



Pilgrim Post

July Volume 26 issue 7

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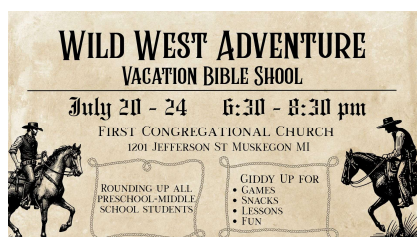
We, the people of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of Muskegon, care for the welfare of our community and welcome everyone, no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey. We welcome into our community people of every age, race, nationality, mental and physical ability, 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.

Come, be a part of our journey!

***We invite you to listen to Rev. Becky Emerson preach at
FCC on Sunday, July 12, 2026.
Worship service begins at 10:30 AM.
Ballots will be passed out at the service***

***Join Congregational Life members at the Clippers Game
at Marsh Field, July 15 at 6:30 PM. We have 30 tickets
at the Welcome Center, \$10 each. They are grouped so
we can all sit together.
Come purchase yours before they run out!***

***We are excited to hold
"Wild West Adventure" Vacation Bible School
July 20-24, 2026 from 6:30-8:30 PM at FCC. We are
rounding up all preschool - middle school students.
Giddy Up for Lessons, Games, Snacks, Fun!
Please help us spread the news!***



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.*

We welcome and thank our Department Members, Governing Board Members, and Committee members, both new and returning.

Welcome to our new member:

Bill Hassinger was officially received in front of the congregation on Sunday, June 14, 2026. Bill is a native of Muskegon but spent his retirement years in Manistee. He has five grandchildren and one great grandson. Bill has reunited with his high school sweetheart Joanne. He is proud to have served 32 years with the Michigan State Police, the last 16 as Chief Deputy Director.

Our Sympathy and Prayers

Are with the family of Joyce L. Johnson. Joyce passed peacefully surrounded by her family on Friday, May 29, 2026 at the age of 98. Joyce became a member of FCC in 1958 and she and Ken raised their children in the church family. She had been a volunteer at the Cherry Guild at Hackley Hospital for 50 years. Joyce married Dr. Kenneth Johnson, DDS on December 14, 1951, and together they raised their son Bradley and Scott. Scott and Ken were preceded in death. A Cremation will take place and a private gathering will be held.

Cookies for Sunday Fellowship

Those whose last names begin with the letters A through C please bring cookies or treats during the month of July. 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.



July Birthdays

01 Tom Linacre; Ann Taylor

03 Molly Lawton

08 Jim Johnston

09 Jon Witmer; Jennifer Turner;
Mike Kestner; Linda Kestner

13 Mike Saunders; Jane Toot

15 Scott Garabedian; David Keessen

16 Tom Witmer

17 David Borns

18 Barb Duffey; Donna Hood

19 Jeanne Mudler

20 Gary Neal; Joanne Buikema

21 Sally Seith

22 Judy DeWall; Linda Nicles

24 Megan Perreault; Jesse Frein;
Katie Brandow

26 Connie Cottrell

27 Lynda Malmquist

30 Diane Gauthier

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 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- July 25

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 July 11 ,10 am till noon at the garden. Congratulations! We're grateful for the opportunity to partner with you and bring volunteers alongside your work in a meaningful way.

Missions & Service News

July's Mission the month is Family Promise of the Lakeshore. They are located at 2160 Crozier Ave in Muskegon, At that location they can house up to 4 families. People come to them by word of mouth, 211, or referred by the schools. They are a shelter for families with children. There are 4 sleeping rooms, a day room with a microwave, tables, chairs, games and puzzles. Curfew is 5 PM. Residents have key cards to come and go. They are required to let someone know if they will be late or will be gone for the nights. A care manager is on site and meet with the residents once a week. Life Skill classes are available: Banking and Budgeting, How to be a good tenant; Smart Grocery Shopping and Nutrition, etc. Several area churches provide an evening meal for the group. The average stay is about 60 days. Once out on their own they offer a stabilization program to help if something goes wrong and continued care if needed. They get funding from Private and Corporate Donors; State Grants; Foundation Grants; Area churches. More information will be available at the Welcome Center.

