

A JOYFUL NOISE!

March 2012

Have you lost track of how many times on Facebook, or in person, someone has said what they are giving up for Lent? It seems to be almost natural anymore that Lent means giving up something for six weeks. There was a trend for a while encouraging Christians to instead of giving something up, taking something on like volunteering or increasing your offering donation. Either or both are good exercises for us to pursue as modern-day disciples, but I wonder if these methods diminish the purpose of Lent and become the focus?

The purpose of giving up something was to sacrifice an important part of our daily living as a preparation step on the road to Easter. To me, giving up chocolate or giving an extra dollar or ten, doesn't really help us prepare for Easter. So this season, from now until the first week of April, I would encourage you to think, as often as you can, about what Holy Week means to you.

Think about the celebration of Palm Sunday. Jesus has completed his three year ministry in a tiny nation, ruled by an oppressive Empire. The overwhelming majority of the people are poverty-stricken, illiterate, and desperate for a Savior. And so, after three years of teaching, healing, miracles, prayer, and transforming lives, Jesus enters Jerusalem in a grand parade with the waving of palm branches and the cheers of the people. How are things going in your life? Has the recession affected you personally or your family? Have you encountered illness or stress that is overpowering? Are you desperate to be rescued? How is your prayer life?

Just days after the triumphant celebration, Jesus gathers his friends and family to a meal, a Last Supper. Everyone is welcome. There are no restrictions. And he asks us to not only join him at the table, but to repeat this experience and develop a ritual by which to remember him. He already knew his time was limited. Who do we invite to our tables? Who do we exclude? Who even knows that we are here? I've been sharing in worship lately, that there are several churches in our area that do not welcome everyone to communion. How do you feel about that? Have you ever been rejected?

Soon after this meal, Jesus was arrested, endured indescribable torture, and was left to die on a cross. We witness graphic violence almost daily in the news. We are almost numb by the images. It is hard to imagine let alone grasp the significance of Good Friday. What does it mean to you that Jesus was killed? How could his friends and family and the people who were already desperate go on? How can we reconcile this earth-shattering reality?

And then, like a half hour-long song in a minor key that is finally resolved to a major, Easter arrives!!! Hallelujah, he is risen! And every year, Easter is one of the best attended Sunday's, when we all wear our best clothes, sing happy songs, feel great about life, have that meal that Jesus asked us to do to remember him... But how did we get here? Is it all about the celebration? What does Easter really mean, if we don't think about Jesus' life, healings, teachings, miracles, his welcome with palms, his last supper, his arrest, his death, and his absence, before his resurrection? Let us in this season of Lent, as we give up or take on, really think about why we sacrifice, what it means to be a modern disciple, and what Easter means to us.

Join us for Lenten meals on Wednesdays at 6pm and worship on Sundays.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

Pastor Dan Furman

LETTERS

Dear Congregation,

I would like to thank everyone that supported me during the Special Olympics Polar Plunge fundraiser at the Grand Traverse Resort. This church plays a big part in what I do here in Benzie and I want you to know that I really appreciate it.

Our next fundraiser will be held at the Benzie High School on the evening of March 10 from 6:00 to 8:00. This year we are planning to play Floor Hockey instead of basketball to support our Special Olympics program here in Benzie County.

Again this year, we will be selling baked goods at the game to support our program, so if you have a little time and would like to donate some baked goods that would be super. You can leave the baked good at the church or I can pick them up at your home.

Right now I am carrying ten sports and this year we plan to add flag football. If you would like to get involved in any of these sports as a volunteer or a coach, please let me know.

Respectfully,
Sonny Rodriguez
989-493-1747

Dear Church Members:

Please accept this letter as my notice of resignation as Chancel Choir Director, effective immediately.

This was not an easy decision to make. I am very grateful for the opportunity to work with the Chancel Choir. They are all very dedicated individuals. After much consideration, though, I have decided that with the new addition to our family in March, I will not be able to make the commitment that is needed to keep this ensemble thriving.

However, I would like to continue as leader of the Praise Team and Brass Quartet. Both of these ensembles have very flexible schedules which is conducive of my needs and my family's needs. I will not accept payment to continue my leadership with these two groups.

The church is very important to me and my family. I still plan on assisting with our church worship music as much as physically possible.

Sincerely,
Christy Case

UPDATE ON THE CHOIR . . .

The music committee is in the process of searching for a new choir director. We will start by placing an ad in our local newspapers. In the meantime, Rosemary Miller has graciously offered to take over until a replacement can be found. Choir practice begins on Thursday, March 1, at 7:30 p.m. If you are not a current choir member, consider joining now.



NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees met on Monday, February 20th. We would like to thank exiting board members Dennis Richards and Ron Olson for their dedication and years of service. New members, Mike Jones and Doug Rodriguez, will now be offering their insight and expertise for the upcoming year.

The financial business of the church was discussed at length. Fees for church building use were also discussed. Several maintenance issues were brought to our attention and will be addressed shortly.

If you have any questions or concerns, please see a board member. We will bring up your issues for discussion at our next board meeting on Monday, March 26th.

