



Pilgrim Post

October, 2026 Volume 26 issue 10

**1201 Jefferson Street, Muskegon, Michigan 49441 Email: fcc@fccmuskegon.org
Phone: 231-726-3254 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.

Happy Fall!

Come be a part of our community



Worship Service every Sunday 10:30 AM

Mobile Food Pantry

Saturday, October 3, 10 AM

***We are looking for volunteers to help unload
the truck about 9 AM-dress for the weather.***

Annual Crop Walk

Sunday, October 4 – thank you walkers and sponsors!

Craft Fair at FCC

October 24, 2026 10 AM-3PM

TRUNK OR TREAT

Tuesday, October 27, 5-7 PM

***We are looking for 20-40 decorated vehicles to park and
pass out candy in the main parking lot. Set up at 4PM***

Saturday Breakfast

October 31, 2026, 9-10:30 AM

Saturday Breakfast Garden

Saturdays in October 10AM-noon & Tuesdays 1-3PM

Last bike clinic of the season Oct. 10, 9-noon



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.

Cookies for Sunday Fellowship

Those whose last names begin with the letters O-S please bring cookies or treats during the month of October. 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.



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

01 Ryan Wiles

03 Cathy Sander; Leigh Lewis

05 Britta Portenga

06 Mike Frasier; Sam Koschmann

09 Karen Fowler

10. Howard Sanden

12 John Cress

13 Langston Jackson; Mike Akhurst

16 Joshua Rummery

17 Joan Sanderlin

19 Tom Munroe; Carol Minnaar

20 Betsy Peterson

21 Shirley Buikema

22 Brewster Willcox

23 Laurie Gasahl

25 Jim Van Buren

27 Bob Vanderlaa

29 Sally Leinicke; Catherine Ward

LETTER FROM REV. BECKY EMERSON

Hello everyone,

Greetings and Grace to you!

I just want to take this opportunity to thank you for your wonderful hospitality in these many layered transitions. Your care has been and is meaningful. I am sure, for many of you, this is also a time of transition, and I am certain as we continue to walk together, we will do well.

Every generation faces the challenges and joys of their times. We continue to wrestle with what it looks like to love God and love neighbor. If the question is, who is my neighbor? I think there is merit in the answer, who is not my neighbor! Never have we imagined such a time as ours! God is still speaking and often it is through all of us.

There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven. (There's a Wideness in God's Mercy, by Calvin Hampton). We are God's heart, head and hands! Our Anchor holds!

Peace!

Rev. Becky

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 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

Saturday, October 31 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 show up at 8:30 AM if you are willing to volunteer. "Cowboy" offers a Worship Service in our Chapel at 10:45 AM for any who would like to attend.

Saturday Garden* Mission of the Month We are now harvesting - please join us Saturdays from 10 AM to noon and Tuesdays from 1-3 PM. THROUGH THIS MONTH / weather permitting. Bike Clinic is October 10 from 9 AM-noon.

Congregational Life Dept We are collecting new and gently new (clean) winter coats (adult and/or children) in the month of September and October and distributing them at the November Saturday Breakfast. Please place in basket at Welcome Center.

We will be collecting candy for our annual Trunk or Treat. It can be left at the Welcome Center.

Christian Education Life-long Learning — We will use our first few sessions of this new year to continue conversations about the Rise of Christian Nationalism and what should be our response, and new discussions of Christian hospitality and what it means. Sometime in October we will work together to identify additional topics or programs we want to engage. The best way to stay abreast of what's happening is to be sure your name and contact info are included on the Life-long Learning email distribution list. If you are not on that list but want to be kept informed, to add your name go to: fcc-life-long-learning@googlegroups.com

Member Care Womens Single Group Luncheon will be at 1:00 PM at Mr. B'S, 1910 E. Apple Ave., Muskegon on Tues. October 6. Call Judy 734-478-3716 or sign up at the Welcome Center.

Building and Grounds Volunteers still appreciated to help with inside projects on Wednesdays from 9 11 AM.

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.



Minutes of Governing Board Monday, September 21, 2026, 6:30 PM

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm by Jim Perreault, President

Opening prayer offered by Rev. Becky Emerson

Motion to approve September 21, 2026 Governing Board Agenda was moved by Marti Balgooyen and seconded by Deb Collett. Motion approved as presented.

Motion to approve August 17, 2026 Governing Board Minutes was moved by Bonnie Lipan and seconded by Marti Balgooyen. Motion was approved as amended: Inserted: Vice President? Shall elect one. No one volunteered, so this topic is tabled for now.

Motion approved by consensus as amended: Per Bonnie, we need to nominate additional officers. Jim tabled to end of the meeting.

Minister's Report

Becoming familiar with Staff Meetings, Ministry Meetings, many of the dept. mtgs. Thurs and Fri are days off, UCC meetings coming up; final move happening tomorrow; getting familiar with admin items.

President's Report:

Thank you to Becky for jumping in so quickly.

Update on the Installation Ceremony and delay in getting the committee together.

