



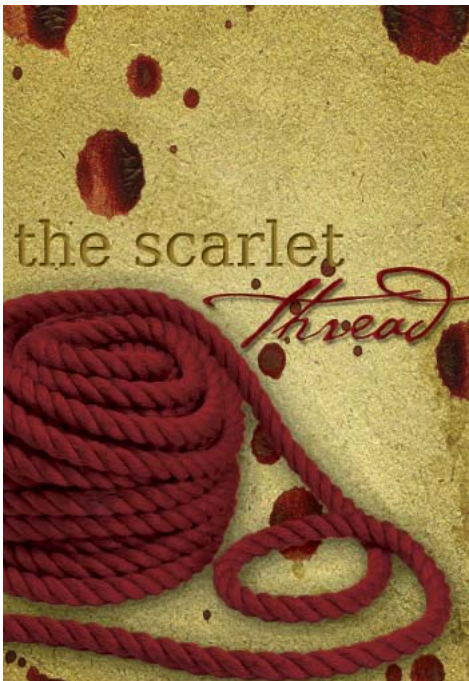
Building Bridges • Transforming Lives

# first touch

This is a monthly publication of First Church of God, St. Joseph, Michigan

## Celebrate the Death, Burial, & Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The holiness and hope of Easter is a special time of worship. Bring friends and family to celebrate this miraculous time in the history of the church. *He lives!*



### Wednesday, April 20

All activities (except choir practice) are cancelled to allow the entire building to be used as a special prayer labyrinth for Middle School D-Group students.

### Thursday, April 21

Jesus Christ spent the night before his betrayal enjoying one last meal with his disciples, at which time he taught them the importance of servanthood. Our Life Groups have the opportunity to follow Christ's example and experience this through footwashing. Those not in a Life Group are invited to a special Thursday service (*see article below for more information on this important ordinance of the church*).

### Good Friday, April 22

At noon (12:00pm) on Good Friday, we will gather in the sanctuary of the St. Joseph campus for a solemn commemorative service of Christ's death on the cross, followed by a day of waiting and anticipation (just as the disciples, too, mourned the death of their Lord).

### Easter Services

The week will culminate with a choice of six services as we celebrate the joy of the resurrection! Worship at 11:00am at our Benton Heights campus or at either 9:30 or 11:00am at our St Joseph Campus. (We'll have simultaneous services in the Life Center and Sanctuary at both times.) If you have Sunday plans with family, remember that we also offer an Easter Saturday evening service (6:00pm) that is just as vital as the Sunday morning services.

## On the Night Before the Crucifixion

By Rick Blumenberg

When Jesus met with his disciples on the night before his crucifixion, he took time to wash their feet. Why would Jesus do something so insignificant when he knew his death on the cross was imminent? Why did he spend so much time talking about servanthood and why did he tell his disciples, "*Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet*" (John 13:14, NIV)? Was it perhaps because he considered it to be very important?

This year at First Church we plan to try something new: foot-washing in Life Groups. In the Church of God, we consider foot-washing to be one of three church ordinances, on a par with baptism and communion. If you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, you are encouraged to obey his admonition to wash feet as an act of obedience and servanthood.

You will hear more about Life Groups footwashing in upcoming announcements and in your Life Group. For those of you not in a Life Group, or who attend the Wednesday night Bible Study, Pastor Bob Confer and Pastor Rick Blumenberg plan a communion and foot-washing service for Thursday night, April 21, at the St. Joseph campus. If you've not done this before and aren't sure about it, you're welcome to come and just observe.

Whether in your Life Group (like Jesus) or at the church, find a way to participate in this ancient ritual established by God himself in the person of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

## Staying in Love

Falling in Love is Easy,  
Staying in Love  
Requires a Plan



We all know what's required to fall in love...a pulse. Falling in love is easy. But staying there—that's something else entirely! With more than a thousand matchmaking services available today and new ones springing up all the time, finding a romantic match can be easier than ever. But staying together with the one you've chosen seems to be the real challenge.

