



The Courier

Consumer or Contributor by Keith Langley

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH AT 11:15 A.M.

A Congregational Meeting is called by the Church Council for the purpose of voting on a potential pastoral candidate. Specifically, the congregation will be asked by the Pastoral Search Committee to vote whether Pastor Mark Melillo should be offered the Senior Pastor position at the First Congregational Church of Almont. Please plan to attend this very important meeting regarding the future of our church.

SPECIAL SCHEDULE FOR SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH

- 9:00 A.M.—Sunday School
- 10:00 A.M.—Worship Service
- 11:15 A.M.—Congregational Meeting

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If you look at American society, there is little doubt that we are a nation of consumers. We have our malls and shopping centers; discount warehouses and bargain basements; we can even shop 24 hours a day via our cable TV and the internet. Basically, we live in a society that allows us the freedom to have what we want, when we want it, even if we can't afford it.

In an environment such as this it was only a matter of time before that mentality began to affect the church. You see, unfortunately, we have begun to approach our church experience with the same mindset. What does this really look like when we see it played out in real life? Let's take a look:

- A consumer takes. A contributor gives.
- A consumer says, "What have you done for me lately?" A contributor says, "What can I do for you?"
- A consumer browses. A contributor commits.
- A consumer is influenced. A contributor influences.
- A consumer looks. A contributor acts.
- A consumer consumes resources. A contributor replenishes resources.
- A consumer wants what's

best for them. A contributor wants what's best for others.

- A consumer sits on the bench and watches the game. A contributor is actively involved in the game.
- A consumer says, "It's all about me." A contributor says, "How may I serve you?"

As you can see, there is a difference between a consumer and a contributor. How do you approach your church experience? Perhaps better, how do you approach your faith? Which best describes you: consumer, or contributor? Do you actively seek ways in which you can contribute to the church and give back to God? Do you look for ways in which you can serve the people around you? Have you committed yourself to doing what God asks, when God asks, no matter how difficult the task may be?

I will ask you to pray about this subject. Take this before the throne of God and ask Him what changes might need to be made in your life. There is little doubt that God desires a church of contributors rather than a church of consumers. Which are you? Are you willing to be all that God asks you to be?

Youth Ministry News

By Pastor Keith

As many of you have heard through our announcements at church, this has been a very active fall for the youth ministry. We have had two very different

events, yet similar in nature that have kept us on our toes.

The one that you have heard so much about is what we called "The Fifth Quarter."

After three of the home football games we opened up the church to our students and their friends, and their friends' friends to allow them a safe place to hang out and have fun. Of course this involved games of all types, and more food than you knew what to do with.

The Fifth Quarter turned out to be a real hit both with our students and with the students in the community. In addition, many parents came in to check things out, or even stay for a while. Several of these parents thanked us for providing a safe environment where their kids

could come to have fun. It shows us that the parents of the community want their kids to have positive influences in their lives.



We also were able to provide a meal to the members of the Almont High School Marching Band before one of the football games. We had provided the same

service for two years in a row, but had not made plans to do so again this year. The band director called us and asked if we would provide a meal for the students. We moved heaven and earth (although it was not that difficult) to make sure that we could accommodate the request. This was yet another way in which we were able to serve people in the community in the name and with the love of Christ.

The significance of these two events may have untold consequences. Simply getting teens off the streets, and giving them a safe place to hang out is a great thing to start with. Giving them some level of comfort in being in a church as well as beginning a relationship with a church could have profound

repercussions. For example, I was able to have a nice conversation with a couple of High School girls this past Friday night.

Later in the evening, I met their parents, and had a nice conversation with them as well. While I cannot be certain, I got the sense that the family might be open to attending church at some point.



These are the activities that our church should be striving for; activities that open up our church to the public, so that we can show them the love of Christ in simple, yet real ways. Let's all begin to "think outside the box" for the multitude of ways in which we can reach out to our community.



TRUSTEE UPDATE:

There are several issues that have been keeping the Board of Trustees busy. Probably the most pressing matter is that of the malfunctioning fire-alarm system. The bids that we have received range from \$4,800.00 to \$6,765.00 for installation and maintenance. Any donations to this cause would be greatly appreciated.

Another important issue is that of filling the organist vacancy. We have had difficulty in finding willing candidates. If you know of anyone who could help us out, please call the church office or

any of the trustees.

A big thank you is extended to Rob Dean and friends for what they have done to beautify the church office and its surroundings. The office has also been recently insulated, which will certainly help to lower heating bills this winter. Thank you also to all who provided lawn care this summer. Without the help of these servants our building and grounds expenses would have been much greater.

