

A JOYFUL NOISE!

April 2013

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! The wonder of Easter is upon us. We celebrate together the victory Christ has won over death. New life is available for us all. Not unlike the fact that Spring is on the way. What a wonderful winter we had (if you like snow!) but warmth and sunshine, fresh breezes, and new life sounds so very nice, just as nice as the new life we find as Christians at Easter.

As promised, I will continue to share for several months what I am learning through my CoachShare program where I am working with a nationally trained Coach along with several other UCC pastors across the country to help our churches become revitalized. We begin by setting goals. I have shared in worship that my number 1 goal for 2013 is to shift the focus of our congregation from inside the walls to outside and into our community by using mission to redefine our identity. To help us achieve this goal, I have set the first tangible goal of our congregation donating ten children's books per month to Crystal Lake Elementary school. As we continue to donate books to the school and as we continue to send more church members across the street to volunteer with these children, the community will begin to recognize us as a spiritual organization who cares about education and children in our neighborhood.

This tangible goal is supported by the first three key characteristics of spiritually vital congregations. I have mentioned before that 1) people who do not attend church regularly are not interested in just hearing about God, they want to experience God; and 2) churches need to be connected to their local neighborhood in a meaningful and relevant manner. The third key characteristic of a spiritually vital congregation is to have a clearly defined and visible path for spiritual growth (how to get connected with God and grow in Christ-likeness).

The easiest way for us to foster connection to God is through our weekly worship service, but one hour per week is not enough for us to be spiritually vital. So we offer Bible studies frequently. It is my hope this year that more church members will participate in our Bible studies to help us strengthen our faith. The Lenten gatherings were wonderful ways for us to grow deeper in community and faith. This year we are adding the creation of a relationship between our church and Crystal Lake Elementary school. This will help us create a new identity in our community and help us as a congregation to grow in Christ-likeness.

I had the opportunity to spend some time in a local courtroom recently. Though I was not there long, I witnessed great emotional distress among those who found themselves standing before a judge who would decide their fate. It made me realize that being Christian is so much more than what we do in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings at 10:30am. Our community needs us to pay attention to them and to share the good news of new life that we know in our hearts. Let us start with children's books, Bible studies, and worship this year as we begin to grow into a more spiritually vital congregation.

Pastor Dan Furman

Vacation and BIG Sunday

Pastor Dan will be on vacation the first week of April. The Rev. Paul Hammer will be preaching on Sunday, April 7. As the congregation celebrated communion the previous Sunday on Easter, we will not be celebrating communion on BIG Sunday. Please do bring in groceries and children's books to donate. Birthdays and anniversaries will also be celebrated after worship.

The Rev. Dinah Haag from the Frankfort Congregational church will be available, in case of any pastoral emergencies including hospital visits or funerals while Pastor Dan is on vacation. You may reach her by calling: (231) 651-0311.

News From the Women's Fellowship

On Wednesday, April 3, the Women's Fellowship will meet at the church at 1:00. Come for dessert. All women are welcome. The speaker will be Louise Bass, an artist, and very interesting person. Sarah Circle IV is in charge. The Executive Board will meet at noon, before the general meeting.

Sarah Circle IV will meet at the church at 11:00 on Wednesday, April 17. We will go to lunch afterward.

Circle 1 will meet at the church on Wednesday, April 17, at 1:00. This will be final preparation for the Mother/Daughter banquet.

The Mother/Daughter Banquet is Friday, April 26, at 6:00 p.m. All the women of the church are welcome. The program is "Our Stories." Tickets will be on sale after church beginning Sunday, April 7 and later at the church office. The price is: adults \$12.00, 6-12 yrs. \$6.00, 5 & under, free.

Circle 1 is looking for some men to help prepare, serve and clean up at the Mother/Daughter Banquet on Friday, April 26. Please contact Carol Dye if you would like to help

The Junk Sale will be held on June 28th and 29th. Please keep the fellowship in mind when you are doing your spring house cleaning. We will not be taking any clothes, work out equipment, or electronics.

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 April to pray for the ongoing mission and ministries of the Congregational UCC, in Lewiston. Let us pray for this church as they search for a new pastor.

