

# NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH FEBRUARY, 2022 NEWSLETTER

**“GO AND PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS”**

**- Mark 16:15**



## *From the Minister...*

As we move towards Lent, and towards Spring, and (we hope and pray) towards an abatement of the pandemic, February seems like a cold, “not-yet” month. Yet, there is a lot going on; I strongly urge you to see **Moderator Kevin Gromley’s** article in this newsletter, with news on everything from possible reopening to the status of our projects. Please, please also take the time to join us for the **Annual Business Meeting, to be held on zoom February, 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 AM.** We need a quorum to make important decisions and to ratify our 2022 budget; it will not be long, but it will be significant.

I’ll have a Lenten Program Schedule out mid-month; in the meantime, here’s a poem from **Rev. Kate Wilkinson** that has been much in my heart in mind.

*Winter Prayer by Reverend Kate Wilkinson*

*(With thanks to Marcie Alvis-Walker of Black-Eyed Bible Study for sharing this with me.)*

*Let us huddle together this morning,  
our community a place of warmth in our lives  
as we share the flame of hope and connection.*

*Let us allow the frost of isolation and bitterness to melt away  
as we open ourselves to a sense of peace and spirit.*

*We extend our thoughts to all those who are cold this morning,  
lacking shelter or love to keep them warm.*

*Let us wrap our prayers around them and each other like scarves,  
and wish each other safe journeys through the storm.*

*May we be insulated from fear as the earth is insulated by the snow,  
And, like bulbs, may we continue to grow and open inside, despite the cold,  
Ready for the spring, to stretch and grow towards justice. Amen*

Wishing you many blessings this month and always,

Faithfully,

**Rev. Mary E. Biedron**



## Moderator's Notes...

So, winter has well and truly arrived in Michigan. I hope you are all safe and warm. As I write this, I am enjoying a vacation in sunny Mexico, but I look forward to the thrill of shoveling snow off our driveway when we return in a few days.

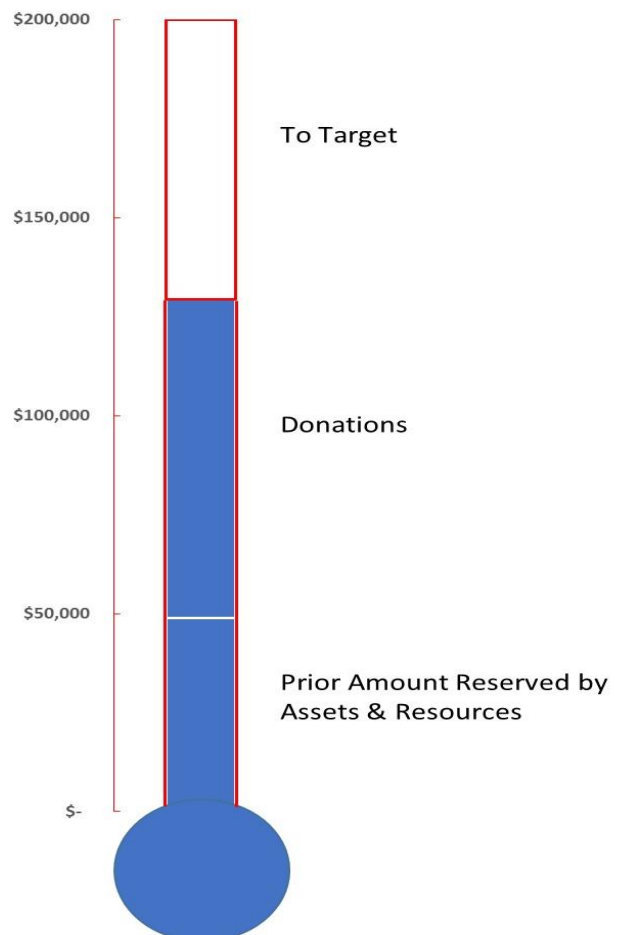
First, a big thank you to everyone who helped plan and execute our Christmas Eve and Christmas Sunday services. The services were delightful, and it was wonderful to be able to be together in person.

