

A JOYFUL NOISE!

December 2014

A few months ago I overheard someone talking about acting. I wrote down one sentence of what he said. "People rearrange their lives to watch an actor who touches them."

That's so, isn't it? I've done it and so have you. For what else will people rearrange their lives? Work? Family? Do people rearrange their lives for their church? Sure, some do. For others, though: "Church?! What church?"

How about this one, this church? We take it for granted, you know, and that's so dangerous. In this time of near-abandonment of churches and other religious institutions in favor of private and individual spiritual practice, the danger is especially sharp and vivid. No matter your own personal preferences, if you call yourself "Christian" you need a church. As one writer says, "Spiritual maturity means you can endure frustration, negotiate conflict and get to the other side of disillusionment with the capacity to hope." No one does that alone or online.

As you celebrated Thanksgiving, was this church on your mind? As you prepare for Christmas will you be here for worship on Sundays, or just Christmas Eve? In the new year will you rearrange your life? For what? Why?

"Don't be afraid," says the Christmas angel. "I bring you good news of great joy! To you is born this day in the city of David a savior, who is Christ the Lord!"

Good news: great joy, the joy of salvation! You can change. You can grow. Your spirit, mind and heart can grow. It's hard, though, awfully hard without what's best about the church.

Time to rearrange?

God is good.

We're open every Sunday. See you then (and bring somebody with you!).

~ Dr. Charles Guerrero

Open House at the Guerrenos'

Jane and I want to invite the congregation to a Christmas open house, 738 Eden Hill Road on Sunday, December 14, from 2:00 PM until 4:00 PM. Light munchies, punch, wine and beer - nothing terribly fancy, just a way to say "Thank you" for the warm and friendly way you've welcomed us as interim minister and wife. See you then!

Christmas
Open House





Annual Advent Workshop

Sunday, December 7
at 9:00 a.m.

- Christmas Crafts
- Gingerbread Houses
- Advent Wreaths
- Ornaments and Decorations
- Decorating Christmas Trees

Fun for all ages -
toddlers through
great-grandparents.

Annual Cookie Walk

Sunday, December 14

Immediately Following
the Worship Service

One-Stop Cookie Shopping!

The proceeds will be split
between a local mission project
and a church project.

Giving Tree Tradition Continues



Women's Fellowship is going to make Christmas a little merrier for some Benzie County families. LOVE INC will provide us with the Christmas wish lists of several families. On November 30, a Giving Tree will be in Fellowship Hall with gifts listed on tags for adults and children. Please choose a gift tag, purchase and wrap the gift attaching the giving tree tag, and return it under the tree by Sunday, December 14. If you have any questions, contact Chris Gehring, 231-882-4653. Thank you for being part of this long-standing tradition and for your spirit of giving.

Christmas Eve Worship

This year we will again have a 5:00 p.m. worship service on Christmas Eve geared for younger families and those who do not want to drive later at night, as well as our traditional 11:00 p.m. worship service.



What's New in the Library

Somewhere Safe with Somebody Good Jan Karon is back! "After a long hiatus, she has returned with a novel that offers something for those who believe and those who do not. All the beloved quirky characters are here, the past is neatly summarized and the future, full of hope" so says Kirkus Reviews. Welcome home, Mitford fans. And if you've not read any of the nine previous Mitford stories, you are in for a real treat. Get a cup of tea, a cozy afghan, and settle in for a heartwarming read.

Pastrix is a spiritual memoir such as you have never before read. This astonishing book was written by the pastor of a Lutheran church in Denver. It is funny, raw, offensive, honest, captivating and packed with truth. If you can get beyond the profanity (or possibly it is because of the profanity), this small book has much to teach. The author, Nadia Bolz-Weber, was the keynote speaker at the September UNA gathering.

