

THE MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER SECOND QUARTER 2025

First Congregational Church UCC
412 4th Street Manistee Mi



From The Pastor

Dear Friends,

**We have so little of each other, now. So far
from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange.**

**What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these
fleeting temples we make together when we say, "Here,
have my seat," "Go ahead—you first," "I like your hat."
-From the poem "Small Kindnesses" by Danusha Laméris**

I recently came across a reading of this poem, "Small Kindnesses", and I was struck by the last few lines. I've shared them with you here, but I encourage you to google the entire poem, perhaps even go to youtube so you can have someone read it to you (poetry is often much better when we hear it than when we read it). But I digress from the point of this message, which is the idea that perhaps these small kindnesses are "the true dwelling of the holy..."

It seems to me that it is so easy to live as selfish creatures. Everyday it feels like simply surviving takes a lot of work and energy, and the world itself doesn't make it any easier. It's easy to get caught up in trying to take care of ourselves. Life is hard and it can be ugly out there. And it is pretty obvious that a lot of folks in the world spend more time focusing on the "me" rather than the "we". But I can't help but think that when we do that we are missing out on a lot of good stuff.

I remember that when we read the creation story we hear that when God created human beings they were created in God's image. I have to wonder if that doesn't mean we just look like God, but perhaps we have a little tiny bit of the Holy within our beings. So maybe when we look into the face of one another we get to for a moment look into the face of God. When we smile at one another it is as if we are smiling at God. So when we offer just a little bit of grace and kindness to the strangers around us we offering a little bit of grace and kindness to the little bit of the Holy each one of us carries inside.

We have all heard the cliché "pull yourself up by your own bootstraps," but that isn't physically possible...don't believe me? Put on a pair of boots and try it. It just doesn't work, we need each other, and we need community. The world is hard enough on it's own, we don't need to add to it. In fact scripture reminds us not to conformed by the world, but instead to be renewed by our relationship with God. So when the world tells us to be unkind, to focus on our own needs first, let's push against that, and work as a community for all of us. After all as someone much wiser once said "It is what we do to care for each other that is the whole point."

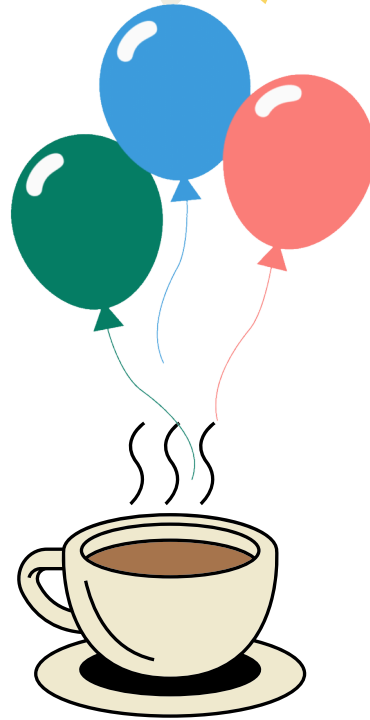
Even if we can't always see it, small kindnesses can make a huge difference.

Blessings- Pastor Liz



May Birthdays

- May 2- Charlie Patrick
Jack Carlson
Steve Lashbrook
- May 4- Lindsie Adams
- May 7- Nathaniel Burkhart
Nancy Ault
- May 8- Penny Kiss
Dale Priester (1936)
- May 10- Jim Uhl
- May 19- Lucas Maycock
- May 21- Gladys Kerns
- May 22- Ethan Skaggs
- May 30- Angela Young



May Anniversaries

- May 12- Bill and Pam
Weiner

Please Consider Signing up as Greeters, Coffee Hour Hosts, Sunday School Teachers or Liturgists. Sign up sheets are located in the hallway next outside of the small dining room.

