

Chanticleer
December 2017
Volume 90, Issue 12

Dear Friends,

In a small rural town, far from the halls of power and authority, off the beaten path, in a stable, a baby is born to a family that is not your usual family. The baby is wrapped in cloth, and placed in the only thing like a crib that they had, a little feed trough. And the world is changed.

Christmas can get big and bright. It can take over the television and radio. It starts in the stores long before we sing carols in church. But what it comes down to is the smallest, most ordinary thing in the world (although the birth of a child is never ordinary to the parents) is how God is going to turn the powers and principalities of the world on their heads and set us all right.

So this Christmas season, I invite you to look for the small graces, the little holy moments, the times when angel songs sneak through the noise, when shepherds are talking about this thing they have just seen.

And I invite you to give thanks for all the ways, large and small, that God is working in, and through, and around, and with, and for, and near you.

Grace and Peace,
Phil

Advisory Update



Advisory Update

With the ongoing work of the Bylaws committee and the possibility of changes to committee structures the Nominating Committee will not be utilized this year. We are asking for volunteers to fill some key positions. Those positions include Vice Moderator, a Trustee, and members of the Christian Education committee (this does not make you a Sunday School teacher).

Diaconate and Outreach will be seeking members as needed to fill board vacancies. Please give this some prayerful consideration. If you feel called to fill one of these positions, please see Amy Frost, Mary Normand (Outreach) or Matt Slot (Diaconate).

Coffee Hour: Coffee Hour is a wonderful time to catch up and connect with friends and meet new people. We are fortunate to have so many folks who share their time and talents to provide coffee hours for us. Thank you to everyone who has hosted coffee hours. For whatever reason there are weeks that no one signs up to host coffee hour. Some folks have stepped up at the last minute to fill in. We are looking for ways to make sure that we have these opportunities to gather each week after worship. Some suggestions include: donating extra cookies to place in the freezer, teaming up with a couple of other folks to put on a coffee hour together, donating money to purchase snacks to sponsor a coffee hour. People are often intimidated by the large coffee pot. We have many people who would make the coffee for someone who wishes to host a coffee hour. If you would like to host a coffee hour and have questions there are lots of folks who would walk you through the process or even do it with you. Just ask.

Next Advisory meeting January 18. Mark your calendar for January 28, 2018 for the Annual Meeting.

Your Moderator, Amy Frost



From the "Chair" of the Board of Trustees Judi Cates-December



As I sit down to write this article, the sky is grey and gloomy and a very cold rain is starting to fall. It is a typical November day in Michigan. Now comes the however you were waiting for, HOWEVER, I am writing the article for December and my thoughts turn to Advent, the wonderful stories of the Bible and celebrating the birth of Christ.

My Christmas Prayer for our world is a world without violence. (A really big prayer) So many violent actions in our news today, so many deaths and so many injuries. I read we need more than Prayers and Hugs, as folks put on social media. I totally agree, but I feel also that prayer and hugs are sometimes what we need along with action. May we lift up our Prayers, hugs those who are near to us and fight for the Powerless? **BE THE CHURCH** is not just words; it is action for our church congregants.

Feed the Poor, Reject Racism, Forgive Often

Pray for the world

Stewardship this year has received a drop in Pledges for 2018 church budget. Our Budget is made up of Pledges and gifts/offering we receive during the church year. As we "build" a budget we take in Pledges (a Promise) and look at historically over the last few years what we receive in gifts/offering. The Pledged dollars help us build a basic budget for needs such as Pastor Phil's, Ramona's, Sher's and Rex's salary. Heating (is good to have in the winter), electrical, gas, snow care and lawn care, and so many other items to numerous to list. Our Church Family does so much volunteering not only in the church events but within the community at large. Dollars from Festival of Trees will go to Eaton Clothing and Furniture for Boots and winter wear for families in need. Women's Fellowship offers so much to outside charities, such as Siren; Olivet College and internally loans to students in College; purchase of Stove and Refrigerator this year, and so much more.

