



“Whatever Your Story, You’re Welcome Here”

M A Y 2 0 1 6

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Messages from the Ministers
- Senior High
- Church School News
- Betsy Hill Retirement
- Church Picnic
- Circle of Friends
- Contemporary Issues
- Small Groups
- Meijer Garden Bus Trip pictures
- Sing and Serve Sunday
- May Calendar

*Whatever Your
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Thoughts from Bob

Dear Friends:

I would like to take my front page this month to highlight a few important events coming up in the next weeks/months. Hopefully you can place these things on your calendar and plan to be with us!



- May 8th – Mother’s Day – This will be the final Sunday for our two morning worship services (9 a.m. Pilgrim Hall Contemporary and 10 a.m. Sanctuary Service). During the remaining Sundays in May and throughout the summer we will have one worship service at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. We will resume our two worship service schedule on Kick-off Sunday, September 11.
- May 15th – Sing and Serve Sunday – Please join us for worship at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary and then stay after worship for service projects in the greater Ann Arbor area. Please see the special article about Sing and Serve in this month’s Courier.
- May 22nd – Youth Sunday, Church Picnic, and Celebration of Holly Porter’s Ministry – The youth of our church will lead our 10 a.m. worship on the 22nd as we will also celebrate the past 12 years of Holly Porter’s wonderful, enjoyable, and caring ministry at FCC as our Director of Christian Education. The church picnic will follow outside (weather permitting) with food, fun, and good opportunities for friendship. You won’t want to miss this special Sunday!
- May 29th – Remembrance Sunday – On Memorial Weekend Sunday, at our 10 a.m. service, we will be lifting up the names of members of FCC who died in the past year. This is always a meaningful time of remembering and celebrating.
- June 5th – Heritage Society Sunday and a Special Congregational Meeting – Each year, at one of our 10 a.m. worship services, we set aside time for the FCC Heritage Society committee to present information about the Heritage Society (the special legacy giving program of FCC) and to recognize and celebrate the current members of the Heritage Society. Then, following the service, we will remain in the sanctuary for a special congregational meeting to hear about and vote on the recommendation of Council, as advised by our Board of Trustees, to change our financial fiscal year from our current calendar year fiscal year to a new fiscal year running from July 1 through June 30, beginning in 2017. Please join us for this important Sunday!
- June 12th – Recognition of Glenn Tucker, Church Organist – Glenn is leaving his church organist position with our church at the end of June to pursue a wonderful two-year opportunity at UCLA to study and perform jazz piano, beginning this fall. Please join us on the 12th as we celebrate the gifts Glenn has so generously shared with our congregation over the past 2 ½ years and wish Glenn Godspeed as he ventures westward. (continued on page 2)

Bob's message (continued)

- July 24th – Art Fair Sunday -- As you know, in 2016, the Ann Arbor Art Fair is changing from its traditional Wednesday through Saturday schedule to a new Thursday through Sunday schedule. Since this change could be a unique challenge to our church, special arrangements are being made on the 24th to accommodate FCC worshippers with free access to parking in the Thompson/ Maynard Street parking ramp AND free golf cart transportation to and from FCC for those who have mobility issues. Please come and join us for worship at 10 a.m. on Art Fair Sunday...and plan to stay afterward (remember the parking is free!) and enjoy the Art Fair foods, shopping, and artist booths. The Fair opens at noon on

Sunday, so you will have the best seat and parking in the house from which to enjoy this popular downtown Ann Arbor tradition! Please watch for more information in the future.

- Finally – Once again this summer we will be holding three of our 10 a.m. Sunday worship services in the air-conditioned comfort of Pilgrim Hall, utilizing the musical talents of Terry Farmer, our contemporary worship service music leader. The three Pilgrim Hall services will be at 10 a.m. on Sundays June 19, July 17, and August 28. Please join us upstairs in Pilgrim Hall for these fun and lively contemporary services!

While there is more I could say... and there are other events I could

lift up... hopefully this gives you a good start in planning your spring and summer at FCC.

Please keep an eye on your Summer Courier, your summer Friday emails, our always updated FCC website, and the Sunday worship bulletins for updates and more information about these and other important FCC happenings!

