

The Carillon

September, 2026

First Congregational Church
Your Independent Worship Center
714 Hillcrest Drive - Fremont MI 49412
231-924-4710
congo@fremontfcc.org ~ www.fremontfcc.org
Deeply Rooted ~ Future Focused
151 years ~ 1875-2026



How do we do this? - Pastor Luke

That is a question I often find myself asking. How in the world is this going to happen? I sit in my office, stare out the window, and wonder. How are we going to reach our goals? How are we going to get more people involved in small groups? How are we going to grow our Sunday School Program? How are we going to grow our Church? I feel like these questions should be similar to questions about losing weight. Not easy, but fairly clear what to do. Hard but simple would be nice. But becoming a healthier church is not so simple. Healthy is different from big. But numerical growth is part of being healthy. Health is also different than age. But we want to have more children as part of our church. And there isn't some simple program that helps a church grow healthy, nor is there a simple program that helps a church grow bigger or younger either. So the truth is I do not know what to do to help the church grow.

Thankfully, church renewal comes from the Holy Spirit. Revival, renewal, and new life are the work of the Holy Spirit in the people. Not the work of the pastor, the Executive Council, nor anyone else. Humanity can not do it by our own power. If we are closed to the Holy Spirit, it does not matter what we do. The church will never become what God desires it to be. It will never reach Fremont for God or build his kingdom. God is the one who works through the church and the one who draws people to himself. So if we want to become the church God desires (and that is what a healthy church is), we must open ourselves to God and be led by the Holy Spirit. Change only comes through the work of the Holy Spirit.

So this leads us to the problem. If there is no program, and change only comes through the work of the Holy Spirit. Then what do we do? The answer is simple. We pray. That is where we start. Prayer is the plan. How do we grow our Sunday School program? We pray every day for it to grow. We pray that we have the opportunity to share our faith with young families. We pray that we are ready if children arrive. We pray for wisdom. And it is much the same for how we grow as a church. We pray. We pray for the church to grow. We pray that we have the courage and strength to invite people to church and share our faith with them. Prayer is the plan. Will you pray with me?



Stewardship Letters:

Stewardship Letters were sent out this week. Please prayerfully consider what you are able to pledge for 2027. If you did not receive a letter and would like to receive one please call or email the church office at congo@fremontfcc.org. The Trustees ask that your pledge card be returned by Sunday, Sept 13 so they can begin work on the budget for 2027.



Men's Fellowship Lunch:



After a summer break our Men's Fellowship Lunches at noon on the first Wednesday of the month begin this Wednesday, September 2. Our chef will be Ted Caris and Bill Black will be our speaker talking about his Navy Experiences. All men are invited! Wednesday, September 2 at 12:00 noon.

Coffee Host Volunteers are Needed:

Would YOU be willing to make and serve coffee following worship on occasion? There is a sign up sheet on the counter in Fellowship Hall for Coffee Hosts (we do sign ups for two months at a time - or call the church office and Lorene will sign you up for any time!)



Altar Flowers:



Included on the Coffee Host sign up is a sign up for Altar Flowers - if you would like to provide flowers please sign up on sheet on the counter in Fellowship Hall. They can be from your garden, from the florist, etc. If you would like a note in the bulletin regarding your flowers please let Lorene know - perhaps in honor or in memory or something special in your life or family, etc.

No Worship Here next Sunday:

Next Sunday, September 6 we will be worshipping together with local churches at the Farmer's Market location at 10:00 a.m. Please bring a chair if you are able - there will be a few chairs available.



Labor Day:

The church office will be closed on Monday, September 7 in observance of Labor Day.



Harvest Festival Parade:

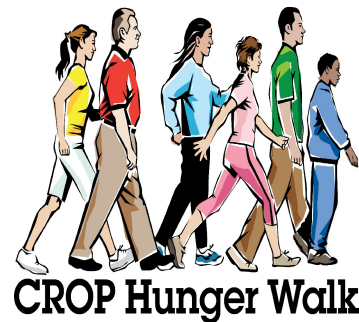


The parade staging will once again be using our parking lot. We are planning to show our hospitality to the participants by offering water and cookies (no candy). If you are willing to donate 2 dozen homemade or bakery cookies please have them to the church by Wednesday, September 23.

