



# *Pilgrim Post* ≈

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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.*



## LETTER FROM REV. TIM

*Dear friends,*

I wish for all of you a Happy New Year! And I am going to betray my age in at least two ways.

The first is to make a New Year's resolution, and, while I may be wrong, it seems to me that that is far less popular than it used to be. I suspect that may be because most of us don't really manage to mean them enough to follow through on them. I guess the logic has become, "Why set myself up for disappointment? Maybe I'll feel a little better about my failure if I don't have a goal to achieve, anyway!"

But here is, and that is another sign of the years passing by me. Thy lyrics of a song speak to me, it seems like they were new just yesterday, but that yesterday is measured, not in years but in decades!

From the musical "Godspell":

Day by day  
Day by day  
Oh, Dear Lord  
Three things I pray  
To see thee more clearly  
Love thee more dearly  
Follow thee more nearly  
Day by day

My wish for the New Year is that we may all learn to do that a little more clearly, dearly, and nearly in the days and months to come.

*Grace and peace,*

Rev. Tim

## 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.*

### **Sympathy and Prayers:**

To family and friends of Jody (Keene) Northuis, Jody (68 years old) passed away Monday, November 29, 2021 after a brief illness. She was born in Muskegon to James and Joan Keene. Jody had been a member of FCC since her Confirmation. She attended North Muskegon High School and graduated from Grand Valley State University with a degree in education. Jody spent 25 years in education, retiring from Saugatuck Public Schools in 2010. Her involvement with Saugatuck's Dancing for the Arts program to secure much needed funding for the school's art and music departments, was one of her proudest accomplishments. Jody was preceded in death by her parents Jim and Joan Keene and brother, Jerry Keene. Jody is survived by her husband of 45 years Randy Northuis; sons, Eric Northuis, Scott Northuis (Mikki); 2 granddaughters, Abbi and Katie; and her sisters, Becky Keene, Jean Keene, and Janet Keene Oliver (Perry); brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Tom and Barb Northuis and nieces and nephews. A private family service has been held.

To family and friends of John Shoberg. John passed away on Tuesday, December 14, 2021. He was a member of FCC and attended as much as his health allowed. John was born December 26, 1946 in Muskegon to Ray and Nola Shoberg. He was a graduate of Mona Shores high School and for over 20 years worked for Dresser Industries in Muskegon. John married the former Darlene Caverly in Muskegon and she preceded him in death in 1992. On July 8, 2006 he married Joan Eilers and she also preceded him in death on October 27, 2017. John had been a very involved member in the LifeCircles PACE program for many years. He is survived by his 2 daughters: Amy (Ted) Lisman of Spring Lake and Kimberly (David Duarte-Ojeda) Shoberg-Duarte of Chicago; 4 grandchildren. Private family services will be held at a later date.

### January Birthdays

2 Margaret Barnard  
3 Sarah Leybourne  
4 Jessica Dold  
Joe Singerling  
5 Stocky Holly  
7 Ric Balgooyen  
8 Bonnie Frein  
10 Sara Hood  
11 Ric Balgooyen  
12 Raymond Jackson  
Jim Perreault  
Kaitlin Rummery

13 Deb Collett  
Andrea Lachniet  
Brooke Miller  
14 Jon Rockwood  
Judy Tierney  
17 Tom Johnson  
18 Linda Decker  
20 Pat VandeVrede  
21 Lynn Mauseth  
Greg Scott

22 Tom Clark  
Jeff Leder  
Marie Van Buren  
25 Jenna Kemp  
26 Sarah Barnard  
27 Jim Gasahl  
Ken Johnson  
Sue Mixer  
29 Karen Andrie  
Karlene Arnst  
Holly Stewart  
John Whitlock

happy  
birthday



## ***FCC Prayer Connection***

If you have a concern or joy that you would like prayers for please email our Prayer Connection at: [FCCPrayerConnection@gmail.com](mailto:FCCPrayerConnection@gmail.com). Your request will be forwarded to all that have requested to receive the prayer concerns. If you would like to receive the prayer concerns, please go through the above email and request to be added to the list. Please let us know if you do not want it published on our public website and Pilgrim Post We are asking that information given in our public prayers be limited to very generic statements such as, "We have been asked to pray for healing (or for other joys and concerns – work or family, an anniversary, etc.)" The exceptions would be that we have a request from the person being prayed for to include more information OR if the prayer is meant to include information that is already public, such as condolences to the family and friends of the deceased and details about the time and place of a funeral, and so on. May we continue to lift up our prayers, both of joy and concern, for our members and friends, but in ways that care about their welfare and their right.



***YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US!***

**Backyard Theology Gathering** will be held on Tuesday, January 25, 2022 at Steve and Nancy Doctor's home. This is a light evening of thought and conversation. Please contact Steve or Nancy for more details.