It's going to be a great summer!

I look forward to seeing you!
Affectionately,



Bob Livingston
Senior Minister

Betsy Hill's Retirement Sunday,



Generational Musings

The power of words is one of our greatest strengths. Like all strengths, we can use it for good or for harm. Our scriptures are chock full of wisdom about harboring the power of our words and funneling them towards good. Proverbs 12.6 imparts this: “The words of the wicked are a deadly ambush, but the speech of the upright delivers them.” Perhaps you have been the target of a deadly ambush of words. They are debilitating, especially if you are someone who is fulfilled by words of affirmation and kindness. The opposite can have a detrimental effect. We have a choice in this ambush. We can react and ricochet back; harnessing the power of our words to injure the one who has injured us. We can also take a deep breath. I find that even 10 seconds makes the difference between a response and a reaction for me. Remember that annoying challenge by Jesus to turn the other cheek when someone harms us? I don’t think that was limited to the instance of



a face slap. I think that also can apply to the metaphorical slap we encounter from another’s words. 10 seconds. 10 seconds to take a breath and, as hard as it is, metaphorically turn the cheek. Sometimes to disengage from the combat of language can have a powerful effect on both parties. Sometimes even a healing effect. Sometimes even a forgiveness effect. Many of us spend much of our faith journeys seeking to hear God’s voice, pouring through God’s word, wondering what these words have to do with our dreams and our suffering, our world and our footprint within it. As we journey and listen and interpret the words of our God and our ancestors, may we have a new respect for the power they hold. May we direct them purposefully and faithfully to those whom we have been called to be in relationship with. May we use them to cheer up and build up, to teach and to inspire, to affirm and to love. Many days, I feel like this wind-up toy. Haphazardly chattering about in circles and eventually, running out of that which fuels me, stopping suddenly. May we not be haphazard chatterboxes. Use that energy and power that we have in our words and pour it into those who need to hear words of hope and affirmation. When we are angry or



hurt, take 10. Turn the cheek. Acknowledge the pain. And then, heed the wisdom of Proverbs 12:18 “Rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” May we use our own power to bring healing.

Peace,

Darcy Crain-Polly
Associate Minister

Calling All Graduates

If you have a graduating student; high school, college, graduate, or other vocational degree, please send us a photo and short bio indicating where the student is heading and what their future plans entail. We celebrate these triumphs and life passages together and look forward to hearing about yours!

Church School News Holly Porter

It is with great sadness and great joy that I am writing this, my last article for the FCC Courier! The sadness is about how I will miss so many smiling faces and hugs, great friendships, and that look of a child when the light bulb goes on and they figure out the answer to something that we are talking about in church school! The joy will be for me to spend more weekends and time with John, family, and grandchildren, something I have missed over the last years. What a great 12 years I have had here at FCC!

The month of May we will be wrapping up the Bible story of Jesus in the Temple. We will also be doing some service projects during the

month of Maym, along with some general Bible studies. Please plan to join us on Sunday, May 22nd for Youth Sunday at the 10 a.m. service.

Right after the 10 a.m. service will be the All Church Picnic, right here on the church grounds. This will also be my "Holly-Day" celebration. We will have face painting, balloon tying, a euchre tournament, live music, bounce house and cotton candy....along with the traditional picnic foods. But most importantly, there will be a photo booth! This will give everyone in the church an opportunity to dress up with props if you want, or just smile and have your picture taken for a "memory" book for me to take with me as I retire. I would love to have

pictures of ALL of you, so please plan to come to the picnic and have your picture taken!!

Again, thank you so much for making me feel so welcomed here at FCC and letting me teach, learn and love along with your children! I have made some lasting memories here at FCC.

Save the Date for "Holly - Day" Church Picnic

Please save the date for this year's Annual Church Picnic, or, in other words: "Holly-Day", May 22. This year we will be celebrating Holly Porter and her tenure as Christian Ed Director at FCC. We will have a **photo booth** which will

be part of the creative process for a memory book for Holly. We will also feature a cotton candy machine for sugar filled treats, the traditional burgers and hot dogs, face painting, the balloon lady, bounce house for the kids, music

and more. We will celebrate in our own "backyard", on the church grounds. Please plan to stay after the 10 a.m. service on May 22 to take part in the "Holly -Day" celebration.

