

THE YEAR AHEAD

2014 Calendar

From the Christian Education and Youth Ministry of
Saugatuck Congregational Church

The Christian Education and Youth Ministry of Saugatuck Congregational Church

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Saugatuck
Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



The Centerpiece of Our Ministry

Elijah was told by God, “Go, stand on the mountain at attention before God. God will pass by.”

A hurricane wind ripped through the mountains and shattered the rocks before God, but God wasn't to be found in the wind; after the wind an earthquake, but God wasn't in the earthquake; and after the earthquake fire, but God wasn't in the fire; and after the fire a gentle and quiet whisper. When Elijah heard the quiet voice, he muffled his face with his great cloak, went to the mouth of the cave, and stood there. A quiet voice asked, “So Elijah, now tell me, what are you doing here?”

(1 Kings 19:11-13, *The Message*)





“Afterward I will pour out my Spirit on everyone: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions.” (Joel 2:28)

God said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

(1 Kings 19:11-13, *New Revised Standard Version*)

Elijah was on the run. Why, I don’t really understand. He had quite literally just finished calling down fire from heaven as part of a dramatic proof that God was alive and at work in the midst of the nation of Israel. But, as if he didn’t understand the power God had just demonstrated, he took off on the run at the first sign of trouble. When God finds him, he is hiding in the desert on Mt. Horeb, also known as Mt. Sinai, also known as the mountain where God gave Israel the law and established a covenant with them right after rescuing them from slavery in Egypt through another massive display of God’s power we refer to as “The Plagues.” Elijah probably couldn’t have picked a more ironic place to run and hide!

Just to make sure we don’t miss the point, God puts that same power on display once again for Elijah, giving him one more reminder of just who the God we serve is. Having already asked Elijah once why he was hiding, and getting some sob story about being the only prophet left and having to flee for his life, God says to Elijah: “Go stand on *my* mountain and watch what *I* can do.” Presumably, with that instruction, we are to understand that even if God is not in the hurricane or the earthquake or the fire, God is making them happen to prove his point and remind Elijah just who he is dealing with.

But then the tone changes.

Before God actually speaks to Elijah again, we shift from big, cosmic, dramatic displays of divine power to a barely audible whisper, the sound of sheer silence. God reminds Elijah of the power that God possess. But then God approaches Elijah with tenderness and compassion, speaking in a still, small voice and asking Elijah simply “why are you here?” Finally, the story continues, in response to Elijah’s paralyzing sense of aloneness, God tells him that there is a whole community of prophets waiting for Elijah to join them if only he will have faith and seek them out.

God reminds Elijah of who God is, but then God speaks to Elijah’s deepest needs and gives him the gifts of community and compassion.



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As I reflect on this story, I think it holds three unique challenges to us that I hope will become guiding principles for our ministry to Children and Youth in the year ahead.

First, this story challenges us to **be aware of the many ways in which God is at work around us and in us.** The wind and the earthquake and the fire which God sends to Elijah are all dramatic displays of God's power. But alongside those "divine fireworks" is also the discovery of God in the still, small voice, in the sound of sheer silence, and in the invitation by God to ponder our own sense of meaning and purpose in the question, "why are you here?" **God is present and at work in more ways than we realize, and this year we want to challenge our children, youth, and adults to become more aware of that presence in their lives.** Our hope is that they will come to have a clearer sense of who God is and of *who they are* through our ministry together.

Second, this story challenges us to **be connected with God and with other people.** Elijah is afraid, and though he needs reminding of the power of God to overcome those fears, what he needs even more than that is a comforting voice to say "I am here with you." Likewise, **God longs to connect with each of us and for us to connect with one another, and this year we want to create a space in which our children, youth, and adults can learn to find those connections in their own lives.** Our hope is that a sense of community and connection will become the centerpiece of our ministry to children and youth here at Saugatuck because we believe that it is through relationships that we are transformed into those who truly reflect the image of God that is inside each of us.

Finally, this story challenges us because Elijah's fear is often our own fear. Having either forgotten or lost faith in the power of the God he serves, Elijah runs for his life in the face of adversity. As we at Saugatuck are undergoing a season of transition, fear is an understandable part of what we are all experiencing. But God challenges Elijah to break through that fear and step out in faith, to take a risk and experiment, to **be creative in living out of faith**, rather than confined by the

expectations of others. God reminds Elijah that there are much more powerful things at work in this world than our fears and then challenges Elijah, *and us*, to set aside fear and boldly step out in faith! Likewise, **it is our hope that our children, youth, and adults will find opportunities through our ministry to creatively live out their faith, breaking the mold of the world around them and engaging in the work of God in a way that authentically reflects who they are!**



“Afterward I will pour out my Spirit on everyone: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions.” (Joel 2:28)



As we encourage spiritual awareness, spiritual and communal connectedness, and faith-filled creativity in our young people, **we want this year to put an especial emphasis on “communal connectedness.”** The first line of the Saugatuck Church Vision Statement is that we are “A Community of Christ,” and so **this year our goal as a Christian Education and Youth Ministry is to help our children, youth, and adults form relationships which will transform them into expressions of the image of God that is already inside them.**

As I have observed the interactions of our youth with one another and with the adults of our church, I have been struck over and over again by the strength of the relationships that already exist here at Saugatuck. This is **an asset that I think we need to bring to the front and center of our ministry**, and so for the year 2014 we are going to put our emphasis on cultivating relationships, both between our young people and God, our young people and one another, and our young people and other members of our church community.



In the last half-century, our society has undergone enormous changes. Today, regular church attendance is half of what it was thirty years ago, even in places like the “Bible Belt” of the Deep South. In many communities throughout New England today, it is not uncommon for less than ten percent of the population to even claim to regularly attend church! And these trends are especially true among young people: there are more people in the “millennial” generation of today’s youth who profess no religious affiliation at all than in any other generation throughout American history.

