



Pilgrim Post

September Volume 26 issue 9

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We, the people of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of Muskegon, care for the welfare of our community and welcome everyone, no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey. We welcome into our community people of every age, race, nationality, mental and physical ability, economic and social status, faith background, marital standing, family structure, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation. We also invite you to share in the life, leadership, worship, fellowship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our congregation as we seek to grow together in faith and love.



***We welcome our new
Senior Minister,
The Rev. Dr. Becky Emerson
to our church family.***

Rev. Becky's story is unique, starting with her upbringing in Guyana (English speaking, former British colony in northeast South America), expertise comprising of education starting at the University of Toronto, and experience in church planning, seminary professor/head of department & certified chaplain. But what most stood out was her clear, close, calm connection with God (whom she is more than willing to grapple with) and people---ALL people.

Becky and her partner, Rev. Denise (who is also seminary trained and a certified chaplain) are the parents of five adult children.

Our Church Family

***Prayers are appreciated for continued healing for
members and friends of our church:***

*Those who suffer in silence. Those who are homebound. Those who are ill.
Those who are recovering from surgery. Those who are lonely.
Those who have moved. Those who have lost a loved one.*

Our Sympathy and Prayers

To the family and friends of Mary Williams. Mary, 91, passed away peacefully with her loving family at her bedside at Heartwood Lodge on July 31, 2026. She was a member of FCC and devoted volunteer & supporter of Saturday Breakfasts. A private family gathering will be held in September.

And

To Tom Chadwick and family on the loss of Tom's wife Karen. Karen passed peacefully on August 26, 2026 at Harbor Terrace surrounded by the love of her family. Karen was 84 years old. She was a member of FCC, member of Member Care, and she and Tom served communion. A private family gathering will be held at a later date.

Cookies for Sunday Fellowship

Those whose last names begin with the letters K-N please bring cookies or treats during the month of September. Homemade cookies or treats are also appreciated as are Gluten free and/or sugar free cookies or bars. Please indicate ingredients as we have many members who have allergies. Many thanks.

Decorate a Table for Welcome Back Sunday Potluck, September 13. Congregational Life invites you to decorate a Fellowship Hall Table Centerpiece. We will also have a Trivia Game hosted by Tom and Diane Goodman that day. Sign up sheet is at Welcome Center.



September Birthdays

01 Joanne Blakkan
04 Rocky Decker; Andrea Rockwood;
Gwen Fosse, Madison Stewart
06 Gail Jones; Stephanie Thommen
08 Joyce Lemieux; Jordan Chambers
09 Julie Schaub; Lachlan Twining
11 Loretta Bonsall
12 William Ferriby
13 Barb Klingenmaier; Josh Kartes
16 Laura Wiles; Rebecca Andrie
17 Susan Blakey; Donna Apple; Allison
Keessen

20 Lincoln Wiles
21 Roy Portenga
22 Mark Bednarczyk
23 Suzi Cress
24 Jak Mercer IV; Meghan Lawton; Andy
Netzler
25 Margo Atwell
27 Kristyn Anacker
28 Barb Wenk; Scott Lachniet
29 Paul Krause

WOW! The Giving Tree Depicts Real People!!

It's true! Beginning on the final Sunday of August --- Gee, I wonder if something special is happening that day? --- The Giving Tree will be shedding its Descending Doves of Peace ornaments for 12 pictures (2 per ornament) that might be best captioned as:

The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ IN ACTION!!!

These special ornaments as well as the picture and signature that adorn the top of The Giving Tree are a declaration that can barely contain the excitement alive and well within our church walls. And, we can't wait to introduce the reason for the excitement to all of Muskegon and the surrounding area and to our Grand West Association and Michigan Conference. What are we declaring, you wonder?

WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH FAMILY!

Within the bonds of Holy Spirit Inspired Covenant,
we, the members and friends of Muskegon's First Congregational Church
welcome our new pastor and her family ---

Author: Dan Barnum-Steggerda

What's Happening

Tuesday Pantry

Tuesday is Food Pantry here at FCC. We receive names with appointments from Love In The Name of Christ. If you know of anyone in need of food please have them call Love at 231-773-3448 before Tuesday. If you would like to help in some other way, we are collecting canned goods on Communion Sundays (first Sunday of each month). Just put them in the baskets in the Narthex. Many thanks!