So, is it possible for two people to fall in love and actually stay there? Absolutely! Join us as we study God's word on making marriage last and create a plan for our marriage through this 4 week DVD series by Andy Stanley.

This class will meet Wednesdays at 6:30pm, beginning April 13.

## Love Your Church Day: April 16

On Saturday, April 16, 9am-noon, bring your shovels, rakes, and rags and let's show our love for First Church by spring cleaning our campus together. Many hands make light work!

## Military Support Group

Our Military Support Group meets the third Sunday of each month. The next meeting is Sunday, May 15, 12:30pm. (Contact Mark/Lisa Baldwin for more information.) Military troops, their families, and others interested in supporting our troops in prayer and care packages are welcome.



**CONGRATULATIONS** to our Young Adult Pastor Dan Deitrich in headlining at The Livery in a release of his new solo EP "*Matter*." His story was also featured in the Herald-Palladium. If you missed it, visit: [thehp.com/articles/2011/03/24/features/3996760.txt](http://thehp.com/articles/2011/03/24/features/3996760.txt).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### First Tuesday

Join the First Church pastoral staff in the Sanctuary at lunchtime the first Tuesday of each month for prayer and fasting. Our next *First Tuesday* is May 3, 12:00-1pm.

### Walk with Us in the Springtime

First Church walkers meet at Grand Mere Park in Stevensville every Monday, Wednesday, & Friday (10:00am) for a brisk walk. Join us!

### Women of the Church of God

Women of the Church of God will meet Tuesday, May 3 at 1:00pm in room 5. Nancy Hemingway will present the Spiritual Birthday Service. All women are invited to attend.

### Prayer Shawls Brunch

You are invited to share brunch with our Prayer Shawl ministry on Tuesday, May 10, 9:30-11:30am, in Room 5 of the St. Joseph campus of First Church.

### Juvenile Diabetes Support

Is your child battling Juvenile Diabetes? Our support group meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 7:00pm. Contact Francine Jordan (269.757.2310 / [fjordan@myarbonne.com](mailto:fjordan@myarbonne.com)) or Brenda Shepard (269.556.1322 / [shepard5@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shepard5@sbcglobal.net)) for information on the next meeting.

### DivorceCare Support Group

Don't go through separation/divorce alone. Led by Randy and Sherrill Schwalich, DivorceCare will help you deal with the pain of the past and look forward to rebuilding your life. This group meets Tuesdays, 6:30pm, at our SJ campus. INFO: [s\\_schwalich@yahoo.com](mailto:s_schwalich@yahoo.com) / 269.926.9880

### Griefshare Support Group

If you've lost a loved one, GriefShare can help you face loss and move toward re-building your life. Led by Cindy Herzog, each session is "self-contained," so you do not have to attend in sequence. This group meets Wednesdays, 6:30pm, at our SJ campus. INFO: [Cynthia\\_k\\_herzog@whirlpool.com](mailto:Cynthia_k_herzog@whirlpool.com) / 269.429.2539.





# Cancer Risks & Care

Dear Church Family and Friends,

Greetings in the name of our victorious Redeemer! April is often a month of contrasts. We can experience both the grief of Holy Week and the victory of Easter. April is also observed as Cancer Control Month.

As we discuss cancer, I am aware that the sound of that word “cancer” seems to make us worried and nervous. We are aware of loved ones who have suffered with cancer and we know that any one of us could develop this illness. Before we get too depressed, it is important to remember that we are considering how we can control our cancer risk. There are several positive things we can do to help ourselves stay healthy. Even more importantly, we are mindful of the comfort we have in our resurrected Savior, who embraces us through all of life’s struggles. *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?....No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:35,37)*

**What can be done to reduce our risk for various types of cancer?** Recent research seems to indicate that we can control several important factors.