It seems that young people today have been conditioned by our culture to view religion as something that is not important for their lives and to see the church as a place where they are not welcome. And in the midst of a climate that puts a tremendous amount of pressure on young

people from a very early age to “succeed” and “perform,” the challenge for us as a church becomes finding ways to meaningfully connect with young people, attempting to counter both of those perspectives, without becoming just another “thing” competing for their time and attention. The key to succeeding in this, I believe, is through an intentional emphasis on relationships and community.

I want to suggest that the best thing for our youth, and for our church, is a change in emphasis from hoping young people will decide to come to us to instead focusing on our going to them and building relationships with them where they are.

And, I want to suggest, the best thing for our children, and for our church, is a change in emphasis from church school being something that happens away from most of the congregation to instead focusing on inviting our children from an early age to be connected with the whole of our church community.

If we go way, way back in the church’s history, this kind of thinking starts to look familiar. The Book of Acts in the Bible is full of stories of the Apostles doing ministry not by waiting on people to come to them but by showing up in the market places, hanging out in the local meeting spots, and building connections through which they could tell others about the thing that inspired them most: how God had made a way for a new kind of community to exist, one that wasn’t based on our achievements or our net worth but instead based on the fact that we are all inherently reflections of the image of God. And the whole New Testament is full of descriptions of that community, the church, which compare us to a family, describing every member as a “child of God.” **So what if we made those New Testament models our model in the year ahead? What if we made intergenerational relationships and meeting young people where they are the centerpieces of our ministry here at Suagatuck?**

Doing just that is what I want to experiment with in the year ahead. That experiment is going to take a variety of forms. **For the next year, the primary**

emphasis of our ministry is going to be building relationships between our adult members and our children and youth which value them not for showing up to be part of the crowd but simply for being, full stop. No pressure to perform, no expectations that they must attend everything, we commit to being there for them simply because they are a child of God, made in God’s image, and worthy of all the love and support we can give.

This way of doing ministry, this experiment, fits perfectly, I believe, with our goals. When we encourage students to become more aware of God in their lives and shape their own sense of purpose, we are valuing them for who they are, not asking them to conform to our expectations. When we encourage students to become more connected with God and one another, we are asking them to form a faith that is real to them throughout the week, not just on Sunday morning. When we encourage students to be creative in living out their faith, we are challenging them to make their faith their own, not to duplicate the faith we hold. **And for any of those things to happen, we have to have the credibility of a real relationship with our young people. We have to invest time in their lives rather than simply asking them to invest time in our programming.**

Putting this way of ministering to our young people into practice is going to be both a challenge and an adventure. I hope you will join me on the way!

Grace and Peace,

Alex

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Alexander P. Marshall
Associate Pastor For Youth and Children's Ministries
Saugatuck Congregational Church, UCC (Open and Affirming)

Our Goals For The Year Ahead

In the next year we are going to be experimenting with making intergenerational relationships and meeting young people where they are the defining feature of our ministry to children and youth.

While we are engaged in this experiment, our goal for the children, youth, and adults we serve is that over the next year they would have opportunities through the work of our ministry:

1. *To Be Aware* of how God is at work in their lives and the world around them;
2. *To Be Connected* with God and others in personally meaningful ways;
3. *To Be Creative* in living out their faith.

We hope that by facilitating these opportunities, the children and youth in our care will ultimately *Be Transformed* through relationships to reflect the grace of God in their lives.

How These Goals Will Be Implemented

“Afterward I will pour out my Spirit on everyone: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions.” (Joel 2:28)

We will facilitate **spiritual awareness** by:

- Introducing our students to a broad range of biblical narratives, giving them theological language with which to describe their own experiences of God.
- Providing our students regular opportunities to reflect--in discussion, prayer, or activity--on how they have experienced God at work in their lives.
- Introducing students to a variety of faith practices and encouraging them to use these in these in their daily lives.

We will facilitate **spiritual and communal connectedness** by:

- Creating regular opportunities for students to build relationships with members of the congregation who represent a wide spectrum of interests, skills, and lived experiences.
- Providing regular opportunities for students to build meaningful relationships with one another.
- Inviting students to regularly participate in different practices of prayer and meditation.

We will facilitate the **creative living out of faith** by:

- Helping students envision ways that their faith can connect to their own lives and situations.
- Organizing activities, trips, and opportunities for service in which students are asked to bring their full talents and creativity to the table.



2014 Calendar

Key:

Church School (CS), Story Tent (ST), or Dunkin' Diakonos Crew (DDC) Event
(Always at Temple Israel Unless Otherwise Specified)

Confirmation Class Event (Always at Ministry Center Unless Otherwise Specified)

Youth Group (YG) Event (YG Always at Ministry Center Unless Otherwise
Specified, other events location TBA)

Middle School Youth Group (MSYG) Event (Always at Ministry Center Unless
Otherwise Specified)

YG and MSYG Event (Location Specified)

Saugatuck Church or Community Event (Location Specified)

