

A JOYFUL NOISE!

February 2011

I always associate February as the month of love. I'm sure most of that has to do with Valentine's Day, but also because it was the birth month of my Great Aunt Shirley who made the best fudge in the world (no offense to local fudge shops) and I have wonderful memories of playing cards with her.

There are two events coming up in February that continue our theme of love. On the first Sunday, our church will be participating in a new venture. We will have a booth at the Bridal Expo at the Grand Traverse Resort in Traverse City. This is an idea we were exploring just as I was leaving my previous church in Pennsylvania. One of the few times that non-church goers still come to church is for weddings. Also, many young people who decide to get married have no church affiliation and/or are frequently turned away from churches due to various reasons such as: no affiliation to the church, or one is Protestant and the other Catholic, or for inter-racial reasons. (In my seven years of ministry, I have married over twenty couples and the overwhelming majority were non-members who told me painful stories of being turned down by churches who did not accept the love shared between the couple.) Our church and denomination has a history of welcoming anyone and so it makes sense for us to advertise / evangelize to the folks who will attend a bridal show looking for florists, photographers, DJ's, that we would be there representing our church as an interested venue.

When I inquired with the organizer, he apologized for not having churches as a category. He said it never crossed his mind, but next year he will be marketing to local churches. This year, however, we will be the only church and the first church ever to request to participate. It's true that weddings could become a new source of revenue for our church, but even more is our hope that folks that do not have a church home will now have a place that will be special in their hearts and they may choose to return, that we would be a place for them to grow in love for each other as well as for our church and their faith.

Another new venture expanding on the theme of love, but in a different direction, is our Called to Care program. Several years ago, our church had an active team of trained Stephen's Ministers or lay people who visited with home-bound members and friends of our church. When we tried to resurrect this program recently, though we had interest, no one was able to complete the required trip to St. Louis for training. So we are now going to use the Called to Care program that does not require a trip for training other than to the church where I can lead the training. If you feel called by God to spend precious time with our church members and friends who have given much to the church in their lives and now need our support, care, and love, please let me know or contact the church office. We will be having our first informational meeting after church on Sunday, February 13, the day before Valentine's Day. Coincidence?

Pastor Dan

News from the Board of Trustees...

At the annual meeting on January 23, 2011, the congregation elected Carol Dye, Rob Wololwiec, and current trustee, Jerry Slater, to three year terms, along with Andy Case and Ron Olson to complete unfilled terms on the Board of Trustees. They and trustees Dennis Richards and Earl Schopp are scheduled to meet on February 15 at 5:00 PM. Meetings are open to all and board members welcome congregational input.

According to the church by-laws, the Board of Trustees has the following charges: to superintend the raising and dispersing of all funds required for the corporate life of the church, provide proper supervision of all church properties and grounds, address personnel issues, have authority to hire all non-ministerial staff, and meet monthly.

Each month at our meeting, we consider assets, needs, and future desires, always remembering our church covenant that says, "we pledge loyalty to Christ and covenant with each other to strive to express the Spirit in our individual and corporate life, to live together as Christian brothers and sisters, and to support the ministry and mission of this church: working, giving, praying for its increase, its purity, its peace and seeking in every way to make it a power for the building of the Kingdom of God."

At our January 10 meeting, the Board of Trustees finalized the Proposed Budget for 2011 to be included with the 2010 Annual Report. We had to make some hard choices. The total amount proposed is \$205,081. This is a decrease of \$47,521 (19%) from last year's budget of \$252,602. Most operating budgets were reduced as well as staff time for Christian education and youth programs. Pastor Dan Furman is moving from Plan A health care coverage to Plan B. Repairs and maintenance to our buildings will be as necessary. Wider Missions will have reduced funds to distribute to community, national, and world missions.

