

NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH MARCH, 2022 NEWSLETTER

“GO AND PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS”

- Mark 16:15



From the Minister...

BACK IN PERSON – I’m delighted to announce that with the decline in cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, Executive Council has voted to return to in-person worship (while maintaining live streamed services available on Facebook and YouTube) starting with Ash Wednesday, March 2 at 7 pm.

On Sundays, we’ll have hybrid (in person and online) services, 10:30 am. Following worship, coffee and conversation will be available in the Link. Sunday School will also be resuming broadly graded classes in person each week.

BECAUSE WE WILL BE SINGING, PLEASE BRING A MASK! Singing in church is still a super spreader risk, and we want to be able to enjoy singing the hymns and enjoying the music from soloists and the quartet. Choir will not resume until a later date.

LENT – Please see the Lenten Calendar for specific details on Sunday worship services at 10:30, and Wednesday Inspirations at 3:00 p.m. I’ll be putting up information on a short-term Lenten Bible study once we get going. Also, starting March 6, I’ll introduce a Lenten practice for you: the God Box Project, where we can write our prayers, our concerns, the things that are striking our hearts and put them in a box to offer them to God. See the March 6 sermon for more details!

Looking forward to longer days (Daylight Saving time begins MARCH 13, spring ahead!) and seeing so many of you in person as we move through Lent towards the good news of Easter!

Faithfully,

Rev. Mary E. Biedron

Moderator’s Notes...

Big news! The pandemic numbers – cases, hospitalizations, positive test rate – have all improved dramatically in Michigan. Consequently, Executive Council approved returning to in-person worship starting Ash Wednesday. We ask that attendees space themselves out in the

sanctuary and that you wear masks (singing is a big spreader of droplets and we will of course have hymns during worship). Our services will be hybrid, live on Facebook and YouTube as well as in person, so any with concerns or conflicts can watch remotely. This is a first step, as the pandemic numbers (hopefully) continue to improve we will gradually return to coffee hour, social events, and other activities in our building.

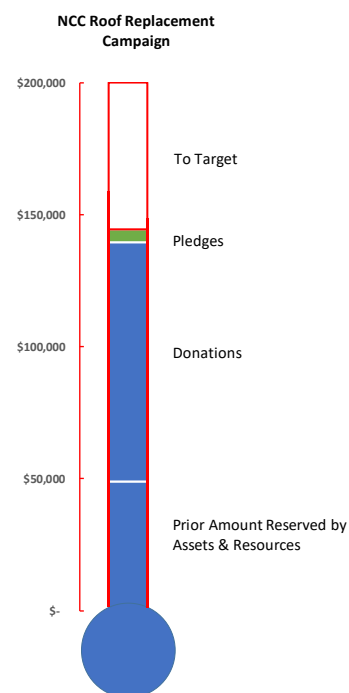


In the other big news, our new electronic sign on Twelve Mile is finally going in. The next time you attend Church you will see the new installation. The sign company is working through issues with the electronics, so stay tuned for activation of the electronic screens.

A big thank you to everyone who helped with Blanket Sunday and who contributed to this worthy cause. As you can see from what’s going on in the world, the need for blankets, clothes, and other essentials remains as great as ever.

Our new A/V system is working well (kudos to Emily Eahrow, our video technician). We have added lighting in the sanctuary to improve the quality of the video picture. 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.

Our capital campaign to raise funds for a new roof continues. We are off to a good start – our goal is \$200,000 and, with contributions, pledges, and the amount already reserved by our Assets & Resources Ministry Board, we stand at over \$144,000. We still need \$56,000 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 – contact our Treasurer, **Nancy Scott**. Our Assets & Resources Ministry Board has received quotes for the work; the new roof will cost around \$250,000. We hope to raise at least \$200,000 of that through our campaign and cover the remainder from the Church’s endowment.