CROP Walk - Sunday, October 4:

We will be having our NOISY Offering on the last Sunday of September and that offering will be donated to the CROP Walk.

On Sunday, October 4 the Women's Fellowship will be having a Soup Luncheon (Make a Meal Soup) following worship. All you can eat in exchange for a CROP Walk donation.



If you would like to make a donation to CROP Walk envelopes are available on the table in the narthex. Please make your check payable to CWS/CROP.

Lessons That Last

Most of us can remember a Sunday school teacher who made a lasting difference in our lives. Sometimes the simplest lessons become the ones we carry with us the longest.

One man recalled his high school Sunday school teacher, a businessman named Mr. Homan, who shared this advice with the boys in his class: "Don't ever go anywhere you would not want your mother or sister to go. Don't ever do anything you would not want your mother or sister to do."

Years later, the man reflected on those words and said, "That advice has served me well. I have always remembered it."

God often uses faithful teachers to plant seeds of wisdom, character and integrity in young hearts. Their influence may not always be seen right away, but the lessons they share can guide lives for years to come.

Never underestimate the power of a few thoughtful words spoken with love and conviction.



Directory Updates:

Fletcher, Kathy* 231-924-1091
(Dawn, Jennifer, April)
3483 S Ramshorn
Fremont MI 49412
fletchergene45@yahoo.com

Kellerman, Alex* & Cathy*
New phone # 231-225-6226

Lee, Yvonne*
c/o Craig Lee
3308 Strabane Drive
Glenelg MD 21737
crang_and_jan@verizon.net

Nadeau-Salacina, Judy*
2931 E & 2nd Street
Newaygo MI 49337
(New address)

Posnik, Rap (f) & Karen (f) 231-883-1985
436 Mary Lane 231-883-6250
Fremont MI 49412
holybaggage@outlook.com

Pfeiffer, Luke* & Karla*
(Falon)
karlapfeiffer29@gmail.com

Spradlin, Sandy*
sandraspadlin1953@gmail.com

Stroschin, Michael* and Jane*
231-301-5910 (new cell - Jane - prefers cell phone over emailing her)



8-30-26

***If you have an update that we should be aware of please let the church office know -
congo@fremontfcc.org or 231-924-4710. Thank you!***

September Birthdays

- 19 Betty Dougan
20 Brad Church
John Cooper
23 Nancy Lindner
27 Judy Nadeau
Jane Stroschin
29 Troyer Church
30 Norah Schmalz



September Anniversaries

- 23 Pete & Nancy Lindner

Rest for the Soul



Studies show many Americans don't get enough sleep, and the effects can take a toll on both body and mind. Whether it's a packed schedule or restless nights, a lack of rest makes it harder to think clearly, stay focused and care for our overall well-being. Over time, that constant fatigue begins to wear us down.

Our spiritual lives follow a similar rhythm. When we rush from one task to the next without pausing to spend time with God, we can feel just as drained. We need consistent, quiet moments with Him to stay grounded, encouraged and strong in our faith.

Even Jesus made space for this kind of rest. Luke 5:16 tells us that He often withdrew to quiet places to pray. If He needed that time with the Father, how much more do we? When we step away from the noise and listen for God's voice, we find the renewal our souls have been longing for.

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 24, 2026

DRAFT

Present: Stacey Church – Moderator, Jack Butterick – Men’s Fellowship, Jean Morehouse – Trustees, Carrie DeMull – Clerk/Deacons, Pat Krehn – Women’s Fellowship, Luke Schmalz - Pastor

I. Meeting called to order at 6:33 pm.

Stacey Church opened with prayer and called the meeting to order.