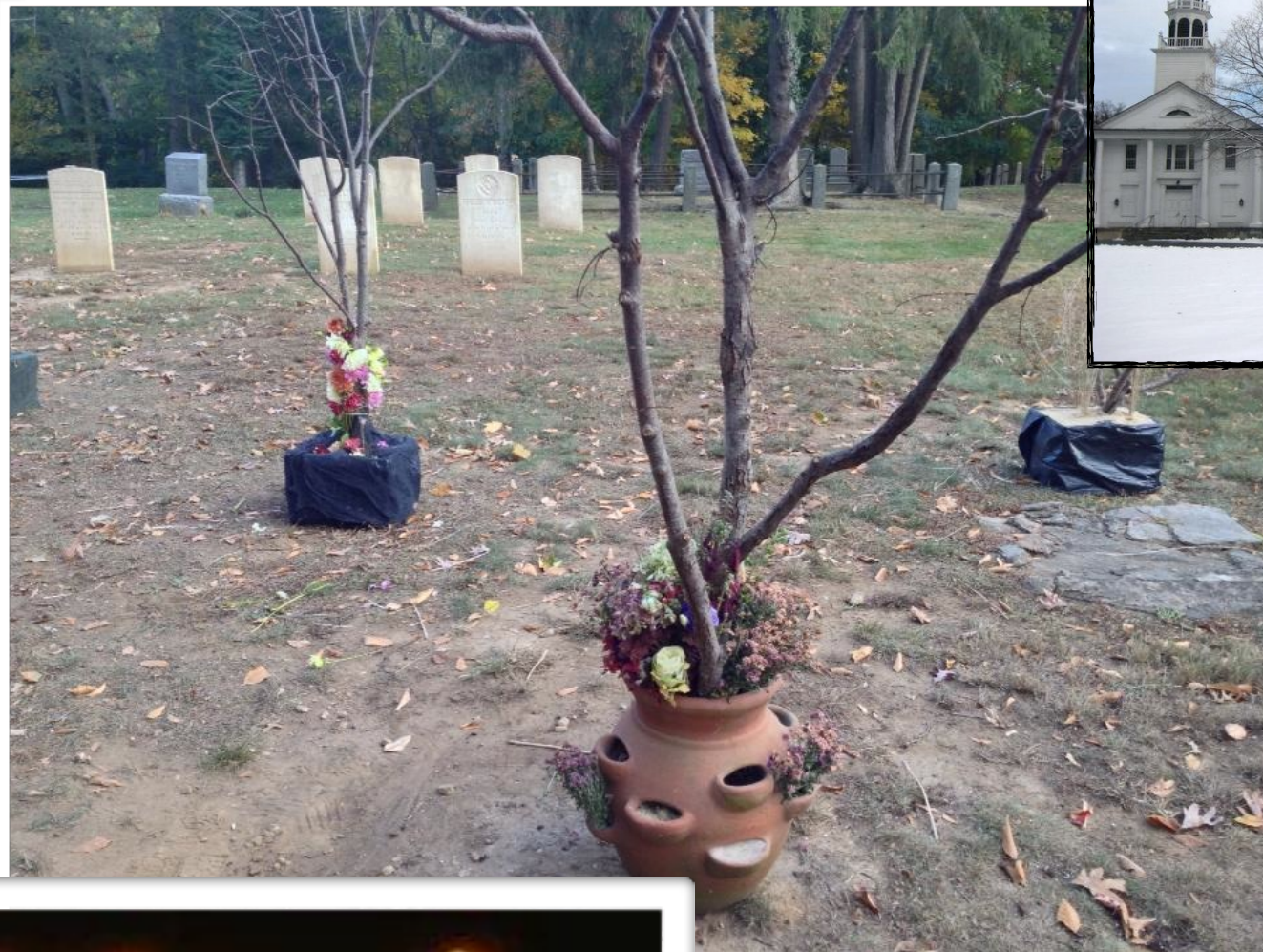
Morning Theme For CS/Faith Story Sunday



~ December 2013 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 No CS, ST, DDC No Confirmation No YG	2	3	4	5	6	7 Advent Retreat 2-4PM (Ministry Center) MSYG Christmas Party 5pm
8 CS, ST, DDC 10 AM Crafter's Sale 11AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	9	10	11	12	13	14 Candlelight Vigil 6PM (Westport Town Green)
15 CS, ST, DDC 10AM Advent Workshop 11AM Christmas Pageant Rehearsal Longest Night Service 4PM (United Methodist Church) Confirmation Party 5PM YG Xmas Party 7PM (Martenson Home)	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 <u>Mission Trip Deposit Due</u> CS, ST, DDC 10AM Christmas Pageant Rehearsal No Confirmation No YG	23	24 YG Luminary Set-Up 12PM (Church Front Lawn) Christmas Pageant 5PM (Temple Israel) <u>(participants please arrive by 4PM)</u> Second Christmas Eve Service 9PM (Seabury Center)	25 Christmas Day Open House (Senior Center)	26 Church Office Closed	27 Church Office Closed	28
29 Alex on Vacation No CS, ST, DDC No Confirmation No YG	30 Church Office Closed	31 Church Office Closed				

Faith Story Sundays:

In January, we will start the first of many experiments in making **intergenerational relationships** the center of our ministry to children and youth: the introduction of **Faith Story Sundays** as a monthly occurrence in our church school. These Sundays will be a little bit like a church service for children, with some music and activities that all center around a story of personal faith told by a member of the congregation. This is a way for our younger children to get to know more adults in the church and for adults who don't normally interact with our children to get to know them. If you know of some members of the church who have stories our kids should hear, let Alex know so he can reach out to them!



Tuesday Coffee Hour

Last fall several of us heard a talk in which we were urged to think about ways we can change up the routine of our pastors and get them “out of the office” and “into the community” a bit more regularly. That idea resonates pretty well with our goal of making our

ministry “move out” to reach our youth and children where they are instead of relying on them to come to us. So as an experiment this year, we are going to start something called “**Tuesday Coffee Hour.**” Each Tuesday afternoon from 2:30-4:00, Alex will be holding “office hours” at coffee shops, restaurants, and other locations across town, connecting with whomever is there. Watch the **Saugatuck Church Youth Facebook page** to see where Alex will be on a given Tuesday and feel free to drop by and hang out!

