

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**

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Maintenance/Custodian

Tom McLaren

Organist

Lavonne Bomeli

Parish Visitor

Mary Powers

First Congregational

United Church of Christ

August, 2020

The

Congregator

August

***B*e present.**

***L*et the day flow with grace.**

***E*xpect nothing. Give thanks.**

***S*urrender. Be open.**

***S*peak only kindness.**

***I*mpart only love.**

***N*ever forget you are not alone.**

***G*ive so that you may receive.**

***S*ee goodness in others.**

From the Covenant Association

The Fall Meeting of the Covenant Association, Michigan Conference, UCC will be held on Saturday, Sept. 26. This meeting was originally set to gather at Olivet College with a program focus on education and youth. COVID-19 has required a change in setting and focus. The meeting will be held virtually and open live to anyone with a computer, pad, or phone connected to Wi-Fi. There are 50 churches in the Association from Midland to Jackson and from Ypsilanti to Lansing. Ordained ministers with standing in the association are voting members. Each church should elect or appoint up to 3 voting members with one being a youth.

The meeting will be conducted virtually using Zoom and the new theme is "Transitions." Our keynote speaker will be Rev. Phil Hart, our Transitional Conference Minister. A group of leaders from a cross-section of our churches has been working now for months to shape the meeting from in the flesh to virtual reality. I have been deeply involved in all of this activity. Many in our association are looking forward to the fellowship of gathering together again. We miss each other. More information will be available and sent to our churches as the date approach. For now, put on your calendars, Sept. 26, The Covenant Association GATHERS for Celebration and Connection in our Covenantal Community.

~ Kendall Brown ~

SCRIPTURE

John 14:6
"I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

WORD OF HOPE

This famous (or infamous) passage from John's Gospel has been a sticking point for many. I do not know what was meant by these words. I can only tell you what they mean to me. Hopefully my feeling about this will resonate with you.

I think Jesus here means that his way of being and his way of living reflect a true relationship with God. Jesus was humble. Jesus was passionate. Jesus was empathetic and sympathetic. Jesus was a leader, but first he was a servant. His way and is a true way, a life lived in the truth of God and God's love. A life truly lived the best way, if you will.

Jesus said this when he was answering Thomas who asked how to know the way Jesus was going. Jesus uses his life example to show the true way. Life, truth and the way to God are synonymous. They are one thing. It is life as it is meant to be. When Jesus said, "I am the way", I believe he meant more than who he was. He meant how he was.

Among all the varied designated daily holidays is "Tell the truth day". When we think about telling the truth we start rationalizing. Do we always tell every truth? Truthfully answering the question "does this outfit make me look fat?" may not be the way to a long life. We sometimes slip past truth. And I'm not sure that is always bad.

But when we think of Jesus' life as an example, a true way to live, we realize that how we express our being must be in the truth of God's love. It is being a servant leader. That is the way of Jesus. That is the truth of life; the way to God. We cannot slip past this. As Jesus was, so we should be. Our way, our life, our truth must be one thing.

PRAYER

God of Truth, God of Love, we struggle to live the life You want, the life Jesus exemplified as a way for us. Through Your Holy Spirit, mold us into what we should be so that our lives will be lived in truth and be truth. Amen.



"Our Mission is to enable disciples to change the world to the glory of God by living the teachings of Jesus our Christ."

**OUR
CONGREGATION'S
JOYS & SORROWS**

~ Jack Anderson
passed away July 18, 2020.

Tuesday Morning Zoom Lectionary Study Group

My wife and I have been attending First Congregational since a year ago. At first, our attendance was spotty because of commitments to other churches. By the first of the year my Sunday morning activities had slowed down. We started worshipping at FCUCC regularly and became members. Then came COVID!! We really wanted to get to know more people and feel more solidly connected to a congregation. Gary's announcing a class via Zoom sounded great and we joined. The class offered much that all of us have been missing because of our disconnect from each other by the pandemic.

Gary's class ended but the group stayed on with me as leader. We have become a lectionary study group. The Lectionary is a 3-year cycle for reading the Bible. For every day of the week there are four readings: Gospel, Epistle, Old Testament and Psalm. For years, churches, worship planners and ministers have been following the international lectionary for planning worship and preaching. It helps everyone to stay on the same page.

I have come to look forward with excitement to our meetings via Zoom on Tuesday mornings. We have been studying the stories of Sarah and Abraham, Rebecca and Isaac, Rachel and Jacob and are about to move into the final story in this narrative, Joseph. This study hour offers more to all involved than studiousness. There is a lot of laughter, sharing of questions, opinions, thoughts, prayers, joys and concerns, and fellowship. Members get to know more about each other every time we meet. And our faith is fueled for the times.

In this day of tremendous disruption to all or our lives, the group has been exploring a new way to do and be church and to recover important pieces of being church that we have lost to the pandemic. We are planning to continue into the fall and are discussing different ideas for topics. At some point when it is safe for all, we want to move back into our building space – and might continue on offering the Zoom avenue as another option.

The group is wide-open to all! Drop-in if you will. Join us, too. For assistance with using ZOOM, email either me (redbaron1947@gmail.com), Gary (gbagley854@aol.com), or Peggy (secretary@fcucc.com).

Kendall Brown