

A JOYFUL NOISE!

December 2012

Coming soon! Thanksgiving is over. Most of the turkey leftovers have been turned into various creations and now we are full speed ahead, heading into the Christmas season. It's even beginning to look a lot like Christmas outside as I write today with snow on the ground and a chill in the air.

And so, coming soon are all of the exciting traditions we have come to love about Advent and Christmas here at church: the Advent Festival, the Cookie Walk, the Children's Pageant, the Live Nativity, the Community Chorus Christmas Concert, two worship services on Christmas Eve, and then of course, Christmas Day.

Looking forward to these events is always an exciting time for us. For our children, it is such joy looking forward to presents wrapped in fun colors beneath a tree that we bring into our homes and decorate. For adults, it is the joy of preparing for the celebrations and reunions, balanced with the reality that for many Christmas is a stark reminder of loss and grief mixed in with the holiday music on our radios and dazzling light displays draped out front of our houses. For the church, it is the celebration of new life, the joy of fuller pews and church activities, and an annual opportunity for the church to remind society about who we are as Christians and why we follow in the footsteps of the One who brings hope, love, and peace to the world.

And so, coming soon, here is something else to look forward to in the new year. Some expressed in the recent evaluation of our ministry a desire to get to know me better as well as wanting more visiting. And so starting in January, I will be putting together Joyous Gatherings in several locations in our area where we will gather for fellowship, fun, and conversation. The first Gathering will be in Thompsonville. As we get closer, a sign-up sheet will appear in the church so we know how many to expect at each location. If you would like to host, please let me know. There will be one or two Joyous Gatherings this summer to accommodate our snow birds as well.

And so as we move from counting our blessings to looking forward to all the exciting opportunities that are coming soon, let us remember to thank God for the blessing of Jesus' birth, let us gather to celebrate our traditions in December, and let us look forward to growing closer together in the new year.

Pastor Dan Furman

Poinsettias

'Tis the season to order poinsettias for the sanctuary. If you wish to donate a poinsettia plant, please submit your orders no later than Sunday, December 16th. You may call the church office or email: who you wish to provide a poinsettia in memory of, or in honor of, and how you would like your name printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Checks for \$15 may be made out to First Congregational UCC with poinsettia in the memo section. Emails may be sent to secretary@benzoniacongregational.org.



News from the Deacons

Thank you everyone for your help with the dinner for the Maples and Long Term Care. What a wonderful evening for everyone. We really appreciated the Women's Fellowship's help, it was wonderful to work side by side with you. The donations of pies, ice cream, breads and Jello salads were wonderful and delicious. Thank you. A huge thank you goes out to Christy and her students for coming over to entertain our guests, they were wonderful. Thank you Anna Nordbeck who three years ago encouraged us to do this and now it's a part of our church tradition.

On December 5th we will be going to the High School Choir Concert. We will meet at the church at 5:30 for pizza and salad and then car pool up to the high school. There will be a sign up sheet on the bulletin board so we will know how much pizza to order. Please join us for this wonderful evening of food, fellowship and support the youth of our church and community.

During the season of Advent, we will have many opportunities to celebrate the birth of Jesus. We will once again be doing our Live Nativity. This is a wonderful opportunity to show the community our faith. The Live Nativity will be December 15th and 16th from 5-7 PM. It takes a lot of people to make this happen and we need your help. If you can't be outside, we also need people to man the hot chocolate and cookies and help us get into our costumes. There will be a sign up sheet on the bulletin board looking for volunteers, please join us for this meaningful mission.

Our church will be hosting the Community Chorus Concert on December 15th at 2:30 p.m. This is always a wonderful program and many of our members are a part of this group, please join us for a wonderful evening of music.

Circle I is having their Advent Workshop on December 2nd beginning at 9:00am with a brunch, The adults and teenagers will be decorating the church. Their Annual Cookie Walk is on December 16th right after church.

We will be having two worship services on Christmas Eve. There will be an early service at 5:00pm and our traditional Candlelight Service at 11:00pm. What a wonderful way to celebrate the birth of Jesus with your family and friends.

There will be poinsettias for sale again this year. The price is \$15 and there is a sheet in your bulletin to fill out for your loved one. If you can't do that, please call Nancy in the office and she will help you out.

Please join us in remembering and celebrating the real meaning of Christmas.



Annual Advent Workshop

Sunday, December 2, at 9:00 a.m.

- Christmas Crafts
- Gingerbread Houses
- Ornaments and Decorations
- Decorating Christmas Trees
- Giving Tree

Brunch following the 10:30 worship service.

Annual Cookie Walk

Sunday, December 16

Immediately Following the Worship Service

One-Stop Cookie Shopping!

Simplify your holiday preparations with a great selection of homemade holiday cookies, breads, and treats.

Women's Fellowship News

Our next meeting is December 5 at 1:00 at the church. Sarah Circle IV is in charge. The program will be Christmas carols with Rosemary and stories with Kay. All women of the church are invited. The Executive Board will meet at noon prior to the general meeting.

Circle I will not meet in December, but will meet again on January 16. Sarah Circle IV will meet on December 12, the second Wednesday. We will meet at the church at 11:00 and go out to lunch after the meeting.

Extra BIG Sundays

Every Sunday, from now through the Sunday before Christmas, will be B.I.G. (Bring In Groceries) Sunday. The members of Women's Fellowship want to be able to give from our plenty to help those who may not have enough food, especially during the season of Christmas, when food is a major part of the celebrations. The food donations will go to Benzie Area Christian Neighbors. If you would like to make a cash donation instead, make a check out to the church with "BACN Food" in the memo line.

