

A JOYFUL NOISE !

May 2013

How the world has changed since last I wrote you an article for our newsletter! The City of Boston was turned upside down with the horrific bombings at their marathon, the pursuing days led to more violence and the eventual capture of the lone surviving brother, also there was the devastating explosion in the small town of West in Texas, and there was the inability of our national government to find common ground with regard to universal background checks for the purchase of guns. And all of this in the church season of Eastertide.

This is the time of year where normally we would be riding the wave of celebration in the church, ending our time of reflection and prayer in Lent, moving through the difficult but essential parts of Holy Week, celebrating the new life of Christ on Easter morning, and then finding Christ again and again for several Sundays afterwards with resurrection appearances. From the pulpit last month, I wondered if this would have been troubling for the disciples to go through the upheaval of losing Jesus (their teacher, their friend) in such a violent manner, only to see him again and again afterwards but only briefly, unable to truly connect, unable to have all their questions answered. The disciples' response mirrors ours. We too see glimpses of God who is still speaking to us and yet we want more, we want peace to succeed, we want our questions answered, we want time to spend with our God.

And so we seek God through the channels that we know. We come to church when we can. We pray. We read our Bibles. But are there other ways to convene with the holy? I attended a workshop in Lansing in April for church vitality. Part of the time was spent talking about current methods of communication: Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, etc. Many of our larger churches are using these methods to communicate with the younger generations, but many churches are not. This is an area we may wish to explore. Did you know our church has a Facebook page? Did you know our church has a website: www.benzoniacongregational.org? Have you been to either? I may think that I am young (!) but I have not dabbled at all with Twitter or Foursquare. Are we missing out on connecting with new people in our area because we are not pursuing this?

So in this time of Eastertide and with the world around us going through serious emotional events, it is not only church members who are seeking answers. How can we reach out to folks who do not come to church that are going through the same stress we are? One way is to use media that everyone knows. In May, I will be teaching a Bible study with a different perspective, one that uses Charlie Brown as an intersection between the secular and the sacred. Most of us have enjoyed Peanuts from the Sunday comics to the TV specials. But have we noticed the common Christian themes? On Wednesday nights in May, we will gather at 6pm in the church Library for a shared meal and then discussion. I hope you will join us as we look for common ground and for more interactions with God in our lives.

Pastor Dan Furman



100 Years!

On Wednesday, May 8, our very own Mary Cornell will celebrate her 100th birthday! Please shower her with cards at 6230 Ridge Drive #34, Benzonia, MI 49616. She has been an active member of our church for nearly seventy years. Let us show our love for her with cards and hugs. Happy Birthday, Mary!!

News From the Women's Fellowship

The Women's Fellowship meeting for May has been cancelled. Circle I will not meet in May. Sarah Circle IV is meeting for lunch on May 15 at Kay Fischer's cottage. Kay's phone at the cottage is 352-9169.

Your Thank Offerings may be put in the Sunday collection or dropped off at the church office. Be sure to designate on the check that it is for the Women's Fellowship Thank Offering.

We will need help with Liz Ehman's memorial service on May 4th. Anyone who can help with the lunch or furnish food, please contact Carol Dye or Barb Brian.

Circle I sent half of the cookie-walk money, \$394.00, to Church World Service to be used toward the purchase of health and hygiene kits since we do not assemble them anymore. The other half of the money went toward the new window blinds in the sanctuary. Thanks to all bakers and cookie buyers.

The Junk Sale will be on June 28 and 29. Keep us in mind as you do your spring cleaning. We are not accepting clothing, fitness equipment or electronics. We will be needing workers to set up on Wednesday and Thursday, June 26 and 27, as well as for the sale on Friday and Saturday. If you can help with any of these functions, it would be greatly appreciated. Contact Barb Brian for more information.

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 May to pray for the ongoing mission and ministries of the First Congregational UCC, in Manistee. Our former pastor, the Rev. Steve Davidson, is currently serving there as the Interim. 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.

Book/Bible Study

Starting on Wednesday, May 1, we will gather to discuss the Gospels according to Charlie Brown. For anyone who enjoys the Peanuts comic strip, you have probably noticed Christian teachings from time to time. Now it's time for us to talk about it. For six weeks, we will gather for a meal at 6pm discussion following. Please sign up on the bulletin board and join us. Books are \$12.

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.

Every Friday at noon, the League of Women Voters meets in the library to discuss local and statewide matters. Feel free to drop in anytime to join in the discussion.

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.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Happy birthday to the following members of the church family!

- 1 Trish Manning
- 5 Betty Webb
- 6 Trevor Danford
- 7 Wade Peacock
- 7 Mickey Austin
- 7 John Hanmer
- 8 Mary Cornell
- 9 Taylor Johnson
- 9 Wally Edwards
- 12 Joe Wittbrodt
- 12 Katrina Smith
- 14 Peter Hopkins
- 15 Joanne Applehof
- 21 Sally Moss
- 22 Les Webb
- 23 Marilyn Sheets
- 25 Bill Bos
- 26 Rob Wolowiec
- 26 Sabra Danford
- 27 Kris Johnson
- 29 Ruth Blacklock
- 30 Larry Czap

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

- 5 John and Barbara Riegler
- 7 Don and Jean Voight
- 9 Al and Anne Young
- 13 John and Barbara Hanmer
- 13 Michael and Nancy Call
- 17 Scott and Kathy Neveu
- 23 Wayne and Marilee Strom
- 25 Jim and Alice Hinkamp
- 27 Larry and Nancy Czap

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, Rosemary Miller, and Jay Pettitt.

Two members have passed from this life to the next since our last newsletter. Please pray for the families of Dorothy Hall and John Rowland Gehring.

The memorial for Elizabeth Ehman will be on Saturday, May 4, at the church. Visitation begins at 10:00 a.m. and the memorial service is at 11:00 a.m.

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 and Wally 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

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR MAY VOLUNTEERS -

	<u>COFFEE HOUR</u>	<u>NURSERY</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>
May 5	Deacons	Jean Bowers	Pat Forrester and Flo Wellman
May 12	Circle I	Barb Brian	Jean Voight
May 19	Esther and Sonny Rodriguez	Chris Stone	John and Barbara Riegler
May 26	Chris Stone	Linda Jenema	

Head Usher: Trevor Danford

MAY 2013

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
			1 12 Noon - AA 2:00 MS Support Barn 6:00 Bible Study	2 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	3 12 Noon - LOWV Library	4 11:00 a.m. Liz Ehman Funeral
5 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 10:30 Youth Class in Barn	6 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn	7 10:00 Yoga -Barn 6:30 Kiwanis 7:00 Council 7:00 WAA - Barn	8 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:00 Bible Study	9 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	10 12 N - LOWV Library	11
12 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	13 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 11:00 Commodities Distribution 12-5 - Bridge Club 2:00 Deacons 7:00 AA - Barn	14 10 Yoga - Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn	15 12 Noon - AA 1:00 - Circle I Lunch at Cold Creek Inn 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:00 Bible Study	16 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	17 12 N - LOWV Library	18
19 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 10:30 Youth Class in Barn	20 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:00 Trustees 7:00 AA - Barn	21 10 Yoga - Barn 6:30 Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn	22 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:00 Bible Study	23 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	24 12 N - LOWV Library	25
26 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	27 MEMORIAL DAY Church Office Closed 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn	28 10 Yoga - Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn	29 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:00 Bible Study	30 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	31 12 N - LOWV Library	

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC BENZONIA, MICHIGAN

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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
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