

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

“The Tie that Binds”

July/August 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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Thoughts – Sam Pentces

In many regards, social media is a double-edged sword in that it's capable of bringing people together, but is also a way to separate them into collective hiveminds. This is the reality we see today: the dawning age of Modern Tribalism.

This trend in behavior is the result of individuals feeling empowered to be bolder when voicing their opinion online. The reason for this is that social media sites provide a layer of protection and provide anonymity, as they often don't require people to show their faces or reveal themselves as people. Further, important communication cues such as tone, facial expressions, and body language aren't existent. Thus, due to the lack of cues, people are given little to no consequence for their actions online. They can lie, exaggerate, and boast themselves up as something they aren't. Plus, due to the internet's anomalous nature, it's incredibly difficult to fact check. Through this anonymity, people looking for, or stumble upon others who share their views, can sympathize with each other without knowing about each other more intimately. They begin to envision both themselves and others as just labels with little to no regard for hobbies, interests, or anything that would define one's personality. Thus, they unintentionally train themselves to view anyone who voices a different opinion through a very 2-dimensional lens. Instead, when then someone opposes their viewpoints; all they see is a threat to their hivemind, and what they believe to be best.

For example: liberals and conservatives have differing opinions on how taxes should be spent. Liberals believe that the government should care for its people with programs such as health care, education, and other social programs. Conservatives believe that taxes should be spent on national defense and keeping the country safe and advocate privatization of many social programs that liberals would like the federal government to provide. But when both sides are in their social media bubbles, they can't see or hear any validity of a point of view that's different from their own. Usually the liberal will hear "I refuse to help those less fortunate than I", and the conservative will hear "I want people to live entirely off the government", and it turns into a never-ending back and forth argument with both sides trying to 1-up each other. Rather than finding compromise, both sides attack each other on social media and accomplish nothing. They often resort to name-calling and sometimes even threats. Both often use plentiful amounts of facts and statistics, but they often come from questionable sources. And due to the possibility of "evidence" being edited, it's easy to spread misinformation and hard to disprove it. Similar behavior can be seen across dozens of social media groups with no resolution being made.

True, this is partially the fault of sites that recommend people and groups based on a person's search history and what they have posted. When you join a group, or like a post, the site will begin to send you more posts, ads, and propaganda, in an effort to re-enforce your commitment to that mindset. While it is manipulative, it is NOT mind control, and it's still the choice of the individual to join a group and engage in its behavior.

When people lose themselves to hiveminds, diversity of thought, individuality, and critical thinking are pushed to the side. In their place is the expectation that the group will think alike, adopt the same doctrine, stand against certain principles, and work in unison for that particular tribe's goals. The result is the sacrifice of the benefits that come from diversity. People sacrifice the strengths that results from having their beliefs and views challenged. Instead of seeing different viewpoints as opportunities to learn and grow, people see them as outsiders who threaten everything they hold dear, and they become fearful and defensive. They are determined to maintain the tribe's identity.

Too many people who participate in social media act rash and spout ignorance as a badge. It's often difficult to fathom any voice of reason that could bring them to their sense and not get lost in the noise. While bias and ignorance will never truly go away, there is



some way to combat tribalism. You see, these groups often argue that their side has been in the dark for too long, and now it's the world's turn to shut up and listen. The solution is to never shut up, but always listen. Just don't listen unquestioningly like they expect you to. Listen with acknowledgement, doubt, and question, and then ask them politely to do the same. You shouldn't be forced to accept ideas you don't agree with, but you should respect the right of existence of ideas that are different from your own. Be willing to form sophisticated debates with someone, insist on not engaging in the back and forth spouting of buzzwords. Share your opinions politely, don't force them onto others. Soften tension with humor if the need arises. But above all else, don't allow yourself to be funneled through social media and give a label for yourself. Be more than a label; be an individual, be unique, be yourself, and encourage others to do the same.

~ Sam Pentces

JULY & AUGUST

SUMMER MUSIC

Would you like to provide Special Music? Volunteers are needed and welcomed! With the choir on recess for the Summer, we have Special Music every Sunday in July and August. Please call Margie Annis if you are interested.