Giving Tree

Women's Fellowship will again be adopting three Benzie County families for Christmas. The families participate in Love, INC family and parenting programs. Our church has hosted some of these programs. On December 2, you will be able to select children and adults from the Giving Tree and purchase Christmas gifts for them. It is a wonderful opportunity to spread Christmas joy through showing our love for them.

Christmas Concert

Once again, our church will be hosting the annual Christmas Concert presented by Benzie County Community Chorus on December 15 at 2:30. Women's Fellowship will provide refreshments following the program. This is a wonderful way to get into the spirit of the holidays.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Happy birthday to the following members of the church family!

- 1 Alan Vigland
- 5 Courtney Sauer
- 6 Anne Young
- 7 Phoebe Vance
- 8 Flora Wellman
- 8 John Hanmer
- 8 Roxane Miner
- 9 Larry Ross
- 10 Geri Thornell
- 13 Hal Bruning
- 13 Shirley Jones
- 14 Margie Peacock
- 14 Elisabeth Case
- 15 Dorothy Hall
- 18 Emmeline Wolowiec
- 18 Michael Call
- 18 Elizabeth Ehman
- 20 Rosemary Abbett
- 28 Brenda Case
- 29 Kay Bos
- 31 David Call
- 31 Wayne Strom

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 7 Sonny and Esther Rodriguez
- 21 Alan and Joanne Appelhof
- 21 Mike and Carolina Jones
- 22 Neil and Linda Nugent
- 22 Andrew and Christy Case
- 27 Roger and Helen Dewey
- 29 Bill and Kay Boss

Card Party for Liz Ehman!

December 18th is Liz Ehman's 95th birthday. The family would like to celebrate it with a card party and are asking friends to send birthday cards to her. Their hope is to have her receive 95 cards. If you are willing, please send her a card to be received around December 18th. Her address is:

Liz Ehman
Room 112
Jacobetti Home for Veterans
425 Fisher Street
Marquette, MI 49855

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.

Remember In Your Prayers

You are invited to remember in your prayers some of our members who are home-bound, in assisted-living, or are facing health concerns: Marylou Patee, June Trost, Norm Stewart, John Robson, Marjorie Call, Buck and Dorothy Hall, Liz Ehman, Barb Nason, Mona McElderry, Bruce Jenema, Helen Pickard, and Brenda Case.

One More 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.

Thank You

Many thanks to everyone who has already completed and mailed back your Estimate of Giving card for 2013. This will greatly help our church leaders plan for the future.

If you have not received an Estimate of Giving card and would like one, please contact the church office.

And a big thank you to Jean Bowers, Ruth Catton, Mickey Austin, Phoebe Vance and Jean Edwards for folding, labeling and stamping the November issue of The Joyful Noise.

New Member Class

A new member class will be held on Sunday, December 9. We will gather to learn about the United Church of Christ, some of the wonderful history of our congregation, and what it means to be a modern-day disciple. Please let either Pastor Dan or the church office know if you would like to attend.

UCC Sister Church of the Month



As part of our continuing efforts to work together as a community of faith, in worship we pray for UCC churches in our United Northern Association. You are invited in December to pray in December for the ongoing mission and ministries of First Congregational UCC, Clare, who called a new pastor recently to serve them.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS -

	<u>COFFEE HOUR</u>	<u>NURSERY</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>
12/2	Deacons and Circle I	Anna Butts	Gary and Bev Brouwer
12/9	Ginny Bowman	Lynn Hopkins	Ginny Bowman
12/16	Cookie Walk	Kris Richards	Mike and Carolina Jones
12/23	Barb Brian	Chris Stone	TBA
12/30	Joyce Barns	Katrina Smith	TBA
	<u>HEAD USHER</u>	Jim Sheets	

Memorial Garden

On the north side of our church property is a beautiful memorial garden for members and friends of the church who would like their cremated ashes interred on our sacred grounds. For \$400, you may reserve a one-square foot plot. That price includes future opening and closing as well as a memorial plaque to be placed on the stone located along the walkway. Please speak with Pastor Dan for more information. Donations for perpetual care are also welcomed.

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. Designate us by entering our church name as the charity of your choice.

DECEMBER 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
						1
2 9:00 Advent Workshop 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Brunch	3 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn	4 10:00 Bible Study 10:00 Yoga-Barn 6:30 - Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn	5 12 Noon - AA 1:00 Women's Fellowship 2:00 MS Support Barn 5:30 High School Choir Concert and Pizza	6 10 Central Wellness Exercise / Barn 5:00 Bible Study 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	7 12 N - LOWV Library	8
9 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 12:00 New Member Class	10 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 11:00 Commodities Distribution 7:00 AA - Barn	11 10:00 Yoga-Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn	12 11:00 Sarah Circle IV 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 4:00 Deacons	13 10 Central Wellness Exercise / Barn 5:00 Bible Study 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	14 12 N - LOWV Library	15 8:30 Zonta Sew/Barn 3:00 Benzie Chorus Concert 5:00 Live Nativity
16 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship Cookie Walk 5:00 Live Nativity	17 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 11:30 Bridge Club Luncheon 12-5 Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn	18 10:00 Yoga-Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn	19 12 Noon - AA Circle Meetings 2:30 Knitting - Barn	20 10 Central Wellness Exercise / Barn 5:00 Bible Study 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	21 12 N - LOWV Library	22
23 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	24 Christmas Eve 5:00 pm Worship 7:00 AA / Barn 11:00 pm Worship	25 Church Office Closed 7:00 WAA - Barn	26 Church Office Closed 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn	27 10 Central Wellness Exercise / Barn 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	28 12 N - LOWV Library	29
30 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	31 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn					

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James Sheets.....	Church Moderator
Rosemary Miller.....	Choir Director
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