Our Core Values:

Caring: We are a loving and mutually supportive faith community.

Proclaiming the Good News: We believe in a living and loving God

Respect: We embrace openness, diversity and individual faith journeys.

Compassion: We serve and support the needs of others

Fellowship: We celebrate and enjoy life with each other.

Our Mission:

We are a beacon of God's love, hope, and Christian freedom

Confirmation

Congratulations to the Confirmation class of 2016! These six students and their mentors have worked hard amidst busy schedules to study the word, learn about the history of our faith, and be in intentional relationship and covenant with one another. We thank the

families for their participation and commitment; the mentors, for the time, energy, and attention to walking with their student, and to the students; for sharing your faith, your selves, and your dreams with your church family. We are blessed to invite these six young people into the full membership of our

community on Sunday, May 1. Welcome!

Senior High Youth

Our senior high youth will be preparing for our Youth Sunday service which takes place on May 22. May 22 is also Holly Porter's last Sunday at FCC before she retires. She has enriched the faith journeys and lives of so many of our young people. Many of our current high schoolers have had

Holly in their lives since they began their Christian Education journeys. Please come and celebrate through leadership and participation. If you have a high school senior, you have a specific role, so make sure to contact Darcy or one of the youth leaders to figure out what that is.

The youth will be meeting during Sunday worship in May to continue planning for the service. It is always an inspiring and meaningful worship, and we look forward to experiencing what the youth plan for Youth Sunday 2016!

Great Lakes Scrip

The end of the school year is near and gifts for the teachers are always appreciated. What better gift than a Scrip Card? Please check out our selection at the Scrip table in the Mayflower lobby on Sunday morning. If there is a particular retailer that you would like and we do not have it on the table, please go to

shopwithscrip.com and see if it is a card that Great Lakes Scrip carries. If it is, we can get it for you! In addition to making your life easier, we receive a discounted rate...the profits of which go to supplement the mission/work trips of our church. Please visit shopwithscrip.com for

ways to make your Scrip purchases work even better for our church. Thanks so much for your participation!



Sing and Serve Sunday Pam Dabbs

We are going to do it again....worship a little and work a lot as we “Sing” in church and then go out into the local community to “Serve,” just like we did last July! Things will be slightly different and hopefully better for everyone who comes to join us! On May 15th, there isn’t a Contemporary Service, so we will have a shortened 10 a.m. service and then meet briefly in Pilgrim Hall for work assignments and to pick up snacks and water bottles to take with us. This time we decided **not** to have lunches to take to the sites with us because many people expressed the desire to get to the work sites as quickly as possible, especially since we will be having our church service at 10 a.m. If you want to bring your own lunch in a small cooler, that would be excellent, and then you can safely have it when you are ready for food!

Please be sure to wear your work clothes to church and bring your own work gloves...very important! You will be getting water bottles at church, but you may want to bring more. Equipment to use on the sites will be supplied...but, we are allowed to bring our own lawn/garden equipment *as well*.

If you are unable to go to the work site, or you are under the age of 14, you can still be of great help by working at the church. One very important project will be



helping to plant pots of vegetables for our church grounds and small pots of vegetables for our church members to take home as part of our “Grow-A-Row” summer project to support Food Gatherers. In addition, there will be things to make or work on inside the church.

Lunch will only be provided for **children** staying after church. Some of you may choose to stay at the church working on projects with your child and won’t be using the childcare or supervised care. However, **any child staying after church** with or without parents needs to be registered so we have meaningful projects for them to be working on. Please register by emailing: holly@fccannarbor.org Please let her know names/ages and any allergy information she needs to know **and if your child will be eating lunch** with the

other children or bringing their own or none at all. Please **register no later than Wed. May 4th**! FCC childcare workers will be on duty that day so your child will see familiar faces. If you would like to go to the off-site work areas...let us take care of your children until **2:30 p.m.** when childcare will end.