**First**, stopping smoking helps reduce our risk for several types of cancer. Lung cancer may occur in persons who have never smoked, but smokers have 25 times the risk of developing it. (For free help with quitting smoking see [www.LakelandHealth.org](http://www.LakelandHealth.org) and type in Smoke Free in the search engine)

**Second**, maintaining a ‘normal’ weight reduces our risks for breast, colon, and rectal cancers. Breast cancer continues to be the leading cause of death in women between the ages of 35 and 54.

**Third**, changing our diet to include more fiber and less animal fat helps to reduce our cancer risk. Such a diet is also helpful in reducing our risk for heart disease.

**Fourth**, seeking health care at the earliest possible time if you have a change in your health status helps any treatment to be more effective. In addition, it is very important to see your doctor if you experience any of the following warning signs:

- Change in bowel or bladder habits
- A sore that doesn’t heal
- Unusual bleeding or discharge
- Thickening or lump in breast or elsewhere
- Indigestion or difficulty swallowing
- Obvious change in wart or mole
- Nagging cough or hoarseness

If you or a loved one experiences any of these warning signs, it may not indicate anything serious, but if it is related to cancer, it is important to receive health care as soon as possible.

**For more information** you may want to attend the CARE Fair (Cancer Awareness Resources Education Fair) on Thursday, April 14, 2011. Learn about services, screenings, and resources available to help you take control in your fight against cancer. The fair will be held at Lakeland Center for Outpatient Services, 3900 Hollywood Road, St. Joseph. Educational trade fair hours are 11:00 am to 1 pm and 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. For more information go to [www.LakelandHealth.org](http://www.LakelandHealth.org) and look for Cancer Care.

I wish we did not need to be aware of cancer control behaviors, but as long as cancer exists, I want you to know what you can do to reduce your risk. If you have any concerns, or need help finding any information, I would be happy to visit with you.

*Beth Fiskars, RN First Church Parish Nurse You can reach me at: 983-1524 ext. 40 or [nurse@myfirstchurch.com](mailto:nurse@myfirstchurch.com).*

## Blood Pressure Clinics -



Blood Pressure Clinics are a free service offered by our Parish Nurse Beth Fiskars and her team of medical volunteers. The next clinics are Sunday, May 1.

**SJ Campus:** 10:30-11:00am, in Room 5

**BH Campus:** immediately after service in the Fellowship Hall



# First Church of God Joins 2011 CROP Hunger Walk on May 15

Do you like to hangout with friends and have fun? Are you anxious to get outside after a long winter? Do you want to do something to change the world? If you answered ‘yes’ to any of these questions, then here is your opportunity. You can sign up to be a walker and/or sponsor for the 32nd local CROP Walk. Church World Service (CWS) seeks to overcome hunger and poverty by sponsoring a CROP Walk. In fact, CROP stands for – Communities Responding to Overcoming Poverty.

The CROP Walk will be held on May 15, 2011. Walkers begin at First Congregational Church of Christ, Niles Avenue, in St. Joseph. If you can’t make this event or you don’t want to walk, you can still help by being a sponsor for one of the walkers of First Church.

**The Life Group competition is back on!** If your group raises the most money for the CROP Walk, then the entire group gets a prize! Prizes to be announced soon.

## When you support CROP Hunger Walks, you’re building bridges to our world by:

- Helping local hunger-fighting initiatives (25% of CROP Walk funds raised go to local agencies.)
- Supporting long-term development in about 80 countries
- Helping meet the special needs of refugees
- Assisting in disasters and famines
- Sharing some \$3,600,000 annually to support local hunger fighting efforts across the U.S.
- Getting exercise, too!

**Sign-up to Walk at our  
SJ Campus after Services  
April 9/10 & 16/17!**

If you are interested in walking, you can sign up online at [www.myfirstchurch.com/cropwalk](http://www.myfirstchurch.com/cropwalk). Or there will be information to sign up before and after service on April 9/10 and April 16/17. If want to help with the CROP Walk or have questions, please contact Jason Kaeding at 269-208-2813 or email him at [notes2lisa@hotmail.com](mailto:notes2lisa@hotmail.com)

## Women’s Scrapbooking & Craft Retreat: May 13/14

Bring your favorite craft and join us at the St. Joseph campus on May 13 & 14 for a time of fellowship and relaxation.