Saturday Breakfast

The last Saturday of each month we hold a Saturday Breakfast which is open to the community. The Breakfast is from 9-10:30 am and is free to all. Please show up at 8:30 AM if you are willing to volunteer. "Cowboy" offers a Worship Service in our Chapel at 10:45 AM for any who would like to attend.

Saturday Garden

We are now harvesting - please join us Saturdays from 10 AM to noon and Tuesdays from 1-3 PM. April through October /weather permitting. Bike Clinic will be held September 12 from 9:00 am till noon at the garden. Our garden is located across from the church on Jefferson St. We thank the volunteers who have tirelessly worked at the garden to provide for our community.

Missions & Service News

Mission for the month of September is: CROPWalk

The date has been set for the walk: - October 4, 2026. Watch for a table to be set up for Sundays in September for more information and sponsor sheets.

Congregational Life Dept.

Picture directories are ready! We are asking for a \$10 donation to help cover expenses. Thank you for your patience. We hope this helps in putting a face to the name. We will have them available at the Welcome Center or in the office on September 6th.

Please join us for our "Welcome Back" Potluck on Sunday, September 13 following the worship service. There is a sign up sheet at the Welcome Center. Please note the dish you will be bringing. We will follow with a Trivia game- hosted by Tom and Diane Goodman. We are also looking for volunteers to decorate a table for our Potluck on September 13. Please sign up at the Welcome Center or contact the office or a Congregational Life member.

We are collecting new and gently new (clean) winter coats (adult and/or children) in the month of September and October and distributing them at the November Saturday Breakfast. Please place in basket at Welcome Center.

We will be collecting candy for our annual Trunk or Treat. It can be left at the Welcome Center.

Christian Education The topic of hospitality as it pertains to the Christian life and to FCC in particular seems to be arising from many corners at once. In keeping with that theme, we plan to devote September's *Life-long Learning* sessions to discussions of some of the more challenging aspects of "Christian Hospitality." For example...

- When it comes to hospitality I am polite to everyone, keep my emotions under control, and avoid gossip. Why isn't that enough?
- *The truth is that I attend church mainly for my own comfort and development. If that's enough for monks at a monastery, why not here? I don't necessarily want to be so other-directed. Is that so terrible?*
- *It's been said that the average Alcoholics Anonymous meeting is a better example of a Christian community than the average church congregation. If true, how can we get there from here?*

In early October we will host an interactive social event where we will solicit your program suggestions for the rest of the year.

Member Care

We would like to share a note regarding a Prayer Shawl:

"I am writing this on behalf of my mom Mary Williams, who had been recovering at Heartwood Lodge. A bag was delivered to her that contained a beautiful prayer shawl. She instantly recognized it as something FCC does for its members. She hugged it and cried. Then hugged it and cried some more. I can't begin to express how much this meant to her. So thank you so very much. She had it with her at all times and it was a constant reminder that people loved and and prayed for her. And now I have it as a reminder of mom's love." Sincerely, Lynne Williams Horn

Member Care has received 20 magnetic clasps to convert old model tags at no cost to members. Please see Barb Klingenmaier if you need one.

Thank you for wearing your name tag on Sunday mornings. It is nice to put a face to a name. Forgot yours? Ask an usher for a name tag for the morning. Many thanks!

Building and Grounds

We invite volunteers every Wednesday at 9 AM to help keep our church maintained. We then meet in the library for coffee and fellowship afterward. - you do not need to be on the department to help out. Just show up and we will have a task (or two) for you.

Worship and Music

Our meetings will be held the first Tuesday of each month instead of Thursdays First Tuesday will be October 6 at 6:30 PM.

The Motet Choir will resume rehearsals beginning next Wednesday, September 9th from 7:00 to 8:30 PM in the Sanctuary. New Members are always welcomed joyfully! Please see Dr. Match if you have any questions or just show up on Wednesday.

