

A JOYFUL NOISE!

November 2016

FROM OUR INTERIM MINISTER

Every so often someone asks me if I've ever thought about writing a book. It happened again the other day.

Of course I've thought about it. Just about everyone who does what I do has given it a little thought. I doubt I'll do it, though I do have an idea of what might be in my book. For a while now, I've known that in much of my conversation and thought and prayer I'm especially partial to several sentiments, coming chiefly from what other people have said or written.

If I ever write a book it's likely to center around quotes or ideas like these:

- * "Life is lived looking forward but understood looking back." That's a paraphrase of something Soren Kierkegaard once wrote. The older I get, the more I understand it.
- * "It's my turn." When Mitch Albom tries to sympathize with Morrie Schwartz in Tuesdays With Morrie, Morrie deflects Mitch with the observation that it's simply Morrie's turn to be old and sick, and it's Mitch's turn to be young and well. It's rather fatalistic but powerful nonetheless.
- * "Life is about losing everything." From Isabel Allende's book Paula, a book about the death of her daughter Paula. It's a good thought for any stage of life.
- * "Punctuated equilibrium." Speaking very broadly, Stephen Jay Gould says that phrase describes evolution. It also works for a lot of other human activity and concern, especially aging. Great change is rarely smooth.
- * "How long will the human experiment last?" Shelby Lee, my mentor in the ministry, asked me that many years ago in the middle of a deep conversation about the ways of God. Shelby was getting at the importance of patience and perseverance, and character and faith. The more I've thought about it, the more it's come to mean.
- * "God remembers." In seven billion years, when the sun becomes a red giant and absorbs the earth, will it matter that we lived? Yes, because it matters to God, and God remembers.
- * "God is love." My entire ministry turns around trying to do what I can to help that great truth of the Bible inform more and more of life.

That's me. What about you? What would be in your book?

God is good.

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

~Dr. Charles Guerrero

FALL BACK

It's that time of year again. Time to enjoy that extra hour of sleep and turn your clocks back one hour when you go to bed on Saturday, November 5, or you'll be an hour early for church.

COMMITMENT SUNDAY NOVEMBER 13

"When we bring sunshine into the lives of others, we're warmed by it ourselves. When we spill a little happiness, it splashes on us. Hope uncovers new possibilities and shows us what can be done. It wrestles with angles, looks impossibilities in the eye and winks. Hope springs eternal. Hope supersedes all good intentions. Keep going by the power of God's grace. Dare to believe that He has planned greater things right around the corner."

~Barbara Johnson from the book "God Always Has a Plan B"

This year is extremely important as a congregation. We face the possibility of a new pastor, but lose a wonderful minister, who showed us through a difficult time. We look forward to moving ahead and will need every person associated with Benzonia Congregational UCC to move with us. Your pledge is important and we look forward to seeing you on Sunday, November 13. Estimate of giving cards are on the table outside the sanctuary. You may return your completed card to us by mail or, if you prefer, bring it to church on November 13. This will greatly help our church leaders plan for the future.

UPDATE FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

As you already know, we have been working with the book "Completing the Circle." Many have already read this book. If you have not, there are a few copies in the library that you can borrow.

We have organized four feedback / reflection groups. These groups will be involved in thoughtful discussion about our experiences of worship within our church including Sunday mornings, fellowship, outreach and mission – past, present and future. The dates and times are:

Thursday October 27	10 am to Noon
Thursday October 27	5 pm to 7 pm
Monday November 7	2 pm to 4 pm
Monday November 7	6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

(These dates and times are flexible and may be changed)

There are FOUR SIGN UP SHEETS on the Bulletin Board. PLEASE SIGN UP FOR ONE OF THESE MEETINGS. WE NEED YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS. Thank You !!

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING REPORT

The Board of Trustees met October 17, 2016. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Chris Gehring. Corrected minutes were approved from the meeting on September 19. Our budget continues to be in the red for the year. We had several large bills that were paid this month. Local missions is in the red, and we may have to take money from premiere savings. The nursery fund has only \$148 remaining. If you would like to donate to the nursery, please mark your pledge card as such.

