will have a fresh finish coat of paint and a new floor. New lighting will enhance our different programs. Changes are also happening in the chapel with the organ being replaced and finishes being upgraded to enhance the acoustical performance.

As we finish up, there are some things we would still love to do but were not able to be funded by the original project budget. The Design Team has developed a list of things that members could help out with if they felt so inclined. The Design Committee has identified four items as being ones that would add to the finished look of the whole project. If you are interested in helping fund these items, please let us know. Items range from \$200 for each cushion for the Sanctuary pews (we need 90) to \$28K for AC in the Welcome Center. We thank the congregation for its generosity to date and if any of you are able, we will be extra thankful to get these special finishing touches funded. If you are interested in helping, please let one of the Design Team members know: Scott Allen, Peter Sandretto, Jane Thompson, Neil Adams, or Dan Jacobs, and we will send along the list as it is at that time.

## MUSIC COMMITTEE

### PAUL FOSSUM, CHAIR

With huge thanks to last year's co-chairs of the Music Committee, MJ Quigley-Young and Michelle Johns, I look forward to stepping in this year as chair of our committee. I have been a choir member since 2008 serving as a section leader much of that time, and for the past several years have enjoyed also my service as a member of the Music Committee. And it's been in large part the FCC's excellent music tradition that drew me to this congregation, which I love—both things, the music and the congregation. (Ask me more about my first experiences at FCC sometime, perhaps, when we're together again.) Still, in spite of my enthusiasm to serve you all in this role, it's with some trepidation that I do so, given the outstanding leadership we have enjoyed. I first came to know MJ in her role as orchestra teacher of both my (now adult) "kids"- son Sam (string bass and bassist frequently for FCC's special orchestras) and daughter Leah ('cello). MJ's advice and mentorship during this transition has been extremely helpful, and the leadership we've had under her guidance exemplary. Thank you, MJ!

I am joined by an extremely able group of committee members this year. The group includes Cindy Bylsma, Kathy Beam, Terry Foster, Donna Livant, and Barbara Sturgis-Everett, with ex officio members Senior Minister Bob Livingston, Organist Tim Huth, Pianist Josh Marzan, Contemporary Music Leader Terry Farmer, and Interim Chancel Choir Director Darnell Ishmel augmenting the committee's membership. Our committee typically meets monthly from September through May and generally on the third Sunday of the month after the 10 a.m. service. We look forward to our first meeting tentatively slated for

### *Benediction*



September 20. If there are others among this *Courier* issue's readership interested in serving as associate members of the Music Committee, or if you have questions or suggestions to share with the committee, please feel free to contact me at [pfoosum@umich.edu](mailto:pfoosum@umich.edu).

We have continued to be blessed by the outstanding talents of our music staff. We have been grateful for the contributions of outgoing Chancel Choir Director, Shohei Kobayashi, earlier this spring and summer, and have appreciated with joy and with the excitement of

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## MUSIC COMMITTEE

### PAUL FOSSUM, CHAIR

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anticipation the contributions of incoming Interim Chancel Choir Director, Darnell Ishmel. The steadfast musical offerings of Terry Farmer, Dr. Timothy Huth, and Dr. Joshua Marzan have been generous, inspirational, and deeply appreciated. Along with the scriptural readings, prayers, and thoughtful sermon meditations that have lent spiritual continuity as we have needed to meet remotely, the excellent musical contributions we have enjoyed throughout this extraordinary time have helped to ground us as a faith community.

As a committee, we pledge to continue to encourage musically inclined people of all ages to share their musical gifts during our services of worship. Along with the other members of the 2020-21 FCC Music Committee, we reflect on the past year's accomplishments with satisfaction, and we look forward to the year ahead with enthusiasm.

## ACTIVITIES AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

### ROBBIE SAWITSKI, CHAIR

All I can say is whenever we are all able to gather for some good times and festive comradery, your AFC is ready and raring to go! We are planning on being a part of the "clean-up and get the church back in order project" once the construction is finished and the heavy duty professional cleaning has been done. Now THAT is going to be a good time! All for a most excellent cause. When we get the go-ahead for our grand reopening, we will pull out all the stops. We have many awesome times to come, and we are anxiously looking forward to seeing everyone again.



**"The trees are about to show you  
just how beautiful letting go can be."**

## MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

### PAM DABBS

This year's annual Backpack Drive was slightly different this time around. At the time of the event, it was unknown whether or not students would be physically in school come the fall or learning virtually. This uncertainty made it necessary to switch gears in order to truly meet the needs of students throughout the housing areas of Community Action Network. We decided to ask our members to donate money to purchase scrip cards at the church. In this way, the CAN staff could either buy backpacks if the students went back to school in person, or buy supplies to be used at home or in the community centers if they were online learners. Having our members donate funds to buy scrip cards will benefit both CAN and our church youth group, as small percentages of scrip card purchases are used to help fund church mission trips. The total donation from our members was \$2500. Once again, your generosity is greatly appreciated, and we sincerely thank you for your support!



