



First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

*"No matter who you are,
or where you are
on life's journey,
you are welcome here."*

Senior Minister
Rev. Tim Vander Haar

Sunday, January 26, 2025

1201 Jefferson Street
Muskegon, Michigan 49441
231-726-3254

www.fccmuskegon.org

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
JANUARY 26, 2025

By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean that we are Christians who know that how we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe.

4th of the "Eight Points of Progressive Christianity"

WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE COMMUNITY

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

PRELUDE

"Allegro" from *Suite for Organ*, by John Stanley

GATHERING PRAYER

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

**Set us free, O God, from bondage
to our self-centeredness and pride,
and give us the liberty of the abundant life
you have made known to us in Jesus Christ
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and forever.
Amen.**

Those who wish may stand

OPENING HYMN

Those who wish may stand

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

1. O for a tho - sand tongues to sing my
2. My gra - cious Sav - ior and my God, as -
3. Je - sus! the name that calms our fears, that
4. Glo - ry to God, and love and praise be

great Re - deem - er's praise, The glo - ries ev - er
sist me to pro - claim, To spread through all the
bids our sor - rows cease Is mu - sic in the
ev - er, ev - er given By all the saints in

ech - o - ing the tri - umphs of God's grace!
earth a - broad the hon - ors of your name.
sin - ner's ears, is life, and health, and peace!
ev - ery age, the church in earth and heaven.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 4:11-21

On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.” Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time. Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

CHORAL ANTHEM

Spirit, Open My Heart, by Alfred Fedak and Ruth Duck

*Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living. As you love may I love,
in receiving and in giving. Spirit, open my heart.*

God replace my stony heart with a heart that’s kind and tender. All my coldness and fear to
your grace I now surrender.

*Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living. As you love may I love,
in receiving and in giving. Spirit, open my heart.*

Write your name upon my heart as my law, my goal, my story. In each thought and word and
deed, may my living bring you glory.

*Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living. As you love may I love,
in receiving and in giving. Spirit, open my heart.*

May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of sister, brother. In the welcome of Christ,
may we welcome one another.

*Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living. As you love may I love,
in receiving and in giving. Spirit, open my heart.*