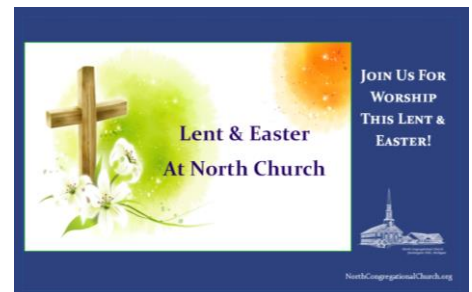


Looking ahead, we will have our annual Program Meeting on **May 22** (mark your calendars). At that time we will vote on new officers and Ministry Board members. Executive Council has formed a nominating committee that has begun work. If you would be interested in serving on one of our Ministry Boards you can let any member of Executive Council know, or simply email me at gromk@aol.com (we still have many positions to fill). In addition to the new officers and Board members, I hope that we will be able to ask the Congregation to vote on new by-laws. We have been operating under a suspension of our old by-laws; the updated version will formalize our new organization / Ministry Board structure. *If you have suggestions for the by-laws please share them with any Council member.*

Executive Council Notes

Executive Council met on February 28 and considered the following:

- **Assets & Resources and Treasurer:** No new financial update from our February 6 Business Meeting. As noted above Assets & Resources has received quotes for a new roof; the activity team working on this will review and make a recommendation to the Board. Our stewardship drive has reached about 83% 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. Plans are in place for mailing Lent / Easter cards.
- **Education:** As we return to in-person worship the Education Ministry Board is making plans to also return to in-person Sunday School. New curriculum materials have arrived for 7-12th grade. The Education Board plans a Lenten Bible study series with our Senior Minister.
- **Fellowship:** The Board is planning a chili cookoff / tailgate for March 27.
- **Missions:** Again, kudos for all the work on Church World Service Blanket Sunday. The Missions Ministry Board has been in touch with Camp Restore Detroit to plan a spring mission activity, likely involving outdoor planting and gardening.
- **Worship:** The Worship Board has coordinated with Rev. Biedron on plans for Lent and Easter. We will do the imposition of ashes in the parking lot for Ash Wednesday, March 2, as well as at the evening service that day. The Board is working with **Laurie Meeker** on music for Easter. The Board approved the purchase of special singer N95 masks. Ushers, please make note of the return to in-person worship and your team schedule.
- **Committees**
 - The nominating committee is formed and has begun work. Thus far we have nominees for 10 out of 25 open positions.
 - The communications committee mailed out 769 welcome post cards to households that have moved to our area within the last few months; the cards encourage them to join us for Lent and Easter.
- **New and Other Business:**
 - Council provided comments and suggestions for the draft Church by-laws and policy manual.
 - Council approved May 22 for our Annual Program Meeting.



We look forward to spring, to worshipping together again in the warmth of the spring sun and of God's love.

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Matthew 18:20)

Kevin Gromley



MARCH MEETINGS

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

Women’s Fellowship - Wednesday, March 9, at 12:30 p.m., Plymouth/Bradford Room

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

Education Ministry Board – Monday, March 14, at 7 p.m.

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

Worship Ministry Board – Sunday, March 20, at 11:30 a.m.

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

NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME...

begins Sunday, March 13. Please remember to set your clocks ahead one hour before retiring Saturday night.

MISSIONS MINISTRY BOARD

MISSION BENEVOLENCES *for the month of March*

Samaritan Counseling, CARES Food Cupboard, Starr Commonwealth, Southeast Michigan Association of Congregational Churches

FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY BOARD

CHILI / SOUP COOKOFF

Break out your best Chili and Soup recipes! The NCC Chili/Soup cookoff is coming back on March 27th. We will be bringing back the People's Choice awards (the Golden Chili and the Palladian Ladle) for the best chili and soup. To sign up please send a note to **Tim Sirovy** timsirovy@gmail.com or 248-877-0171, to let us know if you will be participating with the type of chili (including level of spiciness) or soup. We may also have an in-person signup sheet in the Narthex when we return to in-person worship. We will communicate additional information as we get closer to the date. We are looking forward to safely gathering with our NCC family.

