



Pilgrim Post

January Volume 25 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.



*We are blessed with a New Year
And thankful for our members and friends.
May we continue to serve God and know
that he is with us always.*

LETTER FROM REV. TIM

Dear friends,

As we enter into what is projected to be the year of my retirement, I am filled with a bittersweet flood of feelings. That is especially so as I write this letter in the midst of the Christmas season – with every special event that goes by, I can't help but think, "Well, this is the last time for that." I'm sure I will say more in months to come about how much I have appreciated the opportunity to serve among you as Senior Minister, but for this time I want to return to a familiar quip I have shared before about that title.

Our By-Laws refer to the office of Senior Minister because for most of our history we have been privileged to have multiple ordained ministers on our staff. Now, even though I am the one and only, it remains my official title, and you have probably heard me say before, I am okay with that, because minister means one who serves, and every week I look out at the faces of a church full of those who serve.

Permit me to share a little bit more about that. Sometimes when we talk about church we mean a building – "God's house." That is not totally farfetched because church, kirk, and all its variations, is derived from a Greek term *Kyriakos* – belonging to the Lord. But in its New Testament usage it refers always to people, not a place – for instance in Ephesians 3:10, "that through the church the manifold wisdom of God may now be made known to the principalities and powers..." A more common word in the early days, *ecclesia*, also Greek but which made its way into Latin and then English to attach to all things ecclesiastical, has a little different sense, but also has to do with people. It literally means those who are called, who come together for a purpose, an assembly.

So my point is that YOU are the church, and as the search and call process ramps up, it is critical to remember that. I am very grateful to our President, Jane Clingman Scott, who has so effectively gotten things started, as well as to the committee members who are working hard already to get the ball rolling. But they need each and every one of you to step up and BE the church so that FCC/UCC can go courageously and lovingly into the future God has in store. And a next step for that has already been planned. During our worship on January 5 the Search and Call Committee will present to you the first stage of the planning we need to do, together. I hope many of you can be present in person that day, but if not, we certainly encourage you to tune in and give them your feedback.

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 for:

The family of Richard (Dick) McEwen. Dick passed away December 8, 2024. Dick attended Albion College for a period prior to joining the army during the Korean War. He met the love of his life, Gerane Piirainen, and the two were married on January 22, 1954. They enjoyed 69 years together. He was an active member of First Congregational Church of Muskegon where, together with Gerane, he was instrumental in creating and organizing the Saturday morning community breakfasts. He was a strong, quiet provider for his family and his example of hard work and resilience will be long remembered.

The family of Ron Nelson who passed away December 29, 2024. Ron was an active member of FCC- on Building & Grounds Dept., Greeter, Wed. volunteer for years.

To Dennis and family of Susan Emmons who passed away December 29, 2024. Sue was a longtime member and a staff member of FCC. Her church meant the world to her. Sue has done almost everything at FCC, from working in the office to singing in the choir, accompanying the choir, handbells, music library, brass ensemble, church archives, and countless other activities. Sue and Denny have been part of the fabric of this community for decades and donated incredible amounts of time and resources. She was extremely generous, talented, and always willing to help.

We welcome Steve Chapman to our FCC Family: *Steve joined the church on December 29, 2024 by Letter of Transfer. Steve states: I have one child, a son age 48, who has a wonderful family and lives outside of Austin. My relationship with organized churches has been inconsistent, but my drive to grow spiritually has been a constant element in my life. I spent several years teaching biology, serving as high school principal, and directing major wilderness programs. Along the way I became fascinated with why some groups become so much healthier and more functional than others. After going back to school to study the question, I left my career in education to start a consulting company. For the last 25 years I've worked with executive teams and boards to help them develop better aligned and more humane organizational cultures. In the last year I finally retired. I like to cook, especially unusual things that most people wouldn't think to make from scratch. I also carve decoys and other nature-themed items from wood.*



January Birthdays

02 Margaret Barnard
03 Sarah Leybourne
04 Joe Singerling, Jessica Dold
05 Stocky Holly
08 Bonnie Frein
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, Karlene Arnst,
Holly Stewart, Karen Andrie
31 Steve Chapman

What's Happening

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. Homemade cookies are also appreciated as are Gluten free and/or sugar free cookies or bars.

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 on Tuesday, January 7th at 1:00 pm at The Brunch House, 3065 Henry Street, Muskegon Please sign up at the Welcome Center or call Judy D. at 734-478-3716.