John Bacholzky

GIVING TREE

Our Annual Giving Tree benefits many families in the community of Almont with Christmas gifts. Our Giving Tree will be up in the Heritage Room on Sunday, November 12. Simply take a bulb or two off the tree, buy a NEW gift as listed on the bulb, and return the gift and the bulb by Sunday, December 10.



PLEASE NOTE: This year we are asking that you return your gifts UNWRAPPED. However, we would appreciate the donation of wrapping paper and bows.

If you have any questions, please contact Renee Porter at 798-7210.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Our church participates in this program, sponsored by Samaritan's Purse, in which you fill a shoebox with gifts that are sent to children in need all around the world. The Good News of God's love is also shared with the children. For detailed information, please visit the table in the Heritage Room or call Cindy Baden at 798-2678.



PLEASE BRING YOUR SHOEBOXES TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Children's Ministries!

AWANA: The clubs are for children in Kindergarten through 5th graders. We meet Wednesday nights from 6:30-8:00 p.m. If you have children in these grades please join us!

We are growing! Each week we have more children that come and participate. It is very exciting to see how the children are learning God's Word! We also have been learning the books of the Bible and the Pledge to the Christian Flag.

**There will be NO AWANA on Wednesday, November 22.
Have a great Thanksgiving!**

Our volunteers are special to our program. When you see them please thank them: Rachel Owen (praise leader), Sarah Moyer (T&T Director), Cindy Baden (T&T Leader), Brad McDonald (Game Director), Jason Webber (Sparks Leader) and Stacey Kmetz (Snack Provider). If you would like to donate a snack please let Melody know. There is always room for more volunteers. If children are important to you and you would like to donate your time, please contact Melody Webber (586) 372-1948.

JUST FOR OUR AWANA CLUBBERS...



Fill in each blank with the missing word. Keep up the good work on your memory verses!

I pledge _____ a _____ to the Christian Flag and to the _____ b _____ for whose Kingdom it stands. One Savior, _____ c _____, risen, and _____ d _____ again with life and liberty to _____ e _____ who believe.



Answers: a) allegiance, b) Savior, c) crucified, d) coming, e) all

PRE-ORDER YOUR AWANA SHIRT TODAY

You can now show your AWANA Club pride by ordering T-Shirts. The deadline to preorder AWANA T-Shirts (50% cotton/50% polyester) will be December 6, 2006. This way the order will be in for Christmas.

You have a choice of colors: red, blue, green, yellow, or gray.



Child sizes are medium (10-12) or large (14-16) for \$12.20. Adult sizes come in Small-XL for \$13.25. Adult XXL is 14.25 and Adult XXXL is \$15.25.

Please make checks out to First Congregational Church.

Men's Ministry

BEING GLAD IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS

Going into this winter in Michigan, there are several feelings that I've experienced recently. I have felt both excited and scared; I have also felt apprehension, depression, worry, insecurity and unworthiness, just to name a few. These feelings have unfortunately described me at any given moment throughout any given day. So much so, that I could probably get a prescription for some type of "mental assistance."

The reasons that I thought I had for feeling these darkest of emotions, has been the economy in our State of Michigan and how the outlook isn't so pretty, and how I feel this feeling of absolute surety that the floor is going to drop out from underneath me and my company at any given moment. Those financial feelings and worries coupled with all the stuff that has happened recently in my life and in our church, well...it's just enough to make me pull my hair out. Hence my growing bald spot.

Then I read a story about a man who lost his job and how having a

relationship with the Giver Of Life is what ultimately matters. "*Yeah he can say that now,*" I thought, now that he has had time to reflect and look back.... *That was then this is now*...All those self defeating excuses that just come so quickly and easily to me.

But then he referenced the Bible. Man I hate it when someone ruins a good "Righteous Pity Party." (Can we even use those words together?) He used stories of other men who were better than me going through things and times tougher than mine. Job never gave up even though, for lack of a better way to put it, his life was the pits! Job continued on, never losing his trust in God. "*Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him. . .*" He then said that God had warned him that stuff like this would happen to him and it will happen to me too. "*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*" (John 16:33)

I find encouragement in this quote from Charles Spurgeon: "Many men

owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties." And also in this verse: "*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.*" (James 1:2-3)

It's encouraging to know that God uses these times and trials in our lives to build character and to remind us about how much we need Him. I think men, more than women, need these "loving reminders" to keep us from believing that we can do things on our own—without God. So be glad when you go through tough times. Remember that God loves you, and He wants the best for you. He allows us to experience these trials so that He can continue the work in us. So hang in there ". . .*being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*" (Philippians 1:6)

God Bless You!
Steve

WE ALL NEED A TREE

I hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse, and after he had just finished a rough first day on the job a flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric drill quit and his ancient one ton truck refused to start.

