

A JOYFUL NOISE!

March 2011

In my office, I have a wooden artwork of eleven people dancing. I bought it at an art show in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania when I served there as an Associate Pastor. The artwork has eleven figures, each a different color, with their arms raised in joy or praise or song. It reminds me of all God's children coming together despite differences to unite for the common good and in celebration of life. I keep it in my office to remind me of the good humanity can do when we choose to collect ourselves and set our faces toward accomplishing grand ideas.

As I write this, protesters have astonishingly taken control of the second largest city in Libya and there are reports of the Libyan air force attacking their own civilians. Just over a week ago, the Egyptian people overthrew their dictator in a largely peaceful protest. Just yesterday, a devastating aftershock struck Christchurch, New Zealand causing catastrophic damage and loss of life. It's hard for me to even look at the dancers when thinking about our sisters and brothers trapped in collapsed buildings or hiding from a national leader who is more interested in himself than his people.

A bit better than a week into March, we will begin the slow journey of Lent toward Holy Week and Easter. Traditionally this is a time for us as individuals to look inwardly at our own lives, what we might sacrifice and/or what we might take on as a special mission project as a way to grow in our spirituality, and to prepare ourselves for a deeper appreciation for Easter. Some people give up electronics like online social networking or TV while others give up tempting foods like chocolate, pop, or fast food. Others take on mission projects like visiting home-bound church members, volunteering or donating food or clothing to BACN. These are difficult choices but made for the purpose of spending that energy toward growing in our faith.

Lent doesn't seem like a time for dancing either, especially as we tend to focus inwardly, but the changes in the world are beginning to demand we not only pay attention outwardly but begin to act. It seems hard to think about what we can do for the victims of earthquake on the other side of the world from us, or for people being attacked by their own government, and yet, how can we not act?

Let us begin with prayer. I invite you, as we enter Lent, to not only focus inwardly on what you would like to change about yourself, but to also pray daily, for our sisters and brothers outside our community. It might be a moment of silence. It might be simple words, "God please be with _____." It might be your status on Facebook. It might be lighting a candle and just talking to God. It might be a song you sing in your car on your way somewhere. Let us unite as God's people, individually this Lent, in prayer, for others, together, so that we might dance as we grow in faith, mission, and hope.

Pastor Dan

News from the Board of Trustees...

The Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, February 15th. The Board welcomed new members: Carol Dye, Ron Olson, and Andy Case. Jerry Slater, Dennis Richards, and Earl Schopp round out your Trustee Board for 2011. Jerry Slater was elected as chairman of the board with Earl Schopp serving as Vice-Chair.

Currently, we still have one vacancy. If you would like to join and help your church make financial, personnel, and building decisions please let one of the board members know.

Mark Lambert of Insurance Board Partners in Protection gave an in depth presentation of the church property and liability insurance. We decided to approve the 2011 insurance policy with the removal of the umbrella policy, which saved \$666.00. Dennis and Earl continue to do an excellent job of keeping the church building in a state of good repair.

Our food panty is now closed. The food panty account had \$2490.00 left in it. A check will be issued to BACN for that amount.

The personnel committee will be conducting job reviews of all paid church staff in the coming weeks.

The new church website is up and running! Please check it out and give us any feedback you may have. You may access it at www.benzoniacongregational.org.

Finances continue to be a struggle. Pledge amounts and pledge givers continue to dwindle. Please know your Board of Trustees is doing everything it can to manage church money wisely and efficiently while also keeping an eye to its future well being. If you have any ideas or comments on how we can improve the church's financial situation we would like to hear from you!

Respectfully Submitted,
Andy Case

Newsletter Email

In an effort to save time and money, we are now offering our newsletter via email. If you use email and have an email address, please contact the church at: secretary@benzoniacongregational.org and let Nancy know that you'd like to receive the Joyful Noise via email.

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.

Women's Fellowship News

The March meeting of Women's Fellowship will be Wednesday, March 2, at 1:00 at the church. Sarah Circle is responsible for the program. Kay Bos will give us the story of Sarah, for whom our circle was named. The Executive Board will meet at noon before the general meeting. All women of the church are invited to the Fellowship meeting.

Circle Meetings - March 16

Circle I will meet at Cold Creek Inn at 1:00.

Sarah Circle will meet at the church at noon. Bring your own sandwich. There will be a desert. Also bring one of your favorite poems, and tell us why you selected this poem or what special connection it has to you.

Circle IV will meet at the church at 10:30 and go to lunch afterward.

News from the Deacons

It sure has been a long winter, but we have some interesting activities coming up to help us get the rest of the way through winter. Beginning March 1st at 10:00 am, Pastor Dan will begin the new Bible Study. He will be leading us in the study of the Ten Commandments, please join us. Pastor Dan will also begin training for the Called to Care Ministry. See Pastor Dan for more details.

