

# A JOYFUL NOISE!

February 2012

This year, I will be participating in a national program called CoachShare. Last fall, the Associate Conference Minister for the Michigan Conference, the Rev. Cheryl Burke shared with me at the United Northern Association Executive Committee meeting that the Center for Progressive Renewal in conjunction with the Michigan Conference was offering a program for pastors to work with a nationally trained vitality coach to help churches grow. The Board of Trustees approved the expenditure of \$400 with the other half coming from funds related to the Michigan Conference.

In January, I had my first teleconference with the Coach, who is also a pastor for a church in Connecticut. I will be working with this coach as well as five other pastors from across the nation who are in similar church settings or who are looking to work on similar goals. There are two other pastors in Michigan, one in Wisconsin, one in California, and one in Florida. We will set goals and then work together to implement them in our churches. We will "meet" either on the phone or using Skype once per month though we are encouraged to call or reach out to each other more frequently as we go along.

Already, my coach has shared with us several key characteristics of spiritually vital congregations. I am looking forward to exploring these with the group as well as our own church leaders and indeed our congregation. One characteristic for us to begin to absorb is this: unchurched folk, or people who have spent little to no time in churches at any point in their lives, want to experience God and not just hear about God; in other words, just attending worship on a Sunday morning no matter how wonderful the sermon or music program, they will want to be active as they seek to grow in their faith. This means collective work as our church in our community perhaps with our new connection to Crystal Lake Elementary as well as continuing to foster our wonderful after-worship fellowship perhaps through community meals.

I am thankful the Board of Trustees is giving me this opportunity and I look forward to the personal as well as congregational growth we will experience this year.

Pastor Dan Furman

## **Annual Meeting Report**

The annual meeting of our church was held on Sunday, January 27th. A new budget was approved and reports filed. If you would like a copy of the annual report, budget, and slate of officers and board members, please contact the church office.

## **Women's Fellowship News**

Women's Sunday will be Sunday, February 10. Rosemary Miller will deliver the message. We are looking for other women to volunteer for the other parts of the service and to usher. Please contact Chris Stone if you would like to participate in this annual event. [chrisstone47@gmail.com](mailto:chrisstone47@gmail.com) or call 882-5205.

The Women's Fellowship will be serving a soup lunch after church on February 24. The proceeds will go towards new shades on the south windows in the sanctuary. Please help us with this project.

Circle I would like to thank the Sheets family for their generous donation of several new toddler toys for the church nursery in memory of Jo Danford.

## **Welcome!**

On Sunday, January 27, we welcomed four new members to our church: Roy and Judy Polhamus, and Les and Betty Webb. Roy and Judy are retired educators, Les is a retired physician, and Betty served as a homemaker and has done extensive volunteer work in the community.

On Sunday, February 3, we will welcome two more new members: Anna Butts and Shannon Townsend. Anna will be graduating from Benzie Central High School this year and her mom, Shannon is a home health aide. Please warmly welcome these new members when you see them.

## **Ash Wednesday and Lent**

On Wednesday, February 13, we will gather for the ancient ritual of Ash Wednesday. This is a solemn, sacred, and unsettling worship service as we start the journey toward Easter. We place ashes on our foreheads to remind ourselves of our own mortality and to recognize the importance of our service as Christians in our communities and in God's world. Please join us at 7pm.

We are then invited to join St. Andrew's Presbyterian and St. Philip's Episcopal churches in a Lenten worship, fellowship, and lecture series to begin on February 20 at 6pm. Each church will host twice as we gather as a community on our collective walk with Christ toward Holy Week.

## **Chili and Games**

On Sunday, February 24, we will gather after worship for chili and games. Bring your Cribbage boards, board games, and decks of cards and settle in for some fun and fellowship.

## **Children's Book Deposit**

At the entryway from the parking lot, just inside the doors on the left, is a wooden cabinet made by Rob Rafferty 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. We have already collected over 100 books donated by the Bridge Club as well as other members of our community. Please bring books you would like to donate and use the new cabinet at the church.

### **Joyous Gatherings**

This year Pastor Dan will be meeting regionally in homes with several church members each time. This is to address comments that were made on the recent ministry surveys. The first gathering was held in Thompsonville in January. If you would like to host a joyous gathering in another part of the county, please let Pastor Dan know.

### **UCC Sister Church of the Month**

As part of our continuing efforts to work together as community of faith, in worship we pray for UCC churches in our United Northern Association. This month you are invited to pray for the ongoing mission and ministries of First Congregational UCC, Harrison. The pastor of Harrison, the Rev. Jer Baxter, died unexpectedly in 2012, so let us pray for the church and the pastor's family as they grieve their loss.

