



# The Allegan Congregationalist

October 2023

Our church exists to introduce people to Jesus Christ and train those who already know Him.

## Fighting from the High Ground by Greg Carlson



### Calendar Events:

- 10/28 Hymn Sing and Dessert Reception 6:30 PM
- 10/29 Church Quarterly Meeting
- 10/31 Trunk 'N Treat

Born again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ “fight the good fight of faith” from strategic high ground (I Timothy 6:12).

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...” (Ephesians 2:4-6).

You and I presently and personally face challenges. What if, regardless of their mode or measure, our Heavenly Father calls us to engage difficulties, pains, troubles, and perplexities in light of an empty tomb, an occupied Heavenly throne, and the glory that we spiritually “sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus?” He does. We fight from victory as believers rather than for it. It often does not feel or look like it, and skirmishes can be lost if we forget or neglect to walk in the light of truth. But look at the promise God is making here. The believer who opens her or his eyes to look up will then be directed by the Spirit of God and the Word of God to look down from the high ground of Christ’s victorious vantage point. “I will triumph in the works of Your hands” (Psalm 92:4).

Our spiritual enemies know this truth far better than we do. They bear the scars of millions of moments throughout history when believers have looked around to view seeming hopeless situations, and then looked up to their Lord. In such Heavenly light, the Savior has directed them to look down from His throne of triumph. They have prayed accordingly...

“Lord, how You will administer Your victory in this scene of danger, disaster, and destruction, I do not know. But I know You will. And I know You call me to be a part of Your working to do so by trusting You, and submitting myself to be whatever You would have me to be or do in the matter.”

Today’s challenges call us to realize our occupation of the high ground by our spiritual and Heavenly union with the risen Lord Jesus. Then we can say with the hymn writer Bart Miller:



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## Fighting from the High Ground (cont.)

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, you soldiers of the cross;  
Lift high his royal banner, it must not suffer loss.  
From victory unto victory, His army shall he lead,  
'Til every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, stand in his strength alone;  
The arm of flesh will fail you, you dare not trust your own.  
Put on the gospel armor, each piece put on with prayer;  
Where duty calls or danger, be never wanting there.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the strife will not be long;  
This day the noise of battle, the next the victor's song.  
To those who vanquish evil, a crown of life shall be;  
They with the King of Glory shall reign eternally.

We can make the matter pointed and directed toward the particular conflicts we face. As we do, we will join the psalmist in triumphing in the works of God's hands. In that, we will greatly honor God. Our hearts will find peace in the love of God. Our hands will fight by the power of Christ and His Word. We will strengthen and encourage fellow believers to look around, look up, and then look down from where we "sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere." (II Corinthians 2:14)

## happy Retirement A Celebration to Honor Leah



"First Congregational Church." For over 26 years, Leah VanOrder was the voice you heard when calling 673-3139. In that time period, 312 newsletters were published; 1,352 bulletins constructed.

Countless memories and hearts touched. Leah joyfully served as our greeter, organizer, inventory control, PageMaker, calendar keeper...A Secretary of many hats. What a joy to gather with Leah, Denny, and their family for a luncheon following service on 9/24. In every ending, there is a new beginning. We wish you continued joy and know our friendship continues.



Each week following service, the Women's Fellowship hosts coffee and snacks to help foster community within our church family. How can you participate? Please stay after and join us Sunday mornings. Also, let Julie (269-673-4071) know if you would like to host one Sunday to celebrate a special occasion. We'll be right along side you to help with the coffee, set-up, & clean up.

## The Flesh and The Spirit— A Poem

By Todd Wagner

Fallen and dead in my transgressions, what hope do I have to be saved?  
 The law of God is too difficult to keep. I alone cannot keep it.  
 God's wrath and judgment I will receive. What hope do I have?  
 But You, Mighty God, sent Paul, who brings a message of hope and peace to many.  
 There is hope and peace in Christ, Paul proclaims. The one called Jesus. The Son of God.  
 Paul declares Christ died for the ungodly, salvation has come to mankind.  
 All we must do is believe. All we must do is have faith. Faith and trust in Christ Jesus.  
 For where my sin reigns over me in death, God's grace and righteousness bring me life.  
 All I must do is believe. All I must do is have faith. Faith and trust in Christ Jesus.

Through Christ, I am freed from the bondage of sin. The sin of the flesh.  
 The fleshly desire for sexual immorality and impurity. Drunkenness and jealousy.  
 Through Christ, I receive righteousness and holiness. Peace, kindness, and goodness.  
 Paul preaches – we have died to sin and can live no longer. The body and flesh are powerless.  
 But through belief in Jesus, we who are dead will be made alive again.  
 The chains of bondage to death have been broken, death has mastery no more.  
 Where I once was a slave to sin, I have been set free. Christ set me free.  
 My new life, I obligate to the one who gave it. I will be a slave to His righteousness.  
 My due reward for slavery to sin was certain death. By God's grace alone, my reward is life.