Treasurer's Report

Income exceeded expenses for operations by \$6,758 for the month of August. Both income and expenses were below budget expectations. We are grateful for the generous gifts given towards your pledged offerings, which meant we needed to move \$10,300 of our Endowment funds into operations for cash flow in August. This allowed us to keep the remaining \$2,000 of our Endowment funds invested Status on contributions for Thermostat Endowment Funding Campaign: no new contributions were received in August. \$76,910 collected as of 8/31/2026. The goal is \$200,000 by October of 2028. Elisabeth will address the congregation in October as a reminder of the campaign.

Motion to accept the September 21, 2026 Treasurer's report and place on file.

Motion was moved by Bonnie Lipan and seconded by Marti Balgooyen. Motion approved as presented.

Motion to grant Rod Puseman Associate Membership at FCC was moved by Marti Balgooyen, seconded by Scott Peterson. Motion approved.

Motion to grant Roger Wenk Membership at FCC was moved by Marti Balgooyen and seconded by Deb Collett. Motion approved.

Motion to grant Lucy Lower Membership at FCC was moved by Marti Balgooyen and seconded by Joe Dixon. Motion approved.

Unfinished Business: Update on Coffee hour procedures document.

New Business: None

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM.

Submitted by Michelle Kemp, Clerk

Next meeting: October 19, 2026

PRELIMINARY MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT for August 2026

	Current Month Actual	Current YTD Actual	2025-2026 YTD Budget	2025-2026 YTD Difference	2025-2026 Annual Budget
Pledged Offerings	\$30,042	\$65,632	\$59,607	\$ 6,025	\$ 365,341
Non-pledged Offerings	\$1,464	\$2,751	3,431	\$ - 681	22,595
Misc. Income	\$3,401	6,671	919	\$ 5,752	81,500
Operating Income Endow.	\$10,300	10,300	12,300	\$ - 2,000	102,726
Total Op. Income	\$ 45,207	\$ 85,354	\$ 76,258	\$ 9,096	\$ 572,162
Total Op. Expenses	\$ 38,449	\$ 77,350	\$ 90,257	\$ - 12,907	\$ 572,162
NET TOTAL:	\$ 6,758	\$ 8,004	\$ - 13,999	\$ 22,003	0

Income exceeded expenses for operations by \$6,758 for the month of August. Both income and expenses were below budget expectations. We are grateful for the generous gifts given towards your pledged offerings, which meant we needed to move \$10,300 of our Endowment funds into operations for cash flow in August. This allowed us to keep the remaining \$2,000 of our Endowment funds invested and earning dividends. Thank you!

Gifts receipt - In August we received \$211 in contributions towards the Saturday Breakfast Program, and also began collecting vendor fees for the upcoming Craft Fair to benefit the Minister's Discretionary Fund. The August Mission of the Month, Hope Project, received \$220 in donations. There were also contributions to Congregational Life for the pictorial directory project, the FCC Food Pantry, our music program, and Miscellaneous B&G Designated Fund.
(As of 09/16/2026, Deb Collett, Treasurer - ejm)

Thermostat Endowment Funding Campaign: no new contributions were received in August. \$76,910 collected as of 08/31/2026. The goal is \$200,000 by October of 2028.

The Missions and Service Department is grateful for your generous support for the August Mission of the Month, Hope Project. A total of \$220 was collected as contributions toward that mission. Thank you!

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.

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

Missions and Service have received a Thank you note from LoveINC:

For our \$500 check. This is what we helped make possible so far this year at Love:
Appliances 95; Food Pantry 1258; Personal Care 910;
Financial Support 45; Baby Pantry 131; Furniture 10; Ramps build 10;
Clothing Pantry 500; Household Pantry: 654 Bicycles Given 24;
Total Neighbors Impacted: 6,975

Meijer Simply Give donations are tripled on Saturday, Dec. 12
at the North Muskegon Meijer.

LOOKING AHEAD

Remembrance Sunday

Sunday, November 1st

We remember our members who have passed in the last year.

Candlelight Concert

Sunday, December 6, 2026 at 4 PM

Community News

THE SOUL BOX PROJECT COMES TO THE MUSKEGON LAKESHORE

Central United Methodist Church invites Muskegon and surrounding communities to experience a powerful memorial to lives lost to gun violence

Central United Methodist Church in downtown Muskegon will host ***The Soul Box Project: A Lakeshore Community Memorial and Gun-Violence Awareness Display*** from September 22 through October 8, 2026, offering residents throughout Muskegon County, the Lakeshore and surrounding communities an opportunity to remember lives lost, reflect on the human cost of gun violence and learn how communities can work together toward greater safety.

The display will be located at Central United Methodist Church, 1011 Second Street, Muskegon, Michigan 49440, and will be free and open to the public on select dates and times

SEE THE ATTACHED CALENDAR FOR DATES AND TIMES THE DISPLAY WILL BE OPEN!!

