

The Carillon

April, 2024

First Congregational Church
Your Independent Worship Center
714 Hillcrest Drive - Fremont MI 49412
231-924-4710
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Executive Committee

Minutes – 3/25/24

Present – Pastor Luke, Lou D, Dean M, Jean M, Jack B, Pat K, Carrie D, Ruth C, Jack S, John.

Opening prayer, 6:30pm – Pastor Luke.

Approval of 2/26/24 EC meeting – M-Dean. S-Jean. Approved.

Public comments – none.

Board Reports

Charitable Giving (Jack B) – will meet March 27 to address a number of current topics.

Deacons (Ruth) -

Ruth read note from Stacey Church, Music Committee (reports to Deacons) – it is suggested to restart the Praise Group but there is not a piano player available every Sunday for a variety of reasons. Dean is Music Committee Chair and will look into resolving this dilemma.

Bible Study to start.

Family Night, the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month, 6:00pm, are in process.

No coffee on Easter Sunday.

The Deacons are calling all Members/Friends in the interest of good communications.

The April meeting set for the 2nd Sunday is rescheduled to the 1st Sunday, April 7.

Christian Education – no report.

Trustees (John) – the financial statement for Jan/Feb was reviewed; there are no surprises, FCC is solvent.

Women's Fellowship (Jean) – the group will meet April 3 to discuss a Tea Party, a fund raiser for Guatemala and other fun stuff.

Men's Fellowship (Dean) – the last meeting was Feb.7, Chef was Jim Rynberg, Tom Schmidt lead Devotion, Scott Swinehart spoke on his Patriot Farm for Veterans. Next meeting, April 3 with speaker Jackilyn Roseberry, Fremont Library.

Technology Board (Jack S) – a) ready to go live on April 14; b) action photos needed and Pat will ask Kelly Parks if she has some; c) Jack S will ask Jeff if he can produce a still photo of the congregation waving palm fronds on Palm Sunday for inclusion in the new website.

Pastor Luke's report -

Pleased with participation the Lenten Season.

A new member class is finished and three people will become members of FCC on April 21. Three additional people have expressed interest in joining, too.

Good Friday service at FCC is set for 6:00pm.

Easter 3/31 – we're ready for the service at 10:00am. An Easter Egg Hunt, organized by Crystal will follow in Fellowship Hall, including the presence of a live rabbit and Crystal taking *action photos*

Family Night is March 27, 6:00pm, potluck.

Lorene will be away from FCC April 1-7 and Pastor Luke April 3-5. Pastor Luke is taking steps to assure that Pastoral care is available in case there is an emergency.

Creation Care, April 21; details to be announced.

Family Night, April 10 – Pat will bring pizza.

Acceptance of reports – M-Jean. S-Pastor Luke. Approved.

Old business – none.

New business – Pastor Luke

Rooms of Refuge – up to twenty guests in need of a place to spend the night will spend the nights of April 22 – 28 in FCC. Boards will provide seven dinners and one lunch. There will also be a House Dad/Mother staying overnight with our guests.

New website – launching April 14.

Summer ecumenical services in the Park - May 26, July 7 and September 1. FCC will pay the total \$90 rental for the Park, donate a box of communion elements, provide/handout bulletins.

All church meeting, April 14 – the purpose/goals are to encourage ideas and feedback from the Members; identify new activities, the need for participation and how to execute these programs (action steps); implement a new Bible Study; discuss outreach to new people and invite their attendance at FCC; solicit ideas to be put in a Suggestion Box before the 4/14 meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm. **Next meeting**, April 22 at 6:30pm.

Scribe for 3/25/24

Jack B

Board of Charitable Giving

The Board of Charitable Giving met March 27.

a) Contributions for the first half of 2024 \$300 each to:

- Compassion Home
- Love INC/Rooms of Refuge
- Hygiene Bags w/Inspire church
- Community Chest
- Newaygo County Prevention of Child Abuse.

b) FCC will host 10-20 homeless people from Love INC's Rooms of Refuge program the nights of April 22-28. Details on Rooms of Refuge are contained in this edition of Carillon. Various groups within FCC will prepare seven dinners and one lunch. Charitable Giving will prepare/serve dinner on Tuesday, April 23 at 6:30pm and stay to visit with our guests for an hour or so.

Jack Butterick, Chair

Pantry Spring Cleaning

If your annual regimen includes re-organization of your food pantry and you have extra canned goods, please consider bringing them to the True North basket in the church narthex. 15% of the people in Newaygo County live below the poverty level and will appreciate our generosity. Jack Butterick

Board of
Charitable Giving



Walk Up Choir:

Sunday, April 21 is our next time to sing. Rehearsal is 9:30 or just “walk up” when we are ready to sing. Our song will be “He Lives!”



Town Hall

Sunday, April 14 following worship we will have an All Church Town Hall Meeting with Casual Conversation. A brunch will also be served (breakfast casserole, fruit, etc). Please consider joining us!!

New Website Launch

After many, many months of discussion, gathering information, taking pictures, finding a developer, etc we are ready to launch our new updated church website. Be sure you check it out and let us know what you think!!



The launch date is Sunday, April 14.

Thank you to the website committee for their hard work in revamping the site and the material.

Check it out and let us know what you think!

We will be hosting ROOMS OF REFUGE in Fellowship Hall on April 22 - April 29. Below is information of what Rooms of Refuge is.

WHAT IS ROOMS OF REFUGE?