The Liberty Bell — a symbol of the United States of America By The Rev Dan Barnum-Steggerda

...proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof...(Leviticus 25:10 KJV)

July 4, 2026. By the time you're reading this USA's 250th birthday is just a few days away. Our country, the country that we call "HOME," continues to struggle to attain and maintain the vision our forefathers and foremothers put forth in their founding Declaration of Independence as well as the historical documents that followed.

You may have noticed an addition to our Welcome Center at church - The Giving Tree (used at Advent and Christmas time) has returned. It sports different ornaments that the Christmas Stars... ornaments that speak to the life and faith of our church within our community of Muskegon. In June, the Tree was adorned with heart ornaments with rainbow colors applied to them. On the tip-top was a rainbow. The brightness and beauty of the rainbow and heart remind us that June is PRIDE MONTH when we celebrate the amazing creation of each and every individual ever born upon this spinning sphere.

In short order, July will be upon us and The Giving Tree will have found the "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" penned in our Country's Declaration of Independence and symbolized by The Liberty Bell which has the above Leviticus passage engraved upon it. Please take time to stop and have a gander at the tree, pick up a sheet with a more detailed narrative for this month reflect upon our history, a history of struggle but also success, a history of even failure that only seems to stir great HOPE within its citizenry. Never forget that within the very real struggles and hurdles of the present here is HOPE promised there will be Jubilee again, we will be able to "proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

Amen. And Amen.

I wonder...what will The Giving Tree teach us in August?

GSA

The Westshore GSA (Genders, Sexualities Alliance) youth group that is being supported by the church and community is thriving. Our Westshore GSA meetings are held on Mondays, at 7 – 8 pm throughout the summer. All are welcome! Follow us @westshore.gsa on Facebook and Instagram..



Congregational Life Dept.

We are sponsoring a Clipper Baseball Game July 15, 2026 at 6:30 PM. Tickets are \$10 per person and are for sale at the Welcome Center. Because the private deck was too costly, we have 30 seats that are together. Purchase your tickets now (at the Welcome Center).

Christian Education

Vacation Bible School will be held July 20-24, 2026 from 6:30-8:30 PM here at FCC. Wild West Adventure! This will be a great time for preschool – middle school students and it's free! Giddy Up for Lessons, Games, snacks and fun. Please help us spread the word!

Wednesday Volunteers

We 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

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.



A Meet and Greet for Rev. Becky Emerson on Saturday, July 11, 2026 from 2-4 PM.

This will be an informal gathering for any congregational members and friends to come and chat with Becky and her wife the day prior to her preaching on Sunday, July 12th. Our address is 1405 Moulton Ave., North Muskegon - Blue house across from the new high school tennis courts. There are lots of spaces to park in front of our house. Weather permitting, we will have this outside around our pool. Swimming is also allowed. There will be D'oeuvres, iced tea, lemonade, water and of course wine and cheese.

On Sunday, July 12, 2026 Rev. Becky will be preaching in our worship service at which time paper ballots will be handed out.

Minutes of Governing Board

Monday, June 15, 2026, 6:30 PM

Present: President Jane Clingman-Scott, VP Melissa Wikman, Hal Rummery, Bonnie Lipan, Rev. Bruce Mulder, Scott Peterson, Judy DeWall, Pat Johnson, Tom Linacre, Sue Hicks-Rummery, Steve Chapman

Call to order 6:31 pm by President Jane Clingman-Scott. Opening prayer by Rev Mulder.

Motion to approve June 15. Moved by Melissa Wikman, Seconded by Tom Linacre. Motion Approved as amended- New Business Meet and Greet.

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

President's Report: Jane thanked our two outgoing Governing Board members who were present for all of their work. Melissa and Tom have been a delight to work with and have made a great deal of contributions to the Governing Board.

Minister's Report: Bruce connected with Becky Emerson to see if he could be of assistance to her as she prepare the running the worship on July 12. Wants to try to have as much in place for her as possible, if she were called.

