



Pilgrim Post

August Volume 26 issue 8

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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.

*Heartfelt thanks to our Interim Minister,
Rev. Bruce Mulder.*

*Thank you for walking with us
through this year of change.*

*Your wisdom, patience, leadership, and sense of
humor have carried us forward and enriched our
lives. We are so grateful for your ministry here.*

We pray you and Jean have a blessed life.

*Love in Christ,
Your friends of First Congregational Church*

Letter from Rev. Bruce Mulder, Interim Minister

Dear Friends in Christ of First Congregational,

At the end of his letter to the Roman Church, Paul rattles off an impressive list of people who have been indispensable to him and his ministry. I imagine he knows that, without them, he would never be spiritually formed or full. With deep and abiding love, Paul acknowledges their faith, work, hospitality, and sacrifice and what it has meant to him. It's both a beautiful and timeless tribute to the Body of Christ. This is who you all have been to me. By God's grace we have grown, laughed, struggled, wept, and rejoiced; I am grateful to have walked along with you through the transition process.

Thank you all that from the first day, you welcomed Jean and me and made us feel at home. I pray you will continue to grow as disciples, worship God, serve the Lord as well as grieve and celebrate together. As you all are, I am excited for your next season of worship and witness in Muskegon and beyond.

I close with the way we close worship every Sunday, with the Benediction I heard week after week at Garden Crest Presbyterian, (St. Petersburg, FL) the church I grew up in:

***Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good.
Do not return to anyone evil for evil;
strengthen the fainted-hearted, support the weak,
help the afflicted, honor all people, love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the presence of the Holy Spirit.
And, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the steadfast love of God
and the presence of the Holy Spirit
be and abide with you all, now and forever. Amen.***

***Shalom,
Bruce D Mulder***

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 family and friends of Phyllis Laurin. Phyllis died peacefully at home on Sunday, June 28, 2026 with her three children by her side along with her faithful dog Cookie and cat Andy. Phyllis was 94 years old. She had been a longtime member of FCC. She and her husband Dave moved to Muskegon in the early 1960's. She will be known for her teaching reading at elementary schools and FCC. She was in Service League, Questors, Friends of Art, Garden, and Book Clubs and volunteer at FCC. Her service was held July 29 at FCC. She is survived by her daughter Beth, son David Douglas (Doug) and son Phillip; and two grandchildren.

Cookies for Sunday Fellowship

Those whose last names begin with the letters E- through J please bring cookies or treats during the month of August. Homemade cookies 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.

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



August Birthdays

02 Barbara Boucher; Lexus Chambers

04 Julie Olson

05 Bob Kieft; Khamiya Reynolds

07 Jim Korbecki

08 Robin Egeler

10 Steve Doctor; Jean Keene;
Norma McEwen

11 Laura Bednarczyk

12 Steve Kartes

15 Jan Entsminger

16 Idris Muhammad

17 Austin Decker; Scott McEwen

18 Mara Bullion

19 Sue Munroe; Chris Sanden;
Pat Johnson

21 John Wahlberg; Scott Peterson

23 Tami Wade

26 Mikki Borns; Cindy Maguire

28 John Frein

29 Cynthia Bates-Twining; Kendra Andrie

31 Dan Barnum-Steggerda;
Jack Crampton

What's Happening

Women's Single Group We will meet for lunch on Tuesday, September 1 at The Village Baker in Spring Lake. Please sign up at the Welcome Center or call Judy D. at 734-478-3716. Newcomers are welcome. (No luncheon in August.)

Saturday Breakfast- August 29th

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 contact Donna Lachniet at 231-740-1140 or just show up at 8:30 am if you are willing to volunteer. "Cowboy" offers a Worship Service in our Chapel following the breakfast for any who would like to attend.

Saturday Garden Bike Clinic will be held August 15 from 10 am till noon at the garden. The garden helpers are still in need of your help in harvesting and staying ahead of the weeds. Many things can be done without bending! Bring the whole family!

Wednesday Volunteers are welcome to meet every Wednesday at 9 am to help keep our church maintained. We then meet in the library for coffee and fellowship afterward.

3 C's Exercise continues every Wednesday at 9:00 am. \$3 per class in Fellowship Hall.

Missions & Service News August Mission for the Month: Project Hope.