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Newaygo County has the 5th highest rate of homelessness in the state of Michigan, with 18.8% of children experiencing homelessness by the 5th grade. Love INC has seen the faces of these statistics walk through our doors and we hear the stories from many other community pastors and leaders who



want to help but have very limited ways of stepping in. While we know some efforts are being taken in the county to address housing insecurities, safe and effective emergency sheltering remains nonexistent.

Love INC is proposing a rotating emergency shelter, Rooms of Refuge, which will utilize local church partners and their facilities. The rotating shelter model is not new or unique. In fact, the model has been around for almost 40 years and is currently being used in over 200 communities with well over 3,000 churches involved around the nation! (*Search Family Promise or Interfaith Hospitality Network online to read more about the extensive history and success of the rotating shelter model.*)

With confidence in the efficacy of this model, Love INC is launching Rooms of Refuge as a local response to the housing insecurities we are now facing on a frequent basis. Rooms of Refuge will serve families, as well as adult individuals.

We believe Rooms of Refuge is a viable and appropriate strategy for three primary reasons:

- I. Newaygo County does not currently have any other emergency shelters available. Individuals are being referred to neighboring counties or motels, or they are forced to seek alternatives that might not be safe or beneficial.
- II. Statistically, we know that individuals are more likely to stay in shelters longer when it is a “brick and mortar” shelter—they are more likely to settle in without a sense of urgency to make the arrangements for permanent housing. Whereas, research and decades of experience show that people are more likely to have a shorter stay when participating in a rotating shelter model. The experience, while safe and welcoming, is still a bit uncomfortable and inconvenient. It involves packing up his or her belongings night after night, and staying at a different church each week.
- III. Rooms of Refuge will complement other current efforts and services in Newaygo County by filling in a gap.

Like the rotating emergency shelters in other communities, the purpose of implementing Rooms of Refuge is to address homelessness and provide a safe and welcoming environment for individuals or families with housing insecurities.

Love INC will facilitate a temporary place for families or individuals to stay through its network of local churches. Host congregations will provide an evening meal and optional activities, as well as a private space to sleep at night. In the mornings, Love INC will provide transportation to another site where Love INC’s Day Center will be stationed. Guests will have access to showers, laundry facilities, computers, and a place to receive support while they are searching for housing or employment. Every guest will meet with a case manager regularly to develop and execute an individualized action plan to guide them in taking the next necessary steps for success.

More than a dozen churches, as well as other agency partners, are committed and united in their efforts to address the issue of homelessness in Newaygo County. This project is truly one that involves an extensive network of many hands and feet coming together to make a difference in the community.

Please consider joining this collaborative movement!

April Dates to Note:

Monday, April 1 - Women's Fellowship Board - 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, April 2 - Book Circle - 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 3 - Men's Luncheon 12:00 noon

Sunday, April 7 - Defibrillator Instruction Presentation - 11:15 a.m.

Monday, April 8 - Technology Board - 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 10 - Family Night - 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 14 - Special Music - Jean Howarth

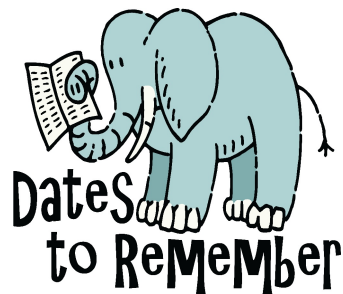
Sunday, April 14 - All Church Town Hall Meeting & Brunch - 11:15 a.m.

Monday, April 15 - Trustees - 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 21 - Walk Up Choir - 9:30 a.m.

Monday, April 22 - Executive Council - 6:30 p.m.

Monday, April 22 - Monday, April 29 - Rooms of Refuge



Wood Shop is once again opening when two or more are gathered

Christmas Crafters - Thursday - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

April Birthdays

- 7 Carrie DeMull
- 8 David Zeerip
- 11 Yvonne Lee
- 19 Arnold Dougan
- 21 Bill Black
Linda Oosterhouse
- 24 Beth Hooker
- 27 Mary Butterick



April Anniversaries

- 6 Gary & Beth Hooker
- 19 Arnie & Betty Dougan
- 24 Duane & Loretta VanDuzen
- 30 Pat & Robin Dekleva

The Easter Story - Pastor Luke

One of the aspects of Christianity that I have grown to cherish is how the more one delves into it, the more one discovers. This Easter, I found myself experiencing a fresh revelation. As I pondered the Easter narrative, I realized its profound centrality. It serves as the cornerstone of our understanding of the world and informs our actions within it. We seek to embody its message in both grand gestures and everyday interactions.

Our journey into the Christian life commences with baptism, a symbolic participation in Christ's death and resurrection. Through communion, we commemorate and partake in the benefits of the Easter story. In the elements of bread and wine, we perceive, feel, and taste the essence of Christ's sacrifice—the shedding of his blood and the breaking of his body. The significance of Sunday worship lies in its commemoration of the day of Christ's resurrection. Our liturgical service structure mirrors the key events of Christ's life: we are called to worship, confess our sins, receive forgiveness, engage with the word, and are commissioned for mission. Even the daily rising of the sun echoes the resurrection, serving as a tangible reminder of renewal and hope.

This narrative is retold incessantly because it stands as the single most pivotal event in history. Everything hinges upon it, thus compelling us to repeatedly share its story. Recognizing this reality provides us with deeper insights into our faith. It enables us to discern its fundamental themes and prompts us to contemplate their implications—themes such as sin, God's boundless love, new life, resurrection, and the ultimate defeat of evil. The question then arises: how do we embody the resurrection narrative in our daily lives? As we continue to reflect on the Easter story and its significance, may we be inspired to live out its transformative message each day.