While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches

with both hands.

When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation. His face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

"Oh, that's my trouble tree," he replied. "I know I can't help having

troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, those troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children... So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them. Then in the morning I pick them up again." "Funny thing is," he smiled, "when I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before."

NOT THAT I HAVE ALREADY
 ATTAINED, OR AM ALREADY
 PERFECTED; BUT I PRESS
 ON, THAT I MAY LAY HOLD
 OF THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST
 JESUS HAS ALSO LAID HOLD
 OF ME.

PHILIPPIANS 3:12

Women's Ministries

Helping Women Reach Their Full Potential in Christ

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Nov. 7	First Tuesday Ladies Prayer at 11:00 a.m. in the library
Nov. 11	Lunch and shopping trip to Canterbury Village
Dec. 1	Women's Christmas Party



Sometimes we just need some fun girl time. Someplace to **talk, eat**, and of course **shop!** And maybe even do something a little out of the ordinary. Well, here's our idea—let's get together and take a short trip to **Olde World Canterbury Village**, where we can do all of our favorite girl stuff.

Canterbury Village, a designated historical site in the State of Michigan, extends over 21 acres. It is host to 18 specialty shops and wonderful features. With 90,000 sq. ft. of holiday retail space, Aldridge's Always Christmas, is one of the largest and most unique Christmas stores anywhere! Think Frankenmuth but on a smaller scale.

The date for this event is **Saturday, November 11**. We'll meet at the church parking lot at **10:00 a.m.** and carpool to Canterbury Village, located in Lake Orion. While there we'll have lunch, shop and see the sites. It will be a day to just have fun together. We'll return to the church around 4:00 p.m. If you have any questions, or if you are able to be a driver, please let Shelli know (798-8168).



If you have a Secret Sister, now is the time to reveal who you are (and discover who had you)—bring your final gift to our Christmas Party.

Now will also be your chance to get a new Secret Sister for 2007.

Ladies, this event is for **EVERYONE**—not just those with Secret Sisters. If you do **NOT** have a Secret Sister and would like to participate in a gift exchange, just bring a wrapped gift (\$5-\$10) to exchange with others. Or sit back and enjoy watching others exchange gifts!

Christmas Party

Yes, it really is already time for our annual Christmas Party. And sometimes when the creative juices just don't seem to work, I'm grateful for an event that is so big and such a great tradition, that it needs no special title or theme. That's what our annual Christmas Party has become. And even though it has no particular theme this year, you can be sure it will have all the great things you've come to enjoy: lots of food, lots of laughter, our Secret Sister exchange, an optional gift exchange, singing, a craft, our annual Angel Award, and a very special devotional time—a first-person narrative of the testimony of Jennie Christensen by Shirley Wallace. And this party is not just for us, so invite family and friends—the more the merrier!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1st

7:00—10:00 P.M.

FELLOWSHIP HALL

- ✦ Bring a dish/dessert to pass for our potluck dinner.
- ✦ Good fellowship—this is a great time to invite friends.
- ✦ Everyone is welcome.
- ✦ An evening to remember—singing, an easy craft, gift exchange, a devotional by Shirley Wallace

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

The Courier

First Congregational Church
201 E. St. Clair / P.O. Box 423
Almont, MI 48003

OUR VISION IS
TO FOSTER A
COMMUNITY OF
DISCIPLES WHO ARE:

Communing
with God

Connecting
with each other

Cultivating
our commitment

Communicating
the love of God

Caring
for our community

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*We exist to SERVE God by SHARING the
Good News of Jesus Christ and His
unconditional LOVE for all.*



Sunday Worship Schedule

Worship Service @ 8:30 a.m.

Sunday School @ 10:00 a.m.

Worship Service @ 11:15 a.m.
Jr. Church and Child Care available

CHURCH STAFF:

Keith Langley, Youth Pastor
Melody Webber, Dir. of
Children's Ministries
Audrey Minter, Secretary
Rob & Mary Kalmanir,
Custodians

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Mon - Fri

9:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m.

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Articles are to be submitted
for the Courier by **15th**
of the month via e-mail to:
courier@almontfcc.org