Search and Call Report: If the minister were to call Dr. Becky Emerson aft the July 12th service- if she were to accept the call there is the matter of installation. UCC has some guidance on this process. Would want Worship and Music and Congregational Life to work on this together. Consider inviting members of other downtown churches to meet with Dr. Emerson.

Department Motions: None

Treasurer's Report:

Income exceeded expenses for operations by \$11,946 for the month of May. We finished the month of April with the bottom line at \$2,262 below budget expectations. For cash flow purposes, we transferred the full 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 continue to be above budget expectations in that category.

Motion to accept the May 2026 Treasurer's Report and place on file was moved by Deb Collett and seconded by Tom Linacre. Motion approved as presented.

Unfinished Business: Host a meet and greet for Dr. Becky Emerson on July 11th at the Rummery's home. They will provide wine, soft drinks and appetizers. This Open House will be from 2-4 PM and hosted by Hal & Sue and Melissa Wikman and Trevor Smith. If anyone would like to bring something or donate items for the party that would be great.

New Business: Comments shared about the Congregational Meeting were positive. A suggestion that we should give a bit more detail on the budget worksheet than what we gave them. We believe the congregation can handle that and would be able to make a more informed decision.

Submitted by Jim Perreault, Clerk:

Next Meeting: July 20, 2026 at 6:30 PM/

PRELIMINARY MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT for May 2026

	Current Month Actual	Current YTD Actual	2025-2026 YTD Budget	2025-2026 YTD Difference	2025-2026 Annual Budget
Pledged Offerings	\$29,693	\$322,054	\$308,818	\$ 13,236	\$ 341,440
Non-pledged Offerings	\$1,891	\$18,476	28,970	\$ - 10,493	30,773
Misc. Income	\$500	75,729	84,917	\$ - 9,188	87,115
Operating Income Endow.	\$5,300	78,300	78,300	\$ 0	80,000
Total Op. Income	\$ 37,384	\$ 494,559	\$ 501,005	\$ - 6,445	\$ 539,328
Total Op. Expenses	\$ 49,330	\$ 496,821	\$ 500,598	\$ - 3,777	\$ 539,328
NET TOTAL:	\$ - 11,946	\$ - 2,262	\$ 407	\$ - 2,669	0

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Gifts receipt - In May we received another gift of \$6,000, donated to FCC's 4 food programs from the Women's Division Chamber of Commerce Dancing with the Local Stars. The programs benefiting from that grant are FCC's weekly Emergency Food Pantry, FCC's monthly Feeding America Mobile Food Pantry, FCC's Saturday Breakfast, and the Saturday Breakfast Garden. We also received \$592 from Harbor Unitarian Universalist Congregation's co-sponsorship of the August Mobile Food Pantry. There were also contributions to our Minister's Discretionary Fund, Congregational Life, Worship & Music Designated Fund, and Miscellaneous B&G Designated Fund. *(As of 06/10/2026, Deb Collett, Treasurer - ejm)*

Stewardship Drive

Letters will be going out shortly. Kindly return your pledge card to the church by Wednesday, July 22, 2026. Many thanks.

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.

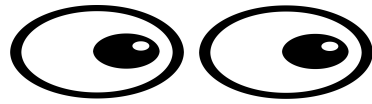
For an announcement in the weekly email requests are to be made to the Director of Music by Wednesday at 6 PM.

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 (August Post due July 22).

