

THE MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2022

First Congregational Church UCC
412 4th Street Manistee Mi



From The Pastor

Dear Friends,

December is upon us, and with it comes countdowns, parties, plans, shopping, grift wrapping, gift giving, good food, hugs, business, and so much more.

The Holiday Season can be very overwhelming. From our own holiday to do list, to social gatherings, to our everyday chores it can easily be just too much. And for many of us this season can be a time of grief as much as a time of joy. Maintaining a balance can feel like a Herculean task. As I was thinking about what to write in this months newsletter I even started to google "holiday self care" and that in and of itself was overwhelming. Pages and pages of long articles and lists all designed to make sure we can all live our best lives during this holiday season with titles like: "75 Self-Care Gifts You Can't Live Without" or "12 Days to A Stress Free Holiday" or "48 Ways to Find Peace in The Holiday Bustle." Even trying to find a moment of calm can feel like work.

I know that there is a lot going on everywhere, including here at church. I hope that in our many offerings, the small group discussions (in person or on zoom), the daily devotional books, the worship services; Victorian Sunday, The Longest Night, and Christmas Eve you find something that can help ground you in your faith and feed your spirit.

But I also offer you these 4 (yes just 4) simple tips for a more relaxing Season.

- 1). It is ok to pause.
- 2). It's more than ok to say "No" (remember 'no.' is a complete sentence).
- 3). Your best is TOTALLY enough.
- 4). There is no such thing as perfect.

And a bonus: Follow your bliss. Eat the cookies you love, listen to the music that gives you joy, put up the extra string of lights and watch whatever Christmas movie you like best, Die Hard, A Christmas Story, Home Alone, Elf, Polar Express, It's A Wonderful Life, Miracle on 34th Street, Christmas Vacation, or even Hallmark Classics.

Peace

Pastor Liz



Church Office Hours!

YES! WE'RE OPEN

Deb will be in the office Tuesday-Thursday from 9am- Noon

Pastor Liz will be in the office as much as possible Tuesday-Thursday. If you need to contact her when she is out of office, her email remains the best option, or call her home phone.

Reminder: During office hours please use the door bell so that Deb can buzz you in from her desk. the keypad lock is only for use when Deb isn't in the building.

Please Don't Forget The office will be closed the week between Christmas and New Years to give our staff an opportunity to enjoy this Holiday Season. If you need something that week please contact the Pastor at home or through email.



December Birthdays

- Dec 4- Sally Zielinski
- Dec 5- Erin Graham
Kathy Reeves
- Dec 7- Amanda Diesing
Germanese
- Dec 8- Erin Tabaczka
- Dec 11- Ron Sluis
- Dec 12- Ron Cowden
- Dec 20- Sage Myers
- Suzanne Schwing
- Dec 21- Will Somsel
- Dec 23- Nanci Swenson
- Dec 24- Darla Jones
- Dec 25- Mickey Finan
- Dec 27- Jacob Livingston

Happy Anniversary

- Dec 3- Stu and Kathy Swiger
- Dec 23- Kate Thomson and
Kevin Postma
- Dec 28- John and Kathi
Gumpper



Thank You!

The Bazaar was a huge success. A big thank you to the people who came in every week from January until the bazaar and past. Also a thank you to the people who were going out of town and checked to see if we needed anything. Another thank you to the people who donated things for us to use (Sweaters, fabric, plastic jars etc...). People who volunteered at the bazaar, the people who came and shopped. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Another Thank you to the people who helped with the Maker's Market. The weather was horrible but the people who rented tables said they would come back again. This event can grow!

Thank you The Craft Committee, Joanne, Linda and Chere

PS. The craft group will start up again on January 4th at 9am- See you there!

December Greeters

Dec 4- Bill and Sally
Mason
Dec 11-
Dec 18-
Dec 24 (5:00pm)-
Dec 25-

December Coffee Hour Host

Dec 4- Deboni/Rozga Family
Dec 11- Anna, John & Aphe Wojcik
Dec 18- Joanne and Chere
Dec 25-

December Liturgist

Dec 4- Scott Warsen
Dec 11-
Dec 18- Loren Bach
Dec 24-
Dec 25-

Please Consider Signing up as Greeters, Coffee Hour Hosts or Liturgists.

There are lots of opportunities to be a greeter or reader in December! We need extra speakers for Advent Candle Lighting. If you can help or have questions please see Pastor Liz, or someone from the Worship Team.



