



# Pilgrim Post

March Volume 25 issue 3

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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.

## *March is Full of Blessings!*

*Ash Wednesday—March 5*

*Lent begins — We remember Christ's sacrifice for our sake*

*Service at 6:30 pm*

*Sunday, March 9*

*The first Sunday in Lent*

*Sunday, March 16*

*Bring out the Irish in all of us!*

*Lucky, Leaping Leprechaun Talent Show*

*Thursday March 20*

*The first day of spring!!*

*After the winter we've had, take time to celebrate*

# ***LETTER FROM REV. TIM***

*Dear friends,*

Even though it is relatively late in coming this year, it seems an amazing surprise that this month the season of Lent is upon us. And as I often say at the beginning of our Ash Wednesday service, Lent is a time when we are reminded of two things: God is God and we are not. And my response to that, every year, but this year more than ever is, "Thanks be to God!"

Part of that is that I need a reminder to reign in my thoughts of anger and judgment at all the many people I think are screwing things up. I am not God to judge others – I need instead to humbly take a look at myself, and my actions, and my attitudes. And all the rest is "above my pay grade." Thanks be to God! Because I am fairly sure that if it were my job to save the world, I would probably screw it up as least as badly as those I'm inclined to judge. So maybe an honest look at what I am actually doing, and a little bit of repentance (which literally means to think again) as I consider how I could do it better, and more in accordance with the love for neighbor and self which God asks of me, is a good place to start.

But I also find another aspect of the phrase to be helpful. If God is love, and I believe that with all my heart, and if God is fully wise, which I also believe, and all powerful in the end, then it gives me hope, and the courage to claim what I said recently in a service of remembrance: Because the habit of God's heart is to smile upon us, and to work always for our welfare, then it's always good in the end, and if it's not good, it's not the end yet. That gives me strength to persevere, and to do the best that I can in good times and bad, and the courage to do what I believe to be right, no matter what. May it do the same for you.

*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:*

*John Wahlberg, FCC member, whose wife Phyllis passed away peacefully with her family by her side on Saturday, February 14, 2025. Our deepest sympathy and prayers are with you and your family John.*



## **March Birthdays**

03 Betty Korbecki; Jerry Lahnala  
05 Abbie Ginman; Brennan Kemp  
07 Nancy Sheridan; Kristin Saunders  
08 Laura Baessler; Wayne Kahrs  
10 Noah Lucas  
11 Jessica Krause  
12 Emily Bearden; Emily Keene  
15 Charlie Taylor; Brian Fosse  
16 Heidi Rybak  
17 Lorri Lemieux

18 Cathy Forrest  
19 Christian Doctor, Fred Minnaar, Beth Buell  
21 Debbie VanderWier  
24 George Gasahl  
25 Joanne Cochrane  
26 Kurt Forrest  
27 Rhonda Rios  
28 John Hermanson  
29 Elisabeth Major, Bill Hodges  
30 Jonny Lawton  
31 Jesse Miller

**Please join us for Ash Wednesday Service**



## **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](mailto:michaelm@fccmuskegon.org) and ask to be put on our Thursday email. This is a great opportunity to stay connected.

## **Cookies for Sunday Fellowship**

Those whose last names begin with the letters T through Z please bring cookies or treats during the month of February. Homemade cookies are also appreciated as are Gluten free and/or sugar free cookies or bars.

## **Join us Sunday March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

for "Women In Politics" presentation after church by Shirley Albers.

## **Women's Single Group**

We will meet for lunch on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at Mr. B's Pancake Pancake House 1:00 p.m., Please sign up at the Welcome Center or call Judy D. at 734-478-3716.

## **TALENT SHOW**

On Sunday, March 16th, Congregational Life Department will host a "Lucky, Leaping, Leprechaun" Talent Show during Coffee Hour.

**Applications to perform must be received on or before March 9th.**

Application Forms are available at the Welcome Center.



## **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). You may place them in the baskets in the Narthex.

## **Saturday Breakfast**

The last Saturday of each month ( March 29<sup>th</sup>) 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.