THE BLESSING OF ALL CREATURES GREAT & SMALL

Please join us for a pet blessing in honor of the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi on **Sunday, July 22 at 3 pm**. St. Francis of Assisi lived in the 12th century and is the patron saint of animals.

You are invited to bring your creatures, great or small (or a picture, if you prefer) to be blessed and to spread the word to neighbors and friends and their animal companions.



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** at the 10:30 service!!

CHURCH SECURITY



As previously reported, 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 August 12 regarding the policy of doors being locked during service and whenever the church is being used (see proxy form in this issue if you cannot be at the August 12 service to vote).

ECUMENICAL WEEKEND



We have been invited to participate in the worship experience at Temple Beth El in Traverse City 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



NEW ARRIVAL

Congratulations to Linda Johnson on the arrival of granddaughter Adalin Marie. She weighed in at 6 lbs. 7 oz., 19 ½” long.

CHURCH PICNIC AND CAMPING WEEKEND



The church picnic was a lot of fun. Lots of food and a campfire were enjoyed at Chippewa Landing near Manton. Thank you to Jack Purkiss for organizing this event.



If you have an event, meeting or announcement you would like to share with the church family during July and August that is missing from this issue, please email the office at office@firstcongcadillac.org and we'll get the word out to everyone.



PRIDE SUNDAY

We had a good representation at the Pride Parade in Traverse City. We also held a Pride Sunday service conducted by the ONA committee. Below are some pictures from these two events:



Brie & Sandie Post



Report from Nancy Liebau – UCC WOMEN’S CONFERENCE

A few months ago, by chance or by God's HAND, I read about the UCC Women's Conference to be held in June: *The Gathering*.

Women's gatherings are not new to me. I have gathered yearly with women at the Adrian Dominican Motherhouse for 34 reflective retreat weekends where faith, fellowship and fun are in abundance! *The Gathering* promised educational presentations as well as arts and crafts and Bible Study. Also included: discussions, prayer, song, food, entertainment, and time alone with nature and our Creator!

What did I have to lose? Besides, Donna, Charlotte and Linda were going to be there! I signed up, arrived Friday afternoon for the Newcomers Meeting and "eased right in to this" gathering of Christian Women!

Among the highlights of the weekend were three presentations I chose to attend. The first: "If You Are White, You Are Privileged". The presenter had sent two articles to participants prior to the session in preparation for discussion. P. McIntosh calls white privilege "an elusive and fugitive subject" and Susan Grant, the hostess for the group, had no trouble leading a lively discussion.

Throughout the next hour stories were shared, eyes may have been opened, and most importantly, awareness awakened and perhaps some personal determination to continue the search. Donna shared a book with me, "Waking Up White" which I am reading at present.

The second session was about "Human Trafficking". With factual detail and handouts, the presenter brought the topic home not only to MI but to our local counties and neighborhoods. Again, with personal stories and discussion, the exploitation of children, youth, women, and men came to a new level of awareness. Is my chocolate, my coffee, being brought to me by the enslavement of others? Yes, I have seen the hotline numbers in MI rest areas but, have I paid attention to people there or in my neighborhood? As we left the session, I am sure the slogan "if you see something, say something" rang in the ears of all those in attendance - all tips are anonymous!

Thirdly, the keynote speaker, Rev Denise Daniels spoke to the theme, "The Worth of a Woman". Through her activities in Chicago and now Detroit, Denise speaks for the poor and the oppressed, acting and reacting to issues that demean and take advantage of others.

Denise enjoys "working" with clay seeing it as a way to be close to the earth, sometimes messy, and close to our Creator, who is always shaping and reshaping us. She led us in prayer and meditation at the close of her presentation: "God shapes me, I don't shape God".

In conclusion, I am certain that the HAND of God led me to this weekend - I needed some "shaping" - I am looking forward to the next Gathering of the Women of the United Church of Christ!

By the way - our very own Donna won the 50/50 drawing! It will come as no surprise to know Donna returned her winnings to the United Church of Christ to be used in preparing future pastors for the Church. You are a Woman of Worth, Donna!