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MESSAGE

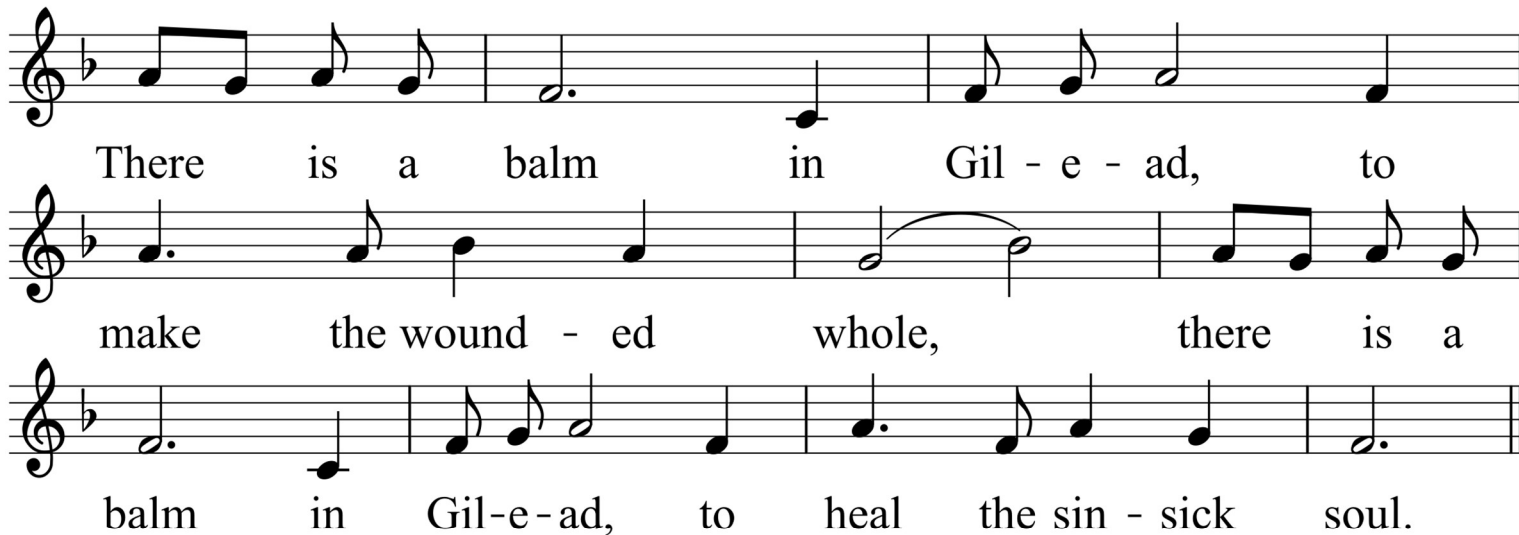
THE PROPHETIC VISION FULFILLED

Those who wish may stand

HYMN

Those who wish may stand

There Is a Balm in Gilead



There is a balm in Gil - e - ad, to
make the wound - ed whole, there is a
balm in Gil - e - ad, to heal the sin - sick soul.



Some - times I feel dis - cour - aged, and
Don't ev - er feel dis - cour - aged, for
think my work's in vain, But then the Ho - ly
Je - sus is your friend, who, if you ask for
Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.
knowl - edge, will nev - er fail to lend.

Text: African-American Spiritual, Tune: BALM IN GILEAD, African-American Spiritual

SEARCH AND CALL UPDATE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

. . . ending with the Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we
forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

OFFERTORY INVITATION

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Teach Me, O Lord, by Philip Stopford

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.
Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law;
yea I shall keep it with my whole heart.
Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein is my desire.
Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.
O turn away mine eyes lest I behold vanity; and quicken me in thy way.
O stablish thy word in thy servant, that I may fear thee.
Amen.

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DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father (*Creator*), Son (*Christ*), and Holy Ghost.
Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Those who wish may stand

CLOSING HYMN

Those who wish may stand

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

1 Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther, there is no
2 Sum - mer and win - ter, and spring - time and har - vest, sun, moon and
3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth, thy own dear

shad - ow of turn - ing with thee; thou chang - est not, thy com -
stars in their cours - es a - bove join with all na - ture in
pres - ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to - day and bright

pas - sions they fail not; as thou has been thou for - ev - er wilt be.
man - i - fold wit - ness to thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy and love.
hope for to - mor - row, bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

Refrain

Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness!

Morn - ing by morn - ing new mer - cies I see; all I have need - ed thy

hand hath pro - vid - ed — great is thy faith - ful - ness, Lord, un - to me!

WORDS: Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)
 MUSIC: William M. Runyan (1870-1957)
 Words and Music © 1923, Ren. 1951 Hope Publishing Company

FAITHFULNESS
 11.10.11.10.Ref.

BLESSING AND SENDING

POSTLUDE

"Trumpet Voluntary" from *Suite for Organ*, by John Stanley

Today's Service

Rev. Tim Vander Haar
 Dr. Michael Match
 John Mattson
 The Motet Choir
 Dan Barnum-Steggerda
 Blake Filius

Pastor
 Music Director/Cantor
 Organist
 Song Leaders
 Liturgist/Prayers of the People
 Audio and Video

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

*A white carnation is in memory of **Rev. Dr. James Bidle**, FCC past minister and member of FCC. Jim passed away on January 2, 2025 in Crystal Lake, IL. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.*

Westshore GSA Youth Group will be meeting on Monday, from 7 to 8 pm.

*Cookies for Sunday Fellowship - Those whose last names begin with the letters **O-S** please bring cookies or treats during the month of February. Gluten free and/or sugar free cookies are also appreciated as are homemade cookies or bars.*

*This morning you are invited to join us in Fellowship Hall at 11:45 am for the **Progressive Christianity** Faith Journey titled How We Behave. This will be a short presentation with snacks!*

*Every communion Sunday we ask that you consider bringing in even one canned good or non-perishable food item and place it in the bushel basket in the Narthex. This will go to **Food Pantry** clients. Many thanks!*

*If you would be interested in ordering **altar flowers** honoring a deceased loved one, an anniversary, a newborn or someone recovering from an illness or surgery please contact the church office. Cost of the arrangement is \$35.*