### **Last Saturday of the month Saturday Chapel Service**

Cowboy conducts a worship service in the Chapel on Saturdays following Saturday Breakfast.

This is open to all.

## **Paint Class Continues by Popular Demand!**

### ***Wednesday March 19<sup>th</sup> – 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.

## **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 at FCC on Mondays at 7 p.m. All are welcome! Follow us @westshore.gsa on Facebook and Instagram.

**GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES**  
**Monday, February 17, 2025 6:30 pm**

Present: President Jane Clingman-Scott, Vice-President Melissa Wikman, Clerk Bonnie Lipan. At Large Member: Shirley Albers Ex-Officio Members: Rev. Tim VanderHaar

Worship & Music – Scott Peterson  
Missions & Service – Tom Hardy  
Member Care – Joan Sanderlin  
Finance Endowments – Tom Linacre  
Congregational Life – Trina Jankowski  
Christian Education - Patty Kelly  
Building Grounds – Rick Brott

Absent: Treasurer Deb Collett , At Large Member Roy Winegar, Past President Eddie Jankowski

Call to order 6:30 pm by President Clingman-Scott with an opening prayer by Rev Tim VanderHaar.

**Motion to approve February 17,2025 Governing Board Agenda**

Moved by Shirley Albers Seconded by Tom Hardy Motion Approved

**Motion to approve January 20, 2025 Governing Board Minutes**

Moved by Shirley Albers Seconded by Tom Linacre Motion Approved

President's Report

An Ad Hoc Committee is being formed to plan a Retirement Celebration for Rev. VanderHaar  
Minister's Report

- a. Next Saturday will be busy with the Saturday morning breakfast as well as the celebration of life for Tom Williams who will also have his ashes interred in the Columbarium.
- b. Ann Taylor's time off the premises has been working well with the volunteers that have stepped up to help.

Committee and Department Reports

Standing Committees

1. Personnel is continuing to evaluate staff and staffing levels and budgets to be prepared for transition.
2. Outreach Task Force – March 2 there will be a presentation on women in politics presented by Shirley Albers
3. Nominating – Nothing until Spring
4. Search and Call – 6 question Questionnaire will be presented to the congregation for input.

Departments (action items, clarification, questions)

5. Member Care

**Motion to accept Joel Dulyea as associate member.**

Moved By Shirley Albers 2<sup>nd</sup> Melissa Wikman Motion Carried

**Motion to add Marti Balgooyen to Member Care**

Moved by Joan Sanderlin 2<sup>nd</sup> Shirley Albers Motion Carried

Treasurer's Report - included in Board Package

**Motion to accept the February 17,2025 Treasurer's Report and place on file**

Moved by Bonnie Lipan Seconded by Patty Kelly Motion Approved

Unfinished Business - None New BusinessNone

adjournment 6:57 pm

**Next Meeting: March 17,2025 6:30 pm**

## PRELIMINARY MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT for January 2025

	Current Month Actual	Current YTD Actual	2023-2024 YTD Budget	2023-2024 YTD Difference	2023-2024 Annual Budget
Pledged Offerings	\$18,922	\$181,360	\$223,874	\$ - 42,514	\$ 337,000
Non-pledged Offerings	\$2,164	\$11,399	20,839	\$ - 9,440	31,145
Misc. Income	32,282	81,718	55,800	25,919	59,450
Operating Income Endow.	0	35,370	35,370	\$ 0	85,570
Total Op. Income	\$ 53,368	\$309,848	\$335,882	\$ - 26,035	\$ 513,164
Total Op. Expenses	\$ 44,509	\$286,781	\$ 298,939	\$ - 12,158	\$ 513,164
<b>NET TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 8,859</b>	<b>\$ 23,067</b>	<b>\$ 36,944</b>	<b>\$ - 13,877</b>	<b>0</b>

Income exceeded expenses for the month of January by \$8,859. Year-to-date, income exceeds expenses by \$23,067. As expected, we did not use any funds towards operations from Endowments.

