

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
PO Box 892
Cadillac, MI 49601

“The Tie that Binds”

June 2018

Newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC
Cadillac, MI

Margie Annis, Music Director
Patrick Delaney, Treasurer
Penny Phelps, Administrator
Marie Linn, Clerk
Rachel Whiteman, Secretary/Organist
Karen Rowley, Newsletter Editor
Laura Jacobson-Pentces, Chair of Trustees

Church service is Sunday morning 10:30 a.m.
Childcare available.

The church is open on **Mondays and Wednesdays** from 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

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Rabbi Arnie Sleuterberg Remembers his Mother

Rabbi Arnie and Reverend John shared in an ecumenical dialogue on Mothers' Day, May 13. The following is Rabbi Arnie's presentation about his mother Edith.

Last May 4, on the occasion of the evening of mourning and remembrance marking the end of WWII in the Netherlands, I was asked to give the keynote address in my Mother's home town of Zaltbommel.

My mother, Edith Hes Sleutelberg, often spoke of an idyllic childhood in her home town, Zaltbommel-- excellent parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends – lots of activities, good schools, a vibrant synagogue, lots of nature, swimming, sports, fun.

And then came the Nazis. She was terrified. "The sky was black with planes," she said. Jewish children were no longer allowed to go to school. Her parents had to close their clothing store, she could no longer go into parks to play with her friends. They could no longer shop except for one hour in the afternoon after many items had been sold out (though some merchants put food under the counter for my grandmother). All Jews had to wear a yellow star saying Jood (Jew).

As she couldn't go to school, my mother volunteered for a seamstress every day in order to have something to do. It was there that a woman, seeing her star, said, "Edith, I didn't know you were Jewish." She responded, "All my life." That evening, the woman contacted my grandfather, Arnold, asking for permission to find a hiding place for my mother. In the end, she found separate hiding places for each member of the family. The yellow star was a mark for death. In my mother's case, it saved her life.

My mother was shy and liked to be home. Only once did she try sleeping over at her Aunt and Uncle's house with her cousins, but at bedtime she wanted to go home. So preparing her for going into hiding, away from home, alone, with strangers, was heart wrenching. I can only imagine what it must have been like for my grandparents to give away their precious children to strangers at a time of war in the hopes that they might survive. They told their skinny little 15 year old girl to count on it being 6 months, an eternity for my mother.

In the middle of the night of October 3, 1942, after she put on 9 layers of clothing and ripped off her yellow star, Gerard van Angelen put her on the back of his bicycle, peddled her to the Waal River, and took her in a row boat across the river near Haaften, where Krijn de Kock placed her on the back of his bicycle and took her to "Pella," their farm. There she would spend the next 2 years and seven months. For the rest of her life, she observed October 3 as a somber day of fasting and mourning.

With great fortune, however, the de Kock family was warm, welcoming, empathetic, kind, and loving. They made my mother feel like one of their family. They called her "sus." (Sister) She was the youngest of the six de Kock children and they all doted on her. Though she could never leave the house by day, and could only go outside late at night amongst the trees to get some fresh air, she was, nonetheless, fully integrated in family



life. If anyone came to the house, she would be sure to be in the attic, and one of the 6 children would be there with her. She was never alone. They purchased for her a spinning wheel on which she made lots of yarn, then knitted or crocheted it into gloves, mittens, socks, scarfs, sweaters, and hats. This was how she filled her time. She went through puberty while in hiding. Before sending her into hiding, her mother had prepared her for what was to come, and the de Kock women helped Edith become a woman.

As was common, when the Germans needed housing, they would expel families from their homes. One day they came to evict the de Kock family. But, after a conversation, it was agreed that the Nazis would have complete use of the main floor while the family moved to the upstairs, with my mother hiding in the attic. Those 3 weeks were full of anxiety for everyone. Had my mother been discovered, the whole family would have been murdered. These consequences were well known to the de Kock's before they took in my mother. But their deep faith in God compelled them to take the risk. They felt commanded by God to "welcome the stranger," to "provide for the less fortunate," "to shelter the homeless," to "protect the innocent," "to keep faith with those in need." They took their religion seriously and acted as they believed God expected them to act. My sense is that they would have rather been killed doing the right thing, than lived having violated their calling as people of faith and integrity. May we never be tested, but if we are, I hope that each of us would be as courageous.