But, as Pastor Dan pointed out in a sermon during Epiphany, we are a people of light. Our church will continue to spread that light as we minister to members, friends, our local community, and the worldwide community. At First Congregational Church, UCC, of Benzonia, we will continue to let God's light shine through us, we will continue to follow the example of Jesus, and we will continue to let the Holy Spirit instill us with hope.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Gehring

Women's Fellowship News

Circle I will meet for lunch on Wednesday, February 16, at 1:00 at the Cold Creek Inn in Beulah.

Circle IV will meet on Wednesday, February 16, at 10:30 a.m. at the church and go out to lunch afterward.

Sarah Circle will not meet in February.

Notice

Women's Sunday has been moved to March 13.

Penelope Olson will deliver the message. We will be asking other women of the church to participate.

News from the Deacons

~ Pastor Dan will have the first meeting of the "Called to Care" ministry on Sunday, February 13. This is a ministry similar to Stephen's Ministry, and all who are interested, please come to this meeting.

~ The new 10:00 Tuesday Bible Study Class is now scheduled to begin on March 1. The topic of this new class is **the Ten Commandments**. It will be a seven--week course.

~ The Church Council decided to close our Food Pantry. We will continue to have BIG (Bring In Groceries) Sunday at the beginning of each month, but we will take the contributions that come in to one of the food pantries in the community—BACN, Fresh Winds, etc.

~ On February 20 the deacons will be having Chili and Games after church. We'll have chili and cornbread for lunch, and then we will play various and sundry board games, card games, etc. Everyone is invited and encouraged to join us in this fellowship of food and fun. Please bring your favorite board game. Anyone wishing to donate a crock pot of their particular type of chili are welcome. Please speak to Chris Jones.

~ On Saturday, March 12, the Special Olympics basketball games will be happening at Benzie Central High School. We will have our Brats and Basketball event at the church. We will have brats at the church before heading out to BCHS for the games. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board so we know how many brats to purchase. Further details will be in the March Joyful Noise.

In conjunction with the games, there is a bake sale held in the hall outside the gym, which we (along with a number of other churches in the area) help with, and which brought in around \$300 last year to the Special Olympics. Any volunteers to help with that are welcome. Our own Sonny Rodriguez is one of the main movers and shakers in these Special Olympics events.

~ We have a few vacancies for the head usher position in the coming months. If anyone is interested (male or female) in these month-long positions, please call Chris Jones.

A big thank you goes out to Trevor Danford, Phyllis Crowell-VanHammen, Marilyn Sheets, and Agnes Slater for their years of service as they leave the Board of Deacons at the start of this new church year.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Crowell-Van Hammen

What's New in the Library

Finding Time for Serenity...A series of 365 daily meditations urging women gently & persuasively to seek serenity in the midst of their harried lives. Author Crafton , wife, mother, grandmother, priest, writes from experience. She knows about the bags under the eyes, middle-age pride, kids leaving home. She becomes the wise and funny friend every woman needs every day. These short selections could work well as part of a Fellowship/Circle meditation.

Help, Lord! I'm Having a Senior Moment...Notes to God on Growing Older...While growing older certainly has plusses, it's downside poses big challenges. The author hits upon the things we least enjoy about getting older, but enables us to see God's hand in our "maturity". A short, entertaining read that will give you chuckles.

Front Porch Tales...Warm-hearted Stories of Family, Faith, Laughter, and Love...Phillip Gulley shares tender and hilarious real-life moments that capture the important truths of everyday life. Quoting the author, "A few of the names and events in this book have been altered to protect persons still living, namely me." Lets you know where these tales are going! Gulley is the author of the Harmony books, some of which we have on the shelf. Another good book for a gloomy day.

The Help...now after the collections of short tales, designed to give chuckles, perhaps you are ready for something a little heavier, more thought-provoking and totally engrossing. Set during the beginning of the civil rights movement in Jackson, Miss., where black women were trusted to raise white children but not to polish the household silver, it is a skillful depiction of the ironies and hypocrisies that defined the era. The author, born in the South, paints a picture of this time about we Northerners have little idea. This book was widely read; one of last year's best sellers.