Gifts receipt - In January we received (as expected) unrestricted gifts through the Community Foundation of \$30,100 from the Walsh Fund and \$1,782 from the Busker Fund. Both were deposited in Miscellaneous Income per the donor's wishes. Also from the Community Foundation, we received a restricted gift of \$1,100 from the Wheaton Fund, designated for Building & Grounds use. We also collected gifts of \$220 towards the UCC's CA Wildfire Relief Fund, and an additional \$40 towards the UCC Christmas Fund. There was a contribution of \$147.50 from AgeWell Services, \$569.60 from CWS CROP Walk, and an additional \$507 in gifts for Saturday Breakfast. In January other gifts included \$100 for FCC's food pantries, \$130 for Music & Worship, and \$80 for Miscellaneous Building & Grounds. There was a contribution of \$100 toward the Thermostat Endowment Funding Campaign.

We closed the month with the bottom line at \$13,877 below expectations.

*(As of 2/11/2025, Deb Collett, Treasurer - ejm)*

**Thermostat Endowment Funding Campaign: \$70,815 collected as of 01/31/2025.  
The goal is \$200,000.**



### 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 our website.

***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**

## March 2025 Lectionary

- SAT Mar 01 Sirach 17:1-15; Psalm 103:13-18; Mark 10:13-16
- SUN Mar 02 TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY; Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99;  
II Corinthians 3:1-4:2; Luke 9:28-43a
- MON Mar 03 Sirach 17:20-24; Psalm 32:1-2, 5-7; Mark 10:17-27
- TUE Mar 04 Sirach 35:1-12; Psalm 50:5-8, 14, 23; Mark 10:28-31
- WED Mar 05 ASH WEDNESDAY; Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12;  
Psalm 51:1-17; II Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:16, 16-21
- THU Mar 06 Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 1:1-4, 6; Luke 9:22-25
- FRI Mar 07 Isaiah 58:1-9a; Psalm 51:1-4b, 16-17; Matthew 9:14-15
- SAT Mar 08 Isaiah 58:9b-14; Psalm 1-6, 11; Luke 5:27-32
- SUN Mar 09 FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT; Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16  
Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13
- MON Mar 10 Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18; Psalm 19:7-9, 14; Matthew 25:31-46
- TUE Mar 11 Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 34:3-6, 15-18; Matthew 6:7-15
- WED Mar 12 Jonah 3:1-10; Psalm 51:1-2, 10-11, 16-17; Luke 11:29-32
- THU Mar 13 Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25 (*Apocrypha*); Psalm 138:1-3, 7-8;  
Matthew 7:7-12
- FRI Mar 14 Ezra 18:21-28; Psalm 130:1-8; Matthew 5:20-26
- SAT Mar 15 Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8; Matthew 5:43-48
- SUN Mar 16 SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27  
Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35
- MON Mar 17 Deuteronomy 9:4b-10; Psalm 79:8-9, 11, 13; Luke 6:36-38
- TUE Mar 18 Isaiah 1:10, 16-20; Psalm 50:8-9, 16-17, 21, 23; Matthew 23:1-12
- WED Mar 19 Jeremiah 18:18-20; Psalm 31:4-5, 13-15; Matthew 20:17-28
- THU Mar 20 Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalm 1:1-4, 6; Luke 16:19-31
- FRI Mar 21 Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28; Psalm 105:16-21;  
Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46
- SAT Mar 22 Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Psalm 103:1-4, 8-12; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
- SUN Mar 23 THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8;  
I Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9
- MON Mar 24 II Kings 5:1-15; Psalm 42:1-2; 43:3-4; Luke 4:24-30
- TUE Mar 25 Daniel 3:25, 44-43 (*Apocryphal additions*); Psalm 25:4-9;  
Matthew 18:21-35
- WED Mar 26 Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9; Psalm 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20;  
Matthew 5:17-19
- THU Mar 27 Jeremiah 7:23-28; Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9; Luke 11:14-23
- FRI Mar 28 Hosea 14:2-10; Psalm 81:6-11, 14, 17; Mark 12:28-34
- SAT Mar 29 Hosea 6:1-6; Psalm 51:1-2, 16-19; Luke 8:9-14
- SUN Mar 30 FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32;  
II Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 5:1-3, 11b-32
- MON Mar 31 Isaiah 65:17-21; Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-1