After the war, a few days after May 5, 1945, my mother was reunited with her family. Miraculously, all 5 had survived, along with her Tante Hete, but all of the rest of the family - her grandmother and all of her aunts and uncles and cousins - were murdered. As Ester, my sister, and I grew up, her story came out in small snippets. We would ask something, she would respond until breaking down in tears, and that was it until next time. Over the years we were able to learn more and more, and ultimately she was able to share her story on videotape. She spoke of her grandmother, and how her father's inability to convince his mother to join them in hiding haunted him the rest of his life. She spoke of her cousins, her best friends, who were "taken away." Whenever we travelled, wherever we travelled, she would look in the phonebook for the names of her cousins in the vain hope that any had survived. She lived with survivor's remorse, asking, "Why did I live when they all died?"

The silver lining was the de Kock family. They and my mother and family have remained close over the years. 34 years ago the de Kock family and Gerard van Angelen were inducted into the Avenue of the Righteous Gentiles on the mountain of memory in Jerusalem at Yad Vashem, for their heroic bravery, steadfast convictions, compassion, and selflessness. 29 years ago members of the de Kock and van Angelen families attended my ordination in New York. 6 years ago my mother was witness for the wedding of the de Kock's granddaughter, Krijna, to Bas Haghoort and I had the honor of co-officiating the ceremony. 4 years ago Krijna spoke at her funeral.

Fortunately, Edith died an old woman, warm, in her own bed, ...unlike most of her family who died naked, screaming, on cold concrete floors in poisonous gas chambers, images that haunted her every single night, preventing her from ever having a good night's sleep.

Mom shared that since age 14 she felt that she had been living on borrowed time and she was determined to make the most and best of that borrowed time. The truth is, all of us are living on borrowed time, and the more conscious we become of that, the richer and more beautiful and more precious that time becomes.

Near the end of her life, after cancer had spread to her lungs and brain, she said to me, "I've had a great life. You've had me a long time. There is nothing to feel bad about. You go and live your life; find happiness. I love you."

I owe my very life to Gerard van Angelen, Krijn and Engeltje de Kock, Jan, Corrie, Altje, Engeltje, Krijn, and Leendert. I pray that they rest peacefully and securely in the loving embrace of God, who inspired them to be righteous heroes. Their memories are abiding blessings to us all, especially when we act heroically, by their example, to make this world a better place.

And on this Mother's Day, I thank God for allowing me to be born to Edith Hes Sleutelberg, who every day of her life, made this world a more compassionate, loving place. May she rest in peace. Amen

– *Rabbi Arnie Sleutelberg*

HAPPENINGS IN JUNE

- Due to vacations, we will be publishing a July/August edition of the newsletter. Please send in your articles or information for summer events and activities **no later than June 18th**.
- **Saturday, June 23rd** is the Pride Picnic and Parade in Traverse City. The picnic is scheduled from 2:00 – 5:00 pm at F&M Park in Traverse City (716 East State Street), and the parade begins at the F&M Park at 6:00 pm. We will march from the park and west down Front Street. For more information, visit www.upnorthpride.com
- **Sunday, June 24th** is the Pride Sunday service sponsored by the ONA Committee. Wear a rainbow of colors and celebrate LGBTQ Pride.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC

SUMMER PICNIC and CAMPING WEEKEND

A Church picnic will be held on Sunday, June 24th 12:30 - 3:00

at Chippewa Landing, Manton MI

Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided.

Bring your drinks and a dish to pass or snacks.

All are welcome!