Thanks to Pastor Dan for his donation of three children's Christmas books:

The Spirit of Christmas

This is the Stable

Mortimer's Christmas Manger

If you are still enjoying Christmas stories, you will find these on the upper shelves of the children's section.

Youth Group and Sunday School

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the Advent Workshop. There were many crafts and all seemed to have a great time. On February 6 the youth and the children will be making Valentines for our shut-ins and college students. A Sledding Party is planned for right after church on February 13.

Our Sunday School Children are volunteering to light the candles (with supervision) and lead prayer. They are also having Bible Drills where they race to find the weekly scripture and the winner gets to read it. Carol and Katrina would eventually like to see the children take a more active role in the church services as readers and greeters.

FEBRUARY SPECIAL DAYS...**February Birthdays**

Happy birthday to the following members of the church family!

| | |
|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Alice Hinkamp |
| 2 | Pete Moss |
| 2 | Peg Strong |
| 2 | Leah Johnson |
| 3 | Doug Joy, Jr. |
| 3 | Glen Sauer |
| 4 | Ryan Strom |
| 5 | Sharon Pokorny |
| 8 | Christy Case |
| 8 | William Armstrong |
| 9 | Anita Armstrong |
| 9 | Christine Jones |
| 11 | Janet Schell |
| 13 | Kim Weaver |
| 16 | Rich Pokorny |
| 23 | Donna Knox |
| 26 | Keith Westphal |
| 27 | Joyce Wittbrodt |
| 29 | Marsha Case |
| 29 | Marilee Strom |

(no wedding anniversaries in February)

Habitat for Humanity of Benzie County

If you or someone you know needs an affordable home, call our office at 231-399-0300 or email us at hfhbenzie-county@charter.net.

Currently there is a nearly completed Habitat home in Thompsonville that is available for a new owner. Do you meet the following requirements?

- Do you live or work in Benzie County?
- Can you afford house payments of about \$500 a month?
- Is your annual income within Habitat guidelines (for example, maximum income of \$24,900 for a family of 2)?
- Are you willing to invest substantial hours of "sweat equity" in the home?

Habitat for Humanity is an international Christian organization that seeks to provide equal housing opportunities for families. Affordable home ownership has many benefits to the family and the community.

Silent Auction Items Needed

The First Congregational Church of Thompsonville will be having their annual Chili Supper and Silent Auction on Saturday, March 26. If you have an item to donate to the silent auction, please contact Sue Meredith at 231-639-1738 or email suem@myhonorbank.com. Please mark your calendar and plan on attending.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR FEBRUARY VOLUNTEERS -

| | <u>COFFEE HOUR</u> | <u>NURSERY</u> | <u>GREETERS</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2/6 | Pasta Dinner | Helen Dewey | Flo Wellman |
| 2/13 | Sharon Pokorny | Chris Jones | Cath Kelder and Helen Pickard |
| 2/20 | Roxane and Ken Miner | Gillian Soholt | Ruth Catton |
| 2/27 | Chris Stone | Kathy Neveu | Ann and Gordon Nordbeck |

Church Family Update

We are saddened by the loss of two long-time church members. Fran Forrester died in December and his funeral was here at the church. Please remember Pat and her family in your prayers. Cards may be sent to: P.O. Box 584 Beulah, MI 49617. And June Mills died in January at her residence in Colorado. Cards may be sent to her daughter Kris Pemberton at: 6602 Welch Court, Arvada, CO 80004. Please also keep the Mills family in your prayers. We also celebrate with Emily Haynes who turned 100 in January. Belated birthday cards may be sent to: P.O. Box 142 Beulah, MI 49617.

Reminder

If you, a loved one, or a church member you know is in the hospital, please let the church office know so that Pastor Dan may visit. Due to privacy laws, hospitals no longer contact the churches to let them know church members are hospitalized. The church wants to know so that we can support you during this time of need.