### **Flowers**

If you would like to supply flowers for a certain Sunday, please let the church office know the date and how you like the dedication to read in the bulletin. You may then bring in your own flowers or donate \$25 to the church to make the arrangements with a local florist. Flowers may be given in loving memory of a loved, in celebration of a birthday or anniversary, or in thanksgiving for your many blessings.

### **GoodSearch.com**

Remember that if you use the Internet, you can earn money for the church using [www.goodsearch.com](http://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.

We have three Alcoholics Anonymous groups that meet in The Barn every week. Monday and Tuesday nights and Wednesday's at noon. Please keep these folks in your prayers as they work to keep their sobriety.

**February Birthdays**

Happy birthday to the following members of the church family!

- 1 Alice Hinkamp
- 1 Judy Polhamus
- 2 Pete Moss
- 2 Peg Strong
- 2 Leah Johnson
- 8 Elizabeth Neiger
- 8 Christy Case
- 9 Chris Jones
- 13 Kim Weaver
- 16 Lynn Hopkins
- 23 Donna Knox
- 25 Wyatt VanHammen Brown
- 27 Joyce Wittbrodt
- 29 Marsha Case
- 29 Marilee Strom

(no wedding anniversaries in February)

**Church Family Update**

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

In January, Liz Ehman passed from this life to the next. Her memorial service will be held in the Spring. Please remember the Ehman family and the Olson family in your prayers.

**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.

*Dear Church Family,  
All of your combined prayers are helping me get better and I want to thank each of you for your continued concern. This is an ongoing health issue for me. My January testing has shown my cancer cell count down two-thirds from the beginning of my diagnosis. We are so thankful. I am going to take my name off the bulletin prayer list until the next testing in April, but I want you to know that I still appreciate all of your wonderful support and loving prayers. They are working.*

*With heartfelt thanks,  
Brenda Case*

**THANK YOU** to our "Centerfolds", Ruth Catton, and Jean and Wally Edwards, for all their work folding and labeling and stamping the January issue of A Joyful Noise.

**A BIG THANK YOU  
TO OUR FEBRUARY VOLUNTEERS -**

	<b><u>COFFEE HOUR</u></b>	<b><u>NURSERY</u></b>	<b><u>GREETERS</u></b>
2/3	Deacons	Mary Rodrigues	Jean Bowers
2/10	Roxane Miner	Kris Richards	Cindy Schnarr
2/17	Chris Stone	Chris Jones	Pat and Earl Schopp
2/24	Soup Lunch	Kay Bos	Jo Bahry
	<b><u>HEAD USHERS</u></b>	Andy and Leonard Case	

# ***FEBRUARY 2013***

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
					1  12 Noon LOWV	2
3  10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	4  10:00 Central Wellness - Barn  12-5 Bridge Club 5:30 Love, INC 7:00 AA - Barn	5  10:00 Yoga-Barn  6:30 - Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn	6  12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting Barn 6:30 Christian Ed 6:30 Bell Choir	7  11-2:30 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn  12-5 Bridge Club 5:00 Music Board 5:30 NA - Barn	8  12 Noon LOWV	9
10  <b>WOMAN'S SUNDAY</b> 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	11  10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 11Commodities Distribution 12-5 Bridge Club 5:30 Love, INC 7:00 AA - Barn	12  10:00 Yoga -Barn  7:00 Council 7:00 WAA - Barn	13  12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 4:00 Deacons 6:30 Bell Choir <b>7:00 Ash Wednesday Worship</b>	14  11-2:30 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn  12-5 Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn	15  12 Noon- LOWV	16
17  10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	18  10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:00 Trustees 5:30 Love, INC 7:00 AA - Barn	19  10:00 Yoga -Barn  6:30 Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn	20  12 Noon - AA  2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:30 Bell Choir	21  11-2:30 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn  12-5 Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn	22  12 Noon LOWV	23
24  10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	25  10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:30 Love, INC 7:00 AA - Barn	26  10:00 Bible Study 10:00 Yoga -Barn  7:00 WAA - Barn	27  12 Noon - AA  2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:30 Bell Choir	28		

First Congregational Church, UCC  
901 Barber Street, P.O. Box 234.  
Benzonia, MI 49616  
Phone: (231) 882-4922

## ***A Joyful Noise! February 2013***

### 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

Office phone: 231-882-4922      Office fax: 231-882-7992  
Office hours:    Monday – Friday      9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

<http://www.benzoniacongregational.org>

Office Email: [secretary@benzoniacongregational.org](mailto:secretary@benzoniacongregational.org)  
Pastor Email: [pastordan@benzoniacongregational.org](mailto:pastordan@benzoniacongregational.org)