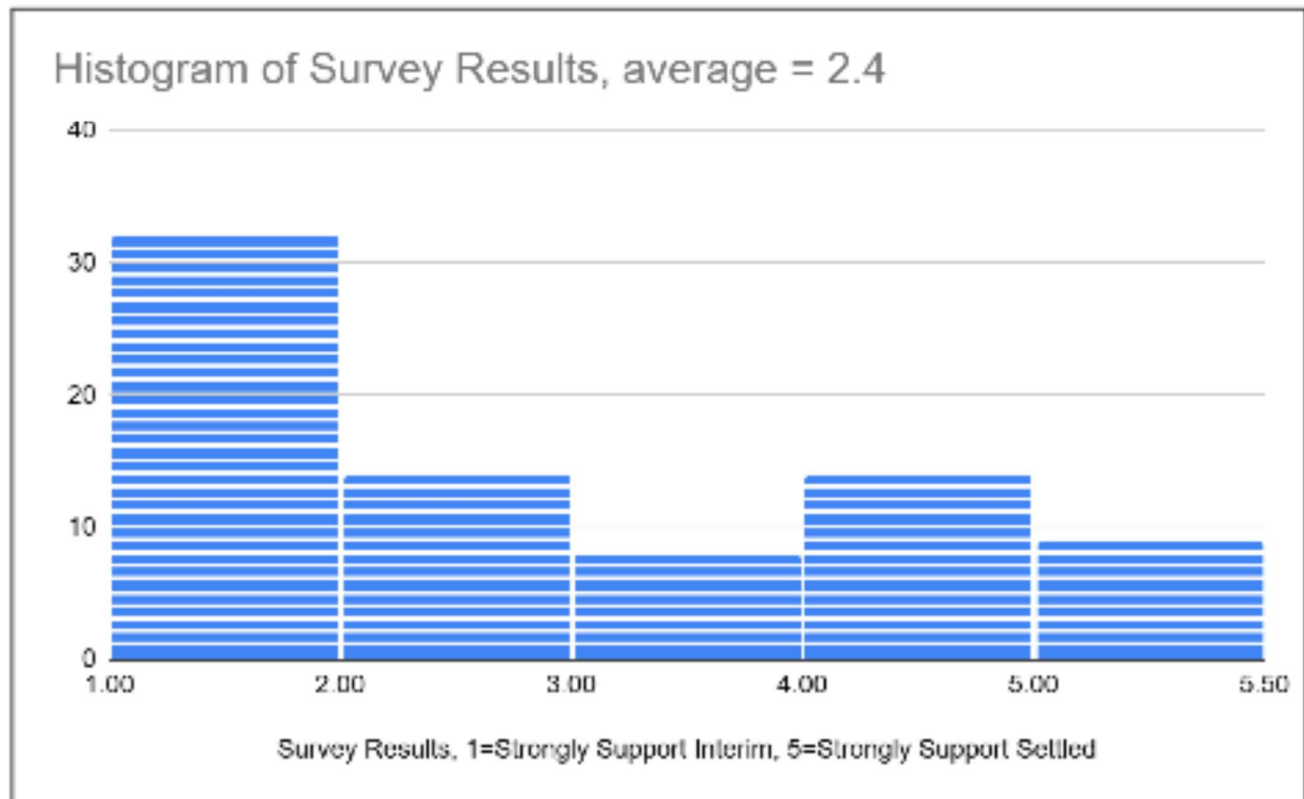
FCC Women's Single Group will meet on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at Early Owl for a 1:00 pm lunch. Please sign up at the Welcome Center or contact Judy Dewall.

*Sunday, **February 9th** please join us during coffee hour for a lively game of Trivia. Tom and Diane Goodman will emcee. Sponsored by Congregational Life Department.*

*Please note the February 1, 2025 Mobile Food Pantry has been **cancelled**.*

Survey Results - Congregational Communication #1

77 Total Votes (55 submitted in person, 22 submitted online)



Themes from Comments:

Favoring Interim Minister

Need for a Transitional Period

- An interim minister is seen as essential to guide the congregation through the emotional and administrative transition after Pastor Tim's long tenure. This period allows for grieving, adjustment, and preparation for new leadership.

Importance of Visioning and Self-Discovery

- The congregation requires time to reflect, build consensus, and clarify its vision for the future before committing to a settled minister. Rushing into a decision risks long-term challenges.

Flexibility in the Selection Process

- While many favor an interim minister, there is openness to hiring a strong settled minister candidate if one emerges. The process should prioritize thoughtful, prayerful decision-making.

Favoring Settled Minister

Commitment and Stability

- A settled minister is viewed as providing long-term stability and commitment, allowing the congregation to move forward without prolonged transitions.

Concerns About Comparisons and Transitions

- Acknowledgment that a settled minister might face unfair comparisons to Pastor Tim, but there is also concern that an interim period could delay finding a permanent leader.

Trust in the Search Committee

- Confidence in the diverse search committee to select a proper fit, with a preference for efficiency in the process to avoid unnecessary delay