

The Carillon October, 2026

First Congregational Church
Your Independent Worship Center
714 Hillcrest Drive - Fremont MI 49412
231-924-4710
congo@fremontfcc.org ~ www.fremontfcc.org



Christmas Craft Sale and Plum Pudding Shoppe

Saturday, December 5! Our ladies have been busy making crafts all year long and Plum Pudding needs your help! You have been generous in the past with your baked goods and specialty items. Please consider helping us again.

In accordance with the State of Michigan Food Requirements this is the required list of food items that can be made for Plum Pudding:

- Breads - not frozen
- Similar baked goods
 - Vinegar & flavored vinegar
- Cakes - not refrigerated
- Muffins
- Cooked fruit pies
- Jams & Jellies (in glass jars that can be stored at room temperature)
- Cookies
- Dry herbs and dry herb mixes
- Dry baking mixes
- Dry dip mixes
- Dry soup mixes
- Dehydrated vegetables or fruits
- Popcorn
- Chocolate covered pretzels, marshmallows, graham crackers, rice krispie treats
- Coated or uncoated nuts
- Dried pasta made with eggs
- Roasted coffee beans or ground roasted coffee



All food items have to be labeled with a list of ingredients with your FIRST name, The First Congregational Church 231-924-4710 on the label.



Thank you for your cooperation,
Mary Butterick, Plum Pudding Coordinator

Communication:

Is your board or ministry meeting? Are you having a meeting at church? Are you using a room at church? We want to be sure all meetings and events are on the church calendar. Be sure to communicate with the church office so your event can be scheduled. Communication is very important!!

Board and Ministry Secretaries - be sure to include the church office when sending out your minutes so they can be put on file.

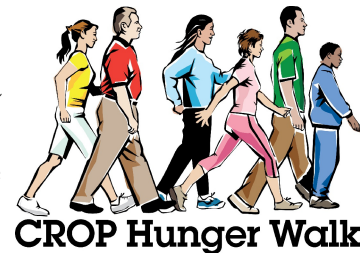
Soup Luncheon

Sunday, October 4, our Women's Fellowship will be serving an All You Can Eat Soup Luncheon (Make a Meal Soup) for a donation to CROP Walk. Join us following worship for a bowl of soup.



CROP Walk

Sunday, October 4 is CROP Walk - if you would like to make a donation and can't make it to the Soup Luncheon envelopes are available on the table in the narthex. Please make your check payable to CWS/CROP. Thank you for your support!



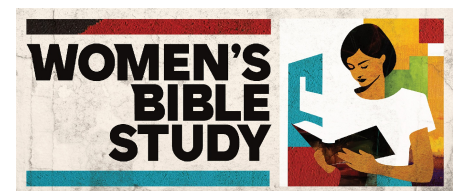
Men's Fellowship Lunch

Men's Fellowship will meet on Wednesday October 7 at 12:00 noon for their monthly luncheon. Everyone is welcome. A light lunch will be served. Please contact Bill Black (black815@comcast.net) so enough food is prepared. A donation is appreciated. Our speaker for October is Dean Morehouse. "We All Coach!" Dean's message has relevance to everyone, not just athletic coaches. You taught your child to ride a bike or helped them learn to read. You helped a new fellow employee, coached little league or taught someone learn how to bake. All coaching!



Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible study continues to meet on Wednesday's at 4:00 p.m. (change from the summer months meeting time of 6:00 p.m.) with Beth Hooker leading. This allows you to come and go in the light. If you haven't come before it's never too late - YOU are welcome to join us.



2026 Pledge Reports:

The Board of Christian Ed is considering a Trunk or Treat event for Halloween Hours on Saturday, October 31. In order to accomplish this we would need 7-10 volunteers willing to decorate and open their “trunks” to pass out candy. Would you be willing? Contact Crystal and let her know so she can begin planning. Candy donations will also be needed.



9	Lorene Witte
14	Miles Cowles, Sr
15	Kathy Fletcher
22	Pat DeKleva
29	Sally DeShetler (104 th)





October Dates to Note:

Sunday, October 4 - Worship with Communion - 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, October 4 - CROP Walk Soup Lunch following worship

Monday, October 5 - Women's Fellowship Board Meeting - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, October 7 - Men's Fellowship Lunch - 12:00 noon

Wednesday, October 7 - Women's Bible Study with Beth - 4:00 p.m.

