

# NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH JANUARY, 2022 NEWSLETTER

**“GO AND PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS”**

- Mark 16:15



## *From the Minister...*

As we head into the new year, I'm still aglow from our beautiful Christmas service, both in person and online. It was a powerful reminder of the many ways the Holy Spirit works in us, for us, and through us. **Our youth readers and candle lighters, Katie, Keira, Anna, Allison, and Lauren**, you did a wonderful job! It was great to have the quartet singing in the service as a special treat. Thanks to the ushers for stepping up when we had some forced absences, and to **Carol Turner** for scheduling the Advent Wreath lighters. Online, we enjoyed a slide show of the Living Christmas Card for this year and from years past, as well as the Traveling Advent Wreath, thanks to **Sara Lange** for taking it around, and **Dave, Rachel, Christine, Barbara, Carol, Beverly**, the **Sunday School** and the **Confirmands** for taking part. I'm grateful for the work of the Diaconate to organize visitors for our shut-ins with gifts and poinsettias, as well as for the cards that volunteers took to send to everyone in the congregation. The children's Christmas Pageant was adorable as always, with our Sunday School students in seasonal masks and Bible times costumes. We were able to put our new AV cameras and mics through their paces, thanks to the work of **Emily Eahrow**, our AV tech; recordings of our Sunday and Wednesday services are linked on the YouTube tab on our website. And finally, many thanks to everyone who brought in socks, knitting tree items, Reverse Advent Calendar staples and adopt-a-family gifts and needed items; our benevolences and missions are at the heart of the life of North Church.

Now, having heard the good news once again, our thoughts turn to the ways that we can proclaim God's love for the entire world in word and deed. I hope that you will find ways to join with other North Church folks to engage in the activities planned by our Fellowship, Education, Worship, Missions, Diaconate and Assets Ministry Boards.

And! There's still time to send in an Estimate of Giving, if you have not yet; our Stewardship drive is winding up activity, and we appreciate knowing your intentions – whether as a regular pledge, or a one-time gift – as we plan for our ministries in 2022.

Happy New Year!

Faithfully,

*Rev. Mary E. Biedron*

## *Moderator's Notes...*



A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

On Sunday, December 12, we enjoyed our Christmas Pageant, with the children and youth of the Church reenacting the nativity scene with accompanying readings of the Christmas story. It was so wonderful to see them again, complete with a wandering star above the manger. If you haven't yet seen it you can view the recording on the Church website or on Facebook.

We are nearing the end of our stewardship drive. This is an important event in the life of the Church – your pledges and donations help us plan our budgets and pay for North Church's operation. If you have not already done so please fill out your pledge card and bring it with you Sunday (or drop it off at the Church office).

Our new audio/visual system is now in the sanctuary. We are still learning its capabilities, but it has already improved our ability to live stream worship (and other events) to reach more people. If you have attended worship in person you may have seen our technician, **Emily Eahrow**, working in the balcony.

Work is proceeding on replacing our somewhat decrepit sign on Twelve Mile with a new electronic sign, which will allow us to post current messages for those driving by. The electrical work has been completed, so there will be adequate power for the display. As with many things this year the electronics are somewhat delayed, we should see the new sign installed in January.

I probably do not need to tell you about the status of the pandemic in Michigan – it isn't good. Executive Council reviews the status at each meeting. We will continue in-person worship with safety precautions, and pray we can soon proceed with further reopening when it is safe to do so.

### **Executive Council Notes**

Executive Council met on December 20 and considered the following:

- **Assets & Resources and Treasurer:** We have received the final invoice for our new A/V system and for the electrical work for the new sign (which came in under estimate). Our Treasurer prepared the final budget for next year. Our stewardship drive has reached about 80% of our target pledge donations for next year (please send in your pledge if you have not already done so). The Church applied for and received a "silver linings" grant from the NACCC to help defray the costs of our new A/V system and other measures related to the pandemic.
- **Diaconate:** Poinsettias and holiday gift bags were delivered to ten of our shut-in members after worship on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Sixteen Christmas card packets have been distributed. The Diaconate has purchased Advent devotional booklets from the NACCC to distribute to our shut-ins; additional copies are still available in the narthex, anyone is welcome to take one. Plans are in place for serving communion on January 2.