Flowers

There is a new sign-up sheet outside the church office for altar flowers for 2011. If you are interested in supplying flowers for the new year, please sign up for a certain date (or if you are unable to be in worship call the church office to make arrangements). You may then bring in your own flowers or donate \$25 to the church to make the arrangements with a local florist. If you would like the bulletin to reflect your donation, please let the church office know who the flowers honor or memorialize as well as identifying yourself as the donor.

GoodSearch.com

With the arrival of a new year, remember that if you use the Internet, you can earn money for the church using www.goodsearch.com. One penny per search, or more for Internet shopping, helps the church. So far, the church has earned \$40 just from Internet searches and shopping. Designate us by entering our church name as the charity of your choice.

UCC Sister Church of the Month

For the past year, in worship we have been praying for UCC churches in our United Northern Association. You are invited in February to pray for the ongoing mission and ministries of First Congregational UCC in Wolverine. This church has seventy members and is located north of Gaylord, east of Boyne City, and southeast of Petoskey. Please remember our friends at First Congregational UCC Wolverine throughout the month of February.

Newsletter Email

In an effort to save time and money, we are now offering our newsletter via email. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by email, please contact the church at: office@benzoniacongregational.org. We are also sending out weekly updates every Friday with prayer requests and upcoming events. To receive this email, simply send our church secretary, Nancy, a note using the above email address. Lastly, hopefully by the time you are reading this we will have a new church website. You may access it at either www.benzoniaucc.org or www.benzoniacongregational.org (We needed a second domain name as my email address was too long for my new business cards!)

FEBRUARY 2011

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SAT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| | | 1 10:00 Yoga-Barn 1:00 Finance 6:30 - Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn | 2 12 Noon - AA 2:00 MS Support Barn 7:30 Bell Choir | 3 10 CMH Exercise Barn 5:30 NA - Barn | 4 10:00 CMH - Barn 12 N - LOWV Library | 5 |
| 6 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Pasta Dinner Youth Group Meeting | 7 10:00 CMH - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn | 8 10:00 Yoga - Barn 7:00 Council 7:00 WAA - Barn | 9 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 4:30 Deacons 7:30 Bell Choir | 10 10 CMH Exercise Barn 5:30 NA - Barn | 11 10:00 CMH - Barn 12 N - LOWV Library | 12 |
| 13 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship Youth Group Sledding Party | 14 10:00 CMH - Barn 11:00 Commodities Distribution 7:00 AA - Barn | 15 10 Yoga - Barn 5:00 Trustees 6:30 Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn | 16 12 Noon - AA 10:30 Circle IV 1:00 - Circle I Lunch at Cold Creek Inn 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:30 Christian Ed 7:30 Bell Choir | 17 10 CMH Exercise Barn 5:30 NA - Barn | 18 10:00 CMH - Barn 12 N - LOWV Library | 19 |
| 20 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship Youth Group Meeting | 21 10:00 CMH - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn | 22 10 Yoga - Barn 7 WAA - Barn | 23 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 7:30 Bell Choir | 24 10 CMH Exercise Barn 5:30 NA - Barn | 25 10:00 CMH - Barn 12 N - LOWV Library | 26 |
| 27 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship | 28 10:00 CMH - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn | | | | | |

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A Joyful Noise! February 2011

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC BENZONIA, MICHIGAN

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Daniel E. Furman | Minister |
| Chris Stone | Treasurer |
| Mary Rodriguez.. .. | Financial Secretary |
| James Sheets..... | Church Moderator |
| Christy Case | Choir Director |
| Rosemary Miller | Assistant Choir Director |
| Gillian Soholt..... | Youth Coordinator |
| Jean Edwards..... | Newsletter Editor |
| Carol Dye & Katrina Smith..... | Christian Ed Coordinators |
| Pat Kinske | Custodian |
| Nancy Eggleston | Secretary |

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