If you didn’t join us last July, please try to come this time. More often than not, you get such a wonderful feeling from doing something like this so much so that you begin to wonder who is benefitting more...you or the people you’re helping! Everyone is welcome. Remember, “Whatever Your Story, You are Welcome Here.”

FCC Vision Statement:

We strive to be a joyous spiritual home, welcoming and valuing all people, embracing God’s word and enriching lives.

Trustee News Beth Randall

The Trustees continue to manage the financial needs of our beloved FCC paying attention to all areas including staffing, programming, and physical building needs. We also continue to work on the goals set forth in the strategic planning process, including improving our reporting and clarifying policies. One well-examined proposal is to align our fiscal year with our programming year, which follows the school year. Moving our fiscal year to run July 1 – June 30 enables program budgets to be in one fiscal year, allowing for better monitoring and agility in making adjustments

to budgets as needed. Additionally, December is consistently our largest revenue month. Placing December in the mid- point of a fiscal year allows Council, Boards, and Committees to modify budgets if we are not on target for revenues. Please note the call to a Special Meeting of the Congregation on June 5 to approve this change in our by-laws.

Another carefully thought through policy is an Investment Income Distribution Policy. A rolling 20 quarter average will be used in determining the balance of the General Investments and

Endowments. The Policy specifies that 4% of this average will be used to supplement the annual budget; however, it is expected that this will need to be phased in over the next couple of years.

The Trustees appreciate the commitments you make to First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor through your offerings of time, talent and treasure.

Treasurer's Report as of March 31, 2016

Total Actual Revenue: \$187,370
Actual PLEDGE RECEIPTS: \$98,121
Total Actual Expenses: \$199,171

YTD Budget Revenue: \$ 182,052
YTD Budget Pledge Receipts: \$111,035
YTD Budget Expenses: \$181,552

COMMENTS: The pledge receipts are included in the total revenue figures that precede it. It is not unusual for the pledge receipts to trail the budget. Historically, in December we receive the greatest amount of pledge revenue. However, we urge all members to remain current with their pledge payments.

While we would like revenues to be equal to or greater than budget and expenses to be less than budget; after the first quarter this appears to be fairly typical of previous years. The one cautionary note is that with Easter occurred in March this year compared to April last year, this may have had an impact on revenues and increased expenses. The April 30th report should provide a more realistic picture.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:

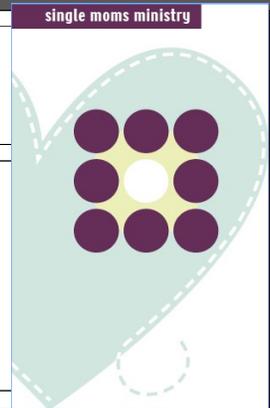
ALPHA HOUSE

Alpha House is always looking for volunteers to make and serve hot breakfasts for their residents on Sunday mornings. The volunteer commitment includes purchasing food, preparing, serving and then cleaning up. A couple of adults or a family can easily make and serve breakfast to the residents at Alpha House. Please contact FCC member Jennifer Hall at a2halls@gmail.com or call/text 734.395.1696 for available dates to volunteer.

small groups - single mom's ministry

Our single moms will gather on May 19 at our new start time of 6 p.m. We will dismiss by 8 p.m. An interesting program is being planned. Moms are organizing additional meeting times during

the month and the summer. Please see Darcy for details.



small groups - weber lunch club



Monthly lunch gatherings with Bob Livingston and other FCC friends are highly informal, with welcoming and wide-ranging conversations. We meet at Weber's Restaurant, 3050

Jackson Rd. Ann Arbor, at 11:30 a.m. Our next meeting, and our final meeting until Fall, will be on Monday, May 16. We look forward to seeing you!

small groups - text breakfast

The text breakfast group with Bob Livingston meets together on Wednesday mornings at 8:30 a.m. at the **Classic Cup Café** located at 4389 Jackson Road. Our discussions conclude

by 10 a.m. The text or texts to be discussed will be the text or texts for the next Sunday's sermon. Generally the texts will be available in the bulletin the preceding week. Please make

your plans to be there at 8:30 a.m.! All are welcome to join us! Our last meeting until the Fall season will be on May 25.

small groups - aa meeting

Although not directly connected to FCC, a group from Alcoholics Anonymous meets on Tuesdays all year long at 7:15 p.m. in

Pilgrim Hall. Please feel free to attend these meetings.