3 C's Exercise

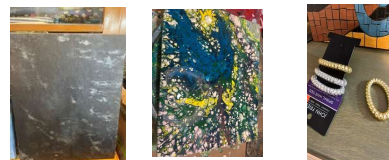
Every Wednesday at 9:00 am \$3 per class in Fellowship Hall.

Exercise Drumming Class

Thursdays at 9:00 am in Fellowship Hall \$3 per class.

Year 5 of “Let’s Make a Mess” acrylic pour paint class will be scheduled for Wednesday, September 16th at 1 PM in FCC’s decor room. There is no charge for the class and everyone is welcome. Each participant will be asked to bring in their own materials. We will be introducing some new and exciting ideas even incorporating the use of a brush!!!! Several of our classes will involve bringing more than one canvas and material. We will post the materials list for each class at least 2 weeks prior. Some classes may require some unusual equipment. If you have any questions please don’t hesitate to ask Nancy Doctor or Barb Kartes. We hope you can join us to get “messy.” The following is the Materials List for our first class. **Materials list #1** Canvas no smaller than 12x14- Please pre paint your background in dark moody night colors. Paint colors to bring for this project which will be in 2 parts are yellows, reds, browns A very large straw (large hole, metal Masking tape

Materials list #2 (see pic #2) Canvas no smaller than 12x12
Any paint colors you would like. About 6-8 Background color
Mixing cups; Spiral hair ties (See pic #3); Spinner
Garbage bag for tray.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Featuring Heartfelt Handmade Crafts
Saturday, October 24, 2026 10 AM-3 PM

Minutes of Governing Board **Monday, August 17, 2026, 6:30 PM**

Meeting called to order by Jim Perreault, President.

Opening prayer offered by Elisabeth Major.

Motion to approve August 17, 2026 Governing Board Agenda was moved by Marti Balgooyen and seconded by Hal Rummery. Motion approved. Sue will make a revision to Member Care and resubmit.

Motion to approve July 20, 2026 Governing Board Minutes was moved by Jane Clingman-Scott and seconded by Steve Chapman.

Motion approved by consensus as amended: Per Bonnie, we need to nominate additional officers. Jim tabled to end of the meeting.

President’s Report: There has been some conc

Motion to accept the Treasurer’s report and place on file. Motion was moved by Bonnie Lipan and seconded by M. Balgooyen.

New Business: None

Meeting adjourned at 7:19 PM.

Submitted by Michelle Kemp, Clerk

Next meeting: September 21, 2026

PRELIMINARY MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT for July 2026

	Current Month Actual	Current YTD Actual	2025-2026 YTD Budget	2025-2026 YTD Difference	2025-2026 Annual Budget
Pledged Offerings	\$35,590	\$35,590	\$40,946	\$ - 5,356	\$ 365,361
Non-pledged Offerings	\$1,287	\$1,287	1,540	\$ - 253	22,595
Misc. Income	\$3,270	3,270	432	\$ 2,838	81,500
Operating Income Endow.	\$0	0	11,557	\$ - 11,557	102,726
Total Op. Income	\$ 40,147	\$ 40,147	\$ 54,475	\$ - 14,328	\$ 572,162
Total Op. Expenses	\$ 38,901	\$ 38,901	\$ 55,429	\$ - 16,528	\$ 572,162
NET TOTAL:	\$ 1,246	\$ 1,246	\$ - 954	\$ 2,200	0

Income exceeded expenses for operations by \$1,246 for the month of July. Both income and expenses were below budget expectations. A major savings in expenses for this first month of the fiscal year was due to rewriting property insurance with a new carrier, which also allows us to pay quarterly rather than the entire annual amount due on July 1st. As a result, we finished the month at \$2,200 above budget expectations.

Gifts receipt - In July we received additional contributions of \$229 for the Westshore GSA. We also received \$225 in contributions towards the Saturday Breakfast Program, and collected \$117 in building use fees. The July Mission of the Month, Family Promise, received \$131 in donations. There were also contributions to our annual craft fair, Congregational Life, the FCC Food Pantry, our music program, and Miscellaneous B&G Designated Fund.

