



Pilgrim Post

January Volume 24 issue 1

1201 Jefferson Street, Muskegon, Michigan 49441 Email: fcc@fccmuskegon.org
Phone: 231-726-3254 Cell: 231-260-8559 Website: fccmuskegon.org

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.



2024

*Wishing You A
Blessed
New Year*

LETTER FROM REV. TIM

Dear friends,

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all the best in the New Year, and to express my gratitude for being able to serve this congregation, and for the fine staff who assist me.

One of the ways in which we serve is to deal as accurately and responsibly as we can with our church's finances. To that end, we have commissioned H&S Companies, PC to review our accounting system by examining a sample of our financial records for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022. That was chosen because at the time we began the process, it was the most recent year completed. After extensive work, including some delays on their part beyond their control, we have received that report.

On the whole it looks good – they found no discrepancies in the samples they looked at. That affirms that our Business Manager and Finance Department are doing things properly and well.

But they have made two recommendations – one is that we complete the switch to Realm software, which has a much better bank reconciliation module than the software we have used in the past and will make everybody's job easier. That is something we have been working on and hope to complete soon, so it is reassuring to have the professionals agree. The other is that each completed bank reconciliation should be reviewed by myself or another designated member of the board as an added layer of accountability.

Another thing they talked about, and which we have been talking about internally for some time, is how, and whether, capital assets (i.e Buildings, Land, and Equipment) should be reported on a Balance Sheet, net of any accumulated depreciation. Since we have never done that, and so many of our assets would be, in an accounting sense, fully depreciated, creating such a Balance Sheet would be a daunting task.

The details of all of this are, of course, available to any of our members. If you want to dig deeper, you are welcome to contact Elisabeth Major with your request. My thanks to all who have worked so hard on this, and to all of you who are a part of our ministry here.

*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.*

Blessings to:

Aria Grace Mazzuli on her baptism on Sunday, November 26, 2023. Aria is the daughter of Joseph and Jennifer (Osborne) Mazzuli, granddaughter of Ozzie and Sandy Osborne and Robert and Phyllis Mazzuli. (Jennifer was baptized at FCC when she was an infant.)

Communion Sunday will be on the second Sunday in January instead of the first Sunday.

Have you moved? Married? Off to College? New family member(s)?
We would love to stay connected! Please email the church with your new information. Fcc@fccmuskegon.org

Cookies for Sunday Fellowship

Those whose last names begin with the letters K through N please bring cookies or treats during the month of January. Home made cookies are also appreciated as are Gluten free and/or sugar free cookies or bars.



January Birthdays

02 Margaret Barnard
03 Sarah Leybourne
04 Joe Singerling, Jessica Dold
05 Stocky Holly
008 Bonnie Frein
10 Sara Hood
11 Rick Balgooyen
12 Jim Perreault, Raymond Jackson,
Kaitlin Rummery
13 Brooke Miller, Deb Collet,
Andrea Lachniet

14 Judy Tierney, Jon Rockwood
18 Linda Decker
20 Pat Vande Vrede
21 Greg Scott, Lynne Mauseth
22 Tom Clark, Marie VanBuren, Jeff Leder
23 Karen Chadwick
25 Jenna Carson
26 Sarah Barnard
27 Sue Mixer
29 John Whitlock, Karen Arnst,
Holly Stewart, Karen Andrie

What's Happening

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.

Women's Single Group

We will meet for lunch at 1:00 pm at Valkyrie at the Four Corners in North Muskegon Please sign up at the Welcome Center or call Judy D. at 734-478-3716.

How To Spot Phishing Scam Emails

Is Amazon really about to close your account unless you reset your password? Or is it a phishing attacker trying to collect your security information? How can you tell? Please join Elisabeth Major after worship service on Sunday January 7th in Fellowship Hall for How to Spot Phishing Scam Emails - A Tech Talk. This will be the first in a series of 3 very brief presentations about specific technology subjects. The 10-minute presentation (plus a question/answer time) packs lots of useful information without a huge time commitment. Plus, there'll be snacks!



Souper Bowl Sunday

Please join us for Souper Bowl Sunday following church service on Sunday, February 11th. Please sign up at the Welcome Center if you are coming. Also, if you can contribute a soup or chili, please indicate what kind on the sign up sheet.

Wear your favorite team's color.

Bring a canned good or goods for the price of admission.

GSA

The Westshore GSA (Genders, Sexualities Alliance) youth group that is being supported by the church and community is thriving. We have had a total of 13 different students attending with an average of around 8 per Monday night. The outreach from all of you has been tremendous with donations of snacks, furniture, books, games, a TV, a refrigerator, a microwave, and pride flag curtains. The students have been very enthusiastic and enjoy hanging out in the awesome space you have provided for them. Many nights, I have to ask them to leave because we have stayed well over our time slot.