- **Education:** Kudos to everyone who helped with our Christmas Pageant on December 12, and with Christmas crafts take-home packets. Sunday School continues virtually, via Zoom, with in-person Sunday School and events roughly monthly. The Education Board plans an adult education Bible study series with our Senior Minister after the New Year (and looking for a **volunteer** to help Rev. Biedron with this).
- **Fellowship:** Fellowship hosted a wonderful Mascottts party on December 4 (doubly good as Michigan won against Iowa that evening). The Board is also looking ahead to the New Year, making plans for a social event following our all-Church meeting in early February.
- **Missions:** Missions made arrangements with Adopt-a-Family to assist two needy local households this Christmas (thank you for everyone's donation). The Board also made a \$300 donation to the NACCC's initiative to assist people impacted by the recent tornados and storms in the Midwest and South. The Women's Fellowship giant stocking is stuffed with sock donations that will be distributed to local families in need.
- **Worship:** The Worship Board has plans in place for Christmas Eve and Christmas worship, coordinating with **Laurie Meeker** on music for those services. Christmas Eve will be a hybrid worship session (in person and live streamed), with the option of lighting candles at home. We will revert to seating in alternate pews in the sanctuary in light of the pandemic numbers.
- **Committees**
  - Communications prepared a series of recommendations for enhancements to the Church website, which have gone to our contractor who is helping maintain it (if you visit our website you will see some of the changes already made).
  - A nominating committee will be formed at our next meeting.
- **New and Other Business:**
  - Council approved a capital campaign to raise money for the cost of a new roof for our building. We will formally launch this campaign in January, but I will send out a preliminary note (in case some of us would like to make an additional donation for this in the 2021 calendar year).
  - Council approved the budget for next year presented by the Treasurer and Assets & Resources. The full Congregation will vote on this in early February.
  - Council approved resolutions related to staff compensation.
  - Council's next meeting will be January 24. At that meeting we will begin the nominating process to fill Board and officer slots for the 2022-23 program year (to be voted on by the Congregation at our May meeting).

The pandemic continues to test our patience and resolve; may we continue to live and endure with faith and hope, thankful for the gifts that are ours.

*For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* (Isiah 9:6)



*Kevin Gromley*

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December 16, 2021

**Congratulations!**

Thank you for submitting your application to the **NACCC's Silver Linings Grant Program**. The Growth Ministry Council created this opportunity to assist member churches who introduced new initiatives during the pandemic.

After careful review by the Growth Ministry Council, the decision was made to award your church \$5,000.00 in support of your project and a check is enclosed.

The Growth Ministry Council members sincerely pray that this grant is a blessing to your church ministry. We look forward to hearing from you as to the results. And we hope that you share the information that the NACCC has helped your church.

Yours in Christ,

The Growth Ministry Council  
National Association of Congregational Christian Churches



## ***JANUARY MEETINGS***

Worship Ministry Board - Sunday, January 9, at 11:30 (in person with a Zoom option.)

Education Ministry Board - Monday, January 10, at 7:00 p.m.

Diaconate Ministry Board – Tuesday, January 11, at 7:30 p.m.

Assets & Resources Ministry Board – Wednesday, January 12, at 7:00 p.m.

Missions Ministry Board – Wednesday, January 12, at 7:00 p.m.

Fellowship Ministry Board – Tuesday, January 18, at 7:00 p.m.

Executive Council – Monday, January 24, at 7:00 p.m.

## ***NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES***

### ***ASSETS & RESOURCES MINISTRY BOARD***

### ***STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN FOR 2022***

*“Go and Proclaim the Good News”- Mark 16:15*

Happy New Year from the Stewardship Team!

As of December 13, we have received 54 pledges totaling \$143,140. This represents 79% of our goal of \$182,000. These commitments help us plan our operating budget and ensure continued support for our ministries and programs.

Estimates of Giving (Pledges) can still be turned in by completing the short form on the church website or by contacting **Nancy Scott** at [ncc.churchtreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:ncc.churchtreasurer@gmail.com).

Pledge confirmations and 2021 tax statements will be sent out in early 2022. If you have set up recurring online donations and need to change your amount for the coming year, you can do so by logging in to your account. Contact Nancy if you have any questions.

Thank you for your support!

*North Congregational Church Stewardship Team*

## **INCORPORATING CHARITABLE GIVING INTO YOUR ESTATE PLAN (Summary of Kiplinger magazine article from March 2, 2020)**



Charitable giving may have significant tax implications that can lower your estate taxes at your death. Advance planning can help ensure that you achieve the most tax savings available while meeting your charitable goals.

Here are five ways to structure your charitable giving into your estate plan:

### **Give Appreciated Stock**

Consider giving appreciated stock to a charity during your life. If you give the stock to charity, you will receive a charitable income tax deduction equal to the full fair market value of the stock at the time of the gift and will avoid capital gains taxes.

### **Charitable Rollover**

Individuals who are over 70½ may donate up to \$100,000 per year to charities directly from their IRA as a Qualified Charitable Distribution. This will count towards any required minimum distribution an account holder must take from the IRA. This can be a good strategy for individuals who do not “need” the distribution to cover living expenses.