Horton and the Kwuggerbug and more Lost Stories by Dr. Seuss These stories were written early in his career, published in magazines, and largely forgotten. All have characters or places that were used in later stories. All have the Dr. Seuss style and charm as do the illustrations. All are entertaining and educational, teaching the value of the individual and the importance of doing things for others.

REMINDER...Kids, there are many, many Christmas books in the library. Enough to keep you reading to Christmas and beyond!

From the Trustees

There is still a balance in the Capital Fund, but there are final bills for landscaping and repair of church signs that we're waiting on. Pledge cards are coming in. If you have turned yours in, thank you. If not, please send or turn it in as soon as possible. We have also found that some members have not received their cards. If you are one who has not, please contact Andy Case.

The Church Council has formed a search committee for a new full time pastor. The memorial committee will be giving funds for the update of the sound system. We will be checking to see if the changes to the 2012 by-laws have been done and then update all printed by-laws. Linda Joy continues to search the archives of financial records and has offered to buy archival boxes for the very old records which the church has.

Update from Buildings and Grounds

The Memorial Committee has approved funds to update the sound system in the Sanctuary and add the capacity to record services. At a previous meeting, we ask for volunteers to be trained to run this new sound system. Please give me a call or email if you would like to be on this list and attend the training session. We will let you know when and where it will be held – sometime soon. It will be so helpful to have several who can run this system. Thanks. Carol Dye 231-392-4005 carol@randydye.com

Request from the Ushers

The deacons respectfully ask that you make sure that everything is put back and picked up in the pews as you leave each Sunday. This will help the ushers who have a lot of other responsibilities after the service. Thank you for your help.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



- | | |
|----|------------------------|
| 1 | Alan Vigland |
| 5 | Courtney Sauer |
| 6 | Anne Young |
| 7 | Phoebe Vance |
| 8 | Flora Wellman |
| 8 | John Hanmer |
| 8 | Roxane Miner |
| 10 | Geri Thornell |
| 13 | Hal Bruning |
| 13 | Shirley Jones |
| 14 | Margie Peacock |
| 14 | Elisabeth Case |
| 18 | Emmeline Wolowiec |
| 18 | Michael Call |
| 19 | Johnna Milks-Titsworth |
| 20 | Rosemary Abbett |
| 20 | Mia Jones |
| 22 | Marley Demers |
| 28 | Brenda Case |
| 29 | Kay Bos |
| 30 | John Milks |
| 31 | David Call |
| 31 | Wayne Strom |
| 31 | Edward Shigwadja |

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

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

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. This month please remember:

Pink Rearick at the Homesteader;

Mary Hopkins at Frankfort Senior Care Home

Gordon Nordbeck at The Maples

Rosemary Miller and Susan Lutes at the Pines

Helen Pickard, Pat Forrester, and Harriet Stone in Traverse City

Homebound: Buck Hall, Mona McElderry, Brenda Case, Jean Voight, Doii Burget, and Jerry Richardson.

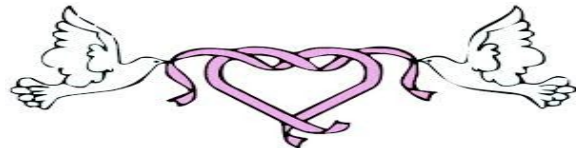
We share our sympathy as Wally Edwards passed from this life to the next. Our prayers are with his family.

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 for the ongoing mission and ministries of First Congregational UCC, in Wolverine.

Flowers

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. If you are interested in supplying flowers, please sign up for a certain date or 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



Bilqis (Belle) Crowell-VanHammen and Cory Brown will be celebrating their marriage on Saturday, December 13, at the church at 2:00 p.m. Her parents, Phyllis and David, welcome any of our church family to join us for the marriage service at the church.