THE GIVING TREE...Chapter AUGUST

I hope everyone had a chance to view The Giving Tree's July ornaments! The Liberty Bell rings in songs of celebration --- our country's 250th birthday! With its crack, the Liberty Bell also gongs constant threats that undermine our liberties and symbolizes the vulnerabilities of our democracy and the freedoms fought for and won back in 1776 and throughout our semi-quincentennial lifetime.

Now, we come into the month of August...What will The Giving Tree share with us? What might we learn? What might our minds, hearts and souls be reminded of? Perhaps the important event happening on Sunday afternoon, August 23 will help you "piece" it together?

Muskegon County Cooperating Churches' PRAYER WALK AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Sunday afternoon, August 23 at 4:00 pm in Hackley Park!

Our FCC congregation's prayer station will be lifting up the gun violence within and against the LGBTQ+ community. As part of God's wondrous and beautiful creation, each and every person is unique and special...no matter who or where we might be on Life's journey!

Celebrate the PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING (Philippians 4:6-7) and IS FOR ALL PEOPLE OF ALL TIME OF ALL PLACES. The Descending Dove of Peace heralds this great truth and reminds everyone of the importance and necessity of treating everyone in a way that we, ourselves, would wish to be treated. The Golden Rule reminds us of one another's holiness and that gun violence against even a single person is gun violence against all of God's children.

May the threat of gun violence cease.

May you live within the arms of safety and love that are free gifts of The Holy Trinity.

May you be blessed with Peace in your heart and mind and soul both this day and everyday.

So be it. And, AMEN!

Christian Education The Life-long Learning group is planning an August picnic for some casual fellowship and a conversation about next year's program — topics, style, guest speakers, more of, less of, shared leadership...whatever. The details of this gathering have not been finalized but will be communicated through the Life-long Learning email distribution list. *If you are not on that list but want to be kept informed, to add your name go to fcc-life-long-learning@googlegroups.com*

Congregational Life Dept Will sponsor a Potluck /Trivia event on Sunday, Sept. 13th. A sign up sheet will be at the Welcome Center. Also a sheet to sign up to decorate a table for the event. We will begin collecting new and CLEAN USED coats **in September** for a November giveaway at Saturday Breakfast.

More Happenings:

<i>Saturday, August 1, 2026</i>	<i>Mobile Food Pantry at FCC- volunteers needed</i>
<i>Sunday, August 16, 2026</i>	<i>Rev. Bruce Mulder's last day at FCC</i>
<i>Sunday, August 23</i>	<i>Rev. Kristen Orion – Guest Minister</i>
<i>Sunday, August 23</i>	<i>MCChurches Prayer Walk Against Gun Violence 4pm/Hackley Park</i>
<i>Sunday, August 30</i>	<i>Rev. Becky Emerson's first Sunday as Sr. Minister</i>
<i>Sunday, September 13</i>	<i>Kickoff Sunday Potluck sponsored by Congregational Life Sponsor a table to decorate.</i>
<i>Saturday, September 26</i>	<i>Saturday Community Breakfast (volunteers needed)</i>
<i>Sunday, October 4</i>	<i>Crop Walk</i>
<i>Saturday, October 24</i>	<i>FCC Craft Show and Luncheon 10-3</i>
<i>Saturdays and Tuesdays</i>	<i>FCC Saturday Garden Tues 1-3 pm; Sat. 10-noon</i>



A huge thank you to the adult teachers and helpers to make the vacation Bible School a great success for the 16 youth who participated. A very heartfelt thank you to Gillian Sutherland for the special decorations and activities.

Thank you to our gardeners and all the work they do at the Saturday Garden.

Thank you to our volunteers for the Pantry and Saturday Breakfasts.

And to the volunteers who help celebrate God's love by being in our departments, and liturgists, communion servers, choirs, teachers, helping keep our grounds looking nice.

Thank you to each and every one of you for serving God and being a part of our church Family

We truly are blessed.

Minutes of Governing Board

Monday, July 20, 2026

Call to order 6:30 pm by President Jane Clingman-Scott.

Opening prayer offered by Rev Bruce Mulder.

Motion to approve Governing Board Agenda for July 20, 2026 was moved by Tom Hardy and Seconded by Hal Rummery. Motion was approved.

Motion to Approve Governing Board Minutes from June 15, 2026 was moved by Deb Collet and seconded by Pat Johnson. Motion was approved by consensus as presented.