### **Bequest in Your Will or Revocable Trust**

A very simple and direct way to benefit charity at your death is to leave a bequest in your will or revocable trust. The gift can be for a charity’s “general purpose,” meaning the charity can use the funds as it sees fit, or for a specific purpose that you detail. Charitable bequests are eligible for the estate tax deduction and will reduce estate taxes.

### **Name a Charity as the Beneficiary of Your Retirement Account**

It is relatively simple to name the charity as a beneficiary of all or a percentage of your non-Roth retirement accounts (IRA, 401(k), 403(b), etc.). Because the charity is tax-exempt, after your death it can withdraw the assets from the retirement account without having to pay income taxes on the withdrawal.

### **Consider a Charitable Remainder Trust**

You can benefit a charity and a family member by creating a charitable remainder trust (CRT) and naming the CRT as the beneficiary of your IRA. A CRT is a split interest trust where an individual you choose will receive annual payments from the CRT for a period of time. When the individual’s interest in the CRT terminates, the remaining amount is distributed to charities of your choosing. Due to the many rules surrounding the creation and operation of a CRT, an attorney is essential to create it properly.

As you can see, there are many ways to benefit charities, either during your life or at your death. Which way you choose can have different tax implications. Taking into account taxes with your charitable giving can ultimately increase the amount received by not only the charity, but your loved ones as well.

## **DIACONATE MINISTRY BOARD**



### **PILGRIM POSTAL PALS**

Each month the Diaconate will be spotlighting one of our members or friends that may be celebrating an occasion or may need a little boost. There will be 20 stamped and addressed cards available on the Circle of Care table for two weeks. Take a card, add a note and your name, and drop it in the mail within a few days of selecting a card. Watch the weekly Planner for details.

## **WORSHIP MINISTRY BOARD**

**COMMUNION...**will be celebrated during worship on Sunday, January 2, 2022.

### **LAY READERS**

Lay readers are needed, and we'd love to have **you!** The lay reader's responsibilities include speaking from the pulpit (and being recorded/viewed during the live streaming and Facebook recording) twice in the service: during the Invocation, and Lord's Prayer (leading the congregation, unison reading) and that day's scripture reading. Materials are sent to you a few days prior for your review and printed for you on the day of service.

If you are willing to be a lay reader, choose a date that works for you on the sheet located in the Narthex, or you can sign up online via the Sign Up Genius link. Please contact the church office if you have questions. Currently January 9th and 23<sup>rd</sup> are available.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0a4eaead2dabfd0-layreaders>

## **MISSIONS MINISTRY BOARD**

### **MISSION BENEVOLENCES *for the month of January***

NACCC Shared Ministries, Minister's Discretionary Fund, NACCC One Great Hour of Sharing

### **REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR ITEM DROP-OFF**

Thank you to the participants in this food drive. Food and household items gathered for the **Advent food items can be dropped off Sunday, January 2, at Door 4, 10 a.m. - noon.** The items will be stored until Monday, January 3rd, and then delivered to Lighthouse, Pontiac. Other drop-off arrangements can be made, if necessary, by contacting the church office.

## **FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY BOARD**



### **MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB**

A group of North Church Men meet every other Tuesday for breakfast at Moe's on Ten, at 9:00 a.m. They will be meeting on **Tuesday, January 11th and 25th, 2022**. If you would like to join them, please contact **Steve Lange** at [stephenlange@me.com](mailto:stephenlange@me.com).

### **BOOK GROUP - Hybrid (in person and zoom) meeting**

We will continue to have hybrid meetings, with both in-person (masked) and zoom options! Our **January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting will be at 1:00 PM**; the book is the political thriller State of Terror, co-authored by Hillary Clinton and Louise Penny.

Looking ahead, on February 16, we will discuss Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles; on March 16, Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr; and on April 20, This Tender Land by William Kent Kreuger.

This is always an interesting time, and everyone is welcome to join in! If you have not participated in the past, please contact the church office to receive an email with the zoom link. Happy New Year, and Happy Reading!!

### **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

Women's Fellowship is very grateful for all the gifts that were donated to our Adopt-A-Family program. Two families enjoyed a much nicer Christmas because of the generosity of North Church members and friends.

All the gifts were delivered to Neighborhood House in time for the families to pick them up before Christmas. We also received some financial donations which were used to purchase some of the items not designated from Sign Up Genius. Thank you to everyone for your kindness.

### **LIFE LINE SCREENING**

**Life Line** is the nation's leading provider of preventive health screenings, and offers affordable, non-invasive and painless health screenings at North Congregational Church on **Monday, January 17, 2022**. A package of five screenings to identify risk for stroke, heart disease and other chronic conditions will be offered. (See flyers on the Information Table.) These 5 vital screenings are offered for only \$139 and take 60-90 minutes to complete.

**Register** by calling toll free 1-888-653-6441, text the word "circle" to 797979, or you can go online at <https://lisa.social/HSC>.