My question for you is have you made a Pledge this year? Have you taken time to look at what you can give to the Church? Have you taken time to Pray about what you can do to support the Church? No amount is too little; everyone has a set limit to their household expenses. *Would you consider pledging this year?*

I truly love this Church Family and see this love throughout the congregation as we meet and greet each other on Sunday. I have grown so much in the 40 years I have been coming here. Some years were limited giving as our budget was tight; some years were more generous as there was more dollars available. *Where are you at in your life?* **God is Still Speaking** to us to share his love and service in the community and the wider world. Take a moment to pray about your pledge to the church, take a moment to reflect on your role in the Church and our Community. **Is God Speaking to you?** I know God is Speaking to all who listen. Pray, Hug, love each other now and every day.

LOVE GOD---ENJOY THIS LIFE

*May the LOVE of Christ be with you
during this season of great joy.*

*As we give, so shall we receive
With Love Judi Cates*



Upcoming Church Activities



- Nov 19 Brown Gifts Returned
- Nov 24&25 Festival of Trees
- Nov 26 Mitten Tree Goes Up
- Dec 2 9 am - Hanging of the Greens
- Dec 3 – 12/17 Christmas family Collection
- Dec 3 3 pm - Movie Night – S
- Dec 6 9 am – Bazaar Wrap-Up Meeting - L
- Dec 8 7 pm – Community of Christ Euchre Night
- Dec 8 3 pm to 8 pm - Band Boosters Tree Sale
- Dec 9 10 am to 5 pm – Band Boosters Tree Sale
- Dec 10 White gift bags out
- Dec 13 3:30 – 5 pm – Eagles - Community Dinner
- Dec 16 Santa’s Little Helpers
- Dec 16 Choir sings with Community Band at CPAC
- Dec 17 White Bags returned
- Dec 18 Chanticleer Deadline
- Dec 21 6 pm - Community of Christ Caroling
- Dec 24 8 pm – Christmas Eve Service
- Jan 18 6:30 pm – Advisory – A/SMR
- Jan 28 11:30 am – Annual Meeting – BFR
- Jan 9 6 pm - Women’s Fellowship – L
- Feb 23-25 Nordic Fire Festival
- Feb 14 3:30 pm – 5 pm – Community Dinner - Eagles
- April 11 3:30 pm – 5 pm - Community Dinner - Eagles
- Aug 15 3:30 pm – 5 pm – Community Dinner - Eagles
- Oct 24 3:30 pm – 5 pm – Community Dinner - Eagles

AUNTIE ARCHIVE



The busy times of Harvest Feast and Bazaar are now behind us as we move into the Advent Season of Celebration and Hope.

I again have been reading from our old files and have gleaned some interesting facts regarding the history of the women of the church and their unwavering support for this congregation.

The Ladies Benevolent Society (later to be called The Women's Fellowship) was organized in 1869. However, there are records describing events sponsored by "Women of the Congregational Church" as early as 1864. In that year there was a Bazaar (yes, even then) which was held at the 'Opera House'. The Opera house was a barnlike structure located on the west side of Sheldon between Lawrence and Lovett. There they filled the ample floor space with booths containing bazaar goods, aprons, embroidery articles, candy, baked goods, etc. One booth even had a gypsy fortune teller! A dinner was served during the bazaar and in the evening a home talent show or concert was given. Some of this sounds pretty familiar.

The records show many dinners, teas and gatherings held by the LBS which not only served to raise money for the church but also enabled this congregation to minister to the needy of this and neighboring communities.

In 1897 the LBS purchased the parsonage for \$2000. They had funds of \$500 on hand and were able to reduce the debt and keep up the maintenance from that time until the parsonage was eliminated in more recent years. Here are some more examples of how The Women's Fellowship has given to this congregation: (all figures are approximate).