Monday, October 9 - 19 Lorene out of the office

Sunday, October 11 - Worship - 10:00 a.m. Leslie Anderson guest soloist

Monday, October 12 - Technology Meeting - 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 13 - Small Group at the home of Carrie DeMull - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, October 14 - Women's Bible Study with Beth - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 18 - Worship with Communion 10:00 a.m. - Walk Up Choir

Sunday, October 18 - ANNUAL MEETING following worship

Monday, October 19 - Executive Council - 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 21 - Trustees - 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 21 - Women's Bible Study with Beth - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 25 - Worship - 10:00 a.m. Char Spaulding Youth for Christ presentation

Sunday, October 25 - Sally DeShetler's 104th birthday

Monday, October 26 - Lorene out of the office

Tuesday, October 27 - Small Group at the home of Judy Nadeau-Salacina - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, October 28 - Women's Bible Study with Beth - 4:00 p.m.

Thursday - 10:00 a.m. Christmas Crafters

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

T/Th - 9:00 a.m. Harmony Hybrid

Looking Ahead:

November 8 - Guest soloist - Jean Howarth

November 15 - Poinsettia orders due

November 29 - 1st Sunday of Advent

Why study Theology - Pastor Luke

Recently, I have been thinking a lot about why I, we, and you should be studying theology. I have been neck-deep in reading about Nestorianism, Apollinarianism, Arianism, and a bunch of other

theological ideas. As I slowly work through yet another theological treatise, my eye drifts to my beloved Louis Lamour books. At times I begin to wonder why I am doing all when I could do something else. Why study theology? I think few things are more important than studying theology that someone can do with their time. Theology is simply studying God.



The first reason it is worth studying theology is that we study what we love. When we love something, we desire to learn about it. We also see this with hobbies. Someone who loves football will learn the strategy, talk about it with friends, watch TV shows, and listen to radio programs. Without fail, a person who loves sports tries to learn as much as they can about it. Fishermen watch fishing shows. Golfers go to the range to practice. And on it goes. It is simply true that when we love something, we want more of it in our lives. Part of loving God is learning more about him. It does not mean reading about esoteric theological controversies, necessarily. It can start with simply reading the Bible each day. Joining a small group. Or picking up a book on a topic you are curious about. The more we learn, the more we love.

The second reason we need to study theology is that it matters. It matters because we all have a theology even if we don't know it. That theology may be wrong, underdeveloped, or confused. If we never examine what we believe and why, we are like a leaf floating down a river. Reading and studying theology exposes those implicit beliefs and compares them to Scripture, forcing us to ask whether or not they are in alignment with Scripture. What we believe forms us and affects how we act in the world. A person who thinks God is a mean miser just looking for a reason to send them to hell will act a certain way. Same for the person who sees God as a nice old man in the sky who hands out presents. If we want to truly live as God desires, we need to know and understand who He is and what He is asking of us.

The final reason we need to study theology is that as Christians we are called to share our faith. The mission of the church is to go into the world and make disciples. That means going into our world and sharing our faith. But if we don't really understand our faith, how can we share it? The truth is we often don't have more than a Sunday school level of understanding of our faith. We struggle to answer the hard questions that inevitably arise when talking about the big issues. Faith deals with hope, meaning, purpose, suffering, and ethics. People will want to know what we think about those issues, and if we have never thought about them, how can we answer those questions?

The truth is, studying theology is incredibly important. In the moment, it may not feel fun or engaging. But by doing so, we can engage with the biggest issues in life. We can grow as a person. And most importantly of all, we can grow closer to God. I have found my faith strengthened through study. I know the same will happen for you as well.

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2026
DRAFT

Present: Stacey Church – Moderator, Carrie DeMull – Clerk/Deacons, Luke Schmalz – Pastor,
Bill Black – Trustees/Men’s Fellowship, Crystal Schmalz – Board of Christian Education

Absent: Judy Nadeau-Salacina/Dean Morehouse – Growth Initiative, Jean Morehouse – Women’s Fellowship

I. Meeting called to order at 6:32 pm.

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

II. Bill Black made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Crystal Schmalz seconded.
Passed

II. Public comments

1. Growth Initiative: Email Report from Dean Morehouse

- Judy and Dean would like to support the Christian Education Board any way they can to help grow the Sunday School program including research.
- Consider a target goal of 100 congregants (75 initially).
- Host a pancake breakfast to talk about new goals/initiatives. This should occur end of October/early November.

2. Security Review Update: None

IV. Board Reports

Board of Deacons – Carrie DeMull

- Starting prep work for fall.
- September 6 Ecumenical service was attended by 6 from our congregation.
- 2 new Deacons will join the board at the Annual Meeting.
- Harvest Parade prep is going well.
- The Deacons are reflecting on how we can continue to build our momentum from the summer months with guest visits. (Evangelism training, Pancake Breakfast, Hope Initiative rate some examples.
- We are working on Pastor Luke’s performance evaluation for the year. An evaluation sheet was sent to the Deacons to review to talk about at the next meeting.
- The Deacons will check in with Mary Butterick from the Altar Committee and see what the deacons can do to get ready for fall, Advent, and Christmas.