II. Jack Butterick made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Dean Morehouse seconded. Passed

II. Public comments

1. Growth Initiative: Judy Nadeau-Salacina

- Continuation of the work we have done all year so far.
- Providing mentors for new members of our church.
 - a. Makes a person feel more welcome.
 - b. Speeds up their spiritual growth.
 - c. Builds a stronger church family.
 - d. It can turn new faces into active members.
 - e. Provides a faster connection for the new person.
 - f. It provides them with some clear guidance.
 - g. Strengthens roots and creates good habits of prayer and Bible study.
 - h. The mentor also shares that they have grown deeper in their faith and eventually grows new leaders in the church.

2. Growth Initiative: Dean Morehouse

- a. Next growth opportunity is growing the church with young people and their families.
- b. Make a point to ask new visitors if they have a church family.
- c. The Christian Education program (Jelly Room, Children’s Church), will grow through the Christian Education Board. We need to think and pray about what the Christian Education Board/Children’s church will look like in the future.

3. Security Review Update: Dean Morehouse

- Dean has done some research on his own. Talking to Tom Schmidt (Inspire Church) and Bernie (Holton Methodist) and asking them about what they have for security at their church. They do have things in place to make their church more secure.

- Bernie gave a handout to Dean about “Active Shooter Defense” training at Holton United Methodist Church. Some congregation members from the EC will be going to this. If any member of the congregation would like to attend, please let a member of the EC know.

IV. Board Reports

- Board of Deacons – Carrie DeMull

- On August 9 after worship, the church had its’ 151st anniversary celebration downstairs.

We celebrated a pancake breakfast.

- The last ecumenical service will be Sunday, September 6 downtown at the farmer’s market.
 - Rooms of Refuge was here from August 17-24.
 - Pastor Luke will be presenting a sermon on Baptism this fall. The Baptismal font will be

relocated outside the church doors in the narthex. More to come....

- Pat’s small group handed out mini-Jesus’ with a church calling card to the congregation on Sunday, August 9, during the pancake breakfast. Go out and be disciples of Christ!

- Music Committee Report – Dean Morehouse

1. Lorene and Jack continue to provide our church family with the best organ music possible. We are so blessed.

2. Our Six Singers are very consistent in singing each communion Sunday and have received many compliments. The congregation seems to enjoy and sings louder those Sundays.

3. We hope to bring back the “Walk Up Choir” this coming fall and add one Sunday of “Blended Music” to our service.

- Board of Christian Education – Pastor Luke reporting Crystal Schmalz

- 3 children in Sunday School on August 23!
 - The morning consists of a Bible lesson, craft, puppets, prayer, memory verse, prize time, and a snack.
 - We will be having a special activity for Grandparent’s Day in September.
 - Trunk or Treat event in October.

- Board of Trustees – Jean Morehouse

- Financially we are doing very well. Income is at 68% with expenses at 57%
 - Plumber was here to finish the restrooms repairs downstairs.
 - Jeff Stewart and Bill Black are working on the steeple lights. They will be anchored in the ground, instead of high up in the steeple.

- Will be getting new lights up front for our church sign.
- Fans are working in the sanctuary. Window Fan Policy: When windows can be open, use the fans. Look at the weather report to see what the weather will be for the day.
- Charitable Giving is now part of trustees.
- Trustees are going to use the month of September as a fundraiser for Crop Walk.
- Still waiting on our lawyers for a contract for Harmony Hybrid to use our church. As soon as it is received, they will sign it. They start school on September 8.
- Getting a bid from Mellema Nursery to make a green space on the south side of the parking lot. More information to come at the next EC meeting.

- Women's Fellowship- Pat Krehn

- The summer annual gathering at Carrie DeMull's house on August 17 was well attended with 16 people and everyone had fun. Great food and fellowship!
- A soup luncheon will take place after worship on October 4 to help raise money for the Crop Walk. This soup luncheon will be in place of the Friday night spaghetti supper.
- Women's Fellowship fund balance is \$5,606.00.
- We will again be helping with the Harvest Festival Parade. The church parking lot will be a designated staging area. We will be providing cookies, water, and restrooms. The event will take place Thursday, September 24 in the evening.
- Another church T-shirt order may be taking place. We will talk about this at the annual meeting in October.
- Since the Women's Fellowship covered the bulletin boards downstairs, the Deacon's will decide what needs to be put on them.
- The Baby Food Festival children's booth that we set up was an overwhelming success. 500 mini-Jesus' were handed out.