Appointment of Officers:

Motion to nominate Jim Perreault as President. Moved by Deb Collett. Motion approved.

Motion to nominate Michelle Kemp as Clerk. Moved by T. Hardy and seconded by P. Johnson. Motion approved.

Motion to nominate Deb Collett as Treasurer was moved by B. Lipan and seconded by J. Dixon. Motion approved.

Minister's Report: Rev. Mulder offered a heartfelt thank you to the congregation and will miss everyone.

President's Report: (a.) Becky and Denise had a good weekend with us. We will discuss the Call Agreement during Unfinished Business. (b.) If agreement is signed, Bruce's last Sunday with us will be August 16th, the day before our next Governing Board meeting. Thanks to him.

Treasurer's Report: Motion to accept the July 2026 Treasurer's Report and place on file. Motion moved by Tom Hardy and seconded by Bonnie Lipan. Motion approved as presented. (Report is on file in church office).

Motion to appoint Jim Perreault, Deb Collett, Michelle Kemp, Rick Brott, Joe Dixon, Jane Clingman-Scott as check signers for FCC and remove Tom Linacre, Melissa Wikman as signers was moved by Tom Hardy and seconded by Hal Rummery. Motion was approved by consensus as presented.

Motion to accept the reinstatement of Jill White was moved by Pat Johnson and seconded by Tom Hardy. Motion was approved as presented.

Motion to appoint an ad-hoc committee of Worship and Music and Congregational Life to plan Dr. Rev. Becky Emerson's installation was moved by Jane Clingman-Scott and seconded by Tom Hardy. Motion was approved as presented.

Motion was made to accept the Call Agreement between First Congregational Church and Dr. Rev. Becky Emerson as present was moved by Jane Clingman-Scott and seconded by Joe Dixon. Motion approved as amended (changing the word Church Counsel and will update the termination in the contract to match what we have in the By-Laws).

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Next meeting will be held on Monday, August 17, 2026 in the church library.

PRELIMINARY MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT for June 2026

	Current Month Actual	Current YTD Actual	2025-2026 YTD Budget	2025-2026 YTD Difference	2025-2026 Annual Budget
Pledged Offerings	\$21,203	\$346,257	\$341,440	\$ 4,817	\$ 341,440
Non-pledged Offerings	\$1,599	\$19,075	30,773	\$ - 11,698	30,773
Misc. Income	\$1,669	75,398	87,115	\$ - 11,717	87,115
Operating Income Endow.	\$1,700	80,000	80,000	\$ 0	80,000
Total Op. Income	\$ 26,171	\$ 520,730	\$ 539,328	\$ - 18,597	\$ 539,328
Total Op. Expenses	\$ 41,995	\$ 538,816	\$ 539,328	\$ - 512	\$ 539,328
NET TOTAL:	\$ - 15,824	\$ - 18,086	0	\$ - 18,086	0

Income exceeded expenses for operations by \$15,824 for the month of June. For cash flow purposes, we transferred the remaining YTD budgeted amount of Endowment contributions to the General Operating Account. We are grateful for the generous gifts given towards your pledged offerings, which meant we were above budget expectations in that category. Thank you!

We finished the month of June – and the fiscal year - with the bottom line at \$18,086 below budget expectations. *The Finance & Endowment Department confirmed that this year-end deficit be brought to a zero balance by means of a request for endowment funds from the First Congregational Church Fund at the Community Foundation for Muskegon County for the building repair and improvement projects recently completed, per FCC policy.*

Gifts receipt - In June we received a gift of \$900, donated to FCC's Saturday Breakfast Garden's Bike Clinic program from the Nelson Neighborhood Improvement Association. We also received \$164 in contributions towards the Saturday Breakfast Program. There were also contributions to our Minister's Discretionary Fund, Congregational Life, and Miscellaneous B&G Designated Fund. (As of 07/14/2026, Deb Collett, Treasurer - ejm)

Save the Date:



Heartfelt Hand Made Craft Fair
Saturday, October 24, 2026 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
First Congregational Church, UCC of Muskegon
1201 Jefferson St., Muskegon, MI 49441
Lunch available; No Admittance Fee; Free parking
Vendors: Sign up now. Call Ann at FCC at 231-726-3254
for price of booth, details, and application.