At the moment, sadly, we continue to worship virtually via Facebook and YouTube due to the state of the pandemic in Michigan. To see the latest local metrics, you can go to <https://covidactnow.org/us/michigan-mi/>. The current test positivity rate is still very high, at over 30%. Hospitalizations and new cases are high but declining. Executive Council will continue to monitor the situation and coordinate with **Rev. Biedron** to plan our return to in person worship as soon as it is safe to do so. Our new A/V system is working well (kudos to **Emily Eahrow**, our video technician). If you have suggestions or requests for our virtual services, Sunday worship or Wednesday inspiration, please share them with **Rev. Biedron**, our Worship Ministry Board, or me.

I mentioned in a December email to the Congregation that we would be launching a capital campaign to fund a replacement for our Church building's roof. We formally launched the campaign this month. We are off to a good start – our goal is \$200,000 and, with contributions and the amount already reserved by our Assets & Resources Ministry Board, we stand at over \$129,000. We still need \$71,000 to meet our goal, so please consider donating if you can. You can contribute on our website or by mailing a check to the Church office. You can also arrange to donate on a monthly basis versus all at once.

Looking ahead, we will have our annual program meeting in May. At that meeting we will vote on new officers and Ministry Board members. Executive Council is forming a nominating committee that will begin work after our annual business meeting. If you would be interested in serving on one of our Ministry Boards you can let any member of Executive Council know, or simply email me at [gromk@aol.com](mailto:gromk@aol.com)

**NCC Roof Replacement Campaign**



As mentioned, before that we will have our annual business meeting. This will be **February 6 at 11:30**, following worship. It will be via Zoom; we will be sending out instructions next week. At this meeting the members will vote on the budget for the upcoming year. We will need a quorum, so **please plan to attend.**



## Executive Council Notes

Executive Council met on January 24 and considered the following:

- **Assets & Resources and Treasurer:** Our Treasurer is preparing the financial materials for our February 6 business meeting. A committee of the Assets & Resources Board is working with our facilities manager, Janice Thornton, preparing an RFP for final quotes on our roof repair. We had an issue with one of our boilers that is being repaired, A & R is following this work. Our stewardship drive has reached about 82% of our target pledge donations for next year (please send in your pledge if you have not already done so).
- **Diaconate:** The Diaconate continues to stay in touch with our shut-ins via calls and cards. Communion on February 6 will be virtual during the live-streamed worship service.
- **Education:** Sunday School continues virtually, via Zoom, with in-person Sunday School and events roughly monthly. New curriculum materials will be ordered in February for use starting March 1. The Education Board plans an adult education Bible study series with our Senior Minister (and looking for a **volunteer** to help Rev. Biedron with this).
- **Fellowship:** Due to the pandemic situation the February “Superbowl” event is cancelled. The Board is tentatively planning a chili cookoff / tailgate for March 27.
- **Missions:** Missions has completed the budget for benevolences this year, to be approved by the members at our February 6 meeting. Church World Service Blanket Sunday is February 13, you can donate at <https://cwsblankets.org/donate/>
- **Worship:** The Worship Board is coordinating with Rev. Biedron on plans for Lent and Easter. We may do the imposition of ashes in the parking lot for Ash Wednesday, March 2.
- **Committees**
  - The nominating committee is being formed and will meet after our February 6 business meeting.
- **New and Other Business:**
  - Council reviewed the agenda for the February 6 Business Meeting.
  - Council approved a motion to require a negative Covid test prior to returning to the office for staff who have had or tested positive for Covid-19.
  - Our annual program meeting will be in May. In addition to voting on new officers and Board members, we plan to vote on new changes to the Church bylaws to reflect our new organization (we have been operating under a temporary suspension of our prior bylaws). *If you have suggestions for the bylaws, please share them with any Council member.*

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.



*By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.* (Proverbs 24:3-4)

**Kevin Gromley**

## ***CALL TO THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING***

The annual Business Meeting of North Congregational Church will be held on **Sunday, February 6, 2022** as ordered by the Executive Council, to transact business as specified in this Call or authorized by the Bylaws. At this meeting, the Treasurer will provide the annual financial report for the past year; the Assets & Resources Ministry Board will present the proposed annual Operating Budget for the current year to the membership for their consideration and approval; Executive Council and other Ministry Boards may present other items for the Congregation's consideration.

The meeting will be held via 'Zoom' -- everyone will be able to attend via the internet or via phone dial-in (Facebook not necessary).

We will need a quorum, so **please plan to attend this important virtual meeting on Zoom at 11:30 a.m.** (after virtual Sunday worship).