Jim Rynberg has offered to do a fall arrangement on the altar again this year.
Thank you, Jim.

Board of Christian Education – Crystal Schmalz

- 3 children in Sunday School consistently for 4 weeks.
- 5 children for Grandparent's Day.
- The morning consists of a Bible lesson, craft, puppets, prayer, memory verse, prize time, and a snack.
- Trunk or Treat event in October.
- The Board meets regularly when we can meet. Crystal and Carrie meet regularly to discuss the Sunday that each other can teach.
- The cry room and the nursery on the 3rd floor need to be kept clean so if someone from the church wants to use those rooms, they can.

Board of Trustees – Bill Black

- Financially we are doing very well. Income is at 75% with expenses at 64%.
- \$22,000 in checking account, \$675,000 in assets at Edward Jones.
- Year to date budget income: \$95,152. The actual amount is \$106,069.66. An increase in \$10,917.66.
- Year to date budget expenses is under budget by the amount by \$2,238.13.
- Trustees are working on the budget for 2027. Pledges are coming in about the same as last year.
- Jeff Stewart and Bill Black are still 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. Nieboer Electric has the contract.
- 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. In the meantime, Bill will work on a contract for both parties to sign.
- Harmony Hybrid will use the fellowship hall on Tuesdays for lunch.
- The drinking fountain downstairs has been repaired.
- All thermostats have had their batteries replaced.
- The Boiler company will come and inspect the heating system to be sure it is ready for winter.
- The chairs in fellowship hall will be cleaned.
- Trustees have given a check to the church as a donation for the CROP walk.
- Mellema Nursery has finished the green space on the south side of the parking lot.

Women's Fellowship- Stacey Church for Jean Morehouse

- Harvest Festival Parade is all set to go.

- There will be a soup luncheon to raise money for the CROP walk on Sunday, August 4. Prep will be Saturday, October 3, at 9:30 am.
- Discussion about ideas for fall.

Men's Fellowship – Bill Black

- Speaker was Bill Black talking about his time with the Navy.
- The Men's Fellowship will be helping a cleaner clean up the upholstery on the chairs in Fellowship Hall.

V. Pastor's Report – Pastor Luke

- Harmony Hybrid has started school and things are going well.
- The fall banner will be put up in the lobby.
- As mentioned above, Jim Rynberg, will be doing a fall arrangement on the altar.
- Rooms of Refuge went well at the end of August. Plan on a consistent 15 guests. There are guests on a waiting list.
- 2 cases of water have been purchased, and cookies are arriving for the Harvest Festival parade staging area. Gail is working on a welcome sign.
- Lorene has vacation from October 12-19, and December 28-January 4.
- Talked about the end of the year goals on the white board:
 1. 3 children consistently in Sunday school. Our goal is 4.
 2. 100 visitors by the end of the year. 88 so far.
 3. One more town hall, pancake breakfast, and Hope Initiative.
 4. Start working on Advent Season.
 5. Another blanket drive for Community Closet.
- How do we get new members/friends involved in our church and their programs? Something to think about.

VI. Acceptance of reports – Carrie DeMull motioned to accept the above reports. Pastor Luke seconded. Passed

VII. Old Business

- Cleaning of the upstairs 3rd floor rooms. The cry room and the old nursery.

VIII. New Business

- Discussion of a date for a Youth for Christ update by Char. The EC decided on either October 11 or October 25.
- Nominating Committee Update: Jean has agreed to be Financial Secretary for 2027. Kelly Parks has agreed to staying on the Board of Christian Education. Beth is going off the Board of Christian Education. Looking to add some fresh faces to the Music Committee.
- The upcoming annual meeting will be held downstairs using the Karaoke mic and speakers. Will be talking to Jeff to see what he wants to do about set up. Absentee ballots for the congregation that can't be present will be available.

IX. For the Good of the Order

Meeting adjourned with a closing prayer by Pastor Luke at 8:15 pm.

Next Meeting is Monday, October 19, at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted
Carrie DeMull

38th Annual
Christmas Craft Fair
Saturday, December 5, 2026
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.



First Congregational Women's Fellowship
714 Hillcrest Drive ~ Fremont Michigan

Christmas Shoppe

(many new quality craft and wood gifts and decorations to purchase)

Plum Pudding Shoppe

(holiday foods to purchase)

Children's Shopping Room

(children can shop for that special gift for their mom, dad, grandpa, grandma, teacher, friend, etc. Price range \$1.00 - \$5.00 - this includes the gift being wrapped and ready to give)



10% of gross profit is contributed to various Newaygo County non-profit organizations.
For event information, call the church at 231-924-4710 or Gail Cooper at 231-924-2126

www.fremontfcc.org