The retreat starts at 4:00pm on Friday, May 13, and goes until 9:00pm on May 14. But don’t worry you don’t have to spend the night! Just let us know when you fill out the registration form if you will or will not be staying overnight. We will have some scrapbook materials and machines for you to use as well, so please join us, we look forward to seeing you! The cost is \$5. For details and to register:

[myfirstchurch.com/scrapbook-craft-retreat](http://myfirstchurch.com/scrapbook-craft-retreat)

## Grace Christian School Open House

You are invited to Grace Christian School’s Kindergarten, Young 5 and Preschool Round-up on Thursday, April 14, 10am-8pm. with special programs at 10 am and 6:30 pm. Grace Christian School is located on M-140 south of Watervliet.

For more information: 269.463.5545 / [gspatriots.com](http://gspatriots.com).

## Rummage Sale is April 14 & 15!

Our annual rummage sale is Thursday, April 14, 11am-6pm, & Friday, April 15, 9am-2pm. This event is anticipated each year by many in the community and it is a great way for each of us to give to Missions while finding some great bargains ourselves!

Donations can be brought to the Life Center at the St. Joseph campus of First Church on Monday & Tuesday, 9am-7pm. Please donate working appliances only – no broken items or unusable clothing.

### RUMMAGE SALE FOR MISSIONS

**Thursday, April 14  
11am-6pm**

**Friday, April 15  
9am-2pm**

(SPECIAL NOTE: In order to maintain the integrity of our sale--which is why we have so many repeat customers--we cannot accept refrigerators, freezers, mattresses, televisions, computers, monitors or encyclopedia sets.)

Lost-n-found items will also be donated if they are not claimed by April 10. Call the church office if you have misplaced something.

For more information or to volunteer to help, call Deb Ward at 269-429-0925 or visit our website at [myfirstchurch.com/rummage-sale](http://myfirstchurch.com/rummage-sale).

## Middle School Ministry. . .

### Spring D-Groups

D-groups have recessed until next school year, but you can still join us for Spring D-group Worship. Spring D-group meets Wednesdays, 6:30-8pm. Make sure you don't miss out on the fun and worship time!

### Warner Camp Dates:

**5th-6th grade camp - August 1-5**

**7th-8th grade camp - June 20-24**

Make sure you mark these down so your middle schooler won't miss out on summer camp!! Registration forms will be available shortly.

*More information about middle school ministries can be found at [www.myfirstchurch.com/middleschool](http://www.myfirstchurch.com/middleschool)*

## Benton Heights Campus Students

Led by Everette Gaston and Heidi Heald, students in 6th-12th grade meet at the Benton Heights campus Sundays at noon for talk, Bible study, fun, and games.

*For more information, email Everette at: [everetteg112@hotmail.com](mailto:everetteg112@hotmail.com) / 269.470.2300.*

## High School Ministry. . .

### Mission to Appalachia

As a way to help raise funds for this summer's mission trip, we will be offering you the opportunity to sponsor a high school student. Watch for sponsorship booklets to be released soon!

### Superbooks

Student ministries are selling *Superbooks*. Make sure to buy your *Superbook* from one of our students and help to support our mission trips!

### HvZ

Humans and Zombies will battle again at the SJ campus on Sunday, April 29, 8:30pm. Make sure to bring your own bandana, nerf gun, and lots of friends!!!

### High School Warner Camp

High School Camp up at Warner Camp will be June 27- July 1. Make sure you mark your calendars, so you don't miss this opportunity! More information to come shortly on the high school website.