Throughout the last several months with the pandemic in full swing, it has been heartwarming to see the way our church members have responded to a host of needs. Missions & Outreach, on behalf of our church, happens through a committee process, but also through the acts of kindness and concern that so many of you have participated in throughout this time of quarantine. You have donated money, groceries, support, meals, handmade masks, and extended hands of friendship to those feeling alone. In addition, you have made use of technology, and the wide-open outdoor spaces, to come together and still be a very vibrant close knit church. Virtually, you have joined hands and reached out to those with all kinds of needs in the community! It really goes to show that a building is nice to have for a gathering place, but what makes a building a church is the people inside and how they interact in the world we live in. We are so proud of the kind individuals who represent the FCC Community. We thank you all for the creativity you have shown in staying connected and the love and support you have sent out to the community on behalf of our church. You are all members of a very strong and loving Missions & Outreach church-wide group! Nothing we do as a committee could ever succeed without all of you and your

support! We thank you over and over again for your ever present involvement in what really matters in life and which gives us all purpose....CARING about and GIVING support to others.



*Simply Amazing! THANK YOU!*

## LETTERBOXING - MY NEW HOBBY

NANCY SAUVE, BOOKKEEPER

We all know how a walk in the woods is good for the body and good for the soul. Little did I know that our walk in the woods could turn into a fun adventure hunt. Maybe you walk for your health, maybe to be out with the kiddos. Any age can enjoy Letterboxing! Finding a way to get together with a couple of friends during this pandemic, I was introduced to this new old-school activity. Letterboxes are everywhere. How little did I know!

Think about Letterboxing as old-school geo-caching. There are websites with clues. Print the clues, follow the clues, find the letterbox, stamp the stamp from the letterbox in your notebook (many are beautifully hand carved!), leave a note in the letterbox owner's notebook, discreetly hide the letterbox where you found it. Since I've introduced this activity to my daughter in North Carolina, they have turned this into a regular family event. They have found intricate hand carved stamps of light houses and sea birds among many other imaginative interpretations of the surrounding area. My first hunt was at Lyons Oak Dog Park in Oakland County. The stamps were music themed. The first was a stamp of John Lennon.



Here's a picture of our family finding Calvin and Hobbes' themed letterboxes at Island Lake Rec Area.



**A little history:** The year was 1854, and a Victorian guide named James Perrott placed a bottle in the wildest, most inaccessible area on Dartmoor, England, along the banks of Cranmere Pool. In it, he included his calling card so future visitors could contact him and leave their own calling cards. The first suggestion for a rubber stamp appeared in the logbook on July 22, 1907 by John H. Strother who wrote, "Reached the pool at 7.10pm, misty day with cool breeze, and would suggest that a rubber stamp, something like the post office stamps for postmarking letters or rubber stamp for putting the address at the top of a piece of notepaper be provided and kept here. If this were done it would be proof that cards posted had really come from Cranmere." The letterbox finally reached the point as we largely know it today as a box containing a logbook and a rubber stamp.

Letterboxing is perhaps the slowest growing hobby of all time. Forty years would pass from when that first letterbox was planted by James Perrott until a second one made its way into letterboxing history at Belstone Tor. Another 44 years would pass before a third letterbox was planted at Ducks Pool. After 122 years, fifteen letterboxes dotted Dartmoor. (from atlasquest.com)

To search for letterboxes in your choice of places: <https://www.atlasquest.com/>

To see the 74 listed Letterboxes in Ann Arbor:

<https://www.atlasquest.com/results.php?typeId=1;status=9;subFlags=56;title=ann+arbor+MI;coords=42.212894739381,-83.730333307033;rad=15;location=ann+arbor+MI>

There are other websites too. Google and have some fun!

## SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

*Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all gatherings at the church have been cancelled. Many meetings are being held electronically. Your group leader will contact you, or please watch your Friday emails for more information regarding all church meetings and gatherings.*

### TEXT BREAKFAST

Please join us Wednesday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. with Rev. Bob Livingston on Zoom! The first meeting of the fall will be on Wednesday, September 9th. Our lively discussions include sharing our understandings, insights, and questions about the scripture for the upcoming Sunday sermon. Watch the Friday Email for the scripture passage that will be discussed. Please email Bob at [bob@fccannarbor.org](mailto:bob@fccannarbor.org) if you would like to join us.