July Lectionary

WED Jul 01	Amos 5:14-15, 21-24; Psalm 50:7-13, 16-17; Matthew 8:28-34
THU Jul 02	Amos 7:10-17; Psalm 19:8-11; Matthew 9:1-8
FRI Jul 03	Amos 8:4-6, 9-12; Psalm 119:2, 10, 20, 30, 40, 131; Matthew 9:9-13
SAT Jul 04	Amos 9:11-15; Psalm 85:9-14; Matthew 9:14-17
SUN Jul 05	SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Zechariah 9:9-12; Psalm 145:8-14 Romans 7:12-25a; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
MON Jul 06	Hosea 2:16-18, 21-22; Psalm 145:2-9; Matthew 9:18-26
TUE Jul 07	Hosea 8:4-7, 11-13; Psalm 115:3-10; Matthew 9:32-38
WED Jul 08	Hosea 10:1-3, 7-8, 12; Psalm 105:2-7; Matthew 10:1-7
THU Jul 09	Hosea 11:1, 3-4, 8-9; Psalm 80:1-2, 14-15; Matthew 10:7-15
FRI Jul 10	Hosea 14:2-10; Psalm 51:1-2, 6-7, 10-11, 15; Matthew 10:16-23
SAT Jul 11	Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 93:1-2, 5; Matthew 10:24-33
SUN Jul 12	SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Isaiah 55:10-13; Psalm 119:105-112; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
MON Jul 13	Isaiah 1:10-17; Psalm 50:8-9, 16-17, 21, 23; Matthew 10:34-11:1
TUE Jul 14	Isaiah 7:1-9; Psalm 48:1-7; Matthew 11:20-24
WED Jul 15	Isaiah 10:5-7, 13-16; Psalm 94:5-10, 14-15; Matthew 11:25-27
THU Jul 16	Isaiah 26:7-9, 12, 16-19; Psalm 102:12-20; Matthew 11:28-30
FRI Jul 17	Isaiah 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8; Isaiah 38:10, 11-12, 16; Matthew 12:1-8
SAT Jul 18	Micah 2:1-5; Psalm 10:1-4, 7-8, 12, 14; Matthew 12:14-21
SUN Jul 19	EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Isaiah 44:6-8; Psalm 86:11-17; Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
MON Jul 20	Micah 6:1-4, 6-8; Psalm 50:5-6, 8-9, 16-17, 21, 23; Matthew 12:38-42
TUE Jul 21	Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Psalm 85:1-7; Matthew 12:46-50
WED Jul 22	Jeremiah 1:1, 4-10; Psalm 71:1-6, 15, 17; Matthew 13:1-9
THU Jul 23	Jeremiah 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13; Psalm 36:5-10; Matthew 13:10-17
FRI Jul 24	Jeremiah 3:14-17; Jeremiah 31:10-13; Matthew 13:18-23
SAT Jul 25	Jeremiah 7:1-11; Psalm 84:1-5, 7, 10; Matthew 13:24-30
SUN Jul 26	NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST I Kings 3:5-12; Psalm 119:129-136 Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52
MON Jul 27	Jeremiah 13:1-11; Deuteronomy 32:18-21; Matthew 13:31-35
TUE Jul 29	Jeremiah 14:17-22; Psalm 79:8-9, 11, 13; Matthew 13:35-43
WED Jul 29	Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21; Psalm 59:1-3, 9-10, 16-17; Matthew 13:44-46
THU Jul 30	Jeremiah 18:1-6; Psalm 146:1-6; Matthew 13:47-53
FRI Jul 31	Jeremiah 26:1-9; Psalm 69:5, 8, 10-14; Matthew 13:54-58



LOOKING AHEAD

July 2, 7 PM	Worship & Music Meeting
July 6	Staff Off (Independence Day)
July 9, 5 PM	Finance & Endowment Mtg by Zoom
July 11, 10 AM	Mobile Food Pantry at FCC
July 11, 10 AM – noon	Bike Clinic at Saturday Garden
July 11, 2-4 PM	Greet & Meet Rev. Becky at Rummery's
July 12	Rev. Becky Emerson Preaches
July 12, 7 PM	Christian Education Meeting by Zoom
July 13, 2 PM	Member Care Meeting
July 13, 3:30 PM	Missions And Service
July 14, Noon	Building & Grounds Meeting
July 15, 6:30 PM	Clippers Game at Marsh Field
July 20-24, 6:30-8:30 PM	Vacation Bible School
July 20, 6:30 PM	Governing Board Meeting
July 25, 9-10:30 AM	Saturday Breakfast
August 9 (after church)	Congregational Life Department Mtg.
August 17, 6:30 PM	Governing Board Meeting
August 16	Bruce's Last Sunday
August 23, 4-6 PM	Prayer Walk Against Gun Violence at Hackley Park
September 13	Kickoff Sunday