*Check out the high school ministries webpage at [www.myfirstchurch.com/highschool](http://www.myfirstchurch.com/highschool)*



## Middle School Summer Camp Connects Kids With God



The impact one week at Warner Camp has on a person's life is amazing! Okay, it's about crazy fun, it's about deeper friendships, it's about amazing memories...but when it comes down to it, the relevant, intense worship and teaching, as well as, times to engage with God is the most incredible aspect of a week at Warner.

I love the experience at Warner so much that I invest 2 weeks of my summer there: leading worship, teaching, and directing two camps. I love the opportunity it gives me to really connect with our kids. So, if you are in 5th-, 6th-, 7th-, or 8th-grade, make sure you get registered for one of these two camps:

JH2 (June 20-24) is for you if you are in 7th or 8th grade right now.

KK3 (August 1-5) is for you if you are now in 5th or 6th grade.

If you cannot make these camps, Warner does offer many other camps. Visit [warnercamp.com](http://warnercamp.com) for more information on all the great camps for students of all ages.

See you at camp!

Chris



**2 LOCATIONS**

St. Joseph Campus & General Office  
 First Church of God  
 2627 Niles Ave, St. Joseph, MI 49085  
 SERVICES: Saturdays at 6pm  
 Sundays at 9:30 & 11AM

Benton Heights Campus  
 First Church at Benton Heights  
 990 N. Euclid Ave., Benton Harbor 49022  
 SERVICES: Sundays at 11am

OFFICE HOURS  
 M-Th, 8-4:30 | 269-983-1524  
 recep@myfirstchurch.com

Deadline for First Touch articles  
 1st Friday of each month  
 Send to: teresa@myfirstchurch.com

WEBSITE: myfirstchurch.com  
 Web Designer: Julie Beam

**PASTORAL STAFF**  
**Lead Pastor**  
*David Colp*

**Prayer/Missions**  
*Rick Blumenberg*

**Life Groups/Assimilation**  
*Ryan Carrell*

**Discipleship/Older Adults/  
 Pastoral Care**  
*Bob Confer*

**Young Adults, Worship**  
 Dan Deitrich

**Executive Administrator**  
*Gregory Gordon*

**Benton Heights Campus Pastor**  
 Mary Shawl-Ranke

**Student Ministries**  
*Chris Spitters*

**Advisory Council**

- JC Anderson 11
- Bob Dowsett 11
- Vance Price 11
- John Fozard, Oklahoma 11
- Arden Bradley 12
- Michelle Kerns, Chair 12
- Mark Krenz, Arizona 12
- Mitzi Tompkins 12
- Gary Bolin 13
- Rajean Alexander 13
- Dave Eichberg 13
- Greg Gordon and David Colp

**Staff Missionary:** Joseph Steiner  
*Church of God, Debrecen, Hungary*

**Missionary Partners:**  
 Camille Melki, *Beirut, Lebanon*  
 Church of God in Paraguay  
 Tammie Tregellas, *Malawi, Africa*

# Connect with Your Father/Son Over a Bonfire 14th annual Father/Son Camping Trip

**July 9 - 13, 2011**

**Sylvania Wilderness in the UP**



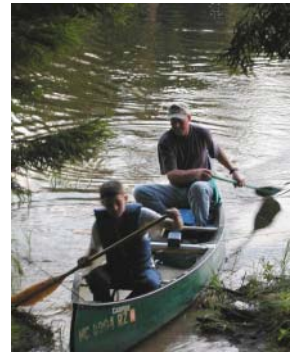
Enjoy five days of canoeing, fishing, camping, and fun with your son (or grandson or nephew) as a gathering of First Church dads/men and sons/boys head up north to the beautiful Sylvania Wilderness near the Wisconsin border. Over the last fourteen years, fathers/sons/grandfathers have enjoyed this trip together, formed bonds, and made lasting memories.

We will enjoy nature and some wonderful days of fishing and canoeing on the various lakes of the Sylvania Wilderness area. The trip will be made on our new church bus.

