



Pilgrim Post

March Volume 26 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.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THESE
SPECIAL SERVICES AT 10:30 A.M.
PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29
&
EASTER, APRIL 5



Photo Directory

Congregational Life has started taking pictures of members and their families after the church service on Sundays in **February, March, April** and **May** to compile a new church directory. There will be a background board for the picture taking process in the back of the Fellowship Hall. This photography will be of no charge to our members.

There will be a new metal board in the Fellowship Hall where the members pictures will then be placed in alphabetical order and displayed. By June we hope to have completed this project and compile a new printed/picture directory from the office which then can be purchased by members for only \$15. We will also try and update the members email addresses and phone numbers at the time of the photographs. If there are any questions, please contact Sue Rummery 616-204-2907.

MUSKEGON COUNTY COOPERATING CHURCHES
MARCH MISSION OF THE MONTH

“Moved by the love of Christ, we seek reconciliation and justice for all, reaching across barriers that divide to alleviate poverty, both spiritual and physical.”

-MCCC Mission statement approved in 2006

Muskegon County Cooperating Churches is Muskegon County’s oldest and largest ecumenical ministry, celebrating 85 years of community service this year. First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ was a founding member, and we are grateful for your continuing involvement and support.

MCCC has been involved in a wide variety of ministries in our community over the years, from building houses, to restoring justice, seeking to eradicate racism, empowering families, and feeding our neighbors through mobile food pantry distributions, in which First Congregational U.C.C. is a strong partner.

Recently, we adopted **“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God.”** -Matthew 5:9 as our scriptural focus.

MCCC organized the first Annual **Prayer Walk Against Gun Violence** as a response to the epidemic of gun violence in our community. The Prayer Walk was very well received by the community, and has become an annual event, taking place the **fourth Sunday of August** in Hackley Park. Members of FCC have participated each year in the event.

In 2024, The MCCC Peace and Justice Committee of MCCC contracted with Mobilization Peace and Training Team (MPT-formerly Meta Peace and Michigan Peace Team) to provide Bystander Intervention Training and De-escalation training in Muskegon County as MCCC seeks to build our own peace team. The first Bystander Intervention Training was held at FCC in April of 2024.

Our next **De-escalation Training will be held on March 21, from 9 am-5 pm at FCC.** You may sign-up at the information center or by emailing Cindy Barnum-Steggerda at mcccpeaceandjusticecomm@gmail.com.

By contributing to the Mission of the month, you will help pay for the cost of training two trainers from FCC, and help subsidize peace trainings, and Outreach grants. The individuals from FCC who will be trained as trainers for the Peace Team are Rev. Cindy Barnum-Steggerda and Rev. Tim VanderHaar. The MCCC Peace and Justice Committee and the Peace Training Team are working together to help eliminate level one violence. Your gift will help MCCC continue to bring Peace and Justice into our community. Your prayers of support are also greatly appreciated.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Cindy Barnum-Steggerda, MCCC Peace and Justice Coordinator

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 offer our sympathy to the family of John Whitlock. John and Peggy had been members of FCC until they moved closer to family due to health reasons. John passed away peacefully on February 8, 2026 at the age of 98. His wife Peggy predeceased him.

We offer our sympathy and prayers to the family of The Honorable James M. Graves, Jr. who passed away on February 4, 2026 at the age of 84. He had been a member in his earlier years at FCC and continued as a Friend of the Congregation for many years.

Cookies for Sunday Fellowship

Those whose last names begin with the letters E through J please bring cookies or treats during the month of March. 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. Thank You.