For those who are interested, an overnight camping option is available for Saturday night (23rd)

(Rustic, no electric or water hookup). Camping is \$10 per camper per day (kids under 14 free).



Additional charges (Sat. or Sun):

Canoe Rental	\$40
Kayak	\$30
Spot Your Kayak	\$10



There is no charge for anyone who is just attending the picnic on Sunday 24th.

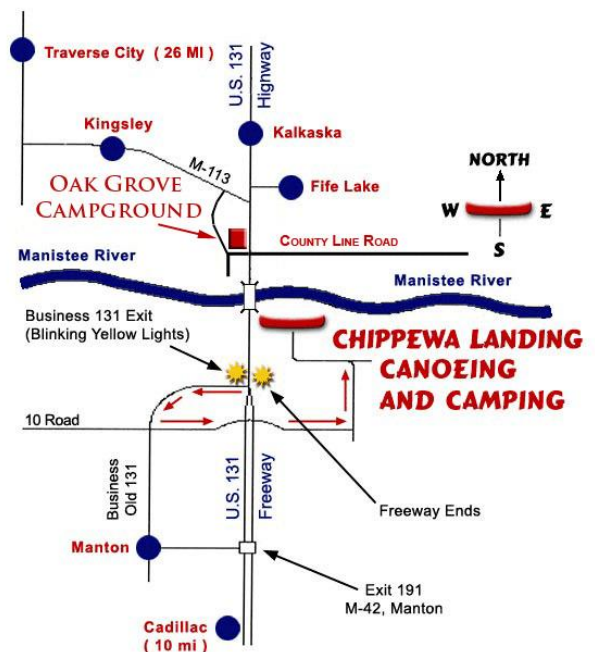
Please call Jack Purkiss for further details, and to reserve a camping spot and/or kayak/canoe rental:

See www.chippewalanding.com for information about the campsite.



Directions:

10 Minutes north of Manton on old 131. From Manton blinker light intersection, 16 Rd, drive 3 miles north to 10 Rd. Turn right on gravel road. 1 mile on 10 Rd. to T, 43 ¼ Rd. Turn left on 43 ¼ Rd. 2 miles to 6 Rd. left only to Chippewa Landing Entrance. Stop at the office to find camp site.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Sunday, July 29th** is the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting which will take place at 11:30 am. The 10:30 am service is planned as a very unique conversational Early Christian Worship experience in our Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to bring a **FAVORITE POTLUCK DISH (breakfast or lunch appetizer, salad, main meal, and/or dessert) TO SHARE WITH OTHERS!!**

LOOKING AHEAD

CHURCH SECURITY

As reported in last month's newsletter, the Board of Trustees is scheduling a law enforcement presentation entitled, "Safety and Security of the Church." This presentation will take place during our semi-annual meeting on Sunday July 29, 2018. Following the presentation there will be a discussion among the congregation regarding this issue. Until that time the Board has decided that all doors will be locked within 10 minutes of the service beginning. This policy will apply to all groups using the church. The policy of locking the doors was a top recommendation coming from the Michigan State Police after an inspection of the building. The Board is in the process of researching safety concerns in today's environment. Please be patient while remembering that this policy is for all our safety. We will create a safety and security plan together after the presentation.

There will be a congregational vote in August regarding the policy of doors being locked during service and whenever the church is being used.



ECUMENICAL WEEKEND

We have been invited to participate in the worship experience at Temple Beth El on **Friday, September 7, 2018 at 6:30 pm**, rescheduled from May. If you'd like to carpool to Traverse City for this service, please contact Rev. John Doud.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

YOUTH SUNDAY

Sunday, May 20th, our congregation was honored with the leadership of our remarkable young people. Sam Pentces, who has graduated from Pine River High School (see picture below), and is enrolled at Northwestern Michigan College in their art program, provided a remarkable sermon on tribalism, which will be available in our next newsletter. Kendra Day graduated from Cadillac High School and is enrolled in the music education program at Northern Michigan University, and she shared her picture book for the Children's Sermon. Lucy Daveridge, Grace Cederberg, and Rudy Meyers provided beautiful music for worship. We are thankful for our young people who are so willing to share their unique gifts and talents with our congregation. We wish them our best as they continue their education and pursue their dreams.