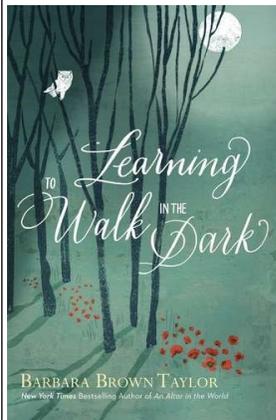
We are pleased to welcome this

group to use our church for their meetings and pray for their continued recovery and healing.

small groups - mind and spirit book group

The Mind and Spirit Book Group meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 10:15 a.m. in the Mayflower Room. The last book that we'll read before our break for the summer is *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor. This is from Barbara Brown Taylor's website:

"On the cover of Taylor's well-wrought guidebook, the light of



the moon gives trees slim shadows, poppies bleed on the ground, and an owl gazes, as

the book's title laces itself among the trees. Taylor (*An Altar in the World*) observes these moonlit elements well: "I have learned things in the dark that I could never have learned in the light..." she writes. Ever the teacher (Piedmont College and Columbia Theological Seminary), she passes on her knowledge, whether purposefully studied or accidentally absorbed, of living with loss. Among these lunar lessons are antipathy to "full solar spirituality," that is, seeing God as light alone, leaving dark to the devil; and sympathy toward the ever-changing moon (imagined as a Sabbath bride, she mirrors the soul better than does the steady sun). Taylor considers "endarkenment," light

bulbs, blotted stars, and Our Lady of the Underground beneath Chartres Cathedral. Taylor's intimate voice makes good points and asks good questions, especially in the last chapter's dialogue. She writes exemplars of exposition (narration, description, argumentation), and pens poetry in her similes and metaphors."

We will enjoy lunch together at Cottage Inn at our last session, June 1, before our summer break.

Please join us—this group is welcoming to all.

Celebration Flowers

On May 8 we will again decorate our sanctuary with spring flowers. They will be planted around the church to beautify the grounds in the week following the May 8 service. Please fill out the celebration plant envelopes found in your church pews, or email

Nancy Sauve at nancy@fccannarbor.org. The suggested donation per plant is \$10. If you wish to have your dedication printed in the bulletin, it is due to the office or in the offering plate by Sunday, May 1.



FCC Bus Trip to Grand Rapids



On April 22, members of The First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor and their friends rode the bus from Ann Arbor to Grand Rapids to spend the day at the Frederick Meijer Botanical Gardens with a festive ending to the day downtown. Some enjoyed The B.O.B. (The Big Old Building) and some went to Founders Brewery. It was an enjoyable day...good friends, good weather, beautiful gardens, and a festive dinner. Please join us on our next trip! Watch for details.



Help Us Update the Church History

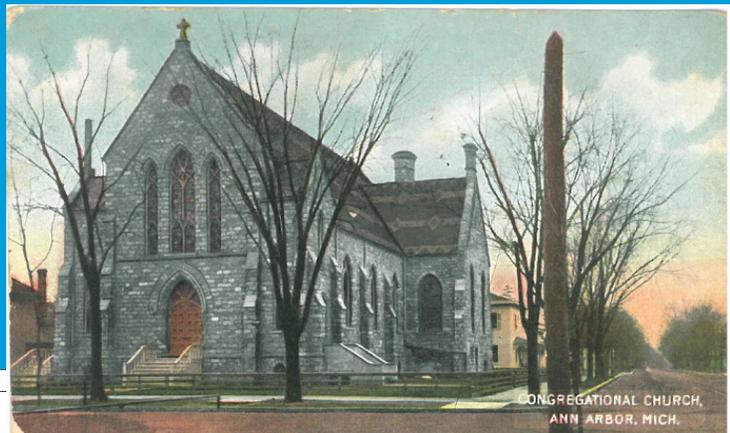
Many of you have been involved with FCC for years and have stories to tell. We want to collect those stories as part of the update of the church history. We will have a time

for videotaping your stories and memories on a Sunday after church in April or May. If you would like to participate, please contact Betty Bishop at

bbishop@umich.edu or 734-662-9492.