August Lectionary

- SAT Aug 01** Jeremiah 26:11-16, 24; Psalm 69:14-15, 29-30, 32-33; Matthew 14:1-12
- SUN Aug 02 TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST** Genesis 32:22-31 and Psalm 17 *or* Isaiah 55:1-5 and Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21
- MON Aug 03** Jeremiah 28:1-17; Psalm 119:29, 43, 79-80, 95, 102; Matthew 14:22-36
- TUE Aug 04** Jeremiah 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22; Psalm 102:16-23, 29; Matthew 15:1-20
- WED Aug 05** Jeremiah 31:1-7; Jeremiah 31:10-13; Matthew 15:21-28
- THU Aug 06** Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51: 12-15, 18-19; Matthew 16:18-23
- FRI Aug 07** Nahum 2:1, 3; 1-3, 6-7; Deuteronomy 32""35-36, 39, 41; Matthew 16:24-28
- SAT Aug 08** Hebrews 1:12-2:4; Psalm 9:7-12; Matthew 17:14-20
- SUN Aug 09 ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST** Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28 and Psalm 104:1-6, 16-22, 45b *or* I Kings 19:9-18 and Psalm 85:8-13; Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33
- MON Aug 10** Ezekiel 1:2-5, 24-28; Psalm 148:1-2, 11-14; Matthew 17:22-27
- TUE Aug 11** Ezekiel 2:8-3:4; Psalm 119:14, 24, 72, 103, 111, 131; Matthew 18:1-5, 10, 12-14
- WED Aug 12** Ezekiel 9:1-7; 10:18-22; Psalm 113:1-6; Matthew 18:15-20
- THU Aug 13** Ezekiel 12:1-2; Psalm 78:7b, 55-59, 61-62; Matthew 18:21-19:1
- FRI Aug 14** Ezekiel 16:1-15, 60, 63; Isaiah 12:2-6; Matthew 19:3-12
- SAT Aug 15** Ezekiel 18:1-10, 13, 30-32; Psalm 51:10-13, 16-17; Matthew 15:10-28
- MON Aug 17** Ezekiel 24:15-23; Deuteronomy 32:18-21; Matthew 19:16-22
- TUE Aug 18** Ezekiel 28:1-10; Deuteronomy 32:26-30, 35-36; Matthew 19:23-30
- WED Aug 19** Ezekiel 34:1-11; Psalm 23; Matthew 20:1-16
- THU Aug 20** Ezekiel 36:23-28; Psalm 51:10-13, 16-17; Matthew 22:1-14
- FRI Aug 21** Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 107:1-9; Matthew 22:34-40
- SAT Aug 22** Ezekiel 43:1-7; Psalm 85:8-13; Matthew 23:1-12
- SUN Aug 23 THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST** Exodus 1:8-2:10 and Psalm 124 *or* Isaiah 51:1-6 and Psalm 138; Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20
- MON Aug 24** II Thessalonians 1:1-5, 11-12; Psalm 96:1-5; Matthew 23:13-22
- TUE Aug 25** II Thessalonians 2:1-3, 14-16; Psalm 96:10-13; Matthew 23:23-26
- WED Aug 26** II Thessalonians 3:6-10, 16-18; Psalm 128:1-2, 4-5; Matthew 23:27-32
- THU Aug 27** I Corinthians 1:1-9; Psalm 145:1-7; Matthew 24:42-51
- FRI Aug 28** I Corinthians 1:17-25; Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 10-11; Matthew 25:1-13
- SAT Aug 29** I Corinthians 1:26-31; Psalm 33:12-13, 18-21; Matthew 25:14-30
- SUN Aug 30 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost** Exodus 3:1-15 and Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b *or* Jeremiah 15:12-21 and Psalm 26:1-8; Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28
- MON Aug 31** I Corinthians 2:1-9; Psalm 119:98-102; Luke 4:16-30:1-6; Matthew 8:1-4

Community Outreach:

August 1 - Mobile Food Pantry at FCC

August 3 - Love INC Fundraiser at Lakeside Café - Pay What you Can Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser to benefit the ministry of Love INC, Monday, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM with a bake sale and silent auction offered.

August 9 - Salvation Army Golf Fundraiser at Putters Creek noon-5 PM.

Month of September - Collecting New and CLEAN used winter coats for a November Giveaway at Saturday Breakfast sponsored by Congregational Life