Our Graduates: Kendra Day and Sam Pentces



Grace Cederberg



Children's Story Time – A story written and illustrated by Kendra Day



Lucy Daveridge



Morning message by Sam Pentces



Solo by Rudy Meyers



A note from Sam Pentces:

Thanks so much for the generous graduation gift! I really appreciated it and will use it for college. Thanks too, for all the support you have given me over the years. I am excited about what comes next!

Also, everyone is invited to my graduation Open House at the Kettunen Center, 14901 4-H Drive in Tuskin, MI on Sunday, May 27, 2-5 pm.

~ *Sam Pentces*

DON LIEBAU

Here is an article in the Cadillac News about church member, Don Liebau who volunteers at Munson Hospital in Cadillac. Don rocks babies in the neonatal unit as they work through withdrawal syndrome. Such a warm heart and comforting arms for these newborns.

https://www.cadillacnews.com/news/volunteer-will-soothe-babies-born-with-withdrawal-syndrome/article_33d9c54a-3aaf-5467-892b-d9a0ca80403a.html



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MAY MEETING

Marie Linn, Church Clerk

The Board of Trustees convened at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, May 16. The date and time had been changed to accommodate board members' schedules.

Penny reported on the progress of the Grant proposal. Additional information is required and will be provided to her so the additional information can be submitted right away.

Committee reports included Building and Maintenance (condition of front step railings was discussed); ONA (Pride Sunday details were presented); Bequests/Gifts (graduation details were presented).

Laura Jacobson-Pentces indicated she would again announce the July Safety Meeting information on Sunday, May 20.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held Wednesday, June 20 at 2:00 pm.

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

Date	Greeters/ Ushers	Liturgist	Fellowship Hour	Sexton	Preacher
Jun 3	Gert and Sperry Claypool	Joyce Oatley	<i>Volunteers needed</i>	Sperry Claypool	Sara Keinath
10	Laura Jacobson & Sam Pentces	Penny Phelps	<i>Volunteers needed</i>	Carol Nilsson	Penny Phelps
17	Bill and Sue Cinco	Laura Porter	<i>Volunteers needed</i>	Patrick Delaney	John Doud
24	George Davis & Leif Williams	Karen Anderson	Church picnic	Richard Harvey	ONA Committee

JUNE 2018 CHURCH CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>June's Mission: New Hope Shelter</i>					<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>3</u> Choir 9:30am Worship 10:30am (Communion)	<u>4</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>7</u> Choir 7:00pm	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>10</u> Choir 9:30am Worship 10:30am,	<u>11</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>14</u> Choir 7:00pm	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>17</u> Choir 9:30am Worship 10:30am	<u>18</u> NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Office 10:30-1:00	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> Office 10:30-1:00 Board of Trustees: 2:00pm	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> Camping trip Chippewa Landing 2-5pm Open House
<u>24</u> Worship 10:30am: PRIDE SUNDAY 12:30pm – 3pm CHURCH PICNIC at Chippewa Landing	<u>25</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>28</u> Choir 7:00pm	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>

NON-CHURCH ACTIVITIES THAT TAKE PLACE IN THE CHURCH BUILDING:

Jazzercise: Mon: 5:45pm; Tue: 8:30am; Wed 4:30& 5:45; Thu 8:30 & 5:45; Fri & Sat : 8:30am .

Symphony Board: 7pm first Monday of the month.

2018 Missions – - Jan.: Our Church's Wider Mission, Feb.: After 26 Project, March: One Great Hour of Sharing, April: Love, INC, May: Strengthen the Church, June: New Hope Shelter, July: Back Pack Program, August: Shepherd's Table, Sept.: Feeding America, Oct.: Neighbors in Need, Nov.: Salvation Army, Dec.: Christmas Fund