March Birthdays

03 Betty Korbecki; Jerry Lahnala	21 Debbie VanderWier
05 Abbie Ginman; Brennan Kemp	24 George Gashahl
07 Nancy Sheridan; Kristin Saunders	25 Joanne Cochrane
08 Laura Baessler; Wayne Kahrs	26 Kurt Forrest
10 Noah Lucas	27 Rhonda Rios
11 Jessica Krause	28 John Hermanson
12 Emily Bearden	29 Elisabeth Major; Bill Hodges; John McBride
15 Charlie Taylor; Brian Fosse	30 Jonny Lawton
16 Heidi Rybak	31 Jesse Miller
17 Lorri Lemieux	
18 Cathy Forrest	
19 Christian Doctor; Fred Minnaar	

Congratulations to Scott Peterson, our Brownie Bake-Off winner! Second place went to Debbie VanderWeir, there was a 4-way tie for third, and "Dead Last" went to Steve Chapman. Thank-you to Brady and Carter Perreault and Ellie and Lincoln Wiles, our four Brownie Bake-off judges, who were very discerning about six of the seven entries

Want to learn to knit? Sue Mixer will be teaching an introductory class designed around making prayer shawls for the Member Care Department. Call her for details.

We welcome back The Muskegon Civic Theatre this year as they rehearse weeknights in Fellowship Hall on a weekly basis during March and April.

What's Happening

Women's Single Group

We will meet for lunch on Tuesday, March 3 at 1:00 pm - Pints and Quarts, 250 W. Norton in Norton Shores. Please sign up at the Welcome Center or call Judy D. at 734-478-3716. Newcomers are welcome.

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- March 28th

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. "Cowboy" offers a Worship Service in our Chapel following the breakfast for any who would like to attend.

It's time for our next "Let's Make a Mess" paint class! Wednesday, March 18 at 1:00 PM in the VET Room (lower level). For questions, and a material list, please contact Nancy Doctor or Barb Kartes.

Wednesday Volunteers are welcome to meet every Wednesday at 9 am to help keep our church maintained. We meet in the library for coffee and fellowship afterward (about 10:30).

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

GSA

FREE EVENT - REGISTRATION REQUIRED

at www.bit.ly/LGBTQandfaith

A panel of local LGBTQ+ community members, moderated by Susan Harrison Wolffis, will share their stories of joy and challenge in faith communities on March 9th, 6pm at The Corner, 280 W. Muskegon Ave.

Our own Addie W. will be on the panel. Don't forget to register!

Missions & Service News

LOVE INC Pantry @ 1st Congregational Church - N. Muskegon Meijer will match Simply Give donations Jan. - Mar. Double Match Days will be held on **Saturday, March 7th & Saturday March 21st**. We continue to feed our community by providing a Tuesday Food Pantry, a Saturday Breakfast, and a monthly Mobile Food Pantry. Our Mission of the Month for March is Muskegon County Cooperating Churches Please see page 2 of this newsletter for more information on this organization.

The poster features the title "LGBTQ+ STORIES" in large, colorful letters. Below the title, it specifies the date "MARCH 9" and the schedule: "DOORS OPEN: 5:45PM", "PANEL: 6-7PM", and "Q&A: 7-7:30PM". The event is moderated by Susan Harrison Wolffis. The location is "THE CORNER | 280 W. MUSKEGON AVE." and it is presented by a collective of local affirming faith communities, including Bethany Central UMC, Covenant Community PCA, Edgewood Lutheran, First Congregational UCC, Lake Harbor UMC, St. Gregory's Episcopal, and St. Paul's Episcopal. A QR code is provided for registration, and the text states "FREE - REGISTRATION REQUIRED" with the website "bit.ly/LGBTQfaithstories".

Christian Education Department News:

Life-long Learning — Our discussion of Philip Gulley’s book, If the Church Were Christian, seems to have tapped into two genuine needs: A non-threatening forum to actively explore questions of faith and belief, and opportunities to become personally acquainted with people we’ve only said hello to in the past. Several participants have said they would like to continue to discuss additional chapters of the book after this 4-part series is finished. And thus is born a nascent book club...This would be open to all and would occur outside of the standard Sunday morning time slot. Frequency? Probably once a month. Leadership? Floating. Style? Relaxed, respectful, open, safe and cooperative. Future topics? Times? Locations? All up to the group. If you would like to be part of the conversation or remain informed, ask Steve Chapman to add your name to the distribution list. schapman@broadreachstrategies.com