Dave Packer contacted us about lights. Carpets will be cleaned soon. Stewardship Chair, Linda Joy, reported that inserts are being placed in the Sunday bulletins, a narrative budget has been set, and letters with pledge cards will be sent out on October 24. Commitment Sunday is November 13. The Search Committee has a couple people of interest for the minister position. "Completing the Circle" sign-up sheets are awaiting more signatures. We still need one or two people for the job of snow removal on church walkways. There was some discussion on hiring Cody Bowers to work with Mary Ellen on the music for worship services. It was moved and seconded to have Chuck make the offer to Cody. The next Trustees meeting was moved to November 14, 2016.



REPORT FROM THE DEACONS

The Deacons are once again helping Benzie Senior Resources prepare gift bags for the seniors in our area. We will be putting out a basket on November 5 to collect shampoo, conditioner, and soap. We are doing it early this year so everyone isn't asked to donate at the same time just before Christmas. Last year Christmas Bags were provided to over 200 seniors in our community. Many recipients often say this is the only gift they get all season. Please help us gather items for the gift bags this holiday season and help make the holiday special for our homebound neighbors.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Our next meeting will be November 2 at 1:00 p.m. Sarah Circle IV will be hosting the meeting. We will be receiving our thank offering at that time. This year the thank offering will be split between the Jail Ministry and Blessings in a Backpack.

On Sunday, November 13, The Soul Sisters will be hosting a LuLaRoe Clothing Party in The Barn from noon to 2:00 pm. Refreshments will be served. A portion of each item purchased will go towards purchasing supplies for the Benzie County Baby Pantry. For more information, contact Beth Sheets.

Circle 1 will meet Wednesday, November 16, at 1:00 at the church. Chris Jones will be the hostess. The discussion will be on the cookie walk and brunch.

The Soul Sisters will be hosting a Soup Luncheon on Sunday, November 20, following the worship service. Everyone is welcome. If you are able, we ask you to bring a new baby item/items to be donated to the Benzie County Baby Pantry. There will also be a free will offering for monetary donations. This money will be used to purchase supplies.



Annual Cookie Walk

This year our Cookie Walk will take place after the service on Sunday, December 11. We need bakers to make holiday cookies, breads or candies. A sign up sheet will be available the end of Nov. Any questions, please contact Chris Stone @ 882-5205 or chrisjstone47@gmail.com

Annual Advent Workshop

Our Advent Workshop will happen on Sunday, December 4, at 9:00 a.m. This is a fun activity for everyone of every age to decorate the church and make Christmas crafts and ornaments. If you can help with a craft or have a good idea for one, please contact Chris Gehring at 882-4653 or Chris Stone at 882-5205.

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 lists of several families. As we get closer to December, a giving tree will be in Fellowship Hall with gifts listed on tags for adults and children. More information will be coming later. Thank you for being part of this long-standing tradition and for your spirit of giving.

World Aids Day Exhibit

November 30- December 4 at the Benzie Area Historical Museum.

Beginning November 30 through December 4, in commemoration of World AIDS Day on December 1 and the upcoming 30th anniversary of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, the Benzie Area Historical Museum will host a block of panels from the Quilt. The twelve-foot square block that will be exhibited at the museum contains panels made for four young men from Manistee, Ludington and Benzonia who lost their lives to AIDS in the 1980's, a time in which many acquired the disease before it even had a name. One of those young men was our own Andy Miner, son of Ken and Roxane Miner.

We at First Congregational Church UCC were asked if we would like to be involved with this exhibit, which is why on December 4 our coffee hour after church will be held at the museum. Our traditional Christmas Workshop and brunch will go on as usual, with brunch happening during the workshop, prior to worship. Coffee hour after church will be at the Museum. Plan to spend a little extra time with your church family as we recognize the loss of many to the disease that has, and does still, claim so many.

The Quilt isn't quite a quilt in the traditional sense. It lacks batting and traditional motifs, although the use of mixed media evokes a modern-day crazy quilt similar to the Victorian crazy quilts of old. It is one of the world's most extraordinary quilts. The Quilt had its beginning in San Francisco in 1987 when a small group of neighborhood residents searched for both a way to express the grief they felt as friends and loved ones died of AIDS and to show the public what they were experiencing. Word spread. When the Quilt was displayed for the first time, four months later, there were almost 2000 panels!