**Judy Campbell, Clerk**

## ***FEBRUARY MEETINGS***

Women's Fellowship - Wednesday, February 3, at 7 p.m.

**Annual Business Meeting (Virtual) Sunday, February 6, at 11:30 a.m.**

Education Ministry Board – Monday, February 7, at 7 p.m.

Diaconate Ministry Board – Tuesday, February 8, at 7 p.m.

Asset & Resources Ministry Board – Wednesday, February 9, at 7 p.m.

Missions Ministry Board – Wednesday, February 9, at 7 p.m.

Worship Ministry Board – Sunday, February 13, at 11:30 a.m.

Fellowship Ministry Board – Tuesday, February 15, at 7 p.m.

Executive Council – Monday, February 28, at 7 p.m.

## **NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES**

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



### **STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN FOR 2022**

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

As of January 16, 2022, we have received 55 pledges totaling \$149,180. This represents 82% 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*

### **WORSHIP MINISTRY BOARD**

#### **COMMUNION**

We will celebrate communion virtually on **Sunday, February 6, 2022** during worship.

#### **FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC**

While Covid drags on, some of you have wondered when the Chancel Choir will be singing in person. A few things will have to happen before it will be safe.

1. The percentage of cases in Michigan will have to consistently go down and stay down for a meaningful period of time.
2. The Choir hasn't sung together for almost two years. We would need several rehearsals to prepare for singing during a service.



3. It should be mandatory that everyone in the choir be fully vaccinated. We all know someone who has been vaccinated and has still contracted a breakthrough case. If a vaccinated choir member contracts a breakthrough case, it will likely be mild for them. However, it could prove fatal for an unvaccinated choir member.
4. When the Choir does return, they will be supplied with singer's masks to reduce the risk further.

This has been frustrating for all of us. But in this case, it is better to err on the side of caution.

*Laurie Meeker*

### **MISSIONS MINISTRY BOARD**

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

SBP (formerly St. Bernard Project)

#### **BLANKET SUNDAY – February 13, 2022**

The CWS Blankets program was created to give a kind, loving and tangible response to someone facing a difficult time, reminding them that they are not alone. In times of crisis - fire, flood, tornado, or hurricane, receiving a blanket fulfills a basic human need for comfort and shelter.

Through the generosity of CWS partner organizations, congregations and individual supporters, our most vulnerable neighbors around the world can feel safe and keep warm with fresh linens and clean sleeping quarters. In 2021, congregational gifts provided over 183,000 CWS Blankets and Kits to families impacted by hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and other crises (including homelessness and poverty). Your gift makes a difference! When our neighbors are in need, even \$10 for a single blanket goes a long way.

You can make a Blanket Sunday donation by clicking on the link below, which will take you directly to the North Church donation site. Thank you for your generosity!

<https://cwsblankets.org/virtual/north-congregational/>

### **FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY BOARD**

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

The Men's Breakfast CLUB has cancelled their Tuesday morning breakfast meetings until further notice.

## BOOK GROUP

Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. on Zoom



On February 16, we will discuss Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles. In June of 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the work farm where he has just served a year for involuntary manslaughter. His mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett's intention is to pick up his eight-year-old brother and head west where they can start their lives anew. But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car. Together, they have hatched an altogether different plan for Emmett's future.

## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Women's Fellowship would like to thank all of those who donated to our Knitting Tree and Socks Stocking.

We collected: 3 scarves, 58 hats (including some *beautiful* hand knitted ones), 55 gloves and mittens, and 206 pairs of socks, for a total of 322 items.

On January 14 **Sara Lange** and **Lys Kennedy** delivered many bags to Crossroads. Sara called them beforehand, and they were only accepting Winter coats and jackets. But...when Sara mentioned we had bags of **new** socks, hats and gloves/mittens they were thrilled! They would be able to pass out some at the Soup Kitchen on Sunday but also have available for the clients during the week.

So, thank you to all the generous knitters and shoppers. It's good to know that even during our time of not being together in person very much, we are still able to come together to support others in need.

## ***JANUARY, 2022 DIRECTORY UPDATES –***

Don't forget to mark these updates in your directory.

John Bell – his landline has been disconnected

Ed Broadwell died January 20, 2022

Jim Campbell, Sr.'s email: Judy\_Jim@att.net

Becky and Jon Smathers' new email: JTBLSmath1@gmail.com