On March 12th we will be have brats at 5:00pm at the church before car pooling to the High School to watch the Special Olympics basketball game. Our own Sonny Rodriguez is once again in charge of organizing this special fundraiser. The cost of the game is \$5.00. We will have a sign up sheet on the bulletin board to sign up for the brats. This will give us a better idea of how many to cook. After we share a meal together, we'll head out to watch a fun game of basketball against the law enforcement officers from the area. There will also be a bake sale, so come prepared to have a snack later. If anyone would like to contribute to the bake sale, it would sure be appreciated. Please let Sonny know.

Women's Sunday will be celebrated on March 13th this year. This is always a wonderful Sunday and a chance to appreciate all the talent in our church. Please be sure to join us that Sunday.

We will begin the season of Lent with an Ash Wednesday service at 7:00pm on March 9th. What a wonderful opportunity to clear our minds and begin the journey towards Easter. We hope you will join us for all the special services we have planned to help us in this journey.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Jones

Christian Education News

The youth have been busy this winter with wrapping gifts at Christmas, making valentines and packing gifts for eight recipients. A lock-in was held on a Friday with many youth in attendance. We had four youth attend the Annual Meeting with discussions following the meeting. A sledding party for the youth and congregation was held with much fun and hot chocolate and popcorn.

The Sunday School Class continues to study the Bible with friendly competition to look up versus and then share with the class.

Coming events for the youth and the entire congregation will be a Mardi Gras Carnival on March 6th and a swimming party on April 3rd.

Adult Bible Study

Can you name the ten commandments?

Ever wondered what not coveting your neighbor's property is all about?

Is watching professional athletes on Sunday afternoons honoring the Sabbath?



For discussion about these and other questions you may have, join our next Bible Study starting Tuesday, March 1st, at 10:00 a.m. in the church library. Please contact the church office if you are interested so we may order a study guide for you. Each study guide is \$16. Scholarships are available if needed.

What's New in the Library

Barclay's Guide to the New Testament...A book-by-book guide to the essential purpose and message of each New Testament writing.. Written by William Barclay, recognized as one of the greatest Christian teachers of modern times, the author vividly describes the circumstances that gave rise to each book. Readers will gain a deeper knowledge of the New Testament from reading this book.

365 Thank Yous...the Year a Simple Act of Daily Gratitude Changed My Life...an inspiring, true story about how a simple, old-fashioned act---writing thank-you notes...led a hopeless, angry, middle-aged man out of despair and into a wonderful life. The author sets a believable, doable example of how to live a surprisingly good life.

Counting Kisses...How many kisses does it take to say goodnight? The family of a fussy baby try to woo her into sleep with a countdown of kisses on every part of her body. Heavy use of pink, combined with brightly colored patterns, adds to the happy tone of this story. This board book will surely become a standard at story times for babies and preschoolers.

As the season of Lent begins March 9, it seems appropriate to remind you of some of the books we have in the library that fit the season.

And the Angels were Silent...Max Lucado leads us on a walk following Jesus steps from Jericho to the tomb.

First Easter, the True and Unfamiliar Story...using old but often overlooked evidence, Paul Maier illuminates the story of the first Holy Week and fleshes out some of its important details. Many photos, both black-and-white and color, illustrate the material.

The Joys of Easter...Rachel Hartman describes six special joys Easter brings, how they relate to the Easter story, and how they have been celebrated in different times in different countries.

You will find these three books on the cupboard top with the new books.

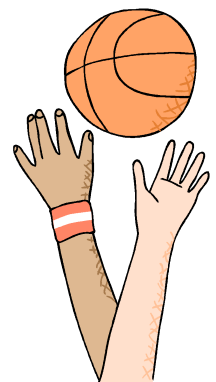
You will also find a wide variety of children's books displayed on the kid's shelves.

Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter will be available by March 9. This is a beautifully written, theologically inclusive anthology guides one through the essential elements of spiritual preparation. Writings from some of Christendom's most celebrated theologians as well as contemporary writers are included.

Third Annual Benzie County Special Olympics Benefit Basketball Game Saturday, March 12, at 6:00 p.m. at the Benzie Central Gym

This benefit has been growing and has been made possible by the good people of this church. Principle players this year will be 7&4 News, the Sheriff Department, State Troopers, and our very own Special Olympics athletes. Last year we added baked goods to the benefit and it went over really well. So if anyone would like to donate again this year, that would be great. There is a sign-up sheet on the church bulletin board.

On behalf of Special Olympics, thank you so much for supporting people with disabilities. God bless everyone.



MARCH SPECIAL DAYS...**March Birthdays**

Happy birthday to the following members of the church family!