All Things Advent

Friends, Advent is well

underway. We are so excited to share our Advent Series with you during this season.

There are still lots of ways for you to participate this season.

- We will be looking for people who would like to help light the Advent Candles. Talk to Pastor Liz if you would like to help.
- Family Faith Formation Intergenerational Activity - December 11th right after worship.
- Be sure to grab an Advent Devotional this season. They are available as an ebook which can be used on your computer or mobil device.
- A family Advent Calendar you can do together.
- Please consider attending our Advent small group study, in person on Tuesday Nights or on Zoom with our friends from Connecticut.
- We will once again be offering a longest night worship on Wednesday Dec 21st.
- Weekly Videos based on our Devotional's Sabbath in the Kitchen released on facebook and youtube each Monday
- Christmas Eve Service Saturday Dec. 24th at 5:00pm
- Christmas Day Worship Sunday Dec. 25th at 10:00am



Outreach: Monthly Mission

Now- December 18: adopt a family for Christmas
If you would like to help. Please take a tag off the gift tree in the Fellowship Hall, be sure to sign up so we can be sure no one gets left out. Please bring wrapped gifts with the tag on them to the church by Sunday Dec. 18th.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

Wednesday Dec 21, 2022
7:00pm
412 4th Street

For some of us the Holidays can feel painful. Not all of us are up and cheery for the Christmas Season. If you are looking for a quiet place for reflection, worship, healing and hope please join us for this service. All are welcome.



Moderator's Musings

Advent is upon us with all the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. We are all getting ready for the big Victorian Christmas Weekend that the city of Manistee is famous for. Our beautiful sanctuary will be hosting the Community Chorus Victorian Christmas concert on Thursday December 1st at 7pm. Tickets will be available at the door. Many of our church choir members sing with this group and the rehearsals certainly indicate that the sanctuary will ring with the joyous music of the Christmas season.

We had quite a group of folks stay after the worship service on November 20th to help decorate the sanctuary. Many hands made light work and transformed the sanctuary with the true splendor of the advent season. The soup and salad potluck brunch was then enjoyed by the work crew where we also celebrated the annual stewardship drive and the end of the successful fund raising campaign that has paid back the \$75,000 we borrowed to pay for the sanctuary renovation. What an amazing accomplishment by everyone in this congregation! We had several major donations from folks who no longer live in Manistee but remember fondly the time they spent worshipping in this 130-year-old sanctuary!

The annual Heritage Bazaar was another big success despite the terrible weather. The bad weather challenged the first annual Makers' Market that featured 19 vendors two weeks later. Both events were successful in both financial and fellowship terms. Thanks to everyone who helped set up, helped staff the tables, sold raffle tickets, helped in the kitchen, or just shopped and bought something. Both these events will help us balance our budget in 2022.

We are taking up a collection to provide the five members of our staff with a Christmas gift. Please give your donation to John Helge or Ron Sluis anytime before Sunday December 18, 2022.

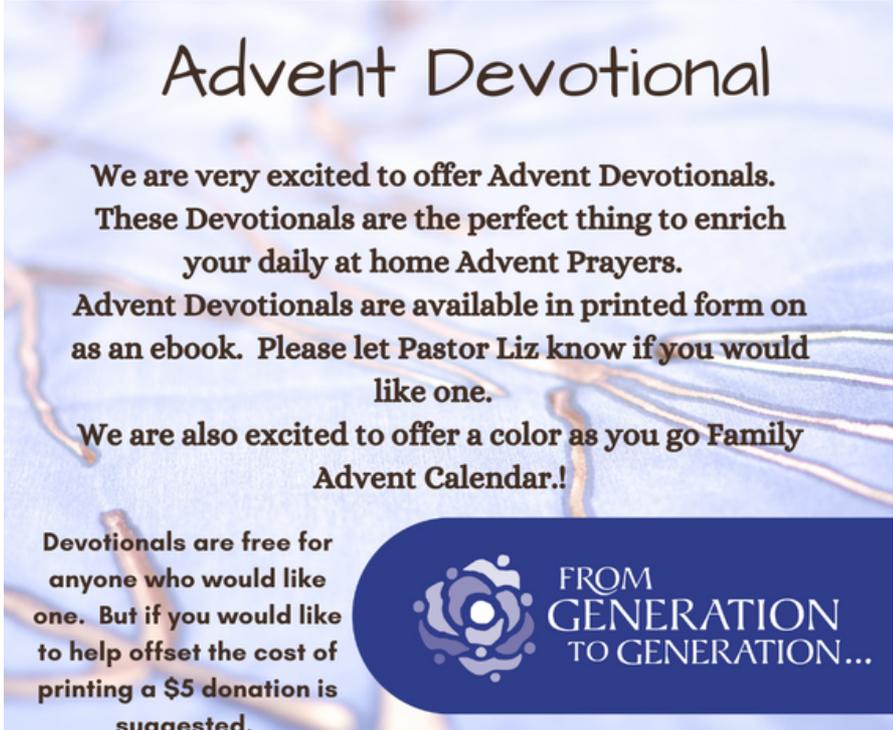
We hope to be able to make this Christmas a little cheerier for our dedicated staff members with your help!