Cost is \$180/person. This includes: canoe rental, camping fees, transportation, camping meals... everything you need, except for four meals while we are on the road. Sign-up by placing a deposit of \$90/person (half of the cost) in the silver 'Registrations' mailbox in the Gathering Area by Sunday, May 1. Make checks payable to "First Church of God." First come, first serve! Space is limited to the first 24 persons to sign-up.

You do not have to have a son to go. Consider adopting one or invite another man to join you. Sons must be at least 10 years old and must be with a parent or an approved adult guardian.

*Questions? Contact Garry Zick (429-3478) or Pastor Bob Confer (983-1524 x14)*



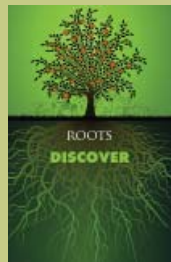
## Well of GRACE Fundraiser: April 14

On Thursday, April 14, 5-9pm, Pump House Grille in St. Joseph is hosting Well of GRACE Night. Upon presentation of a special coupon, 10% of your bill will be donated to Well of GRACE, a ministry devoted to helping spiritually wounded young women. In addition, the owner will personally match the 10% donation with another 10%! Reservations are not needed, but a coupon must be presented.

Coupons are available at the Information Center (SJ campus) or you can download a coupon at [wellofgraceministries.com](http://wellofgraceministries.com).

**New to First Church?**

**Discover Takes You from Spectator to Participant**



Taught by Pastor Bob Confer, our *Roots* connection class, Discover, is an important first step in learning what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ at First Church. The class has good discussions, and questions are always welcome.

**2-Saturday Seminar**  
**April 30 & May 7 | 8:30am-noon**

Sign-up online ([myfirstchurch.com/roots#discover](http://myfirstchurch.com/roots#discover)) or call the church office (269.983.1524)



# A God-Sized Vision for Malawi, Africa

I never dreamed the need would be so great as we drove into the village to

join with our Malawian brothers and sisters for my first church service in Africa. It was so exciting to worship our Savior together. Their passion was contagious.

Following the service, we heard from church leaders who had come from churches all over the country of Malawi to share their vision for the Church of God in their country. They presented a several page document that outlined their vision for the future. A key factor of this vision was building a headquarters for the Church of God. Their vision of this headquarters would be two-fold:

- 1) They would use the location to plant a new church
- 2) The building would also serve as their national training center

There are 130 churches with thousands of members in the country of Malawi. At the same time, those 130 pastors have virtually no theological training with the average pastor having about a 5th-grade education. In addition, since none of the churches can really afford to pay their pastors, they all work to provide for their families. The training center would become a place both for theological training and vocational training for pastors and lay leaders.

As we listened to the leaders share their hearts, the reality began to set in that it was indeed a God-sized vision--a vision that would only be accomplished with God's help. This project is more than our church can handle on its own. It will require us finding other ministry partners from the Church of God to help fund it and bring it to completion. We will be using the tithe money from our Vision 3:10 debt retirement funds to finance our portion of the cost, however, those funds will account for less than half the needed money, so we are currently working to find partner churches to join with us.

First Church family, this is a wonderful opportunity for us to support a major project of one of our four key mission areas that we have identified in the world. The church in Malawi is doing ministry in one of the poorest countries in Africa. The needs--both spiritual and physical--are profound. I am



convinced that we can make a difference and can become the leader for this project that has the potential to change the face of an entire nation. Will you join me in praying for the Church of God in Malawi and our missionary Tammie Tregellas who is working to give pastors training in Africa?

Please pray for this project and for ministry partners who will step up and join us to make the leaders in Malawi's vision a reality.

A final prayer would be to ask God if he is calling you to join us on an exciting adventure on the continent of Africa!



Zikomo

(TRANS: Thank you),

Pastor David



(l to r) Erik Fiskars, David Colp, J.C. Anderson, Pastor Thola, Pastor Emmanuel, and Tammie Tregalls work on vision for Malawi.