Children's Book Deposit

At the entryway from the parking lot, just inside the doors on the left, is a wooden cabinet labeled "Children's Book Deposit." The Christian World Service Board is working to enhance a new relationship between our church and Crystal Lake Elementary school. One way we can do so is to collect and donate new children's books for their library or to be given directly to the students. Please bring books you would like to donate and use the new cabinet at the church.

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.

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 \$450, you may reserve a one-square foot plot that covers 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.

Who Meets in our Church Building Anyway?

From time to time we are asked about the various groups that meet in our buildings. So for the next several months we will share with you information about the various community groups that use our building. Over time you will see that the time spent here is less about the electric and heat used and more about the ministry we provide for the members of our community.

On Thursday afternoons, Narcotics Anonymous meets in the Barn, every Thursday of the year including Thanksgiving. This is a good group of people who very much appreciate the use of the Barn. Let us pray for each of them as they continue everyday to work to remain clean and sober.

APRIL SPECIAL DAYS...**April Birthdays**

Happy birthday to the following members of the church family!

- 3 Steve Elrick
- 5 Anna Nordbeck
- 5 Maridee Cutler
- 6 Scott Neveu
- 9 Earl Schopp
- 12 Shirley Wolfe
- 13 Steve Davidson
- 15 Barbara Brian
- 16 Amanda Case
- 24 Dave Neiger
- 25 Jean Edwards
- 29 Joan Richardson

April Anniversaries

- 23 David and Phyllis Van Hammen

IN YOUR PRAYERS

You are invited to remember in your prayers those of our members who are home-bound, in assisted-living, or facing health concerns. This month, please remember Marylou Patee, June Trost, Norm Stewart, John Robson, Marjorie Call, Buck Hall, Barb Nason, Mona McElderry, Bruce Jenema, Helen Pickard, Mary Hopkins, Susan Lutes, Betty Heckman, Brenda Case, Ruth Blacklock, and John Riegler.

We are saddened to share that in January, long-time member Dorothy Hall passed from this life to the next. Please pray for her husband Buck and the Hall family.

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 to Mickey Austin, Ruth Catton, Jean Bowers, and Jean Edwards for all their work folding, labeling, and stamping the March issue of A Joyful Noise.

***Flowers***

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for altar flowers. If you are interested in supplying flowers, please sign up for a certain date (if you are unable to be in worship call the church office so that arrangements can be made). 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.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR APRIL VOLUNTEERS -

	<u>COFFEE HOUR</u>	<u>NURSERY</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>
4/7	Deacons	Pat Schopp	Mickey Austin
4/14	Barb Brian	Esther Rodriguez	Chris Jones with Liam and Mia
4/21	Kay Bos	Christy Case	Genny Bowman
4/28	Carolina Jones	Chris Gehring	Joyce Barnes and Bob Ward

Head Usher: David VanHammen

APRIL 2013

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
	1 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn	2 10:00 Yoga-Barn 6:00 Song Sisters 6:30 - Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn	3 12 Noon - AA 2:00 MS Support Barn	4 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - BarN	5 12 Noon - LOWV Library	6
Pastor Dan on Vacation This Week						
7 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 10:30 Youth Class in Barn	8 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 11:00 Commodities Distribution 12-5 - Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn	9 10:00 Yoga -Barn 6:00 Song Sisters 7:00 Council 7:00 WAA - Barn	10 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 4:00 Deacons	11 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn	12 12 N - LOWV Library	13
14 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	15 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:00 Trustees 7:00 AA - Barn	16 10 Yoga - Barn 6:30 Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn	17 12 Noon - AA 1:00 - Circle I Lunch at Cold Creek Inn 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:30 Christian Ed	18 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn	19 12 N - LOWV Library	20
21 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 10:30 Youth Class in Barn	22 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn	23 10 Yoga - Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn	24 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn	25 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn	26 12 N - LOWV Library MOTHER / DAUGHTER BANQUET	27
28 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	29 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn	30				

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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
Rosemary Miller	Choir Director
Jean Edwards.....	Newsletter Editor
Carolina Jones & Katrina Smith.....	Christian Ed Coordinators
Hope Kochis	Custodian
Nancy Eggleston	Secretary

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For pastoral emergency, call 231-930-7067