The upcoming schedule: [\(We would welcome suggestions for how to use the available dates.\)](#)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Format</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
March 1	“If the Church Were Christian” Ch. 10	Discussion	Roy Portenga
8	“History’s Hidden Heroines”	Presentation	Shirley Albers
15	<i>Leave Open</i>		
22	<i>Available</i>		
29	<i>Available</i>		
April 5	<i>EASTER</i>		
12	“Tour of the Organ”	[in sanctuary]	John Mattson
19	The Challenge of Taking a Stand (with a focus on Christian Nationalism)	Video/Discussion	Paul Krause et.al.
26	The Challenge of Taking a Stand (with a focus on Christian Nationalism) - pt. 2	Video/Discussion	Paul Krause et.al.

Member Care Dept.

Many thanks to our members for wearing their Name Tags on Sundays. This is a great way to be able to put a face with a name.



Congregational Life Dept.

On International Women’s Day, March 8, 2026, Shirley Albers will be speaking in Fellowship Hall after our church service. Congregational Life Department is seeking volunteers to sponsor and decorate 1 or more of our 10 round tables that people will sit around to listen to her presentation. Cake and cookies will be served. Volunteers are asked to provide a centerpiece, tablecloth, placemats napkins, and other decorations they wish. Suggested themes could be fancy, funny, sporty, seasonal, historical, etc. Dishes, silverware, and cups will be provided. Those who would like to use a round tablecloth from church, please let us know when you register at the Welcome Center. Set up will be from 9:30-10:00 am Sunday, March 8. Please contact Sue Vander Haar for any questions. Sign up by March 1 at the Welcome Center. After the 10 tables have been sponsored, we will put you on our list for future events.

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2026

Meeting was called to order 6:29 pm by President Clingman-Scott

Opening prayer was given by Rev Bruce Mulder.

Motion to approve February 16 2026 Governing Board Agenda -

Moved by Sue Hicks-Rummery and Seconded by Steve Chapman. Motion was approved with amendments: Add to Other Business - Two conversations

Motion to approve January 19,2026 Governing Board Minutes-

Moved by Tom Linacre and Seconded by Sue Hicks-Rummery. Motion was approved as amended: Amend to say the meeting took place by Zoom. And, Amend Missions representative to Judy DeWall.

Motions from Departments:

Motion to approve membership of Ashton Johnson Motion was Moved by Barb Klingenmaier and Seconded by Bonnie Lipan. Motion was approved.

Motion to approve membership of Samantha Lynn Loomis was Moved by Barb Klingenmaier and Seconded by Scott Peterson. Motion was approved.

Treasurer's Report - Motion to accept the January 2026 Treasurer's Report and place on file was Moved by Tom Linacre and Seconded by Melissa Wikman. Motion was approved.

Meeting was dismissed at 7:25 pm.

Next meeting will be held Monday, March16, 2026 at 6:30 pm.

PRELIMINARY MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT for January 2026

	Current Month Actual	Current YTD Actual	2024-2025 YTD Budget	2024-2025 YTD Difference	2024-2025 Annual Budget
Pledged Offerings	\$14,164	\$202,520	\$227,210	\$ - 24,690	\$ 341,440
Non-pledged Offerings	\$990	\$10,627	20,584	\$ - 9,957	30,773
Misc. Income	450	32,240	75,920	\$ - 43,680	87,115
Operating Income Endow.	0	32,500	32,500	\$ 0	80,000
Total Op. Income	\$ 15,603	\$ 277,888	\$ 356,214	\$ - 78,327	\$ 539,328
Total Op. Expenses	\$ 43,172	\$ 307,121	\$ 316,103	\$ - 8,982	\$ 539,328
NET TOTAL:	\$ - 27,569	\$ - 29,234	\$ 40,111	\$ - 69,345	0

Expenses for operations exceeded income by \$27,569 for the month of January. NOTE: We expected annual funds of at least \$27,000 from the Walsh, Busker, and Wheaton funds at the Community Foundation for Muskegon County by the end of January. However, these funds did not arrive until early February. While we were pleased with the amount of those distributions this year (over \$38,000 for operations), they won't show up in our accounts until next month. We finished the month of January with the bottom line at \$69,345 below budget expectations.