~ January 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day Church Office Closed	2	3	4
5 Communion Intergenerational Epiphany Service 10AM Confirmation (w mentors) 5PM YG 7PM	6	7 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	8	9	10	11
12 CS, ST, DDC 10 AM MSYG Ice Skating Trip 11AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM Ski Trip Balance Due	13	14 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG 6PM	15 Heifer Trip Balance Due Confirmation Class Mission Trip Deposit Due	16	17 MLK Shabbat Service, The Conservative Synagogue	18
19 MLK Faith Story Sunday CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	20 Martin Luther King MLK Day Youth Event (Location and Time TBD)	21 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	22	23	24 Ski Trip to Mt. Snow (MSYG and YG, families welcome)	25 Ski Trip to Mt. Snow
26 Ski Trip to Mt. Snow CS, ST 10AM Confirmation 5PM No YG	27	28 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	29	30	31	



Adult Mentor Program

There has been a long standing tradition at Saugatuck of inviting adult members of the congregation to be “mentors” for our confirmation class. This year, as part of our experiment at building **intergenerational connections** in our ministry, we are going to expand that program. The goal is to have a team of mentors who are each paired with two mentees, one in high school and one in middle school.

By taking the time to invest in the lives of these youth, our mentors will be giving them a relational connection that will help inspire them to grow in their own faith. By pairing them with both high school and middle-school students, we hope that our mentees will also form lasting and meaningful relationships with one another, creating a chance for older youth to encourage and guide younger ones as they move into the next phase of life.



~ February 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Church Leadership Retreat
2 Super Bowl / Groundhog Day Faith Story Sunday Communion CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation (w mentors) 5PM YG Super-Bowl Party 6PM (Location TBD)	3	4 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	5	6	7	8
9 CS, ST, DDC 10AM Annual Meeting 11AM Annual Meeting Brunch 11AM Valentine's Candy Sale Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	10	11 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG 6PM	12	13	14 Valentine's Day Alex on Vacation	15 Alex on Vacation
16 Alex on Vacation No CS, ST, DDC No Confirmation No YG	17 Presidents' Day Alex on Vacation	18 Alex on Vacation	19 Alex on Vacation	20 Alex on Vacation	21 Alex on Vacation	22
23 CS, ST, DDC 10AM No Confirmation No YG	24	25 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	26	27	28	

Ash Wednesday and Vespers

One of the ways in which we will give young people a chance to be more **spiritually aware and connected** this year is through inviting them to take part in a few ancient Christian practices around Lent and Easter. For centuries Christians have undertaken the practice of choosing an aspect of their lives to “fast” from during the season of lent, creating the space in their lives for adding a new spiritual practice or discipline, such as a regular routine of prayer or scripture reading. This year we are encouraging our students to engage in such a practice, replacing one thing in their lives with a new discipline that helps them be more **spiritually aware and more connected with God**. One such opportunity for our older students will be a **weekly vespers service** held during the season of Lent. Vespers is a prayer service dating back to the medieval monasteries in which the participants recite a series of prayers together and have some time to pray silently by themselves. If this isn’t something you have participated in before, we highly encourage you to try it out.

Open to all Middle School and High School Youth and their families, held at the Ministry Center.



~ March 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Intergenerational Silver Lake Communion Service 10AM (Temple Israel) Confirmation (w mentors) 5PM YG 7PM <u>Mission Trip Second Payment Due</u>	3	4 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	5 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> Ash Wednesday Service (led by YG) 7PM	6	7	8
9 Amistad Sunday CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	10	11 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG 6PM	12 MSYG and YG Vespers Service 7PM	13	14	15
16 Faith Story Sunday CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	17	18 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	19 MSYG and YG Vespers Service 7PM	20	21	22
23 Palm Sunday Music Prep CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	24	25 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	26 MSYG and YG Vespers Service 7PM	27	28	29 MSYG Movie Night
30 Palm Sunday Music Prep CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	31					



Easter Vigil

For many Christians around the world, the night before Easter is a very important one. They gather together to herald the arrival of the resurrected Christ at the first crack of dawn in Jerusalem! This year, as another way of helping our young people find **connectedness with God and one another**, we are going to try this ancient tradition out for ourselves.

Exact details to be announced, watch for further information.



~ April 2014 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	2 MSYG and YG Vespers Service 7PM	3	4	5
6 Faith Story Sunday Communion CS, ST, DDC 10AM Easter Candy Sale Confirmation (w mentors) 5PM YG 7PM <u>Deposit Due for YG Fall</u> <u>Retreat</u>	7	8 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG 6PM	9 MSYG and YG Vespers Service 7PM	10	11	12
13 Palm Sunday Palm Sunday Service 10 AM Easter Candy Sale No Confirmation YG 7PM	14	15 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	16 MSYG and YG Vespers Service 7PM	17	18 Good Friday	19 YG and MSYG Easter Vigil 11PM (Location TBD)
20 Easter Easter Service 10AM No Confirmation YG 7PM	21	22 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	23	24	25	26 Youth Group Zip Lining Trip
27 CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	28	29 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	30			

Story Tent

Story Tent has become a time-honored tradition here at Saugatuck! Going on its 16th year, Story Tent this year will tell the story of Noah and the Flood. While challenging our 5th through 8th grade students to be **creative**, this story also challenges them to grapple with deep questions about our faith. How do we handle the image of a God who destroys? How do we make sense of a God who gets angry? Where is the love

and peace that we cherish in the story of the flood? Come hear some of the ways our youth have wrestled with these questions and see how they have creatively reinterpreted one of the best known, yet also perhaps least understood, stories in our scriptures.

Exact Date and Location TBA. Stay Tuned!



~ May 2014 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 MSYG Heifer Farm Trip	3 MSYG Heifer Farm Trip
4 MSYG Heifer Farm Trip Faith Story Sunday Communion CS, ST, DDC 10AM Story Tent Rehearsal? 11am? Confirmation (w mentors) 5PM YG 7PM	5 Story Tent Rehearsal?	6 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	7	8	9	10 Story Tent Rehearsal?
11 Mother's Day Story Tent? 10AM Story Tent Rehearsal? 11am? Confirmation 5PM No YG	12 Story Tent Rehearsal?	13 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG 6PM	14	15	16	17 Story Tent Rehearsal?
18 Mission Trip Balance Due Story Tent? 10AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	19	20 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	21	22	23	24
25 Confirmation Class Faith Stories CS, ST, DDC 10AM Youth Group Sailing Day! No Confirmation	26 Memorial Day	27 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	28	29	30	31 MSYG Movie Night

Youth Group Mission Trip

We couldn't be more excited about this year's mission trip! The youth group and confirmation class will be traveling to Northern New Mexico to work on the lands of the Navajo Nation, helping with housing reconstruction and community restoration projects. We will be led on this trip by the efforts of Experience Mission, an organization that hosts trips such as this one in over twenty locations around the world. Their emphasis is also our emphasis: on **building meaningful, lasting relationships** which help to foster sustainable change. We can't wait to take part! To find out more about how you can help us get ready, just ask us!