### 20/40 SMALL GROUP

Our 20/40 small group will gather on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. starting September 9. We have been gathering on Zoom, and outdoors, when we are able to exercise the appropriate social distancing precautions. On September 9, our meeting will be virtual. At that meeting we will discuss the best frequency and platform for our meetings as we go through the Fall. We are



(and must be) flexible as each family balances their new Fall normal! We have been working on *Me & White Supremacy* by Layla Saad. Once we finish that we will do a Bible study. Please contact Darcy at [darcy@fccannarbor.org](mailto:darcy@fccannarbor.org) for the link or to join our email distribution list.

### MIND AND SPIRIT BOOK GROUP

Mind and Spirit will resume meeting on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, via Zoom, from 10-11:30 a.m. At our meeting on Wednesday, September 2, we will review summer happenings and reads. On September 16, we will begin our first fall book, *The Simple Faith of Mister Rogers*, by Amy Hollingsworth. We invite any interested women in the church to join us. Please contact Gail Haynes at 734-332-3434, or [gehaynes@aol.com](mailto:gehaynes@aol.com), if you are interested in knowing more about the group. Members attend when they are available and find it a meaningful way to connect with other women in the church who are interested in discussing issues regarding faith, spirituality, and social issues.

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. Please don't forget to thank our essential workers!



**CIRCLE OF FRIENDS**  
*AN OUTREACH MINISTRY OF FCC*  
**MARY ANN MARQUARDT**

Circle of Friends is a visitation and assistance ministry that links home-centered members, including those in long term care facilities, and *Circle Friends* (active members of First Congregational Church) in a one-to-one relationship. Circle of Friends provides a caring connection to the church through regular visits, spiritual support, and other kinds of assistance as appropriate for both parties.



We have not had any meetings due to Covid-19. Our group reaches out to seniors who are in assisted living facilities, living with family, or at home, and are unable to get to church. Our members have been able to stay in touch. Arnie Proehl is doing well. Sally would like a call or visit since she continues to care for her son at home. Tom and Jeanette Gaffield are in the Gilbert Residence in Ypsilanti. Some of our seniors have had to stay in their rooms at senior facilities and are very lonely. We send our friends cards and talk by phone.

This year our member Gail Haynes started a group for church members who have lost a spouse. We introduced ourselves at a luncheon and several of the women have kept in touch with one another.

If you are interested in our group, please contact me by phone at 313-303-1989 or by email at [maryannmarquardt73@gmail.com](mailto:maryannmarquardt73@gmail.com). Thank you!

*Enjoy the rest of the summer!*

**BOARD OF DEACONS**  
**JANE DELANCEY, CO-CHAIR - MICHAEL MAKIN, CO-CHAIR**

Thank you to the Deacons who are an active welcoming presence in our online worship service each Sunday morning. You model the Church's mission by being a beacon of God's love, hope, and Christian freedom.

While the services are live-streaming, and therefore our roles are reduced on Sunday mornings, the Deacons would like to continue serving our community as best we can. Please reach out if you have thoughts or ideas on how we can serve you better.





The First  
Congregational  
Church of Ann Arbor

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

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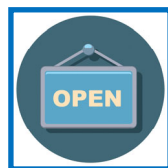
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Join us on  
Facebook

## REACHING OUT TO YOU AND STAYING IN TOUCH

- **10:00 - 11:00 A.M. LIVESTREAM SERVICE**  
From our home to yours. During Michigan's "Stay at Home Orders" we are broadcasting live on YouTube and Facebook. Our single service is a blended one, utilizing our wonderful traditional and contemporary musicians. We think you will like the variety! Please watch your Friday email and our Website for updates on how you can connect on Sunday morning. After the service has ended it will be linked to the homepage of our website so you can access it throughout the week. Our Communications Specialist, Crystal, will be monitoring the live-stream and will be able to help with most technical difficulties. She is diligently following your comments and feedback at this time so we can refine and perfect this process.
- Please check out the Black Lives Matter section on our website. We see a very clear need for our voice to be loud in condemning the evils of racism and uplifting the truth that Black Lives Matter. At FCC, we are committed to advocacy and continued education through our faith, through open and frank conversations, through social responsibility, and through listening and learning. Please join us on this journey as we seek to lift up, reach out to, and care for our Black brothers and sisters during this very difficult time.
- For your spiritual nurture, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, we are posting videos, and on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, we are posting devotionals. These videos and devotionals are being prepared by various staff and other guests. Please check these out daily, as a way to "Look Up During Uncertain Times", by going to the link <https://www.fccannarbor.org/news-blog/>.



- Although the church building is closed, the church office is *VIRTUALLY OPEN*. Robbie is available Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. She has full access to the office files and calendar. The office phone number, 734-662-1679, rings through to her cell phone during these hours. After hours, messages come to her email, so you are always in touch with us.

*Please call anytime!*

*Engaging God's word and enriching lives.*