May Liturgist

- May 4- Loren Bach
- May 11- Jane Lippert
- May 18- Loren Bach
- May 25- Loren Bach

May Coffee Hour Hosts

May Greeters

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| May 4-Kristen Kimm | May 4- DeBoni |
| May 11- Masons | May 11- Volunteer Needed |
| May 18- Volunteer Needed | May 18- Mason's |
| May 25- Volunteer Needed | May 25- Volunteer Needed |

May Sunday School Teachers

- May 4- Volunteer Needed
- May 11- Volunteer Needed
- May 18- Volunteer Needed
- May 25- Volunteer Needed

Wednesday Mornings

CRAFT GROUP

Everyone and Every Craft is Welcome
9:00am - Noon

We will be working on projects for the bazaar, or just bring something you are working on! There is help and fellowship!

Supporting Each Other

Many of you have commented on how wonderful it is to see church members at games, plays, and other community events to support each other's families. If you are doing something in the community or your kids have an event please email Pastor liz or Deb with the information and we will get it into the weekly bulletin.

From The Open and Affirming Team

The Raising Allies Forum surfaced at the end of April with an informative presentation and conversations on issues around gender and gender identity. We would like to host future events in conjunction with PFLAG, our partner in this endeavor. If there are topics you want to learn about or discuss with your friends and church family, please let us know.

June is Pride Month. The Pride in the 'Stee picnic will be held Saturday June 7th from 12-2 at the Lion's Pavilion at the end of First Street. Family oriented crafts and activities, picnic food, raffles, informational tables. The Church has had a table there the past two years to publicize and answer questions about our Open and Affirming congregation. (Any volunteers to help with the table?)

PFLAG and MARJDI have teamed up to sponsor "Art Speaks Pride," an art exhibit, featuring LGBTQ+ artists, for the entire month of June in Hardy Hall at the Ramsdell Theater. A reception for the artists opens the exhibit on Saturday, May 31 st , 5-7pm. The exhibit runs through the Forest Festival, closing July 6. Other June activities will include a free film at the Vogue, children's activities and, for the young at heart, possibly a drag show.

Jim, Sandy, Adriana, Dency

Mission and Outreach

Book/Puzzle Sale

Start collecting books and puzzles for the annual sale. It will be held August 8-9. Anyone interested and able to help let Sandy know.

May Mission of the Month - "Dinner in a Bag"

Recipes will be provided that require canned and nonperishable items. Our mission is to buy/donate the items, then bag and donate them to locals in need.

Please purchase/donate all the items on the recipe and put them in a bag with the recipe for the recipient to use. We will then donate them to various community organizations (like the senior center, Friendship Society, the food pantry at St. Joseph's Catholic Church).

Nametags :

If you'd like a name tag, please fill in the sheet on the table, the new nametags will be ordered the first week in May.

Birthday and Anniversary List :

We love to send out cards, especially on birthdays and anniversaries. If you are new to the congregation please consider putting your birthday or anniversary on the list located at on our card table. If you know of someone who could use a card please let Sandy know.

Ministry Report

Ministry Report for May 2025

The schedule for filling the pulpit on the Sundays that Pastor Liz is not preaching is shaping up. We invite you to consider taking part in this part of church life. If no one has specifically asked you to consider doing so....yet, please contact us for information about how it works. Pastor Liz and liturgists will help! So far, in 4 months time, we have had four wonderful, very different services from members of the congregation. We, the ministry committee, appreciate all of you who have answered affirmatively when asked. And yet, we also know that not everyone feels called to do this particular ministry.

We have also spent time this winter purchasing items for the graduation gifts for our four graduating seniors. For the past several years, we have given them some items for their dorm rooms. The easiest way to ensure that we found what we needed for each was to purchase first and then ask for donations to cover the expense. We will put out a donation box (near the cards for signing) for donations. (To give you an idea, we spent about \$65.00 per student.) If we happen to collect extra money, we will save it for our next graduates.

Joanne and Nanci

News from Chere's Sweatshop (Craft Group)

The craft group meets on Wednesday from 9:00am-4:00pm. Come and go as you wish.