There is freedom in the gospel that Paul preaches. The gospel sets us free.  
 For where the written law could not save us, faith in Christ saves all who believe.  
 Through faith, I am released from that which bound me. Bound me to death by the law.  
 My flesh harbored sin, exposed by the law, and there was no escape, no escape at all.  
 But I am rescued by Jesus, to Him redeemed. My own interests I no longer pursue.  
 The old way has been exchanged for the new. The way of the Spirit. This way is new.  
 Where the law holds in captivity, the Spirit releases.  
 The true law is the Spirit, which leads to a righteous relationship with God.  
 Though my flesh may be a slave to the law and sin, I in my spirit am a slave to God.

There is life and glory in the Spirit, who makes us strong.  
 Yet the flesh is a controlling power, opposed to God and His goodness.  
 We walk in the flesh with jealousy and hate. Our anger kills, and our envy causes us to steal.  
 We indulge in lust; we engage in sexual immorality and our hearts are impure.  
 Though the flesh tries to be righteous, it cannot succeed.  
 But in the Spirit, I shall walk with the One who influences my life and desires.  
 I will serve others in love and sacrifice, tending to the sick and feeding those who hunger.  
 I will show kindness to others with words and a smile; I'll give to those who are in need.  
 As the Spirit prays for me, I will pray for others and delight in the Lord in prayer.  
 I will give in to sinful desire no more. No longer am I my own. I belong to Christ who lives in me.  
 Because of Christ, I am obligated to do good, and not that which is evil.  
 I believe in Christ through faith. I now belong to Him, who gives life to all who receive His call.



## Trunk 'N Treat, Tuesday October 31



We'll be hosting a parking lot of festivities once again on 10/31. We plan to get started around 4 until dark.

### Wondering just how you might like to get involved?

- Sign-up to decorate your car.
- Dress as a Bible character and handout candy.
- Donate candy.
- Bring friends and come out to Trunk 'N Treat in our Cutler St. neighborhood.

There is a sign-up sheet on the round table in fellowship hall. Contact Mrs. B. with additional questions.



## CE Update: Awake Luncheon



### Engaging Families to Grow Kids in the Gospel

On Sunday, October 1, we gathered at On the Grid for lunch with our teens and tweens as well as those from The River and Christ Community Church. Stay tuned for future fun as we grow together in the gospel. Remember, our young adults have begun a new video learning series led by Chip Ingram. Please pray for the good soil for those seeds to find in their hearts and take deep roots in faith in Jesus.

# REMINDER

There will be a quarterly church meeting after the service on Sunday, October 29. Board chairs please have a verbal report prepared.

### Answer Key for the Hymn Quiz on the back page.

Flip to the back and prepare your heart for a song fest at the Hymn Sing on 10/28!

1. How Great Thou Art
2. Why Should He Love Me So?
3. Wonderful Words of Life
4. Near to the Heart of God
5. Learning on the Everlasting Arms
6. The Solid Rock
7. Grace Greater Than All Our Sin
8. When We All Get to Heaven
9. The Old Rugged Cross
10. Nothing But the Blood
11. Because He Lives
12. Trust and Obey
13. It Is Well with My Soul
14. Little Is Much, When God Is in It

## A One-Float Parade



# Bumper Cars, Entertainment Stars ... & You!

Rain may have cancelled the fair parade on Monday, September 11.  
However, our fun was not so easily stopped!

We built it. This year's float followed the fair's theme, *Bumper Cars, Entertainment Stars ... & You (/Ewe)*. Sue Belden sketched a design concept including darling bumper cars constructed from boxes and carpet roll cardboard. The ukelele band practiced and were set to play on a shiny sea of stars. Finally, Ps. 23 took focus at the float's front with our VBS farm animal ewe cutout. Snacks were in the cooler and crowd handouts of koozies and beach balls were ready to be distributed. Unfortunately, the fair parade was cancelled due to inclement weather. Not to be deterred, our float traveled from the Wagner's home to the church parking lot in a parade of one. All those who drove Cutler St. on Tuesday and Wednesday morning were surprised by an explosion of color and community spirit. Someone even awarded the float a blue ribbon! Many thanks to our lead designer and all those helping hands who brought the float to life.







## Missions Update

It's hard to believe, but just over 30 years ago, our family landed in Budapest. At the time, we expected to stay for 2 years. Thirty years have now gone by, and I am still here. Although Abby and Will have grown up, moved back to the USA, and married, I am still here. And to my great joy, Julia joined me here in 2017. What a wonderful partner she is! I am not sure I would still be here if she weren't here with me. This school year will by 31<sup>st</sup> as an English teacher at Szent László Gimnázium. Szent László is a public secondary school, and it is one of Hungary's elite educational institutions. I have taught many very sharp men and women over the years! The new school year officially began 9/1 and was filled with opening ceremonies, administrative tasks, "lessons" with class masters, and then the annual 3-day class excursions. Due to my advanced age and state of decrepitude, this year I only have to teach 12 lessons/week. I will have lessons with the "freshmen" in the special English class. Otherwise, the rest of my lessons will be with students I have taught in the past. I am looking forward to reconnecting with my old students and to getting to know the new ones. I would appreciate your prayers for energy, strength, creativity, and wisdom as I launch into the new academic year. You can pray that I would not only be an effective teacher of the English language, but that I would also communicate the Gospel clearly and effectively both to my students and colleagues.