GSA

The Westshore GSA (Genders, Sexualities Alliance) youth group that is being supported by the church and community is thriving. Our next Westshore GSA meeting will be on Monday, January 6 at 7 pm. All are welcome! Follow us @westshore.gsa on Facebook and Instagram.

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 (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 contact Donna Lachniet or just show up at 8:30 am if you are willing to volunteer.

Paint Class Continues by Popular Demand!

January 15, 2025 – 1:00 PM

Let's Make A Mess!

ACRYLIC LIQUID POUR ART

Please sign up at the Welcome Center so we know how many students to prepare for.
For questions, and a material list, please contact Nancy Doctor or Barb Kartes.



POPCORN, TREATS, AND TRIVIA

Join us in Fellowship Hall after worship on
January 19 for some fellowship, food, and fun

On International Popcorn Day!

Sponsored by Outreach Task Force

CROP WALK REUSULTS

Speaking of Collections: The 2024 Muskegon Crop Walk Results as reported by the Branches Newsletter -Total raised so far this year is \$23,386.00. Our local partners, the pantry at Fruitport CRC, Holton Community Center, Salvation Army pantry and our Saturday Breakfast and Breakfast Garden.

SEARCH AND CALL COMMITTEE

Our Search and Call Committee has been formed and held four meetings.

On January 5th during the 10:30 am worship service

You will meet the members of the search and call committee;

Hear a presentation on their first decision;

Offer input to help in making that decision. Please join us.

Survey question: Which path should the Search and Call Committee take next?

Strongly support contracting with an Interim Minister first OR

Strongly support hiring Settle Minister only.

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 and congregation for your participation in the Interactive, No-Rehearsal Christmas Pageant.

Thank you to our wonderful Motet Choir, Bell Choir, and Christmas Orchestra. What a wonderful way to help celebrate the Holidays. A special thanks to our beloved director and organist and to our worship participants and of course, Rev. Tim.

Thank you to all who contributed to our "Got Sneakers" Program. We collected many for a good cause. Our last collection was the end of December.

Minutes of Governing Board December 16, 2024

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

Opening prayer by Rev Tim VanderHaar

Approve Agenda - Clingman-Scott requested that an item be added to New Business re: Jefferson Towers.

Motion to approve December 16, 2024 Governing Board Agenda. Moved by Patty Kelly
Second by Melissa Wikman. Motion Approved as amended.

Approval of Minutes of previous meeting

Motion to approve November 18, 2024 Governing Board Minutes. Moved by Tom Linacre;
Second by Char Chessman. Motion approved.

Rev. VanderHaar reported on health status of members and the schedule of memorial services for Tom Williams and Dick McEwen

Committee and Department Reports

Personnel - Clingman-Scott reported that the Personnel Committee will meet Dec. 18 to schedule staff interviews to prepare for Ministerial change.

Search and Call - Clingman-Scott reported that the committee has been meeting with very good progress. They will be presenting the issue of the choice between an Interim or Settled Minister to the Congregation on Jan. 5. They are planning many avenues to gather Congregational input on all the transitional issues. Clingman-Scott also informed the Board that a choice of an Interim Minister would be a contract engaged in by the Governing Board.

Member Care- Motion: Approve the membership of Steve Chapman provisionally upon Member Care approval. Moved by Char Chessman Second by Trina Jankowski. Motion approved.

Motion to accept the December 16, 2024 Treasurer's Report and place on file. Moved by Melissa Wikman. Second Patty Kelly. Motion Approved.

Unfinished Business – none.

New Business:

Appointments to the Muskegon Retirement Apartments (Jefferson Towers) Board of Directors.

Motion to appoint Gary Neal, Renae Gordon, and Barb Duffey to the Muskegon Retirement Apartments (Jefferson Towers) Board of Directors each for three year terms commencing in January 2025

Moved by Patty Kelly Second Tom Linacre. Motion approved.

Tim VanderHaar proposed that the Governing Board approve a Resolution of Appreciation to the Jefferson Towers Board of Directors for their extraordinary work this year. The motion was seconded by Clark-Ochs and approved unanimously.

Adjournment 7:05 pm

Next Meeting: January 20, 2024 6:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Deb Collett

PRELIMINARY MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT for November 2024

	Current Month Actual	Current YTD Actual	2023-2024 YTD Budget	2023-2024 YTD Difference	2023-2024 Annual Budget
Pledged Offerings	\$15,592	\$120,614	\$166,540	\$ - 45,926	\$ 337,000
Non-pledged Offerings	\$1,640	\$7,308	11,508	\$ - 4,200	31,145
Misc. Income	10,950	20,650	3,600	17,050	59,450
Operating Income Endow.	14,500	35,370	35,370	\$ 0	85,570
Total Op. Income	\$ 42,682	\$183,942	\$ 217,018	\$ - 33,075	\$ 513,164
Total Op. Expenses	\$ 31,404	\$201,824	\$ 218,718	\$ - 16,894	\$ 513,164
NET TOTAL:	\$ 11,278	\$ - 17,881	\$ - 1,700	\$ - 16,181	0

Income exceeded expenses for the month of November by \$11,278. Year-to-date, expenses exceed income by \$17,881.

