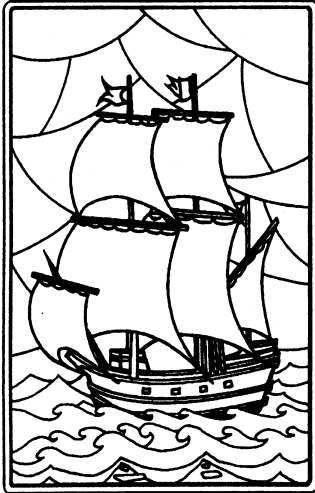


THE PILGRIM VISITOR

First Congregational Church of Royal Oak
1314 Northwood Boulevard, Royal Oak, Michigan 48073
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Summer, 2011-Vol. 37, No. 7



July 31

FCC Golf Outing at Royal Oak Golf Course

August 10

Pilgrim Visitor Deadline for September



**Senior
Minister's
Minute by
John
Miller**

It must be summer.

We have a tomato plant taking over one wall of our house in the back yard.

It must be summer.

We just replaced the hammock that we have worn out since it was a wedding present seven years ago.

It must be summer.

Baseballs whiz around our yard (and the neighbors' yards) and basketballs bounce until late in the evening.

It must be summer.

People head "Up North" although they may wind up hundreds of miles apart!

Summer can bring people together. For parades, for fireworks, for picnics, for ballgames, for gardening, for exploration and more.

We gathered on July 10 outdoors for our summer communion service, heard the word, prayed, worshipped, broke bread and shared the cup.

We spoke of sowing seeds while under the trees above the Social Hall.

We spoke of God's extravagant love for us as the wind rustled the branches.

We stood on the old Clawson farm and thought about the wonders of the cycle of life and new life all around us.

Each season in this rich state of ours can give us

new and refreshed perspectives on this creation and on our creator.

Summer is a time for images of abundance to me.

Plants burst forth.

Animals scamper about.

Storms rise up.

Heat wilts down.

People gather outside.

Activity flourishes in the summer.

And we can be renewed as we watch it all.

Inspired to step out, eyes open to the wonder of it all, hearts lifted as we gather with friends and family, we can choose an attitude of thanksgiving.

We can use the extra light of day to be warmed in body by the sun, in spirit by the abundance and in mind by reflection on all of God's glory.

We are so blessed, and each season helps us to understand that in different ways.

So use this summer and all its possibilities. Embrace the abundance. Consider some new thoughts and reflect on familiar images.

One thought...the good folks at Read The Spirit (readthespirit.com) offered a reflection and exercise on prayer. You can read more here: <http://www.readthespirit.com/explore/2011/5/2/j-philip-newell-invites-us-all-open-our-eyes-in-prayer.html>

The idea is to create prayers that begin with "Open my eyes to..." and inspire us to new awareness and insights.

God promises us the beauty of the seasons, their diversity and the voice of the creation around us. May our eyes be opened in new ways to God through the gifts of summer that are all around us.

If you create a prayer through this exercise, I would love to hear about it. Share it on the church Facebook page, send me a message at minister@fccro.org or drop it at church. And enjoy this summer and its wonders! Amen.



**Impressions
from ...
The Director of
Family Ministries**

Have you ever taken a “staycation?” That relatively new term usually refers to taking time off work and exploring interesting sites that are very close to your own home. Recently, FCC became the perfect destination for an exciting staycation that was enjoyed by an energetic inter-generational group that traveled to Africa without leaving Royal Oak! More than one hundred people, age one through eighty, were included in the adventure, which was also known as Vacation Bible School Prayer Safari 2011.

Anyone who entered our building between June 27 and July 1st could step into the sanctuary to see a tall giraffe, a handsome zebra, a fuzzy lion, and a cute elephant gathered in front of a beautiful sunset scene of the Serengeti grassland. Those who were especially brave could go upstairs to photograph a real (but no long living) lion hiding in the bushes near the balcony, or venture into the social hall to touch the perfectly striped skin of a zebra.

While making African- theme crafts, creating their own snacks (including Hippo Cooler ice cream), playing outdoor games, and singing upbeat songs, our travelers learned the meaning of each part of the Lord’s Prayer. We discovered that God listens, God provides, God forgives, God protects, and God rules!

One of our favorite songs was “Harambe,” which means “working together” in Swahili. It was such a joy to see teen helpers working with adult leaders and older children helping younger ones all week. I want to say a heart-felt “ASANTE” (thank you) to everyone who labored before, during, and after to make our safari experience such an exciting, fun-filled, memorable, spiritual journey!