Unfortunately, this is a living, growing memorial as new panels are added daily. The statistics are overwhelming:

- 12' x 12' sections of the Quilt: 5,956
- Panels in the Quilt: approx.. 49,000
- Names on the Quilt: More than 82,838
- Size of the Quilt: 1,278,675 square feet (equivalent of 174 official NCAA basketball courts)
- Total weight: More than 54 tons

The NAMES Project Foundation was created to care for and maintain The AIDS Memorial Quilt. They continue to accept and incorporate new panels into the Quilt.

Since the beginning of the spread of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS, the UCC General Synod has addressed concerns related to the two diseases in church and in society. The 14th Synod in 1983 called on us to become knowledgeable about and offer supportive care for individuals with AIDS. Again the 27th Synod of 2009 called for comprehensive HIV prevention in church and society. While much has been done to educate, to develop drugs that mitigate symptoms (if one can afford them), much remains to be done.

In 2012 there were an estimated 1.2 million people living with AIDS in the U.S. In 2013 nearly 7000 died from AIDS. Extrapolate that to Africa where many more have the disease and where less care is available. This is a disease that is not giving up easily! We in rural northern Michigan have probably dropped it from our radar. It is mostly a disease of young, urban men, many of them minorities, black, Latino, living in the Northeast and in the South. It is a significant cause of death for people in the 25-34 age-group. Nevertheless, they are our sons, fathers, uncles, brothers, daughters, mothers, aunts, sisters, they are one of us and deserving of our support, care, remembrance.

WHAT'S NEW IN OUR LIBRARY

Room to Grow, Meditations on Trying to Live as a Christian

I've read devotions by Martin Copenhaver before and always find them rich with meaning. These easy-to-read short chapters contain great insights, are down-to-earth but meaty enough to chew on for the day. The very first selection really grabbed my attention. Remember Luke 12:16-21, the parable about the guy who kept building bigger and bigger barns intending to enjoy his wealth 'someday'. What are the 'barns' you are building? What are you doing with your life? How many "I'll do that (stay in touch with friends, use the good dishes, go to church more often) someday soon" do you have in your life? Each of the two dozen selections seemed to be directed to me personally, making Biblical truths into my life. This is a book that will remain by my bedside for a long time to come.

Applesauce Weather

This a short novel written in verse, both rhyming and free, are told from the point of view of 9-year-old Faith and 10-year-old Peter, their Uncle Arthur and their Aunt Lucy who has recently died. *Applesauce Weather* presents a continuity between generations, showing kids how to value a life well lived, even as they anticipate the one about to unfold in front of them. That makes this pleasantly old-fashioned book appealing to grieving kids and parents alike.

Hundred Percent

Christine "Tink" Gouda is eleven and about to start sixth grade. An 'early bloomer', over the summer she grew taller and had to start wearing a bra. Her best friend is still small, flat and cute. Author Young captures the mixed-up feelings kids have when they feel themselves on the verge of growing up. Part of them wants to take comfort in doing the things they have always done. Part of them wants to act more grown up. Will I fit in? Where will I fit in? Who are my real friends? Do people change? Am I changing? Tink's story is sure to resonate with kids ages 9 – 12.

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 November to pray for the ongoing mission and ministries of First Congregational Church, UCC in Clare.

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 \$500 you may reserve a square-foot plot that covers future opening and closing as well as a memorial plaque to be placed on the stone along the walkway. Donations for perpetual care are welcomed.



November 20 3:00 p.m.
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

Join friends and neighbors in giving thanks for the abundance with which we are blessed. Church choirs will lead our singing, and pastors will lead in prayers and readings. Together we will lift our voices in praise and gratitude.

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 by donating 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.