~ June 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Confirmation Sunday! 10AM YG 7PM <u>Fall Retreat Balance Due</u>	2	3 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	4	5	6	7 Relay for Life, Fairfield
8 CS, ST, DDC 10AM YG 7PM	9	10 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG 6PM	11	12	13	14
15 Father's Day CS, ST, DDC 10AM YG 7PM	16	17 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	18	19	20	21 Youth Group Overnight
22 Youth Group Mission Trip to New Mexico	23 Youth Group Mission Trip to New Mexico	24 Youth Group Mission Trip to New Mexico	25 Youth Group Mission Trip to New Mexico	26 Youth Group Mission Trip to New Mexico	27 Youth Group Mission Trip to New Mexico	28 Youth Group Mission Trip to New Mexico
29 Beach Service	30 Alex on Vacation					

Ecumenical Beach Services

Westport is blessed with a beautiful beach. Westport is also blessed with an energetic and **creative** bunch of clergy across all our various churches. When you put those two things together, a beautiful tradition has developed: hosting ecumenical worship services on the beach during the summer, giving us a common space in which to **connect with God and the wider community!** Free parking is available for service attendees at Compo Beach. Plus, we frequently get a magnificent view of the morning light on the water! Come join us for this family friendly service!!



~ July 2014 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Alex on Vacation	2 Alex on Vacation	3 Alex on Vacation	4 Independence Day Alex on Vacation	5
6 Beach Service	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 Beach Service	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Beach Service	21	22	23	24	25 Christmas in July BBQ	26
27 Beach Service	28	29	30	31		



Youth Group Fall Retreat

The end of summer isn't generally something we much look forward to. We decided to change that a little bit. The last weekend of August, leading into Labor Day on Sept. 1, we will be taking a **youth group fall retreat**.

Possible Trip Plan (**Exact Details TBD**): Staying at Silver Lake Retreat Center, spending a day enjoying nature by hiking and/or river rafting and a day having fun at Six Flags New England.

This trip will be a great chance to **re-connect with friends**, rekindling the bonds we created on our mission trip earlier in the summer! Hope to see you there!!

Early Sign-Up and Deposits This Year:

To save everyone a little hassle and a little money, we are offering the chance to bundle your deposits for all of our major youth group events in the coming year:

	Early Deadline (Oct. 5)	Regular Deadline (Nov. 2)	Late (After Nov. 2)
Ski Trip:	\$40	\$50	\$60
MSYG Heifer Trip	\$40	\$50	\$60
High School Mission Trip	\$225	\$250	\$275
MSYG Bundle (Ski and Heifer Trips)	\$75	\$100	\$125
High School Bundle (Ski and Mission Trips)	\$250	\$300	\$350
Confirmation Bundle (All 3 Trips)	\$300	\$350	\$400



Please Note: Guests (youth not normally affiliated with Saugatuck) and new families joining after these deadlines will not be charged late fees.

~ August 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Beach Service	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Beach Service	11	12	13	14	15 Movie Night	16
17 Beach Service	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Beach Service	25	26	27	28	29	30 YG Fall Retreat
31 YG Fall Retreat						



Youth Group Bible Study

Beginning this fall we are going to experiment with another way of helping our youth be more **spiritually aware and connected with God and one another**: designating a bi-weekly time of regular Bible study and prayer. At our **Bible Study** meetings, we will spending some time learning about the biblical narrative, wrapping our minds around its meaning and trying to understand the ways in which it connects to our current lives and situations. Then we will have the opportunity to pray together, including praying for one another, as we both **connect with God and support one another as a community**.



~ September 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Labor Day YG Fall Retreat	2	3	4	5	6
7 Welcome Back Sunday!! YG Mission Sponsor's Dinner 6:30PM	8	9 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG Kick-Off Party (Location TBD) 6PM	10	11	12	13
14 CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation BBQ 5PM YG 7PM	15	16 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	17 YG Bible Study 7:30PM	18	19	20
21 Intergenerational Youth Mission Sunday 10AM YG Mission Trip Announcement Lunch 11AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	22	23 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG 6PM	24	25	26	27
28 CS, ST, DDC: 10AM MSYG Apple-Picking Trip 11AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	29	30 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00				

All Hallows Fest

Two years ago, a new tradition was born! The first annual **All Hallows Fest** was very popular, and last year's Second Annual Festival was even more so. The event teaches us the many ways in which people around the world **connect with God and their loved ones** even across the divide of death. Last year we introduced the "Memory Grove" at Evergreen Cemetery, giving people an opportunity to install ornaments memorializing those nearest and dearest to their hearts. This year we hope to expand the festival in more new and exciting ways, especially focusing on expanding our youth group participation.