See YOU in church!

John Helge.

Cell Phone: 616-915-2403.

Email: johnmhelge@gmail.com



Advent Devotional

We are very excited to offer Advent Devotionals. These Devotionals are the perfect thing to enrich your daily at home Advent Prayers. Advent Devotionals are available in printed form on as an ebook. Please let Pastor Liz know if you would like one.

We are also excited to offer a color as you go Family Advent Calendar.!

Devotionals are free for anyone who would like one. But if you would like to help offset the cost of printing a \$5 donation is suggested.



FROM
GENERATION
TO GENERATION...

Please Join Us

Christmas Eve Worship

Saturday December 24, 2022

Worship with Communion
5:00pm
All are welcome!

Check the Website and Facebook for live stream information

First Congregational Church UCC
uccmanistee.org
412 Fourth Street 231-723-5361

Christmas Eve worship is always a wonderful experience for so many members of our congregation. If you would like to help there is something for you to do. For Christmas Eve we need greeters, ushers and readers, and even musicians. Greeting and Ushering is a great way to help if you don't feel comfortable reading. If you would like to read something there are big reading parts and little reading parts. We will still have our choir and organist, but if you would like to offer a special prelude, or musical piece please let Pastor Liz know.

Everyone can help!

Family Faith Formation Sunday- December 11th

Join us for Family Faith Formation Sunday- December 11th. Be sure to put Family Faith Formation Sunday on your calendar this month. Please stay after worship and coffee hour for an intergenerational event. There will be story telling, Christmas and Advent craft making. And Christmas Carol Singing! We can't wait to spend some time with you!



Thank you to everyone who has turned a pledge form for the coming year. We have so far received 16 pledges. If you would like to and haven't done so yet there is still time. Pledge cards can be left in the offering plate or sent to the office.

<p>For CHURCH RECORDS Envelope # _____ (for office use)</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____</p> <p>I plan to give \$ _____ each <input type="checkbox"/> week <input type="checkbox"/> month beginning _____</p> <p>for an annual total of \$ _____ (dots and year)</p> <p>I understand that this commitment can be changed at any time by giving notice to the church officer.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would like to talk with someone about including the church or church-related institution in my will.</p> <p>Signed: _____ Text Date: _____</p> <p>From BREAD and CUP to FAITH and GIVING</p>	<p>For YOUR RECORDS</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>With others in my congregation, I commit myself to give in proportion to what I have for the ministries of the church and the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>I plan to give \$ _____ beginning _____ (date and year)</p> <p>Each <input type="checkbox"/> week <input type="checkbox"/> month</p> <p>Annual Total \$ _____</p>
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Advent Bible Study

Join us for a Small Group Study Session this Advent Season. We will take a closer look at the themes and art from our Advent Worship Series.

*In Person Tuesday at 7:00pm Starting November 29th
On zoom with Goshen Church of Christ Thursday nights
at 7:00pm Starting December 1st.*

Contact the Church Office for
more information.



FROM
GENERATION
TO GENERATION...

Banned Book Club and Raising Allies will be back in January!

Please plan to join us for our next Raising Allies Forum- An Intergenerational Discussion on how to support LGBTQ+ Community. January 10, 2023 at 6:00pm

Our Banned Book Club will meet to discuss "Copper Sun" by Sharon M. Draper on January 25th at 7:00pm.

We hope you can join us!

Manistee First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
412 4th Street
Manistee Mi, 49660