- Men's Fellowship – Jack Butterick

- Fall meetings will start up again on Wednesday, September 2. Doing devotions will be Tom Schmidt and cooking will be Chef Ted Caris. Doing devotions on October 7 will be Dean Morehouse and cooking will be Chef John Cooper.
- The donations that the Men's Fellowship have received so far have been earmarked for Youth for Christ, Fremont (\$300), and We are Here, Newaygo County/Char Spaulding (\$500).

- Memorial Garden Report – Jack Butterick

- Established in 2004. It receives seasonal maintenance by the Garden Committee (Mary,

Bill, Ted, and Jack) and volunteers from our congregation. The plaques on the first 2 rocks are full except for one spot. A third rock has been installed and is awaiting the installation of the new plaque that will be done by Superior Monument in Muskegon. The cost of the new plaque, and the name plates and the mounting of the new plaque will be \$1,550 leaving a fund balance of \$3,045.

V. Pastor's Report – Pastor Luke

- Harmony Hybrid has 36 students starting on September 8 upstairs. Now using most of the rooms upstairs. Will revisit their lease with them at the end of the school year.
- Rooms of Refuge was here August 17-24.
- Tech booth volunteer appreciation Sunday went well. We appreciate Jeff even more now that he has been gone from the booth on August 24 on vacation.

VI. Acceptance of reports – Luke Schmalz motioned to accept the above reports. Jack Butterick seconded. Passed

VII. Old Business

- Harmony Hybrid Clean up upstairs. Chairs need to be taken downstairs. Sunday school sandboxes need to be moved. Clean up of the choir loft next to the sanctuary also needs to be on the radar.

VIII. New Business

- Thursday, September 24th is the Harvest Festival Parade. Our church parking lot will be used for staging. Time 6:00? We will be asking the congregation to again supply 2 dozen cookies and water donations for this.
- The Men's Fellowship might be providing hay art in the front of the church. Dean will ask the Men's Fellowship if they are willing to do this.
- Nominating committee will be meeting shortly to discuss our volunteer needs for the church. The committee consisting of Luke, Ruth and Carrie, Bill and Stacey will start calling for volunteers and check the annual report to see who is coming/going before making the calls.

IX. For the Good of the Order

- Pastor's evaluation on the Deacon's radar.
- When using the microphones in the sanctuary, please have the microphone as close to your mouth as possible so the congregation can hear you talking.
- Jan Britt's daughter came to visit her and came to church on August 23. She said that the service/church was very upbeat and uplifting.
- Noisy Offering will be at the end of September with a collection for the Crop Walk

Meeting adjourned with a closing prayer by Pastor Luke at 8:44 pm.

Next Meeting is Monday, September 21, at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Carrie DeMull



September Dates to Note:

September 2 - Women's Fellowship Board Meeting - 10:00 a.m.

September 2 - Men's Fellowship Lunch - 12:00 noon

September 6 - No worship here - Worship at Farmer's Market - 10:00 a.m.

September 7 - Labor Day - church office closed

September 8 - First Day of Hybrid Harmony classes

September 13 - Worship - 10:00 a.m.

September 13 - Deacon's meeting - 11:30 a.m.

Monday, September 14 - Technology Board - 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 15 - Hybrid Harmony classes begin 9:00 a.m.

Wednesday, September 16 - Trustees 1:30 p.m.

Sunday, September 20 - Worship with communion - 10:00 a.m.

Monday, September 21 - Executive Council - 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 24 - Harvest Festival Parade Staging - 5:00 p.m.???

Friday, September 25 - Lorene out of the office

Sunday, September 27 - Worship - 10:00 a.m.

M/W/F - Men's Coffee - 9:30 a.m. - ?

M/W/F - Woodshop Open 10:00 a.m. - ?

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

Tuesday / Thursday - Harmony Hybrid - 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.