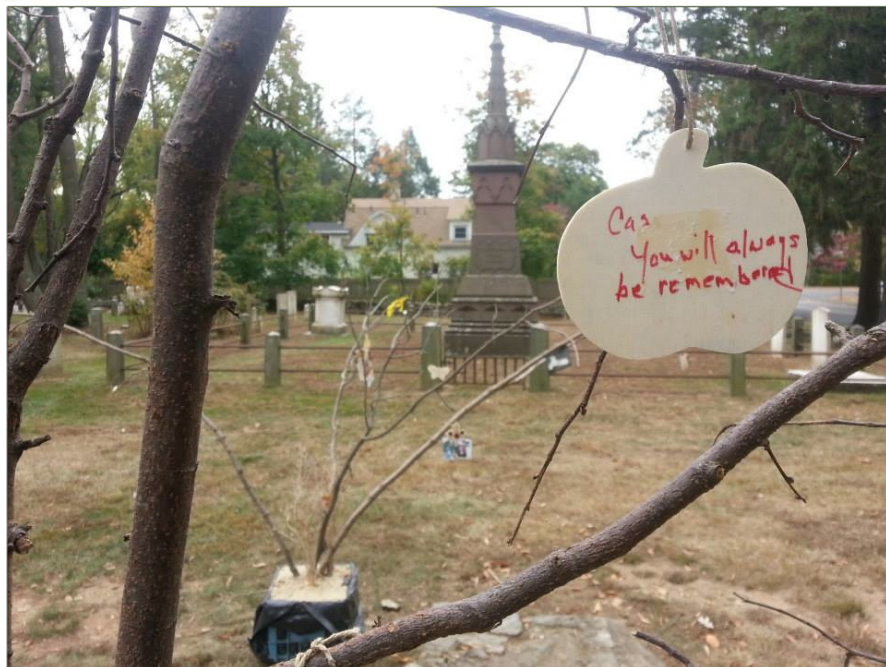
~ October 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 YG Bible Study 7:30PM	2	3	4
5 Faith Story Sunday World Communion Sunday Service 10AM YG Parent Meeting 11AM Confirmation (w mentors) 5PM YG 7PM Early Sign-up Deadline for 2015 YG and MSYG Trips	6	7 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	8	9	10	11 Youth Group Hike (Location TBD)
12 CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	13 Columbus Day	14 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG 6PM	15 YG Bible Study 7:30PM	16	17	18
19 CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation 5PM Crop Walk (Location TBD)	20	21 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	22	23	24	25
26 CS, ST, DDC 10AM All Hallows Fest 5PM No Confirmation or YG (Help with All Hallows)	27	28 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG 6PM	29 YG Bible Study 7:30PM	30	31 Halloween MSYG All Hallows' Eve Lock-In	



Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Each November the Interfaith Clergy Association and the Interfaith Council of Westport and Weston organize a community Thanksgiving Service hosted by one of the area houses of worship. Last year, our own Pastor Alison Patton preached at the service and this year Saugatuck is slated to host the event! Our hope is to involve people of all ages from across the community, including youth and children.

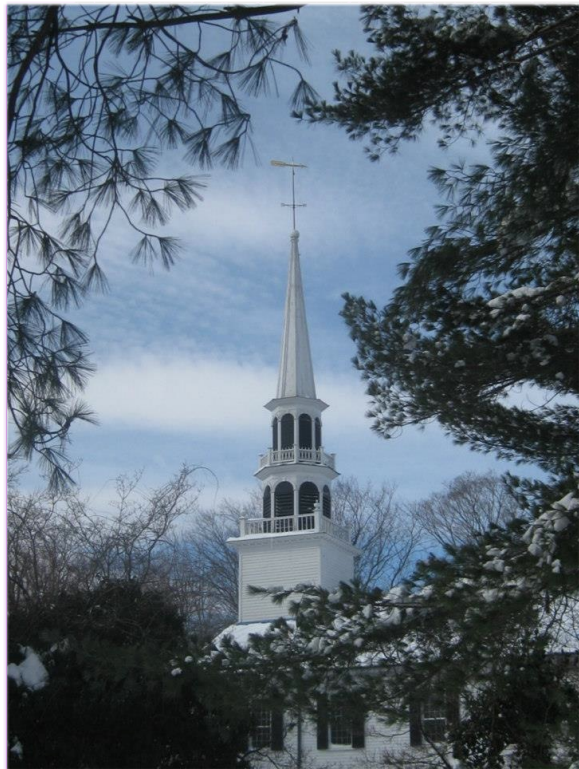
Stay tuned for more details, including the exact date and time!



~ November 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 MSYG All Hallow' Eve Lock-In
2 Faith Story Sunday Communion CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation (w mentors) 5PM YG 7PM Deposits for MSYG Heifer Trip, Ski Trip, YG Mission Trip Due	3	4 Election Day Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	5	6	7	8
9 CS, ST, DDC 10AM YG Rock Climbing Confirmation 5PM No YG	10	11 Veterans' Day Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00 MSYG 6PM	12 YG Bible Study 7:30PM	13	14	15
16 CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation 5PM YG: 7PM	17	18 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	19	20 Saugatuck Hosts Interfaith Thanksgiving Service??	21	22
23 CS, ST, DDC 10AM Confirmation 5PM YG: 7PM	24	25	26	27 Thanksgiving Thanksgiving Day Feast	28	29
30 No CS, ST, DDC No Confirmation No YG						