If you haven't seen the GSA room in the basement, I invite you to come and poke your head in to see the fun things we have been working on. If you would like, we have a fantastic lending library of LGBTQ+ books that you are more than welcome to borrow. In December we had a mixed-up holiday mixer with other local school GSAs. We celebrated a bunch of different holidays, decorated cookies, made paper crafts, watched movies, had a photo booth, and played games. 16 students and 8 adults attended with interest in continued collaboration.

Our next Westshore GSA meeting will be on Monday, January 8 at 7 pm. All are welcome! Follow us @westshore.gsa on Facebook and Instagram.

Jessica Krause



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 volunteer, please contact Shirley Lawton or call the church office.

If you would like to help in some other way, we are collecting canned goods on Communion Sundays. 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 contact Donna Lachniet if you are willing to volunteer.

No Name Group

We hope to begin the No Name monthly dinners in January and we're looking for individuals/couples willing to serve as hosts who will select the restaurant. In the past this event has been held on the second Thursday of the month. Interested individuals can sign up at the welcome center or contact the church office for more details.

Paint Class Continues by Popular Demand!

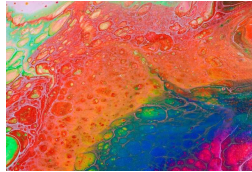


Photo by [Scott Webb](#) on [Unsplash](#)

January 17, 2024 – 1:00 PM

Painting Class

Let's Make A Mess!

ACRYLIC LIQUID POUR ART

Join us for class on **Wednesday January 17, at 1:00 pm**. Please sign up for the class at the Welcome Center so we know how many students to prepare for, and pick up a materials list.

THANK YOU'S

Thank you to our sponsors, choirs, staff, and congregation for a very successful candlelight concert. A special thank you to those who helped make and those who served refreshments following the concert.

Thank you to those who helped decorate the church for the holidays. It was beautiful.

Thank you to the youth for your participation in the Interactive, No-Rehearsal Christmas Pageant.

Minutes of Governing Board Meeting December 18, 2023

Present: Rev. Tim Vander Haar, Deb Collett, Eddie Jankowski, Patty Kelly, Judy Clark Ochs, Roy Winegar, Charlotte Chessman, Robin Murphy, Steve Doctor, Shirley Albers, Roy Portenga, Scott Peterson, Donna Lachniet, Melissa Wikman

1. Meeting called to order by Pres. Jankowski at 6:31 p.m.
2. Rev. Tim opened with prayer.
3. Agenda approved with addition of "Building Use Policy Review" under New Business.
4. Consent Agenda was approved minus Finance Committee, Building and Grounds Department, and Christian Education Department.

A. MOTION PASSED at Finance Committee's recommendation: Susan Anacker's gift of \$6,000 will remain in the Operating Account. (The donor had indicated that her gift should be used for whatever the church needs most.)

Finance Committee submitted to the Board the 4 page H&S Companies review of "Agreed Upon Procedures for the Year Ended June 30, 2022." **Evaluating this review and a decision about dissemination of the findings needs to be handled by Governing Board at its next meeting.**

As of 12/06/2023 \$17,722.15 towards the goal of \$200,000 has been received for the "Thermostat Capital Campaign." Since this is an ongoing campaign, a graphic depiction of incoming gifts will be

Christian Education Department has received B&G Department's approval to seek funding from the George and Josephine Anacker Fund at the Community Foundation for Muskegon County to upgrade internet accessibility equipment (wi-fi) for educational spaces throughout the church building. Tonight they received Governing Board support for pursuing this funding option, with Rev. Tim and Elisabeth Major initiating the process.

President's Report: Eddie thanked the staff and departments for recent successful events, including the Candlelight Concert with attendance of over 300 people. He also emphasized the need for any group using the building to follow the guidelines included in their building use agreement and for staff to enforce those policies.

Minister's Report: Because of Rev. Tim's vacation in January, the Governing Board agreed to delay its next meeting until January 22, the 4th week in January. Tim also expressed great appreciation for the musical and decorative aspects of the Candlelight Concert and the support of its very large audience.

Clerk's Report: The church has received notice that Paul & Karen Jackson have been received into membership of First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven.

Also, a Death Announcement and article "Tending Wheat to Tending Sheep" informed FCC of Rev. Thomas Randle Mason's October 28, 2023 death following "long cognitive and physical decline due to strokes." Memorial services are not planned at this time.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

A. MOTION PASSED: The Governing Board regretfully accepts Tom Goodman's letter of resignation and thanks him for his service.

11. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.
12. **Next meeting: January 22, 2024, 6:30 p.m., FCC Library.**

PRELIMINARY MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT for November 2023

	Current Month Actual	Current YTD Actual	2023-2024 YTD Budget	2023-2024 YTD Difference	2023-2024 Annual Budget
Pledged Offerings	\$24,124	\$123,778	\$ 138,148	\$ -14,370	\$ 320,000
Non-pledged Offerings	\$2,004	\$9,490	11,508	\$ - 2,018	31,145
Misc. Income	6,950	8,750	2,400	6,350	52,867
Operating Income Endow.	20,000	40,607	45,055	-4,448	95,056
Total Op. Income	\$ 53,078	\$182,625	\$ 197,111	\$ - 14,486	\$ 499,067
Total Op. Expenses	\$ 44,403	\$192,596	\$ 212,139	\$ - 19,543	\$ 499,067
NET TOTAL:	\$ 8,674	\$ - 9,971	\$ - 15,028	\$ 5,057	0

Income exceeded expenses for the month of November by \$8,674. The Governing Board's November decision to move a \$10,502 gift from Lorretta Bonsall from Operations to the Thermostat Campaign is reflected in these numbers, although Miscellaneous Income continues to be higher than budgeted expectations year-to-date. Actual income and expenses both remain below budget expectations.

Income continues to come in lower than budgeted, due to our pledge goal of \$320,000 not being met.

(As of 12/06/2023, Deb Collett, Treasurer - ejm)



Winter Weather

If Muskegon Public Schools close for a weather event
the Church **office** will be closed.

For Sunday's if we need to cancel you may check with the news channels of
WOOD Channel 8 and WZZM 13.

***Choir members, please Check your emails. Dr. Match will alert you if
choir rehearsal or service is to be cancelled or not.***

LOOKING AHEAD:

***Congregational Life Department is sponsoring a
St. Patrick's Day Talent Show and Trivia Event***

Sunday, March 17, 2024 in Fellowship Hall following worship service.

Singing, dancing, playing an instrument, or other talent is welcome.

***If you have a talent to share, please sign up at the Welcome Center and include what
Talent you would like to do.***

JANUARY LECTIONARY

MON Jan 01 Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 67:1-2, 4-5, 7; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21

TUE Jan 02 I John 2:22-28; Psalm 98:1-4; John 1:19-28

WED Jan 03I John 2:29-3:6; Psalm 98:1, 3-6; John 1:29-34

THU Jan 04I John 3:7-10; Psalm 98:1, 3, 7-9; John 1:35-42

FRI Jan 05 I John 3:11-21; Psalm 100:1-5; John 1:43-51

SAT Jan 06 EPIPHANY Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-2;
Matthew 2:1-12

SUN Jan 07THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7;
Mark 1:4-11

MON Jan 08I Samuel 1:1-8; Psalm 116:12-19; Mark 1:14-20

TUE Jan 09 I Samuel 1:9-20; I Samuel 2:1, 4-8d; Mark 1:21-28

WED Jan 10 I Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20; Psalm 40:1, 4-9; Mark 1:29-39

THU Jan 11 I Samuel 4:1-11; Psalm 44:9-10, 13-14, 23-24, 26; Mark 1:40-45

FRI Jan 12 I Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22a; Psalm 89:15-18; Mark 2:1-12

SAT Jan 13 I Samuel 9:1-4, 17-19, 10:1; Psalm 21:1-6; Mark 2:13-17

SUN Jan 14**SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY** I Samuel 3:1-20;
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; I Corinthians 6:12-20; John3:43-51

MON Jan 15 I Samuel 15:16-23; Psalm 50:8-9, 16-17, 21, 23; Mark 2:18-22

TUE Jan 16 I Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 89:19-21, 26-27; Mark 2:23-28

WED Jan 17 I Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40-51; Psalm 144:1-2, 9-10; Mark 3:1-6

THU Jan 18 I Samuel 18:6-9; 19:1-7; Psalm 56:1-2, 8-12; Mark 3:7-12

FRI Jan 19 I Samuel 24:3-21; Psalm 57:1-3, 5, 10; Mark 3:3-19

SAT Jan 20 II Samuel 1:1-4, 11-12, 19, 23-27; Psalm 80:1-2, 4-6; Mark 3:20-21

SUN Jan 21**THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY** Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12;
I Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

MON Jan 22 II Samuel 5:1-7, 10; Psalm 89:19-21, 24-25; Mark 3:22-30

TUE Jan 23 II Samuel 6:12b-15, 17-19; Psalm 24:8-10; Mark 3:31-35

WED Jan 24 II Samuel 7:4-17; Psalm 89:3-4, 26-29; Mark 4:1-20

THU Jan 25 II Samuel 7:18-19, 24-29; Psalm 132:1-5, 11-14; Mark 4:21-25

FRI Jan 26 II Samuel 11:1-4a, 5-10a, 13-17; Psalm 51:1-5, 8-9; Mark 4:26-34

SAT Jan 27 II Samuel 12:1-7, 10-17; Psalm 51:10-11, 12-15; Mark 4:35-41

SUN Jan 28**FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY** Deuteronomy 18:15-20;
Psalm 111; I Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

MON Jan 29 II Samuel 15:13-14, 30; 16:5-13; Psalm 3:1-7a; Mark 5:1-20

TUE Jan 30 II Samuel 18:9-10, 14b, 24-25a, 30-19:3; Psalm 86:1-6; Mark 5:21-43

WED Jan 31 II Samuel 24:2, 9-17; Psalm 32:1-2, 5-7; Mark 6:1-6