The Soul Box Project Comes to Muskegon

A Lakeshore Community Memorial and Gun-Violence Awareness Display



You are invited to view the Soul Box Project, a Gun Violence Awareness Display, hosted by Muskegon Central United Methodist Church, 1011 Second Street, Muskegon. Come. Remember. Reflect. Learn.

Sept 22nd - Oct 8th

Select dates and times

Free and Open to the Public

Come. Remember. Reflect. Learn.

Open to the Muskegon's Lakeshore Communities and Surrounding Areas

#BUILD LOVE

The Soul Box Project Comes to Muskegon

A LAKESHORE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL AND GUN-VIOLENCE AWARENESS DISPLAY

Hosted by Central United Methodist Church • 1011 Second Street, Muskegon, MI 49440

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
September 20	21	22 10-2pm	23 10-2pm	24 10-2pm	25	26 10-4pm
27	28 5-7pm	29 10-2pm	30 10-2pm	October 1 10-2pm	2	3
4 12-4pm	5	6 10-2pm	7 10-2pm	8 10-2pm	9	10

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC | COME. REMEMBER. REFLECT. LEARN.

Did you know?

We have an Archive Room with information on our church history, pictures of activities, choirs, etc. We are very proud of this and wish to thank all who have helped us continue this very important legacy. A special thank you to Jane Clingman Scott for continuing this very important legacy.

October Lectionary

- THU Oct 01** Job 19:21-27; Psalm 27:7-9, 13-14; Luke 10:1-12
- FRI Oct 02** Job 38:1, 12-21; 40:3-5 ; Psalm 139:1-3, 7-10, 13-14; Luke 10:13-16
- SAT Oct 03** Job 42:1-3, 5-6, 12-16; Psalm 119:66, 71, 75, 91, 125, 130, 135; Luke 10:17-24
- SUN Oct 04** **NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY**
Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 and Psalm 19; *or* Isaiah 5:1-7 and Psalm 80:7-15
Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46
- MON Oct 05** Galatians 1:6-12; Psalm 111:1-2, 5, 7-10; Luke 10:25-37
- TUE Oct 06** Galatians 1:13-24; Psalm 139:1-3, 13-15; Luke 10:38-42
- WED Oct 07** Galatians 2:1-2, 7-14; Psalm 117:1-2 (Response Mk. 16:15); Luke 11:1-4
- THU Oct 08** Galatians 3:1-5; Luke 1:69-75; Luke 11:5-13
- FRI Oct 09** Galatians 3:7-14; Psalm 111:1-6; Luke 11:15-26
- SAT Oct 10** Galatians 3:22-29; Psalm 105:2-7; Luke 11:27-28
- SUN Oct 11** **TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST** Exodus 32:1-14 and Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23 *Or* Isaiah 25:1-9 and Psalm 23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14
- MON Oct 12** Galatians 4:22-24, 26-27, 31-5:1; Psalm 113:1-7; Luke 11:29-32
- TUE Oct 13** Galatians 5:1-6; Psalm 119:41-48; Luke 11:37-41
- WED Oct 14** Galatians 5:18-25; Psalm 1:1-4, 6 (Response Jn. 8:12); Luke 11:42-46
- THU Oct 15** Ephesians 1:3-10; Psalm 98:1-6; Luke 11:47-54
- FRI Oct 16** Ephesians 1:11-14; Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 12-13; Luke 12:1-7
- SAT Oct 17** Ephesians 1:15-23; Psalm 8:1-6; Luke 12:8-12
- SUN Oct 18** **TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST** Exodus 33:12-23 and Psalm 99
Or Isaiah 45:1-7 and Psalm 96:1-13; I Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-20
- MON Oct 19** Ephesians 2:1-10; Psalm 100:2-5; Luke 112:13-21
- TUE Oct 20** Ephesians 2:12-22; Psalm 85:8-13; Luke 12:35-38
- WED Oct 21** Ephesians 3:2-12; Isaiah 12:2-6; Luke 12:39-48
- THU Oct 22** Ephesians 3:14-21; Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 11-2, 18-19; Luke 12:49-53
- FRI Oct 23** Ephesians 4:1-6; Psalm 24:1-6; Luke 12:54-59
- SAT Oct 24** Ephesians 4:7-16; Psalm 122:1-5; Luke 13:1-9
- SUN Oct 25** **TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST** Deuteronomy 34:1-12
and Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17 *or* Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 and Psalm 1;
I Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46
- MON Oct 26** Ephesians 4:32-5:8; Psalm 1:1-6; Luke 13:10-17
- TUE Oct 27** Ephesians 5:21-33; Psalm 128:1-5; Luke 13:18-21
- WED Oct 28** Ephesians 6:1-9; Psalm 145:10-14; Luke 13:22-30
- THU Oct 29** Ephesians 6:10-20; Psalm 144:1-2, 9-10; Luke 13:31-35
- FRI Oct 30** Philippians 11:1-11; Psalm 111:1-6; Luke 14:1-6
- SAT Oct 31** Philippians 1:18b-26; Psalm 42:2-5; Luke 14:1, 7-11