KEEPING UP WITH THE DEACONS

We have had many wonderful events in the month of February and are now entering March.

You are invited to join Pastor Dan for a Lenten Bible Study on Handel's Messiah beginning Wednesday February 29th at 6pm. Gather around for soup and bread and then stay to feed your soul. The sign-up sheet for this is on the bulletin. If you have been meaning to participate in a Bible Study and haven't been able to now is the time to try it out.

On March 10th you are invited to watch our own Sunni Rodriguez take on the Benzie County Sheriff's Department and TV 7&4 News in an exciting game of floor hockey. This event will take place at Benzie High School at 6pm. There will be pizza and other concessions available there for purchase. We will have a sign-up sheet for carpooling on the bulletin board. This is a fundraiser for Special Olympics so be sure to bring many friends and come hungry.

We are currently looking for ways to enrich our worship space. If you have any suggestions please kindly (and may I emphasize kindly) give us your ideas.

Peace and Many Blessings,

Gillian Soholt

Chair of Deacons

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Women's Fellowship will meet on March 7th, (Wednesday) at 1:00 P.M. The Sarah Circle will be hosting this meeting. Dessert will be served. The program is entitled "Reflections of Winters Past." Kay Bos will introduce the program with a short review of THE SECRET GIFT, written by Ted Gup. The book includes letters of destitute people, citizens of Canton, Ohio who were struggling with financial loss during the Great Depression. The women of the church are asked to reflect on a 'special winter' in their lives or the life of someone close to them, when either the world around was deluged with blizzard conditions, or this person was struggling with hardship. Kay suggests that if it is possible bring a photo to pass that will reveal more of this special winter experience. One of our special Fellowship women will close the program with a fascinating story about winter in Benzie when her family lived in a tent.

CIRCLES

Circle I will meet at the church at one o'clock on Wednesday, March 28 to finalize plans for the mother daughter banquet.

Sarah Circle will meet at the church at noon on Wednesday, March 21. Bring a sandwich. And bring memories of a special friend from when you were young.

Circle IV will meet at the church at 10:30 on Wednesday, March 21, and go out to lunch afterward.

MOTHER-DAUGHTER BANQUET

Save the date for the Mother-Daughter Banquet on Friday, April 27, at 6:00 p.m. All women and girls are invited to attend. You do not need to bring a mother or a daughter for we are all daughters. Plans are being made for a fun program, good fellowship, and delicious food. More details will be in April's newsletter. Hope to see you there.

SPRING AHEAD

Remember to turn your clocks ahead one hour before you go to bed on Saturday, March 10. You don't want to be late for church on Sunday morning.



LENTEN GATHERINGS

When you hear the beautiful harmonies of Handel's Messiah, are you excited to join in the tradition and stand to marvel at the wondrous themes of praise? Is it one of your favorite Christmas or Easter musical selections? Have you ever thought about the Scripture that is woven throughout Handel's masterpiece? If you have answered yes to any of these questions, then please join us for our Wednesday evening programs where we will listen to selections from the Messiah and then talk about the Scripture passages. We will start on February 29 at 6pm and conclude April 4. The church will provide dinner. If you are unable to meet with us but would like a workbook to read on your own, that is also possible. And He shall reign forever, and ever!! Join us.

TIME CAPSULE

In the autumn months of 2011, interest grew to make an assessment of our church archives. A few dedicated members have been going through a storage closet discarding some tattered hymnals as well as cataloging documents. In their search they discovered a box that is a time capsule from the senior high youth from 1992. The box gives instructions to open the time capsule the week of March 29, 2012, and so we shall do just that. Please join us for this brush with history on Sunday, March 25th. Attempts are being made to contact the youth and teachers from 1992 to be in attendance. This discovery has inspired our Christian Education leaders to create a new capsule for some future church leaders and members to discover decades from now. How exciting!

NEWS FROM HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Chili Dinner Fundraiser for Habitat - The Thompsonville First Congregational Church invites you to their annual Chili Dinner and Silent Auction on Saturday, March 31, 4-7 pm, with all donations going to Habitat for Humanity of Benzie County. The menu includes chili, veggies and dip, bread, dessert and beverage. This event is supported by Thrivent Financial. We hope you can support their efforts by attending.

Habitat Partners with Spartan Stores - Glen's Market in Frankfort is running their "Spartan Stores Step Up program through March 10. This program provides shoppers with an opportunity to donate money at the checkout register, which will go directly to Habitat for Humanity of Benzie County. Glen's will then give the donor coupons to be used for a future purchase.

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.

NEW IN OUR LIBRARY

God's Word for Today...daily devotions for the year. Each one page devotion has a Bible verse and reflection based on it. There are also ten devotions for special days and church festivals. Hallesby's writing is simple but eloquent, as are his messages. Whether you make this part of your daily meditation or use it only to pick out a message for Fellowship, etc, I think you will find much to mull over.

The Mysterious Benedict Society...Listen up you readers of Lemony Snicket, Harry Potter, Roald Dahl (think Charlie and the Chocolate Factory) welcome to new author who writes in the same style. Four children are chosen to discover the secrets of Mr. Curtain who is training children to carry out his schemes to take over the world. This is the first in a series, so if you like it, tell me and I'll look for others.