2000 – 2017

Endowment - \$38, 575

Utilities - \$11,550

Kitchen Appliances - \$15,000

Lounge Carpet - \$14,500

These large expenses plus many more gifts and projects too numerous to list are included in the yearly budget. We have to give well deserved accolades to the women of this church who have always been and will continue to be the driving force behind so many church accomplishments.

Happy Thanksgiving,
Auntie



Music Notes



Ramona Kime, Director of Music

The season of Thanksgiving through Christmas is a busy time for musicians, and our choirs are no exception.

November musical activities:

In November, the Celestial Bells played for one of our church services, and the Senior Choir joined the choir at Peace Lutheran for the ecumenical Thanksgiving service. It's a beautiful thing when churches can "play well with others" and join together to give thanks and celebrate Thanksgiving.

December musical activities:

Sunday, Dec. 3rd: the first Sunday of Advent

The Celestial Bells will be playing during the service, always a special treat, especially during the Christmas season.

Saturday, Dec. 16th

The Senior Choir has been asked to perform on the Charlotte Community Band concert on Dec. 16th at the CPAC. We sang a couple Christmas pieces on the band concert in December of 2015, and they loved us so much that they've asked us to join them again! So come on out and support both our choir and the Charlotte Community Band.

Sunday, Dec. 17:

Then on the following day, the Senior Choir and Celestial Bells will be a part of Lessons and Carols. Scripture readings of the Christmas story will be interspersed with music from our choirs.

Christmas Eve service:

The Senior Choir will sing two beautiful anthems during this very special service, including one during communion.

Music can always add to the beauty and significance of our worship services, whether it's performed by our choirs or sung by the congregation, and this is especially true during the Advent and Christmas season. "Sing we now of Christmas, Noel, sing we here!"



***From the Trustees,
Approved Financial Figures as of October 31, 2017
(General Budget Only, NOT restricted accounts)***

Month of October 2017

**Income: \$ 20, 87.76
Expense: \$11,854.03
 \$ 8,233.73**

January 1 thru October 31, 2017 (10 months)

**Income: \$152,923.79
Expense: \$152,833.63
 \$ 90.16**

Board of Trustees - Sunday Counters

December 3 – Maria Davis & Bill Rinckey

December 10 – Eric Crandall & David Frost

December 17 – Bill Rinckey & Lisa Jackson

December 24 – Morning Service – Judi Cates & David Frost

December 24 – Christmas Eve 8 pm Service – Don Johnson, Ron Field and David Frost

December 31 – Eric Crandall



Wishing all of you a most blessed Christmas and New year.

White gifts will be coming out this month. The bags will be handed out Dec. 10 and are to be returned Dec. 17. These are personal care items which will be distributed to Helping Hands, SIREN/Eaton, and Eaton Clothing and Furniture.

Outreach will be adopting 1-2 families from Housing Services this year. This should be ready by Dec. 3. Please watch for it. I understand there is much need this year.

There is a Community dinner coming up this month. It is Dec 13. Chris Reist is handling this one.

The winter coat collection is still going on. Please see Bill or Carol Yerkes if you have questions.

The Mitten Tree went up Nov 26. We have added children's socks and slippers to the need this year in addition to gloves, mittens, hats, and scarfs.

Outreach meets the third Sunday of the month over in the library in the annex. Please join us and learn what we are about. We are always open to new ideas.

“Make the most of today. Translate your good intentions into actual deeds” Grenville Kleiser

Stayed Tuned

Mary Normand, Chair



Many Thanks From BAZAAR

A successful Bazaar is now past. We had a great turn-out and had super support and helpers from our congregation. The Women's Fellowship Board would like to express our sincere thanks to all who contributed. Whether you were a donator, a preparation helper, a Scout who set up and took down tables, or one who rubbed sore feet, or sayer of many prayers; all were very much appreciated. They say God works in mysterious ways, but this church works in wondrous ways to invite the community in to enjoy all our hard work and especially our enjoyment of working with others and hearing about what's going on in the lives of our co-workers for the week or so that we spend so much time together making a successful Bazaar. It could not happen without all the goodwill and determination of this congregation. A special thank you goes to the Chairs of the: Lounge, Pie, Country Kitchen, Kitchen, Dishwashing, Dining room, Jewelry, Publicity, and Delivery. They do their jobs so well that a Bazaar chair has little to do to keep it going. Also, thanks to our Treasurer who keeps us on track and says that we made about \$7500 this year.

