

## PILGRIM JOURNAL

First Congregational Church, UCC

PO Box 5 ~ 102 Church Street

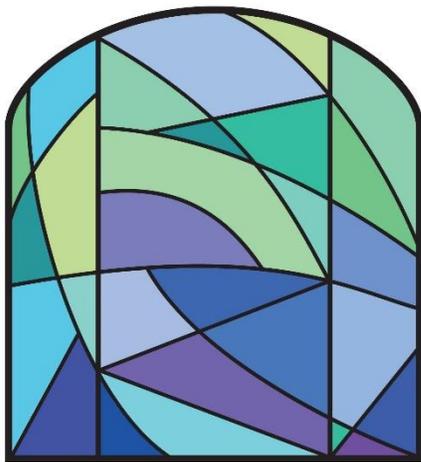
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### January/February 2021 Edition



#### FROM THE PASTOR

Happy New Year Church Family! I pray that each of you had a joyous Christmas Season and are looking forward to the blessings that God will provide us in 2021. We certainly came a long way in 2020! We began last year never expecting the events we would endure. The last Sunday we were together physically, without masks or other precautions, was March 15<sup>th</sup>. Like most of you, I assumed our

physical separation would last a short time, perhaps just a few weeks. Of course, that has not been the case.

I began filming from my basement, with Erin trying to steadily hold my phone, on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. There were cats trying to jump in my lap and the dog wandering around behind me as I tried to provide some kind of worship and spiritual nourishment for our congregation. Soon, we realized this pandemic would not be dissipating as we had hoped, so we moved the filming to our sanctuary. We were still using my phone. Still filming “live” with minimal music or other worship components.

Our goal as leadership was to continue improving. Continue doing whatever we needed in order to remain a vibrant church with the same kinds of opportunities we would have in-person but utilizing the internet. We purchased cameras and a new computer for editing the services. We brought our hymns and special music back into worship. And now, I have finally reached a point where I feel as though we are providing a beautiful, meaningful worship service each week.

One of the greatest blessings has been observing our growth over the internet. As most of you know, our average attendance on Sunday mornings when we were meeting in-person was approximately 30-40 people. Now, with people having the capability to watch our services anytime, from anywhere, we average between 100-150 views per week. Some of our special services, like “The Longest Night” was watched by over 600 people. I have been contacted by countless individuals who are interested in our church and we have received monetary donations from people we have yet to even meet!

Our leadership continues to evaluate when we will return to our sanctuary. At a minimum, I would expect it to be at least another couple of months. When we do return, we will continue to have our services available online. It is truly an outreach for those who have to work on Sunday mornings, for those who do not live close enough to attend physically, and for those who are sick or homebound.

Throughout the pandemic, we have also taken advantage of the online meeting software “Zoom”. It has proved to be a wonderful tool for us and for countless other churches. As you know, we have a Zoom Fellowship on Tuesday mornings and Wednesday evenings, which have given us the capability to “see” each other while we talk. I also use Zoom for countless clergy and denominational meetings. Now, I will begin offering online classes and discussion groups through Zoom. If you are interested in attending the online groups and are unsure how to use the software, please let me or a member of leadership know, and we will be happy to help you.

After all we have conquered in 2020, I am excited to see where God will lead us in 2021. I appreciate all of your continued support and feel incredibly blessed to serve a church filled with so many amazing individuals.

Blessings,

Rev. Kim



## JANUARY / FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS!

01/01 ~ Bob Ross

01/03 ~ Peter Parsons

01/08 ~ Glen Novak

01/08 ~ Pam Schwark

01/18 ~ Al Allum

01/21 ~ Dennis Wegner

02/04 ~ Noah Weber

02/10 ~ Mary Lou Coker

02/13 ~ Lois McGinley

02/18 ~ Dennis Green

02/20 ~ Beth (Adams) Kermode

02/23 ~ Janessa (Butz) Brown

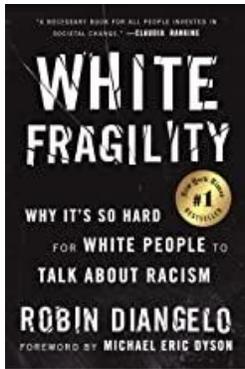


## LIBERATION THEOLOGY ~ OUR FIRST DISCUSSION OF 2021

On January 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm, Rev. Kim will host an online class on liberation theology. Liberation theology is defined as, “a synthesis of Christian theology and socio-economic analyses, that emphasizes social concern for the poor and political liberation for oppressed peoples.” Basically, it is the ability to analyze scripture through the lens of those who have been oppressed. Rev. Kim has taught this class in the past, here at FCC and at numerous other churches and believes it is an eye-opening experience and one that will have you reading the Bible and understanding some of the most familiar stories in new ways. This class is free and is available to anyone. Just go to our church’s Facebook page under “events” and click that you are planning to attend. Then, on the night of the class, go back to our Facebook page, go to the event and you will find the link under the description for the class. Once you click on that link, it will take you directly to the waiting room where Rev. Kim will be ready to let you in.

If for some reason you have difficulty finding the event on Facebook, you may also go directly to Zoom. Click on “Join a Meeting.” The Meeting ID is 890 5688 1912. The password is 953242.

If you have any questions about the class or how to use Zoom or Facebook, please contact Rev. Kim or the church office so we can assist you.



## BOOK DISCUSSION TO BE HELD IN FEBRUARY

Beginning Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> and lasting for three consecutive Tuesday nights at 7:00pm, we will be having a book discussion on “White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism” by Robin Diangelo. This book discussion is available to everyone: you don’t need to be a member of the church or have any affiliation with us. All you need to do is buy the book or check it out from your local library and read it. Then, on the church’s Facebook page, click on the event and mark that you are going. On the night of the book discussion, go back to the event on our Facebook page and click on the link that you will find in the description of the event. That link will take you directly to the waiting room, where Rev. Kim will be waiting to let you in.

If for some reason you have difficulty finding the link on our Facebook page, you may also access the book discussion directly through Zoom. Once in Zoom, click on “Join a Meeting”. The Meeting ID is 832 0297 7739. The Password is 155248. **The ID and Password are the same each week.**

The schedule is as follows:

Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00pm- Chapters 1-3

Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm- Chapters 4-6

Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm- the remainder of the book.

If you have any questions about the book, or how to use Zoom or Facebook, please reach out to Rev. Kim or the church office so we may assist you.

## The Chip Bag Project



A member from the community contacted Rev. Kim to see if we would like to be the drop off location for this outreach project. Kim said yes, we would love to!

From The Chip Bag Project website:

*Foil lined chip bags are insulated, waterproof, and lightweight. The Chip bags will then be sealed together and lined with foam to provide cushioned*



*'insulated' sleeping bags to help the less fortunate living outside to live thru the Michigan winter.*

Please bring your empty, cleaned-out, foil-lined chip and snack bags and place them in the bin located under the mailbox on the Church Street Porch.



A member of the community will collect them and bring them to Eradaжере Oleita in Detroit to put together.

Thanks for helping make things a little warmer for those in need.

You can learn more this project by going to WXYZ's website and/or Fox 2 Detroit's website – or [www.eradeoleita.com](http://www.eradeoleita.com).



### OFFERING ENVELOPES

Our 2021 Offering Envelopes are here. They are located on a table right inside the double glass doors that face Church Street. If you are able, please come and pick your box up – if not, please let me know and we will find a way to get them to you. All numbers have changed! If you give via Pay Pal – you don't necessarily need your 'box', but you do have a 'giving number'. If you would like to know what your 'giving' number is – please get in touch with me by either calling the Church Office or sending an email.

Thanks,

Terry