The Mysterious Benedict Society and the following three books written by Mark Yaconelli were all donations. Thank you, Gillian Scholt.. Yaconelli's books are directed to youth ministry. I've listed them in order of publication, though I think each would stand on its own merits.

Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus...tries to put God at the center of youth ministry. The book is full of story's and examples as well as practical applications to help a youth leader grow stronger in his/her walk with Jesus and how to lead others in their walk.

Growing Souls: Experiments in Contemplative Youth Ministry...a collection of stories, experiences, conversations and insights from people using the contemplative prayer approach in their youth ministry.

Downtime: Helping Teenagers Pray...a description of how to help teens pray; it offers different ways to pray. Basically it is an introduction to prayer. The premise is that prayer should be the foundation of youth ministry, not just that last five minutes which ends the meeting.

A reminder...there are several books in the library devoted to Lent and Easter including many for children.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR MARCH VOLUNTEERS

COFFEE HOUR

March 4	Deacons
March 11	Sunday School
March 18	Mary Rodriguez
March 25	Sonny and Esther Rodriguez

NURSERY

March 4	Kris Richards
March 11	Kathy Neveu
March 18	Pat Schopp
March 25	Barbara Brian

GREETERS

March 4	Kay Fisher and Jean Voight
March 11	Flo Wellman and Genny Bowman
March 18	Doug and Mary Rodriguez
March 25	Natalie Dawe and Stef

HEAD USHER

David Van Hammen

THANK YOU to Jean Bowers, Ruth Catton, and Jean and Wally Edwards for all their work folding and labeling and stamping the January issue of The Joyful Noise.



CALLING ALL DRIVERS

We have church members who would like to come to church but are in need of transportation. If you are willing to help pick people up, please contact the church office or Pastor Dan.

MISSION TRIP CHANGE

Our Christian World Service Board had been exploring the concept of a summer 2012 mission trip to Missouri. But apparently, many other people had the same idea. Joplin, Missouri is no longer accepting recovery help in the summer months due to too many people lending their support. So our Board will reconsider our options.

SPECIAL DAYS IN MARCH

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 Mead
- 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

IN OUR PRAYERS

In February, Betty Peters passed from this life to the next. Please remember Mary Peters in your prayers. Upon the death of Shirley Soderquist, please remember Doug, Mary, and Hannah Rodriguez and Lynn Hopkins and daughters Sara and Hilary. Please remember Jerry Richardson on the death of his brother, John, as well as those of our members who are homebound, in assisted-living, or facing health concerns: Doug Joy, Marylou Patee, June Trost, Norm Stewart, John Robson, Buck and Dorothy Hall, Liz Ehman, Ruth Masters, Marjorie Call, Betty Peters, Barb Nason, Bernice Rankin, Mona McElderry, Bruce Jenema, Helen Pickard, Jo Danford, and Betty Henry.

REMINDER: If someone 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

As part of our continuing efforts to work together as a community of faith, 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 the Old Mission United Church of Christ in Traverse City.

FLOWERS

There is a sign-up sheet outside the church office for altar flowers. If you would like to supply flowers, please sign up for a certain date. You may then bring in your own flowers or donate \$25 and we will order flowers from a local florist. Flowers may be given in honor or memory of someone special or in thanksgiving.

MEMORIAL GARDEN: On the north side of our church is a beautiful memorial garden for members and friends of the church who would like their cremated ashes interred on our sacred grounds. For \$250 you may reserve a one-square foot plot 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.

MARCH 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
				1 10 CMH Exercise Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	2 12 N - LOWV Library	3
4 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	5 10:00 CMH - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn	6 10:00 Yoga-Barn 6:30 - Kiwanis 7:00 - Council 7:00 WAA - Barn	7 12 Noon - AA 2:00 MS Support Barn 6:00 Lenten Meal 7:30 Hand Chime Practice	8 10 CMH Exercise Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	9 12 N - LOWV Library	10
11 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	12 10:00 CMH - Barn 11:00 Commodities Distribution 12-5 Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn	13 10:00 Yoga -Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn 7:15 Hand Chime Practice	14 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:00 Lenten Meal	15 10 CMH Exercise Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	16 12 N - LOWV Library	17
18 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	19 10:00 CMH - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 7:00 Christian Ed 7:00 AA - Barn	20 10:00 Yoga -Barn 6:30 Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn 7:15 Hand Chime Practice	21 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 4:00 - Deacons 6:00 Lenten Meal	22 10 CMH Exercise Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	23 12 N - LOWV Library	24
25 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship OPEN TIME CAPSULE	26 10:00 CMH - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:00 Trustees 7:00 AA - Barn	27 10:00 Yoga -Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn 7:15 Hand Chime Practice	28 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:00 Lenten Meal	29 10 CMH Exercise Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	30 12 N - LOWV Library	

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Mary Rodriguez.. Financial Secretary
James Sheets..... Church Moderator
Rosemary Miller Choir Director
Jean Edwards..... Newsletter Editor
Carol Dye & Katrina Smith..... Christian Ed Coordinators
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