1	Susie Vigland
1	Christine Gehring
2	Helen Pickard
3	John Riegler
3	Brandon Sauer
5	Pink Rearick
5	Brent Strom
9	Jo Bahry
10	Belle Van Hammen
11	Ted Bahry
12	Kristin Richards
16	Genny Bowman
18	James Hinkamp
19	Mary Hopkins
22	Maria Wolowiec
23	Roger Sattler
24	Carol Davidson
24	Nick Danford
26	Judith Herban
27	Pat Mean
29	Carol Dye
30	Spencer Manning, Jr.
31	Becky Sattler

March Anniversaries

5	Dennis and Kristin Richards
8	William and Anita Armstrong
10	Larry and Judy Ross
26	Rob and Debra Rafferty

A BIG THANK YOUTO OUR MARCH VOLUNTEERS -COFFEE HOUR

3/6	Chris Gehring
3/13	Barb Brian
3/20	Shelley Thompson
3/27	Penelope Olson

NURSERY

3/6	Carolina Jones
3/13	Penelope Olson
3/20	Pat Schopp
3/27	Barbara Brian

GREETERS

3/6	Christy and Andy Case
3/13	Rob, Andrew and Emmeline Wolowiec
3/20	Mary and Doug Rodriquez
3/27	Jo Bahry

USHER

Mike Jones

Church Family Update

Though he was not with our congregation for long, John Lowe died in February. He was active in our church and community for the first of his two years here, but soon after, he became seriously ill and was in the hospital more than he was out during his second year. Recently, he came back to our area from downstate, but a few days after his arrival, he was taken again to the hospital where he died. Cards may be sent to his brother Robert Lowe at: 157 West Ann Arbor Avenue, Pontiac, MI 48340.

Former member Adele Schaubert died on February 13. A summer memorial is being planned. Please keep both the Lowe family and the Schaubert family in your prayers.

Called to Care

Years ago, several of our church members were trained to become Stephen Ministers. Due to popular request, we are offering training for a similar program called, Called to Care. If you would like to be trained so that you may visit our home-bound members, those in the hospital, or in nursing homes, join us for our classes after church. The first class was on February 27, but you can easily catch up. Over 20 church members who have supported our congregation for decades now are in need of our support. Contact Pastor Dan with any questions.

Flowers

There is a sign-up sheet outside the church office for altar flowers for 2011. If you are interested in supplying flowers, 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.

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.

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 March to pray for the ongoing mission and ministries of First Congregational UCC in Alpena. This church is just two years younger than ours and has an active ministry on the northeastern shore of our state. Please remember our friends at First Congregational UCC in Alpena throughout the month of March.

GoodSearch.com

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, is donated directly from the website to our 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.

MARCH 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
		1 10:00 Bible Study 10:00 Yoga-Barn 5:30 Friends of the Benzie Bus 6:30 - Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn	2 12 Noon - AA 2:00 MS Support Barn 6:00 Bell Choir	3 10 CMH Exercise Barn 5:30 NA - Barn	4 12 N - LOWV Library	5
6 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Mardi Gras Carnival 12:30 Called to Care	7 10:00 CMH - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn	8 10:00 Bible Study 10:00 Yoga -Barn 5:30 Friends of the Benzie Bus 7:00 Council 7:00 WAA - Barn	9 ASH WEDNESDAY 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 5:15 Bell Choir 7:00 Worship Service 7:30 Deacons	10 10 CMH Exercise Barn 5:30 NA - Barn	11 12 N - LOWV Library	12
13 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 12:30 Called to Care	14 10:00 CMH - Barn 11:00 Commodities Distribution 7:00 AA - Barn	15 10:00 Bible Study 10:00 Yoga -Barn 5:00 Trustees 5:30 Friends of the Benzie Bus 6:30 Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn	16 12 Noon - AA 10:30 Circle IV Noon Sarah Circle 1:00 - Circle I Lunch at Cold Creek Inn 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:30 Christian Ed 6:00 Bell Choir	17 10 CMH Exercise Barn 5:30 NA - Barn	18 12 N - LOWV Library	19
20 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 12:30 Called to Care Youth Group	21 10:00 CMH - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn	22 10:00 Bible Study 10:00 Yoga -Barn 5:30 Friends of the Benzie Bus 7 WAA - Barn	23 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:00 Bell Choir	24 10 CMH Exercise Barn 5:30 NA - Barn	25 12 N - LOWV Library	26
27 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 12:30 Called to Care	28 10:00 CMH - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn	29 10:00 Bible Study 10:00 Yoga -Barn 5:30 Friends of the Benzie Bus 7 WAA - Barn	30 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:00 Bell Choir	31 10 CMH Exercise Barn 5:30 NA - Barn		

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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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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