Your Fellowship Board

MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

An email will be sent out shortly announcing the return of the Tuesday breakfast at Moe's on Ten.



BOOK GROUP- Wednesday, March 16th - in person in the Church Conference Room, and on Zoom at 1:00 p.m.

Our book this month is Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr. In 15th century Constantinople, a young girl scales the high walls of an abandoned monastery said to be haunted by spirits who carry their chamberlain through the broken halls on a throne made of bones.

In the 1940s, in Lakeport, Idaho, a boy follows his father to a new job, a new life and, eventually, a new war.

In 2020, a troubled teenager sits in his car outside the Lakeport public library, a gun in his pocket, a bomb in the backpack beside him.

In 2146, mission year 65 of the Argos — a generation ship headed for a new home on Beta Oph2 — a girl arranges scraps of paper on the floor inside a sealed room. She has been inside for 300-some days, her only company an artificial intelligence called Sybil who contains the sum total of all mankind's knowledge.

Doerr's dazzling imagination transports us to worlds so dramatic and immersive that we forget, for a time, our own. He has created a tapestry of times and places that reflects our vast interconnectedness—with other species, with each other, with those who lived before us, and those who will be here after we're gone. Come and join the conversation!

CROP HUNGER WALK

SUNDAY, MAY 1 is the Annual Farmington/Farmington Hills/West Bloomfield CROP Hunger Walk, starting at 1 PM at OCC Farmington Hills, in the parking lot off Farmington Road.



This annual event raises money for hunger relief, around the world and through our local partner agencies: CARES, Neighborhood House, the Salvation Army Farmington Hills, Yad Ezra Kosher Food Pantry, and Zaman.

Last year we raised over \$54,000, with \$13,000 going to the local agencies.

To take part in the Walk, go to our Walk web page and follow the links to join the team. <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2022/team/north-congregational-church-farmington-hills-mi> You can donate to the Walk on the same page, following the prompts to donate. More details about CROP Hunger Walks can be found on the main crophungerwalk.org page.

There will also be a donation link on the North Congregational Church Facebook page. Help us end hunger around the world and in our own neighborhood!

DIACONATE MINISTRY BOARD



THE DIACONATE NEEDS YOUR HELP

Easter provides a wonderful opportunity to share some North Church love, especially with those we haven't seen in a while. As we have done several times before, we are asking for volunteers to address and mail cards to all the households in the church directory.

During the parking lot chili cookoff on **Sunday, March 27**, there will be packets of ten stamped cards, addresses and a Holy Week schedule along with instructions for mailing. If you are unable to pick up cards and would like to help, email or call the Church Office. We would be happy to deliver them to your home.

Thank you for helping us all stay connected!

EDUCATION MINISTRY BOARD

MICHIGAN PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP SPRING GATHERING

We are planning a quick spring get together.

Who: Kids grades 6 - 12

What: A mini retreat; a chance to renew old friendships and make new ones

Where: YMCA Camp Storer, 6941 S Stoney Lake Rd, Jackson, Michigan

When: March 19, 2022, from 9 AM - 6 PM

How: Registration at <https://forms.gle/ikkAvibbT1zjiSk26>

With the covid numbers going down things are looking up; we want to give this a shot. Michigan PF is an important activity in the Congregational Church. Our teens need fellowship with each other. They need interaction, which we have been unable to do for almost 2 years. Please encourage the youth of your church as well as their friends, and your congregants' grandchildren to give it a try. It really is a fun, purposeful activity.

Please note that we need 20 kids to register by March 13th for us to be able to participate.

FEBRUARY DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please mark these updates in your directory.

George Uridge – Westlake Health Campus, 10735 Bogie Lake Road, Temporary Rm. #305,
Commerce, MI 48382 Cell: (248)508-0669

Kemi Bello -1955 Westlake Court, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48302