**Caring Throughout The Life Span:** This is an eight week course every Tuesday beginning February 1, 2022. The class is conducted by Jane Toot, Ph.D. and will be held at Jefferson Towers at 2:00 pm each Tuesday (Feb. 1, 2022 through March 22). The thought-provoking class is free and is for members of FCC and their families and Jefferson Tower residences/families. Please call or email FCC office (231-726-33254 or [fcc@fccmuskegon.org](mailto:fcc@fccmuskegon.org)), or sign up in our church lobby at the Welcome Center. Please contact Jane Toot with any questions. The class is limited to 30 people. No purchase is required, however Jane needs to know who will be there so she can have enough material for every person.

**Christian Education** invites confirmation class and youth group students to meet virtually by Zoom and share their thoughts and inspirations from the Sunday YouTube video. Zoom links will be sent individually to those who are signed up for each group. Please contact Elisabeth Major if you like to join the Confirmation Class and Holly Stewart if you would like to join the Youth group.

## ***2021 CROP Hunger Walk Report on Funds Raised***

### **IN MUSKEGON, IN PERSON!**

Thirteen churches and some independent walkers raised \$21,930.28 on this year's October 3 CROP Walk. Thousands more dollars were contributed on-line and will be added to our support for Church World Service's global programs as well as Community enCompass's McLaughlin Grows Urban Farm, the Saturday Breakfast Garden at First Congregational Church, and Mission for Area People's Healthy Pantry at Temple United Methodist Church.

Participating churches: Allen Avenue Christian Reformed Church (CRC), Bethany CRC, Central United Methodist Church (UMC), Community UMC, Covenant Community Church (Reformed Church of America), First Church of Christ Scientist, First Congregational Church (United Church of Christ), First Presbyterian Church, Lake Harbor UMC, Seventh Day Adventist Church, St. Gregory's Episcopal Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and Temple UMC.

The following "overseers" of the oldest fundraising Walk in the US are grateful that there has been such a positive response despite changes in most "in person" activities because of pandemic:

Tim Breed (Organizing Committee Chair) Rev. Tim Vander Haar (Treasurer of Muskegon County Cooperating Churches and CROP Walk) Donna Lachniet (Logistics Chair) Dan Achterhoff, Delphine Hogston, Kay Fairfield, Carol Higginson, Diana Wright Stubbs, Brewster Willcox, Barbara Klingemaier, Roy Winegar

Rachel Kessel from Church World Service also provided the committee with helpful assistance via remote conferencing.

Together we're boldly planning for next year's CROP Walk to happen on October 2, World Communion Sunday, and hoping to re-engage churches who were pandemically absent!

For questions or further contact, please use our email address:

[muskegoncropwalk@gmail.com](mailto:muskegoncropwalk@gmail.com)

### ***Attending or Beginning College?***

#### **SPECIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH MEMBERS**

Dorothy and Jane had always wanted to do something in memory of their mother, Dollie Mae Damm, an early Muskegon resident. They created the Dollie Mae Damm Scholarship, which is open to members of the First Congregational Church pursuing a degree in education. Apply online at the Community Foundation's website, [www.muskegonfoundation.org/scholarships](http://www.muskegonfoundation.org/scholarships). You will be asked to indicate you are a church member in the application. **Deadline to apply is February 1, 2022.**

**DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP?** The Community Foundation for Muskegon County awards over \$1.3 million in scholarships every year. If you're a high school/homeschooled senior, current college student, early college senior or adult returning student, the Community Foundation may have a scholarship for YOU! And it isn't just college; the Community Foundation has a number of scholarships for technical or trade school, too. The application for 2021 scholarships IS OPEN! More information and the online application are located at [www.muskegonfoundation.org/scholarships](http://www.muskegonfoundation.org/scholarships). **Deadline to apply is February 1, 2022.**

## 2021 SATURDAY BREAKFAST GARDEN REPORT

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ ----1201 Jefferson St., Muskegon, MI 49441

When the Covid-19 Pandemic forced suspension of the church's 17 year old Saturday Breakfast, Lora Swenson became the motivator and organizer of neighborhood and church volunteers in expansion and improvement of the church's garden. For many years Lora had involved children and other Saturday Breakfast guests in gardening activities following their shared meal. Even with no indoor programmed activity possible because of the Pandemic, Lora has managed to broaden the involvement of people as well as the sources of support.

With help from the Boy Scouts, the Disability Connection, the Nelson Neighborhood Improvement Association, First Congregational Church, Church World Service's CROP Hunger Walk, and even the City of Muskegon, the renamed "Saturday Breakfast Garden" now has three additional raised garden beds. This improved physical accessibility makes it possible for more neighbors to be part of producing healthy food in the "food desert" of downtown Muskegon. The increased size of the existing beds has also allowed many more vegetable, fruit, and flower varieties to thrive.

Lora Swenson has held gardening classes and play dates for children and adults and supervised neighborhood folks of all ages in maintaining, improving, and harvesting the fruits of their labors. With several of the church's neighbors investing great amounts of sweat equity in the Garden as well support from some stalwart church members, FCC expects many more productive growing seasons in this "food desert."

Those friends from FCC and the neighborhood include even more than the reliable Judy Clark Ochs, Jack Crampton, Trevor Smith, Tim Koschmann, Kari Whitman, Milton Webster, Aysha Hobson, and Zeivion and Tony.

Now we look forward to the 2022 growing season.