OMS' English Club ministry will start up again very soon. Julia will once gain help out. You can pray that many of the students who attended one of OMS' English camps this summer will join us during the coming year. Pray, too, that our teammates will be able to make known the love of Jesus Christ in a clear and effective way, both through their words and their deeds. We also expect that Janka (the mother of my student Balázs) will continue her weekly conversational English lessons with Julia. You can pray that both Janka and Balázs would come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Pray, too, for our friend and neighbor Goddard Zsuzsa and her teenage son Marcel. Zsuzsa lost her husband to cancer just over a year ago, and she is still grieving deeply. Life is very much a struggle for her these days. Unfortunately, her experience with "organized religion" has not been positive up to this point—although she did visit our church on one occasion last year. You can pray that she and her son would see the love of Christ manifested through us and through our congregation and that they, too, would be drawn to Christ.

Julie and I spent much of this last summer at her parents' home in Asheboro, NC. One of the most pleasant features of their house is the big screened porch overlooking the backyard. There is a big, old holly tree that housed a nest of cardinals. One morning as I was reading my Bible, I noticed little heads bobbing up and down in the nest. I went over and found three baby cardinals. Their parents were busy bringing food to their chicks. This went on for about three days until both parents showed up at the same time and started chirping at their youngsters. All of a sudden, the three young ones stood up and jumped out of the nest. All of them fluttered downward. Over the course of the next half hour, the fledglings hopped around making occasional attempts to fly. The two parents continually flew from one to the next seeming to chirp instruction or encouragement. Eventually, the little birds all managed to get up in the air and alight on a wooden fence railing. Then, the family all moved deeper into the woods and disappeared. As I watched this miracle unfold, I was reminded about how scary it can be when it is time for young ones to spread their wings and leave the nest. Second, I was reminded of the way in which God looks after us.

We would appreciate your continued prayers for our health and strength. Our deep thanks and appreciation to you for all your prayers and support. We could not do what we are doing here if it were not for you standing behind us in so many ways.



10/4 Autumn Goodenough  
 10/6 Jeff Hipps  
 10/7 Sam Goodenough  
 10/8 Scott Ehrich  
 10/12 Anderson Letts


10/16 Denni Proctor  
 10/18 Joanie Townsend  
 10/19 Steve Mancuso  
 10/22 Doris Edwards  
 10/25 Donna Overmyer  
 10/26 Bella Brown  
 10/27 Nicholas Goodenough  
 10/31 Ann Carns



10/16 Sam & Tonya Goodneough  
 10/21 Dale & Ana Hedberg  
 11/1 Al & Lisa Letts



Please call the office if there is an anniversary or birthday you would like to add to the list.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Awake Lunch Out	2	3	4 5:45 Prayer Mtg	5 9:45 & 12:30 Food Warehouse 3-5:30 CK Dinner	6 8 Food Warehouse	7
8 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Trustee Mtg	9 5:30 Women's Fellowship	10 7 Diaconate Mtg	11 10 Grief Group 5:45 Prayer Mtg	12 9:45 & 12:30 Food Warehouse 3-5:30 CK Dinner	13 8 Food Warehouse	14 8:30 Men's Breakfast 
15 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	16	17	18 5:45 Prayer Mtg	19 9:45 & 12:30 Food Warehouse 3-5:30 CK Take-out Dinner	20 8 Food Warehouse	21
22 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	23	24	25 10 Grief Group 5:45 Prayer Mtg	26 9:45 & 12:30 Food Warehouse 3-5:30 CK Take-out Dinner	27 8 Food Warehouse	28  6:30 Hymn Sing & Dessert Reception
29 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 	30	31  Trunk 'N Treat 4-7	5:45 Prayer Mtg	9:45 & 12:30 Food Warehouse 3-5:30 CK Take-out Dinner	8 Food Warehouse	<b>LITURGIST:</b> Joanie T. <b>GREETER:</b> Jeff P.

## The First Congregational Church of Allegan

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Website: [fccofallegan.weebly.com](http://fccofallegan.weebly.com)

**Worship with us on Sundays at 10:30 AM!**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## Community Hymn Sing

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Please join us for our annual Community Hymn Sing on Saturday, October 28, at 6:30. Invite a neighbor and friend! A dessert reception will follow.



As you know, many hymns are sung with the title in the opening stanza. I think this helps get ones brain in gear and lets the words pour forth from our hearts through our mouths as we sing praise to God. We'll have our hymnals at the ready during the hymn sing and it's great joy as folks call out their favorites. To get you warmed up, can you name these hymns from their opening line?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| † O Lord my God!                         | † Sing the wondrous love of Jesus          |
| † Love sent my Savior to die in my stead | † On a hill far away                       |
| † Sing them over again to me             | † What can wash away my sin?               |
| † There's a place of quiet rest          | † God sent his son, they called Him Jesus  |
| † What a fellowship, what a joy divine   | † When we walk with the Lord               |
| † My hope is built on nothing less       | † When peace like a river attendeth my way |
| † Marvelous grace of our loving Lord     | † In the harvest field now ripened         |