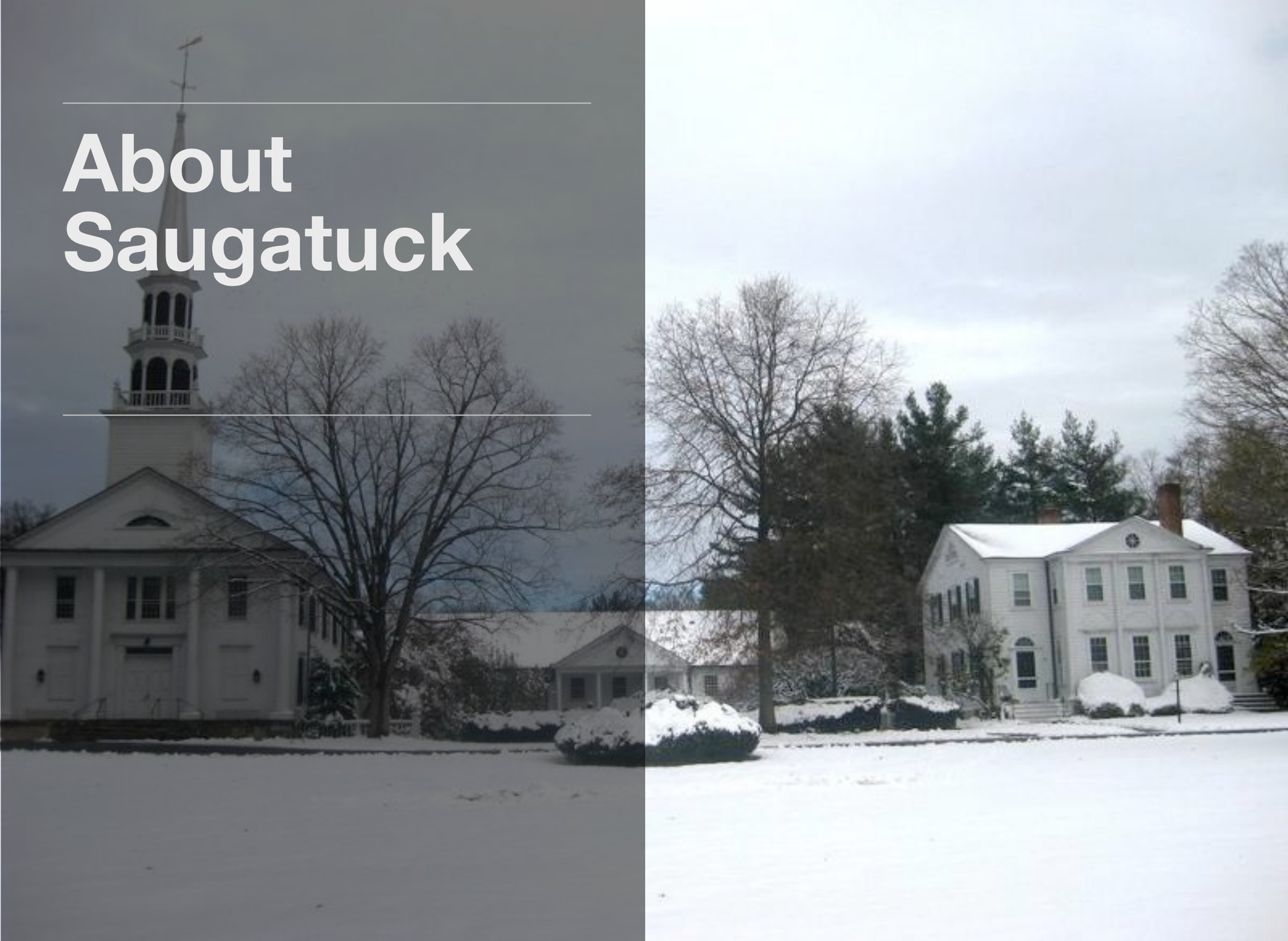
Advent at Saugatuck

As the year draws to a close, we enter into a season of waiting. Its often a time of hurried, frantic activity in all of our lives, but at Saugatuck we try to make time to slow down, **be aware of God at work, and connect with one another.** There will be a mini-retreat open to all members of the church, both young and old. We will have some great times of fun fellowship as our Middle School, Confirmation Class, and High School Youth Groups celebrate the season! This year, one experiment we will try with an eye toward increasing our **communal connections** throughout the church, is running an “**Advent Messenger Service**” in which our youth will take and deliver special cards and gifts sent from one member of the congregation to another. Hope you will join us for the Holidays!



~ December 2014 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	3 YG Bible Study 7:30PM	4	5	6 Advent Retreat?? MSYG Deck the Halls and Christmas Party
7 Faith Story Sunday Communion CS, ST, DDC 10AM Advent Workshop 11AM Advent Messenger Service? Christmas Candy Sales Confirmation 5PM YG 7PM	8	9 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	10	11	12	13
14 CS, ST, DDC 10AM Pageant Rehearsal 10AM Crafter's Sale 11AM Advent Messenger Service? Christmas Candy Sales Longest Night Service?? Confirmation Party 5PM YG Christmas Party 7PM (Location TBD)	15	16 Tuesday Coffee Hour 2:30-4:00	17 YG Bible Study 7:30PM	18	19	20
21 CS, ST, DDC 10AM Pageant Rehearsal 11AM Advent Messenger Service? No Confirmation No YG	22	23	24 Christmas Pageant 5PM (Location TBD) Second Christmas Eve Service 9PM (Location TBD)	25 Christmas Christmas Day Feast	26	27
28 No CS, ST, DDC No Confirmation No YG	29	30	31			

About Saugatuck



Our Covenant

“Afterward I will pour out my Spirit on everyone: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions.” (Joel 2:28)

We the members of Saugatuck Congregational Church acknowledge and celebrate the tangible presence of God in our lives as revealed in Jesus Christ. We recognize that loving faithfulness to God is best manifested in our loving faithfulness to one another and our earth. Therefore, we covenant with God and each other to strive to follow Christ's way, walking with our brothers and sisters in faithfulness to Christ's command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. We accept as our responsibility the worship of God, the witness and fellowship of this faith community and the task of life-long education in the faith. We claim as our mission the promotion of justice, peace and human dignity in both word and deed. In all these things we bind ourselves to follow the Holy Spirit as revealed in the scriptures, in tradition and in our own experience. To practice the covenantal relationship that we affirm we commit ourselves to:

Praising God by:

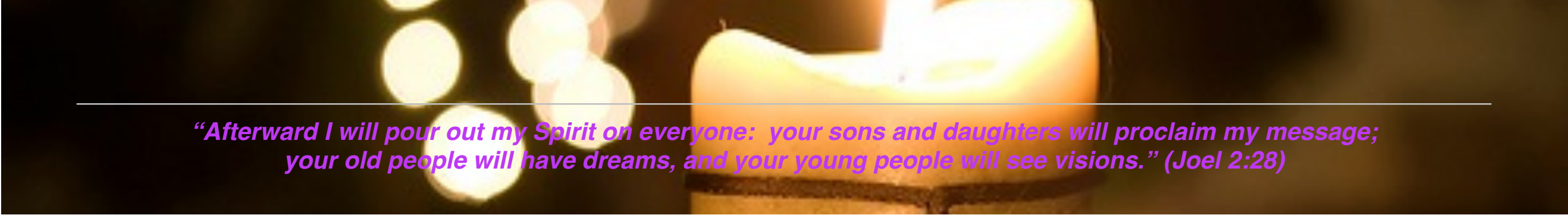
- Welcoming and practicing hospitality toward all people as children of God;
- Nurturing the children in our midst in the Christian faith and the values expressed in this covenant;
- Caring as faithful stewards for God's earth and all of God's gifts;
- Participating, as a relevant part of the greater community, in meeting the unfolding needs, physical and spiritual, of all of God's people; and
- Relating to other faith communities and religions in a covenantal manner, honoring and respecting the work and ministry of each of them.

Affirming our unity in Christ and our love for one another by:

- Demonstrating our commitment to our church with prayers, presence, gifts and service;
- Respecting, trusting and honoring our ordained pastors and lay leaders and remaining open to their transformational leadership;
- Working cooperatively to build a shared vision for the future, giving priority to the well-being of the church family;
- Listening with open and non-judgmental minds to the words and ideas of others;
- Communication openly in a spirit of trust, love and respect and seeking constructive solutions to problems; and
- Forgiving one another for our failings, as we expect to receive forgiveness ourselves.

Following the path of Jesus by:

- Praying, to thank God and ask God's help in our lives and our church;
- Listening to God's response and always humbly seeking to do God's will.
- To the end that we may be, become and do what God intends for us.



“Afterward I will pour out my Spirit on everyone: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions.” (Joel 2:28)

Our Vision

A COMMUNITY OF CHRIST

WELCOMING ALL PEOPLE

LEARNING TO LOVE AND SERVE GOD AND
NEIGHBOR

Our Open and Affirming Statement

We, the members of Saugatuck Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, believe that all people are created in the spiritual image of God, and that God's love and grace are given to all. Therefore, in accordance with our Vision Statement, we welcome anyone who seeks God into the fellowship, worship, and work of this church without regard to their race, ancestry, age, physical or mental ability, gender, sexual orientation, social and economic status or religious background.

Youth Group Covenant

“Afterward I will pour out my Spirit on everyone: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions.” (Joel 2:28)

Being a part of Saugatuck Congregational Church, we share the conviction that the presence of God in our lives compels us to seek ways in which we may follow the commands of Jesus: to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Saugatuck is an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, and as such we, its youth group, take seriously the statement “we welcome anyone,” regardless of their “race, ancestry, age, physical or mental ability, gender, sexual orientation, social and economic status, or religious background.” We as a youth group understand these commitments to mean particular things for our life and community together. **Specifically, we expect from one another, as fellow members of this group, the following basic commitments toward each person in our community:**

- Respect
- Trust
- Kindness
- Faith in one another
- Friendship
- Honesty

We as a youth group hope that, in our time of fellowship and community with one another, we will:

- Learn from one another
- Share and grow in our knowledge and in our ability for moral judgment
- Participate together in missions and outreach to the wider community
- Create an environment in which we can be open and honest with one another

We collectively desire that others who see and interact with us will say that our group is:

- Productive
- Inclusive
- Giving
- Kind and Caring
- A family
- Joyful
- Peaceful

We intend for this to be a community which is marked by:

- Love
- Compassion
- Responsibility
- Faith and Religious Belief
- Fun



Our Policies and Expectations

“Afterward I will pour out my Spirit on everyone: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions.” (Joel 2:28)

As we go about our work in ministry here at Saugatuck, we have certain expectations about how our adults and children will conduct themselves. These expectations are intended to create a safe, warm, faithful environment in which our children and youth can learn and grow.

To that end, **our first expectation is that our adult leadership conduct themselves in a way that ensures the safety of our children and youth.** To ensure this is the case, we require that all adults who regularly work with children or youth undergo regular criminal background screenings, that they be aware of the emergency procedures at all facilities we work in, that they keep the Associate Pastor for Youth and Children and the relevant parents of any youth or children they are working with aware of all their meetings and activities with the youth and children of our church, and that they exercise good judgement with regards to things like safety and transportation. No adult leader in our church should ever be meeting with youth or children in private or secret, all one-on-one meetings should occur in a public location, and transportation to and from events should be arranged in such a way that no adult is ever alone in a car with anyone younger than sixteen.

Our second expectation is that our children and youth also conduct themselves in a way that ensures their own safety and the safety of those around them. We expect that our children and youth will follow the instructions of adults at events or meetings, especially in the event of an emergency. We also expect that our children and youth will not bring to church activities or events any weapons, drugs, or other substances which they are not legally permitted to possess. We further expect that our children and youth will not engage in bullying,

hazing, or harassment of any kind toward other students or youth at our church. Any student who does not abide by these expectations may be asked to leave an event or activity at their own (or their parents') expense, even if that means an early flight home from a trip.

Our final expectation is that everyone involved in our ministry will be engaged in activities which promote the goals of our ministry not those which undermine them. As a ministry, we seek to foster meaningful relationships among our youth and adults and aim to increase our students' awareness of God, connectedness to God and one another, and creative living out of their own faith. Our expectation is that the adults and students engaged in this ministry will not engage in routine behavior that undermines or compromises these goals. Our expectation is also that we will not engage in any activities or programs which cannot be explicitly linked to these goals. We ask that all adult members of the congregation, regardless of their position or function, respect the judgment of our Christian Education and Youth Ministry Team, and especially the Associate Pastor for Youth and Children, when evaluating whether or not new ideas for events or programs align with the goals and objectives of our ministry.