*Report prepared by Donna Lachniet, FCC member and Grantwriter for the Saturday Breakfast 12-13-21*

### **Mission and Services and Mission For Area People**

#### **Thank You For Your Generosity**

The Gifting Tree - Tween Christmas Gifts from FCC totaled over \$700. What a blessing for the teens in our community. Thank you so very much. A special thank you to Deb and Tom Witmer for coordinating this successful community project and to the tree decorators: Deb, Addie, Vivian, and Beth.



## ***Governing Board Minutes December 21, 2021***

Governing Board Meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by President Roy Portenga. Rev. Tim Vander Haar gave the opening prayer. The Agenda and the minutes were approved by consensus. An addition to new business: mask requirements.

### ***President's Report***

Jefferson Towers will be refinanced by H.U.D., to be approved in early 2022. Three people will need to be voted on to be on their Board. These three people are being recommended; Roy Portenga, Mike Franzak, and Beth Carrozza. Thoughts and discussion about making, to our members, Jefferson towers activities and financials. No decision or proposal was made at this time.

One or more signature is needed at the bank. Stewardship drive is completed. The goal was exceeded and a formal Thank You is given to Bruce Hood and Charlotte Chessman for a job well done.

### ***Minister's Report***

Discussion has been made concerning the time of the Christmas Eve Service. This will be evaluated after this year's service by Staff, Tim, and the Music and Worship Department. Tim will be on a well deserved vacation the first two weeks of January, 2022. Guest Ministers are in place.

### ***Treasurer's Report***

Expenses exceeded income for the month. We haven't needed to use Endowment Funds. Report submitted.

#### **Standing Committee Reports**

Finance – a Financial Review is being looked into, asking for bids from CPA firms. Donna would like a review of the Saturday breakfast Funds to be included as this information is needed when asking for Grants.

Endowments, no actions needed.

Personnel- did not meet. Will do staff reviews in February 2022.

Ad Hoc Committee- Will do a survey of the congregation of their likes and needs.

Thoughts of how to make our congregation grow and how to do it are being discussed.

### ***Department Reports***

No action needed from departments, with the exception of Member Care; A Motion was made by Barb Klingenmaier on behalf of Member Care, to move Raymond Jackson and Richard Inbody to inactive membership and also to remove Chelsea Fosse and Mitzie Derks from membership (per family request). Motion was seconded by Shirley Albers. Motion carried.

### ***New Business***

Bonuses for staff: Jackie Murphy mad a motion to give the staff the same bonus as last year. Seconded by Roy Winegar. Motion carried.

Mask sign at door needs to say required not recommended.

*Next Governing Board Meeting will be January 17, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.*

## PRELIMINARY MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT for November 2021

	Current Month Actual	Current YTD Actual	Current YTD Budget	Current YTD Difference	Annual Budget
Pledged Offerings	\$19,490	\$ 166,035	\$ 132,035	\$ 34,000	\$ 330,000
Non-pledged Offerings	849	6,364	14,720	- 8,356	43,359
Misc. Income	650	1,858	4,185	- 2,327	47,659
Operating Income Endow.	0	0	15,000	- 15,000	45,000
Total Op. Income	\$ 20,989	\$ 174,257	\$ 165,940	\$ 8,317	\$ 466,018
Total Op. Expenses	\$ 35,345	\$ 178,227	\$ 202,322	\$ - 24,095	\$ 466,018
<b>NET TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ - 14,356</b>	<b>\$ - 3,970</b>	<b>\$ - 36,382</b>	<b>\$ 32,412</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>

Expenses exceeded income for the month of November, as well as our fiscal year-to-date total. Pledged offerings continued the trend of exceeding the monthly estimate. In its November meeting, the Governing Board approved the recommendation of the Finance Committee to transfer \$30,000 in unexpected gifts from the Miscellaneous Income category into Pledged Offerings in the Operating Income category per the donors' wishes. This report reflects that transaction. Additionally, we have not needed any Endowment funds for cashflow, allowing them to remain invested.

Actual expenses were lower than predicted in our Estimated Spending Plan in nearly every category or department. Because our pledged income was higher than expected, the 6% transferred monthly to the Mission and Service Department for expenditure was also higher than the estimated amount. *(As of 12/08/2021, Greg Scott, Treasurer— ejm.)*

*Your articles, story ideas, comments, and suggestions for the PILGRIM POST are most welcome!*  
**POST DEADLINE IS THE THIRD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH:**

February Issue, January 19, 2022

March Issue, February 16, 2022

Please submit article ideas in writing, including your name and a telephone number where we can reach you if we have questions. You can send articles as email attachments to [fcc@fccmuskegon.org](mailto:fcc@fccmuskegon.org), or deliver hard copy to the church office. All articles are edited for clarity, length, and consistency of style unless the author specifically requests otherwise.

Questions? Please let me know!

Ann Taylor 231-726-3254

We wish to stay Connected:  
 with our members and friends:  
 phone, email, address changes

Please remember to let us know when your address changes within the area or when you transfer to a winter home. We want to keep in touch! We are working on an updated directory for our members.

Thank you!

Church Office—231-726-3254