(As of 08/12/2026, Deb Collett, Treasurer - ejm)

Thermostat Endowment Funding Campaign: no new contributions were received in July. \$76,910 collected as of 07/31/2026. The goal is \$200,000 by October of 2028.

The Missions and Service Department is grateful for your generous support for the July Mission of the Month, Family Promise. A total of \$131 was collected as contributions toward that mission. Thank you!

Announcements:

Our goal is to communicate to the FCC Family accurately. To that end, we have new guidelines in effect. Many thanks for your help.

For printed announcements in Sunday's bulletin requests are to be made to either the Pastor or the Office Manager by Monday at 1 PM.

For an announcement in the weekly email requests are to be made to the Director of Music by Wednesday at 6 PM.

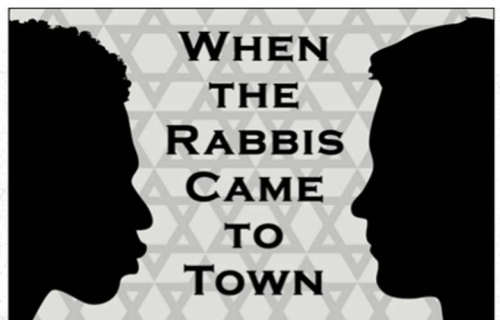
For verbal announcements on Sunday morning requests are to be made to the Pastor by Thursday at 5 PM.

For an announcement in the Pilgrim Post monthly newsletter all requests are to be made to the Office Manager by the 3rd Wednesday of the prior month at noon (October Post due September 16).

Thursday Emails Join in on up to date FCC events and information. Also a direct link to our on-line worship service. Just email michaelm@fccmuskegon.org and ask to be put on our Thursday email.

Pilgrim Post Are you on the email list to receive our Pilgrim Post? Just let the office know you would like to be emailed with a pdf copy. You can also email the office at: fcc@fccmuskegon.org

Community News



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UCC**

**9/26/2026
04:00**

1201 JEFFERSON ST, MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN

A STAGE PERFORMANCE DIRECTED BY DIANE VAN WESEP ABOUT THE LARGEST ARREST OF RABBIS IN AMERICAN HISTORY STARRING ADAM BELL. THE 4 P.M. PERFORMANCE IS FOLLOWED BY A 5:30 P.M. VIP WITH RABBI ALLEN SECHER AND ACTOR ADAM BELL ALSO AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC.

PRESENTED BY HEARTLAND INDEPENDENT FILM AND DRAMA FORUM



REGISTER FOR THE
SHOW HERE



LEARN MORE ABOUT
THIS EVENT HERE



REGISTER FOR
THE VIP

TO LEARN MORE CONTACT: rogerdrapoport@me.com, (231) 720-0930 (voice)

Saturday, September 26, 2026 at 4 PM

Please join us for the Michigan Premiere of
"When The Rabbis came to Town"

The stage play tells the story of Rabbi Secher's 70 year battle against anti-semitism and for civil rights. Direct from sold out performances in Chicago and Florida, this show is followed by a private VIP gathering.

First Congregational members and students with i.d. are admitted free.

Any questions please email to:

rogerdrapoport@me.com or call 231-720-0930.

THE SOUL BOX PROJECT COMES TO THE MUSKEGON LAKESHORE

Central United Methodist Church invites Muskegon and surrounding communities to experience a powerful memorial to lives lost to gun violence

Central United Methodist Church in downtown Muskegon will host **The Soul Box Project: A Lakeshore Community Memorial and Gun-Violence Awareness Display** from September 22 through October 8, 2026, offering residents throughout Muskegon County, the Lakeshore and surrounding communities an opportunity to remember lives lost, reflect on the human cost of gun violence and learn how communities can work together toward greater safety.

The display will be located at Central United Methodist Church, 1011 Second Street, Muskegon, Michigan 49440, and will be free and open to the public on select dates and times

SEE THE ATTACHED CALENDAR FOR DATES AND TIMES THE DISPLAY WILL BE OPEN!!

The Soul Box Project Comes to Muskegon

A Lakeshore Community Memorial and Gun-Violence Awareness Display



You are invited to view The Soul Box Project, a Gun Violence Awareness Display, hosted by Muskegon Central United Methodist Church, 1011 Second Street, Muskegon. Come. Remember. Reflect. Learn.