BEADED MOCCASIN

Cath Kelder

Wow! Thanksgiving has come and gone and the Season of Advent calls us closer to the announcement of the Bethlehem Star. Now that snow, ice and wind are here I thought we should take a look at falls. Falls both inside and outside the home are the main cause of injury and disability for elders. Over 40% of falls occur in the home. There are many things that can be done to make our homes safer and keep us in their comforting environment longer. There is an established trend in construction now called Universal Build. I have given a tape to the church library. Take a walk through a home with Bob Vila to learn how to look for ways make your home a safer place for you to enjoy. Check it out. It has many suggestions and options to help make homes safer for people of all ages. A lot of these options are inexpensive and can easily be done by you or a family member. Others would need the work of a skilled professional. Some of these modifications can be handled by someone from the Council on Aging, (231) 525-0600. Benzie Home Health, (231) 325-0318, may also be of some assistance.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS -

	<u>COFFEE HOUR</u>	<u>NURSERY</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>
12/7	Workshop	Joanne Appelfhof	Roxane Miner
12/14	Cookie Walk	Jean Bowers	Linda Jenema and granddaughter
12/21	Bev Brouwer	Chris Stone	Chris Jones and Ardith Jones
12/28	Helen Dewey	Bev Brouwer	Chris Stone

HEAD USHER Jim Sheets

Poinsettias

We will once again order and arrange poinsettia plants in the sanctuary for the Christmas season. If you wish to donate a poinsettia plant, please submit your order no later than Sunday, December 14th. This form may be dropped off in the church office or put in the offering plate. You can also call the church office (882-4922) and place an order. The cost of a poinsettia plant is only \$10.00 this year.



I wish to provide a poinsettia plant in memory of:

Or in honor of:

(signed) _____

(as you wish to have printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin)

DECEMBER 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
	1 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:00 Love INC 7:00 AA - Barn	2 10:00 Yoga-Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn	3 12 Noon - AA 2:00 MS Support Barn 6:00 Bible Study 7:00 AA - Barn	4 10 Central Wellness Exercise / Barn 5:00 MRT 5:30 NA - Barn 6:30 - Kiwanis 7:30 Choir Practice	5 12 N - LOWV Library	6 8:30 Zonta Sewing - Barn
7 9:00 Advent Workshop 10:30 Church School 10:30 Worship	8 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 11:00 Commodities Distribution 12-5 Bridge Club 5:00 Love INC 7:00 AA - Barn	9 10:00 Yoga-Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn	10 12 Noon - AA 3:30 Deacons 6:00 Bible Study 7:00 AA - Barn	11 10 Central Wellness Exercise / Barn 5:00 MRT 5:30 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	12 12 N - LOWV Library	13 2:00 p.m. Crowell-Van Hammen and Brown Wedding
14 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship Cookie Walk	15 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 11:30 Bridge Club Luncheon 12-5 Bridge Club 5:00 Trustees 5:00 Love INC 7:00 AA - Barn	16 10:00 Yoga-Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn	17 12 Noon - AA 7:00 AA - Barn	18 10 Central Wellness Exercise / Barn 5:00 MRT 5:30 NA - Barn 6:30 - Kiwanis 7:30 Choir Practice	19 12 N - LOWV Library	20
21 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	22 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 7:00 AA / Barn	23 7:00 WAA - Barn	24 12 Noon - AA Christmas Eve 5:00 pm Worship 11:00 pm Worship 7:00 AA - Barn	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed 5:30 NA - Barn	26	27
28 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	29 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn	30 7:00 WAA - Barn	31 12 Noon - AA 7:00 AA - Barn			

First Congregational Church, UCC
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Phone: (231) 882-4922

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC BENZONIA, MICHIGAN

Dr. Charles Guerrero	Interim Minister
Chris Stone	Treasurer
Mary Rodriguez.. ..	Financial Secretary
James Sheets.....	Church Moderator
Carolina Jones	Christian Ed Coordinator
Jessie Zeller	Custodian
Nancy Eggleston	Secretary

Office phone: 231-882-4922

Office hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Office Email: secretary@benzoniacongregational.org

<http://www.benzoniacongregational.org>

Our New Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/BenzoniaCongregational