Thank you for your involvement!
The History Committee

*We are a beacon of
God's love, hope and
Christian freedom*



History Reflection Betty Bishop

Our First Congregational Church, built between 1872 and 1876, was designed by Gordon Lloyd, described by his great-granddaughter Anne Upton as “one of the most prominent Gothic church architects of his time.” He also designed St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, Harris Hall (part of the University of Michigan), and the entrance to Forest Hill Cemetery. Gothic Revival

architecture was seldom used for Congregational churches which tended to follow their New England roots with simple wooden structures with tall steeples. Dorothy Lenz commented that our church is “simpler, more open, than Gothic Revival.” When the church was built at the corner of State and William, across from the University campus, the area was still residential and State Street was

still a dirt road. Most members walked to church for services. The church’s form of self-government and tolerance of personal beliefs appealed to people active in the community and the university. This tolerance for a wide variety of views is probably the most enduring and consistent element in the history of our church.

The First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor

608 E. William St.
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Phone: 734.662.1679
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Robert Livingston, Senior Minister, x554
Darcy Crain-Polly, Associate Minister, x552
Holly Porter, Director of Christian
Education, x553
Newsletter information:
E-mail: nancy@fccannarbor.org

Sunday Worship Schedule

8:45 a.m. through May 8
Continental Breakfast
Pilgrim Hall

9:00 a.m. through May 8
Contemporary Service
Pilgrim Hall

9:30 a.m.
Communion Service,
Douglas Memorial Chapel

10 a.m.
Traditional Service,
Sanctuary
Church School during the
10 a.m. worship service

11 a.m.
Friendship Hour,
Pilgrim Hall

The First Congregational Church May 2016 Calendar

May 1	10:00 a.m.	Confirmation Sunday
	11:00 a.m.	BOCE Meeting, Meeting Room Youth from Bethel Church at FCC
May 3	7:15 p.m.	AA Meeting, Pilgrim Hall
May 4	8:30 a.m.	Text Breakfast, Classic Cup Café
	10:15 a.m.	Mind and Spirit Book Group, Mayflower Room
May 8		Mother's Day
	9:00 a.m.	Contemporary Service (Last 9 a.m. service until September)
May 9	7:00 p.m.	Church Council Meeting, Mayflower Room
May 10	12:00 p.m.	Contemporary Issues Committee Meeting, Mayflower Rm
	7:15 p.m.	AA Meeting, Pilgrim Hall
May 11	8:30 a.m.	Text Breakfast, Classic Cup Café
May 15	10:00 a.m.	Sing and Serve Sunday
		Courier Deadline
	9:00 a.m.	Deacons Meeting, Mayflower Room
	11:00 a.m.	Sing and Serve
May 16	11:30 a.m.	Weber's Luncheon, Weber's Restaurant
	6:15 p.m.	Trustees Meeting, Meeting Room
May 17	7:15 p.m.	AA Meeting, Pilgrim Hall
May 18	8:30 a.m.	Text Breakfast, Classic Cup Café
	10:15 a.m.	Mind and Spirit Book Group, Mayflower Room
May 19	6:00 p.m.	Single Moms Night Out, Mayflower Room
May 21	10:30 a.m.	Lola Borhardt Memorial Service, Douglas Chapel
May 22	10:00 a.m.	Recognition of Holly Porter and Youth Sunday
	11:00 a.m.	Church Picnic, Church Outside Grounds
May 24	7:15 p.m.	AA Meeting, Pilgrim Hall
May 25	8:30 a.m.	Text Breakfast, Classic Cup Café (last Text Breakfast until September)
May 26	7:00 p.m.	Mission and Outreach Committee Meeting, Mayflower Rm
May 29		Remembrance Sunday
May 31	7:15 p.m.	AA Meeting, Pilgrim Hall

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