Upcoming Women's Fellowship Meetings

Women's Fellowship Bazaar Wrap Up Meeting
December 6 at 9 am in the Lounge

Women's Fellowship Annual Meeting
January 9 2018 from 6 pm in the Lounge



The **Charlotte Band Boosters** will be selling 5'-8' Blue Spruce Christmas Trees at the Congregational Commons on Friday, December 8th from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm and Saturday, December 9th from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm for \$50 each. Come listen to Christmas music played by some of our band students and enjoy a cup of hot chocolate while picking out your Christmas tree.

We are encouraging everyone to preorder their Christmas tree by calling Kim Bruce @ 517-206-5796 or Stephanie Waterbury @ 517-974-7198.

The Trees are being donated by Todd Hogeland Tree Farm here in Charlotte.



Thank you for supporting the Charlotte Band Boosters!



Flower Committee

The Thanksgiving altar was prepared by Judi C again this year. Although Thanksgiving is over, the Flower Committee has many thanks giving to do. Thanks to Judi. Thanks to all those who came to prepare our church for Advent and Christmas on Dec.2nd. The transformation of our beautiful church is even more inspiring this year. Thank you to those who provided a Sunday altar arrangement this year. The variety of arrangements adds so much to our worship service. We are blessed to have so many who give to our church in this way. The calendar for 2018 will be posted soon. Thank you to the family of Shirley Olsen for their long time tradition of providing poinsettias. Finally thank you to all who are planning to come in January to undecorate. The Flower Committee could not carry out the assigned duties without of help of all the volunteers. We truly are blessed in this congregation for all the willing workers .Thanks be to God.

Minister:

*Every Member
Minister of Worship and
Congregational Life*

*Phil Hobson
Director of Music
Ramona Kime*

*Moderator
Amy Frost*

*Vice Moderator
Curt Scott*

*Board of Deacons
Matt Slot*

*Board of Trustees
Judi Cates*

*Board of Christian Education
Amy Slot*

*Outreach Board
Mary Normand*

*Church Clerk
Barbara Anderson*

*Financial Secretary
Don Johnson*

*Treasurer
Eric Crandall*

Staff:

*Office Manager
Sher Brown*

*Custodian
Rex Todd*

The Chanticleer is a monthly newsletter, distributed to members and friends of First Congregational Church. We welcome most comments and articles. Chanticleer article deadline is the 18th of each month.

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Hours: Tuesday thru Friday from
9 am to 3 pm
Phone Number: 517.543.1310*

Mission Statement of First Congregational Church

Our church will provide a place and direction for joining with God, healing the broken, and education for youth and adults. We will be challenged by our faith to reach out to our congregants, our community and world family, and to offer opportunities for spiritual growth and renewal. We welcome others into our Christian Family.

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m., Children's Sunday School: 10 a.m.

Adult Bible Studies: Sunday 8:15 a.m., Tuesday at 6:30 pm

Men's Group: Saturday 8:00 a.m.

Senior Choir meets each Wednesday at 7 pm in the Lounge

Board of Trustees meet the third Monday of the month @ 6:30 pm in the Annex Library

Advisory board meets the third Thursday of the month @ 6:30 pm in the Annex Small Meeting Room



Women's Prayer Circle

Women of the church are welcome the 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month at 10:30 am in the Annex Library.



*Blanche
Moyer Circle
The Next Meeting
Will be
December 11
At 6:30 pm*



Prayer Shawl Ministry meets

*The 1st & 3rd Saturdays at 9:00 am.
Love to knit or crochet? Don't know how? We'll teach you! Come & join us
– we would love to have you!*