Gifts receipt - In January we received an additional donation from Church World Service's CROP Walk 2025 of \$279, which was distributed among our 4 food programs. FCC's Saturday Breakfast program also received \$320 from AgeWell Services and \$100 in additional donations. January also saw donations for our GSA Youth Group lock-in of \$107.

(As of 02/10/2026, Deb Collett, Treasurer - ejm)

When it comes to all the events, meetings, ministries, and/or worship services at FCC, our goal is to communicate to the FCC Family accurately. To that end, beginning January 1, 2026, these new guidelines go in effect. 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 (April Post article due March 18.)

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

MARCH LECTIONARY

- SUN Mar 01** **SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT** Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17
- MON Mar 02** Daniel 9:3-10; Psalm 79:1-9; Luke 6:27-38
- TUE Mar 03** Isaiah 1:10, 16-20; Psalm 50:8-9, 16-17, 21, 23; Matthew 23:1-12
- WED Mar 04** Jeremiah 18:18-20; Psalm 31:4-5, 13-15; Matthew 20:17-28
- THU Mar 05** Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalm 1:1-4, 6; Luke 16:19-31
- FRI Mar 06** Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28; Psalm 105:16-21; Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46
- SAT Mar 07** Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Psalm 103:1-4, 8-12; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
- SUN Mar 08** **THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT** Exodus 7:1-17; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42
- MON Mar 09** II Kings 5:1-15; Psalm 42:1-2; 43:3-4; Luke 4:24-30
- TUE Mar 10** Daniel 3:25, 44-43 (*Apocryphal additions*)Psalm 25:4-9; Matthew 18:21-35
- WED Mar 11** Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9; Psalm 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20; Matthew 5:17-19
- THU Mar 12** Jeremiah 7:23-28; Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9; Luke 11:14-23
- FRI Mar 13** Hosea 14:2-10; Psalm 81:6-11, 14, 17; Mark 12:28-34
- SAT Mar 14** Hosea 6:1-6; Psalm 51:1-2, 16-19; Luke 18:9-14
- SUN Mar 15** **FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT** I Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41
- MON Mar 16** Isaiah 65:17-21; Psalm 30:1, 3-5, 10-12; John 4:43-54
- TUE Mar 17** Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; Psalm 46:1-2, 4-5, 7-8; John 5:1-16
- WED Mar 18** Isaiah 49:8-15; Psalm 145:8-9, 13-14, 17-18; John 5:17-30
- THU Mar 19** Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 106:19-23; John 5:31-47
- FRI Mar 20** Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22 *Apocrypha*; Psalm 34:16-20, 22; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
- SAT Mar 21** Jeremiah 11:18-20; Psalm 7:1-2, 8-11; John 7:40-53
- SUN Mar 22** **FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT**Ezekiel 13:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45
- MON Mar 23** The Story of Susanna 1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 *Daniel 13 in some versions*; Psalm 23; John 8:1-11
- TUE Mar 24** Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 102:1-2, 15-20; John 8:21-30
- WED Mar 25** Daniel 3:14-20, 24-28; Song of the Three Young Men 29-33 (*Daniel 3:52-56 in some versions*); John 8:31-42
- THU Mar 26** Genesis 17:3-9; Psalm 105:4-9; John 8:51-59
- FRI Mar 27** Jeremiah 20:10-13; Psalm 18:1-6; John 10:31-41
- SAT Mar 28** Ezekial 37:21-28; Jeremiah 31:10-13; John 11:45-56
- SUN Mar 29****Palm/Passion Sunday** Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Matthew 21:1-11
Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14-27:66
Or Matthew 27:11-54
- MON Mar 30** Isaiah 42:1-7; Psalm 27:1-3, 13-14; John 12:1-11
- TUE Mar 31** Isaiah 49:1-6; Psalm 71:1-6, 15, 17; John 13:21-23, 36-38