Gifts receipt - In November we received gifts of \$20 towards the UCC's Neighbors in Need Fund. There was a contribution of \$162.50 from AgeWell Services and an additional \$50 gift for Saturday Breakfast. In November \$1,647 came in for the Minister's Discretionary Fund, from proceeds of the 2024 Craft Show and memorial gifts in memory of Ric Balgooyen. Other gifts included \$241 for Candlelight, \$100 for the music program, and \$70 for Miscellaneous Building & Grounds. The Thanksgiving Feast brought in contributions of \$1,502 against the \$1,795 in expenses.

We closed the month with the bottom line at \$16,181 below expectations.

(As of 12/10/2024, 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.***

Winter Church Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

10-2

JANUARY LECTIONARY

- WED Jan 01 NEW YEAR'S DAY** Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8; Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46
- THU Jan 02** I John 2:22-28; Psalm 98:1-4; John 1:19-28
- FRI Jan 03** I John 2:29-3:6; Psalm 98:1, 3-6; John 1:29-34
- SAT Jan 04** I John 3:7-10; Psalm 98:1, 7-9; John 1:35-42
- SUN Jan 05 SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS** Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:1-18
- Mon Jan 06 EPIPHANY** Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12 *Or Monday after Epiphany Readings* I John 3:22-4:6; Psalm 2:7-8, 10-12a; Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25
- TUE Jan 07** I John 4:7-10; Psalm 72:4-8; Mark 6:34-44
- WED Jan 08** I John 4:11-18; Psalm 72:1-2, 10, 12-13; Matthew 6:45-52
- THU Jan 09** I John 4:19-5:4; Psalm 72:1-2, 14-15, 17; Luke 4:14-22
- FRI Jan 10** I John 5:5-13; Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20; Luke 5:12-16
- SAT Jan 11** I John 5:14-21; Psalm 149:1-6a, 9b; John 3:22-30
- SUN Jan 12 THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST** Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
- MON Jan 13** Hebrews 1:1-6; Psalm 97:1-2, 6-7, 9; Mark 1:14-20
- TUE Jan 14** Hebrews 2:5-12; Psalm 8:1ab, 4-8; Mark 1:21-28
- WED Jan 15** Hebrews 2:14-18; Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9; Mark 1:29-39
- THU Jan 16** Hebrews 3:7-14; Psalm 95:6-11; Mark 1:40-45
- FRI Jan 17** Hebrews 4:1-5, 11; Psalm 78:3-4, 6-8; Mark 2:1-12
- SAT Jan 18** Hebrews 4:12-16; Psalm 19:7-8, 9, 14; Mark 2:13-17
- SUN Jan 19 SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY** Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10
I Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11
- MON Jan 20** Hebrews 5:1-10; Psalm 110:1-4; Mark 2:18-22
- TUE Jan 21** Hebrews 6:10-20; Psalm 111:1-2, 4-5, 9-10; Mark 2:23-28
- WED Jan 22** Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17; Psalm 110:1-4; Mark 3:1-6
- THU Jan 23** Hebrews 7:25-8:6; Psalm 40:6-9, 16; Mark 3:7-12
- FRI Jan 24** Hebrews 8:6-13; Psalm 85:7, 9-13; Mark 3:13-19
- SAT Jan 25** Hebrews 9:2-3, 11-14; Psalm 47:1-2, 5-8; Mark 3:20-21
- SUN Jan 26 THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY** Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19;
I Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21
- MON Jan 27** Hebrews 9:15, 24-28; Psalm 98:1-6; Mark 3:22-30
- TUE Jan 28** Hebrews 10:1-10; Psalm 40:1, 3, 6-7, 9-10; Mark 3:31-35
- WED Jan 29** Hebrews 10:11-18; Psalm 110:1-4; Mark 4:1-20
- THU Jan 30** Hebrews 10:19-25; Psalm 24:1-6; Mark 4:21-25
- FRI Jan 31** Hebrews 10:32-39; Psalm 37:3-6, 23-24, 39-40; Mark 4:26-34