Sept 22nd – Oct 8th

Select dates and times

Free and Open to the Public

Come. Remember. Reflect. Learn.

Open to the Muskegon's Lakeshore Communities and Surrounding Areas



The Soul Box Project Comes to Muskegon

A LAKESHORE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL AND GUN-VIOLENCE AWARENESS DISPLAY
Hosted by Central United Methodist Church • 1011 Second Street, Muskegon, MI 49440

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
September 20	21	22 10-2pm	23 10-2pm	24 10-2pm	25	26 10-4pm
27	28 5-7pm	29 10-2pm	30 10-2pm	October 1 10-2pm	2	3
4 12-4pm	5 5-7	6 10-2pm	7 10-2pm	8 10-2pm	9	10



FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

COME. REMEMBER. REFLECT. LEARN.

September Lectionary

TUE Sep 01	I Corinthians 2:10b-16; Psalm 145:8-14; Luke 4:31-37
WED Sep 02	I Corinthians 3:1-9; Psalm 33:12-15, 20-21; Luke 4:38-44
THU Sep 03	1 Corinthians 3:18-23; Psalm 24:1-6; Luke 5:1-11
FRI Sep 04	1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Psalm 37:3-6, 27-28, 39-40; Luke 5:33-39
SAT Sep 05	1 Corinthians 4:6b-15; Psalm 145:17-21; Luke 6:1-5
SUN Sep 06	FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 149; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20
MON Sep 07	1 Corinthians 5:1-8; Psalm 5:4-8, 11; Luke 6:6-11
TUE Sep 08	1 Corinthians 6:1-11; Psalm 149:1b-6a, 9; Luke 6:12-19
WED Sep 09	1 Corinthians 7:25-31; Psalm 45:10-11, 13b-16; Luke 6:20-26
THU Sep 10	1 Corinthians 8:1b-7, 11-17; Psalm 139:1-3, 13-14, 23-24; Luke 6:27-38
FRI Sep 11	1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22b-27; Psalm 84:1-5, 11; Luke 6:39-42
SAT Sep 12	1 Corinthians 10:14-22; Psalm 116:12-13, 17-18; Luke 6:43-49
SUN Sep 13	SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Exodus 14:19-31; Psalm 114; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-55
MON Sep 14	1 Corinthians 11:17-26, 33; Psalm 40:6-9, 16; Luke 7:1-10
TUE Sep 15	1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27-31a; Psalm 100; Luke 7:11-17
WED Sep 16	1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13; Psalm 33:2-5, 12, 22; Luke 7:31-35
THU Sep 17	1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 28; Luke 7:36-50
FRI Sep 18	1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Psalm 17:1, 6-7, 8b, 15; Luke 8:1-3
SAT Sep 19	1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-49; Psalm 56:9b-13; Luke 8:4-15
SUN Sep 20	SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Exodus 16:2-15; Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45; Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16
MON Sep 21	Proverbs 3:27-34; Psalm 15; Luke 8:16-18
TUE Sep 22	Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13; Psalm 119:1, 27, 30, 34-35, 44; Luke 8:19-21
WED Sep 23	Proverbs 30:5-9; Psalm 119:29, 72, 89, 101, 104-105, 163; Luke 9:1-6
THU Sep 24	Ecclesiastes 1:2-11; Psalm 90:3-6, 12-14, 17; Luke 9:7-9
FRI Sep 25	Ecclesiastes 3:1-11; Psalm 144:1-4; Luke 9:18-22
SAT Sep 26	Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8; Psalm 90:3-6, 12-14, 17; Luke 9:43b-45
SUN Sep 27	EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22; Psalm 124; James 5:13-20; Mark 9:38-50
MON Sep 28	Job 1:6-22; Psalm 17:1-3, 6-7; Luke 9:46-50
TUE Sep 29	Job 3:1-3, 11-17, 20-23; Psalm 88:1-7; Luke 9:51-56
WED Sep 30	Job 9:1-12, 14-16; Psalm 88:2, 9b-14; Luke 9:57-62