We made the shut-ins a framed carrot patch decoration. Linda and I delivered them along with the flowers from Easter.

We are putting on a sewing and craft camp June 12,13 and 14th. Thursday (the 12th) from 1:00pm-9:00pm, Friday and Saturday (13th and 14th) from 9:00am-9:00pm. We will serve dinner only on Thursday, and dinner and lunch on Friday and Saturday. Bring your projects to work on, the cost is \$60 for all 3 days. You can register for single days at a lower cost if you can't make the entire weekend. Please sign up ahead of time so we can be sure to have enough tables and food.

MANISTEE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
412 4TH STREET

SEWING & CRAFT CAMP

2 & 1/2 DAYS OF CRAFTING & FELLOWSHIP

THURSDAY JUNE 12
FRIDAY JUNE 13
SATURDAY JUNE 14

INCLUDES 2 LUNCHES & 3 DINNERS
(NO LUNCH THURSDAY)

THURSDAY 1PM-9PM
FRI & SAT 9AM-9PM

ONLY \$60

Use the QR code to register. Questions contact the church office (723-5361) or email @ eventsmfcucc@gmail.com.

We are opening it for kids to come on Friday from 9:00am-3:00pm. They will make a fire cracker table runner and a pillowcase. All materials will be provided for the table runner. We are encouraging kids to bring their own fabric for the pillow case, $\frac{3}{4}$ yard for the pain part and $\frac{1}{3}$ yard for the cuff. We can cut the fabric if needed. A sample of each project is made and hanging on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Kids camp is \$25, and lunch is provided. We are asking that people sign up ahead of time so we can be sure to have enough help and enough supplies.

If you have any questions please see Chere or Pastor Liz.

MANISTEE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
412 4TH STREET

SEWING CAMP JUST FOR KIDS

PROJECTS AND LUNCH PROVIDED

WE WILL MAKE A 4TH OF JULY TABLE RUNNER AND A PILLOWCASE.

IF YOU HAVE A SEWING MACHINE PLEASE BRING IT

**FRIDAY JUNE 13TH
10:00AM-3:00PM**

FABRIC NEEDED FOR PILLOWCASE:
MAIN FABRIC : ¾ YARD
COORDINATING COLOR ½ YARD

ONLY **\$25**



Use the QR code to register. Questions contact the church office (723-5361) or email @ eventsmfucc@gmail.com.

Kids Camp

Space for “Kids Camp” is limited so please sign up right away.

If you have any questions please see Chere or Pastor Liz.

Don't miss out on this fun opportunity!

Fellowship Report

Oh my, isn't it great to be back up in our beautiful sanctuary again. Stu and I are happy to see so many signing up and staying for coffee hour. Fellowship isn't just about coffee hour, it's getting together with church people to have fun. On Thursday evening May 1st we will have an opportunity for fellowship at North Channel Brewery where Kevin's band will be performing. If you haven't heard them, you need to, they are incredible. See you in church or maybe Thursday night. Mary and Stu

Monthly Mission



Manistee First Congregational
Monthly Mission
Helping our Community
One Month at A Time

Local food insecurities run rampant even in our small community. We can help by providing meals in a bag... a complete meal for a family of 4.

1. Choose a recipe from the envelope.
2. Buy or donate the ingredients listed on the recipe.
3. Put them in a bag with the recipe inside.

Bring the filled bag to church and we will then donate them to various community organizations (like the senior center, Friendship Society, the food pantry at St. Joseph's Catholic Church etc).





**LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
AT 7:00PM:**

Banned Book Club

**JOIN US EACH MONTH FOR COMMUNITY AND CONVERSATION
AS WE EXPLORE STORIES.**

Coming up:

May 28th

Diary of a Young Girl

By: Anne Frank

June 25th

All The Bright Places

By: Jennifer Nevin

July 30th

New Kid

By: Jerry Craft

Manistee First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

412 4th Street

Manistee Mi, 49660