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JUNE MEETING

Marie Linn, Church Clerk

Use of the church office was discussed regarding the computer and other office equipment by persons other than staff and church officers. After much discussion, it was agreed that the office and its equipment needs to be respected and recognized as for business use and care be taken to keep it in good working condition, as well as the cleanliness of the office, so staff can work efficiently.

There will be an Early Christian Worship service in Fellowship Hall on July 29 and will include Communion. This will also be a potluck. Following the meal we will have our semi-annual meeting and a speaker on Safety and how it impacts our church. The congregation will be able to think about the information presented and then there will be a vote on Sunday, August 12.

A proxy form (see below) will be included in the church newsletter in the event you are not able to attend the August 12 church service to share your vote regarding church security. Proxy forms should be placed in a sealed envelope for privacy and are due in the church office no later than Monday, August 11.

Committees were discussed and two new committees were proposed which will be discussed at the semi-annual meeting.

Discussion occurred regarding upkeep of the church grounds and garden.

The Board meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.



VOTING PROXY

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - UCC
CADILLAC, MI

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that I am a member of the First Congregational Church UCC in Cadillac, MI, and that the person designated below has the authority to vote for me in my absence at the August 12, 2018 church service regarding Church Security during services. I have chosen the option for permission of their vote as follows (check one):

as my designated voter wishes.

as I have designated below*.

This proxy ballot must be received by the Church Clerk no later than August 11, 2018.

Name of Designated Voter (PLEASE PRINT):

Signature of Absentee Voter:

*My vote should be:

Lock all doors during service

Lock all doors, but not front door during service

Lock no doors during service

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE: JULY

Date	Greeters/ Ushers	Liturgist	Fellowship Hour	Sexton	Preacher
July 1	Karma Chapo & Donna Debney	Karen Rowley	Penny Phelps	Sara Keinath	Pat Ponczek
July 8	Charlotte Barfield & Sue Wachowski	Karma Chapo	<i>Volunteer(s) needed</i>	Bob LeVand	Pat Ponczek
July 15	Don & Nancy Liebau	Ralph Annis	Don & Nancy Liebau	Marie Linn	Rev. John Doud
July 29	Service in Fellowship Hall Tom & Diane Jobson	Tom Jobson	<i>Volunteer(s) needed</i>	Tom Jobson	Rev. John Doud

JULY 2018 CHURCH CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>1</u> Worship 10:30 am	<u>2</u> Office 10:30- 1:00	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> INDEPENDENCE DAY	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>8</u> Worship 10:30 am	<u>9</u> Office 10:30- 1:00	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>15</u> Worship 10:30 am	<u>16</u> Office 10:30- 1:00	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> Office 10:30-1:00 Board of Trustees: 2:00pm	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>22</u> Worship 10:30 am PET BLESSING 3 pm	<u>23</u> Office 10:30- 1:00	<u>24</u>	<u>20</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>29</u> Worship 10:30 am in Fellowship Hall; Communion, SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK	<u>30</u> Office 10:30- 1:00	<u>31</u>	<i>July's Mission: Back Pack Program</i>			

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE: AUGUST

Date	Greeters/ Ushers	Liturgist	Fellowship Hour	Sexton	Preacher
August 5	Dick & Karen Rowley	Sue Wachowski	<i>Volunteer(s) needed</i>	Sue Wachowski	Rev. John Doud
August 12	Mike & Joyce Oatley	Catherine Doud	<i>Volunteer(s) needed</i>	John Smith	Rev. John Doud
August 19	Laura Jacobson & Sam Pentces	Robin Corbin	<i>Volunteer(s) needed</i>	Linda Baynes	Penny Phelps
August 26	Gert & Sperry Claypool	Cindy Morley	<i>Volunteer(s) needed</i>	Sperry Claypool	Linda Baynes

AUGUST 2018 CHURCH CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<u>1</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<i>August Mission: Shepherd's Table</i>						
<u>5</u> Worship 10:30 am (Communion)	<u>6</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>12</u> Worship 10:30 am	<u>13</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u> Office 10:30-1:00 Board of Trustees: 2:00pm	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>19</u> Worship 10:30 am	<u>20</u> NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Office 10:30-1:00	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>26</u> Worship 10:30 am	<u>27</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u> Office 10:30-1:00	<u>30</u>	<u>31</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