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Elsie Walton
- 2 Arthur Wolfe
- 3 Barbara Hanmer
- 5 Agnes Slater
- 7 Mike Jones
- 8 Nancy Reynolds
- 9 Sonny Rodriguez
- 10 Mark Thompson
- 13 Jeanne Hafer
- 13 Evan Milks
- 14 Nancy Czap
- 15 Carolina Jones
- 20 Malia Jackson
- 22 Linda Jenema
- 24 Sonni Rodriguez
- 25 Pat Schopp
- 27 Larry Wulke
- 29 Tom Swanson

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARY

- 24 Tad and Margie Peacock

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

THOSE FACING HEALTH CONCERNS:

- Brenda Case**
- Tom Kennard**
- Ruth Blacklock**

THOSE IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES:

- Pink Rearick** who is at the Culver Meadows.
- Mary Hopkins** who is at Frankfort Senior Care.
- Rosemary Miller** who is at The Pines
- Helen Pickard, Pat Forrester, and Hal Bruning** who are in Traverse City.

Reminder: If you, a loved one, or a church member you know is in the hospital, please let the church office know so that our minister may visit. Due to privacy laws, hospitals no longer contact the churches to let them know that church members are hospitalized. The church wants to know so that we can support you during this time of need.

New Address for the Davidsons

Steve and Carol Davidson are happily moved into their new home in Wisconsin and ready to hear from old friends. Their new address is:

5636 N. Moraine Hill Dr.
West Bend, WI 53095

FLOWERS

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for altar flowers. If you would like to supply flowers, please sign up for a certain date. You may then bring in your own flowers or donate \$25 and we will order flowers from a local florist.



A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR NOVEMBER VOLUNTEERS

COFFEE HOUR

- Nov. 6** Deacons
- Nov. 13** Bev Brouwer
- Nov. 20** Soul Sisters Lunch
- Nov. 27** Linda Jenema

NURSERY

- Nancy Call
- Christy Case
- Mary Rodriguez
- need volunteer*

GREETERS

- Pat and Earl Schopp
- Geri Thornell
- Jean Bowers
- Ardith Jones

HEAD USHER

Sonny Rodriguez

NOVEMBER 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
		1 10:00 Yoga - Barn 12:00 AA - Barn 5:30 WAA - Barn	2 12 AA - Barn 1:00 Women's Fellowship 7:00 AA - Barn	3 12 AA - Barn 5:00 MRT 7:00 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	4 10:00 CW Barn 12 N - LOWV Library	5 Set Clocks Back Tonight
6 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	7 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12 AA - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 2:30 CW - Barn 5:00 Love, INC 7:00 AA - Barn	8 10:00 Yoga - Barn 12 AA - Barn 5:30 WAA - Barn 7:00 Council	9 12:00 AA - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn	10 12 AA - Barn 4:00 Deacons 5:00 MRT 7:00 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	11 10:00 CW Barn 12 N - LOWV Library	12 8:30am Men's Fellowship At Papa J's Honor
13 COMMITMENT SUNDAY 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 12-2 Soul Sisters Clothing Party - Barn	14 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 11:00 Commodities Distribution 12 AA - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 2:30 CW - Barn 5:00 Trustees 5:00 Love, INC 7:00 AA - Barn	15 10:00 Yoga - Barn 12 AA - Barn 7:00 WAA - Barn	16 11 Sarah Circle IV 12 AA - Barn 1:00 Circle I 6:00 AA - Barn	17 12 AA - Barn 5:00 MRT 7:00 NA - Barn 7:30 Choir Practice	18 10:00 CW Barn 12 N - LOWV Library	19 8-12 Zonta -Barn
20 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship SOUP LUNCH 7 - Community Thanksgiving Worship	21 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12 AA - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 2:30 CW - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn	22 10:00 Yoga - Barn 12 AA - Barn 7 WAA - Barn	23 12 AA - Barn 6:00 AA - Barn	24 THANKSGIVING OFFICE CLOSED 12 AA - Barn 7:00 NA - Barn	25 OFFICE CLOSED	26
27 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship	28 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12 AA - Barn 12-5 Bridge Club 2:30 CW - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn	29	30			

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC BENZONIA, MICHIGAN

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

Office phone: 231-882-4922

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