Dianne Kruszman



**From the Director
of Pastoral Care
Ministries**

“Slow Me Down, Lord”

Wilferd A. Peterson

Slow me down, Lord!

Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind.

Steady my harried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give me, amidst the confusions of my day, the calmness of the everlasting hills.

Break the tensions of my nerves with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory.

Help me to know the magical power of sleep, teach me the art of taking minute vacations, of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with an old friend or make a new one, to pat a dog, to watch a spider build a web, to smile at a child or to read a few lines from a good book.

Remind me each day that the race is not always to the swift, that there is more to life than increasing its speed.

Let me look upward into the branches of the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well.

Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life’s enduring values that I may grow toward the stars of my greater destiny.

BIRTHDAYS (80+)...

July

12—Joseph Sundell

17—Bruce Pearce

23—John McNaughton

29—Frank Bartlett

29—George “Cal” Green

August

none on record

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY (50+)...

Richard and Shirley Dickman (August 17)

Earnst and Carol Syerson (August 29)

Barb Deiss

Book Donations Needed

The FCC Library will start accepting donations of new and gently used books, which are especially appreciated as we approach the October Book Sale. Books may be placed in the crate in front of the Library beginning September 4th. We welcome encyclopedias, hardcover and paperback novels, biographies, mysteries, science fiction, non-fiction, self-help, how-to, religious and children's books. Please do not donate musty or moldy books, old textbooks, torn or damaged books, magazines, catalogs or law books. Just a quick reminder the Library is open each Sunday in the summer, a great place for that vacation reading. Thank you for your continued support.



Summer Greetings from the Trustees

We are pleased to report that as of the end of June we are in the black. Let's keep the good news coming by making sure that YOU keep your pledges up to date. While we want all of you to have a wonderful summer vacation, the church does NOT go on vacation. Our doors are open, staff is working and the needs of the congregation continue to be met on a daily basis. So, while you are mailing out postcards to family and friends from wherever you are.....drop your check in the mail to FCC. We'll be here when you get back to town!



Pictorial Directory

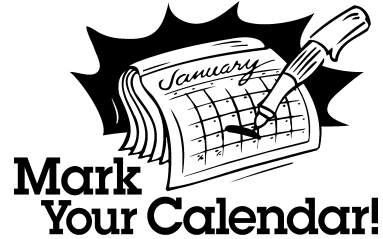
Our last pictorial directory was published in 2006 and there have been many changes in our church family in the past five years. Sadly, we have lost twenty-six of those pictured. Many new babies have joined us and we have gathered new families into our congregation. It's time for us to create a new directory!

Photography will take place in the Fellowship Room just before Thanksgiving. The dates will be Thursday, November 17 through Wednesday, November 23 (with the exception of Sunday, November 20.) We will begin making appointments in October.

This is a great opportunity for family portraits. Groups within multiple generational families may wish to make adjoining individual appointments and then have a large group picture taken. Each household photographed will receive a complimentary 8x10 color copy of the picture appearing in the directory. Photographs may be purchased, as well, with a delivery before Christmas.

Those individuals/families who will not be in the area of our church during the photography session ("snow birds," college students, or those serving in the military, for example) have the opportunity to be photographed locally beginning in August for inclusion in our directory. Call Kathy Howell 248-288-4806 for information about alternate times and locations.

Amateur photographers are encouraged to take pictures of church people and activities in the months ahead. We will need a variety of photos for the activity pages of the directory.



2011 Covenant Class

Danny Christy Rachel Cooper
Tatum Eidson Chantelle Ellis
Regan Larsen Manon Nitta
Katie Whitfield

PV Deadline for the summer:

August 10 for the September PV

PARISH REGISTER

Baptism

Edward James Johnson, son of Robert Johnson
and Sharon Stanton-May 15, 2011

Death

Jeanne Nielsen-June 30, 2011

Golfers Needed!

Sign up for the annual FCC golf outing on July 31,
3:00 pm at the Royal Oak Golf Course. The cost is
\$50.00 for golf, food, prizes and fellowship. Please
contact Lori Dixon 248-229-3571 or
ldixon8102@aol.com to get in on the fun!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ROYAL OAK

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The Rev. John F. Miller, *Senior Minister* Melissa Ambrose-Eidson, *Minister of Music*
Dianne Kruzman, *Director of Family Ministries* Barbara Deiss, *Director of Pastoral Care Ministries*
Patricia Noll, *Administrative Assistant* Lori Dixon, *Adult Bell Choir Director*