

A JOYFUL NOISE!

February 2015

Well, the annual meeting has come and gone . . . and it was a pretty good one. Thanks to Moderator Jim Sheets and this church's other elected leaders (and the congregation too, of course) for seeing to it that a year with a troubled beginning finished well.

Looking ahead. Ash Wednesday is on February 18 and we'll continue the Ash Wednesday service that's been held here for several years. I'm glad this church does an Ash Wednesday service. No, it's not exactly a part of our Congregational heritage, but it *is* a part of our Christian heritage: the order for Ash Wednesday worship in the 1986 Book of Worship of the United Church of Christ has roots in the sixth century. One scholar sums it up this way:

[Ash Wednesday] signifies a time to turn around, to change directions, to repent. [The] first day of Lent reminds us that unless we are willing to die to our old selves, we cannot be raised to new life with Christ

Ashes on the forehead is a sign of our humanity and a reminder of our mortality [Ashes] symbolize the dust of broken debris of our lives as well as the reality that eventually each of us will die.

You won't hear much about that in contemporary, popular American Christianity, but as the Presbyterians say in one of their worship resources, "The church's peculiar Lenten claim is that in dying we live, that all who are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death."

It is the power of the resurrection on the horizon ahead that draws us in repentance toward the cross and tomb. Through the intervention of God's gracious resurrection, lifelong changes in our values and behavior become possible. By turning from the end of the "old self" in us, Lenten repentance makes it possible for us to affirm joyfully, "Death is no more!" and to aim toward the landscape of the new age.

God is good.

See you in church (and bring someone with you!)

~ Dr. Charles Guerrero



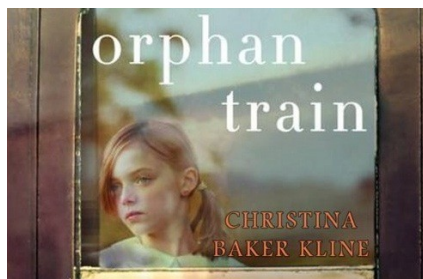
ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

7:00 PM, FEBRUARY 18

CHILI AND GAMES ON FEBRUARY 22: The Deacons will be hosting a chili and games get-together on Sunday, February 22, after worship. This will be sure to cure your cabin fever. Join us for some fun.



What's New in the Library



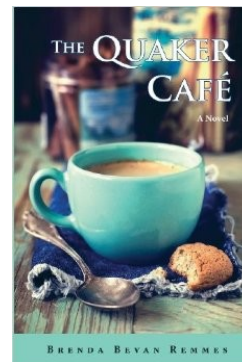
Orphan Train: This is historical fiction at its best! From the mid 19th century to the first quarter of the 20th century there was no system for dealing with orphans. The solution was to round up these children, take them to various cities and give them away to anyone who wanted one. This was the fate of more than two hundred thousand children one of whom is the 91-year-old Vivian in this story.

The second major character is Molly who is close to “aging out” of today’s foster care system. A community service position helping an elderly woman clean out her home is the only thing keeping Molly out of juvie or worse. The elderly woman is Vivian. As the two learn of the similarities in their lives, a relationship that begins on shaky ground slowly grows to one of true affection for each other.

As the story moves back and forth in time between the late 1920’s to present day, the author explores the subjects of love, adversity, resilience, providence, the workings of the child welfare system, and how the choices we make resonate through generations.

Thanks to Sarah Circle who gave this book in memory of Myrt Maddock.

We have read several novels about the Pennsylvania Amish, I thought it time for us to switch gears and learn a bit about another religion and another part of the country. I found this bit of fiction which is set in a small rural town in North Carolina where the majority of the town folk are Quakers. ***The Quaker Café*** is the name. The main character is Liz, a free-spirited liberal from the Midwest who marries into one of the towns conservative Quaker families. This is “a town where regardless of what happens behind closed doors, the neighbors awake each morning and meet at the Quaker Café.” Some of these neighbors know more about past and present events than they are willing to tell. As our heroine learns good people can make bad choices and bad choices can have lasting consequences. A sequel is being worked on.



Women's Fellowship

Circle 1 will meet Wednesday, February 18, at 1:00 at the church. Linda Jenema will be the hostess. Up coming events are the Maples/Long Term Care Dinner on March 4 and the Mother/Daughter Banquet on April 24.

From the Trustees Meeting on January 19

The year end financial reports and the proposed 2015 budget were discussed. A follow up on the stewardship campaign will be done soon. It was noted that all capital improvements planned for 2014 have been completed. The sound system upgrade will be done soon.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS



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

(no wedding anniversaries in February)

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.

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 February to pray for the ongoing mission and ministries of First Congregational UCC, in Atlanta.

Flowers

If you are interested in supplying flowers, please sign up on the new sign posted on the bulletin board, and indicate who the flowers honor or memorialize. You may then bring in your own flowers or donate \$25 to the church to make the arrangements with a local florist.



A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR FEBRUARY VOLUNTEERS -

| | <u>COFFEE HOUR</u> | <u>NURSERY</u> | <u>GREETERS</u> |
|---------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Feb 1 | Deacons | Mary Rodriguez | Doug and Mary Rodriquez |
| Feb 8 | Roxane Miner | Jo Bahry | Mickey Austin |
| Feb 15 | Chris Stone | Chris Gehring | Genny Bowman |
| Feb 22 | Chili Lunch | Phyllis Crowell | Jo Bahry and Cath Kelder |

HEAD USHERS Andy and Leonard Case

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 price includes future opening and closing as well as a memorial plaque to be placed on the stone located along the walkway. Donations for perpetual care are also welcomed.

FEBRUARY 2015

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SAT |
|---|---|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 10:30 Church School 10:30 Worship | 2 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:00 Love, INC 7:00 AA - Barn | 3 10:00 Yoga-Barn 6:00 Cub Scouts 7:00 WAA - Barn | 4 12 Noon - AA - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn | 5 10 Central Wellness Exercise / Barn 3:00 Choir Practice 5:00 MRT 5:30 NA - Barn 6:30 - Kiwanis | 6 12 N - LOWV Library | 7 |
| 8 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship | 9 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 11:00 Commodities Distribution 12-5 Bridge Club 5:00 Love, INC 7:00 AA - Barn | 10 10:00 Yoga-Barn 6:00 Cub Scouts 7:00 Council 7:00 WAA - Barn | 11 12 Noon - AA - Barn 3:30 Deacons 7:00 AA - Barn | 12 10 Central Wellness Exercise / Barn 3:00 Choir Practice 5:00 MRT 5:30 NA - Barn | 13 12 N - LOWV Library | 14 |
| 15 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship | 16 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:00 Trustees 5:00 Love, INC 7:00 AA / Barn | 17 6:00 Cub Scouts 7:00 WAA - Barn | 18 12 Noon - AA - Barn 1:00 Circle I 7:00 P.M. ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE 7:00 AA - Barn | 19 3:00 Choir Practice 5:00 MRT 5:30 NA - Barn 6:30 - Kiwanis | 20 12 N - LOWV Library | 21 |
| 22 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship CHILI LUNCH AND GAMES | 23 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 5:00 Love, INC 7:00 AA - Barn | 24 6:00 Cub Scouts 7:00 WAA - Barn | 25 12 Noon - AA - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn | 26 10 Central Wellness Exercise / Barn 3:00 Choir Practice 5:00 MRT 5:30 NA - Barn | 27 12 N - LOWV Library | 28 |

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

A Joyful Noise! February 2015

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