

NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH APRIL NEWSLETTER 2023



“The Greatest of These Is Love”
- Corinthians 13:13

From the Minister...

HOLY WEEK begins with **PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP** on April 2 at 10:30 AM; we'll have in-person and online worship with palms, scripture, and Hosannas! On April 5, **MAUNDY THURSDAY COMMUNION** will begin our days of awe, with a solemn worship at 7 PM in-person and online with communion for all. On **GOOD FRIDAY**, worship will be virtual only on the North Church Facebook page, as we recall the crucifixion of Jesus with solemn music and scripture.

EASTER SUNDAY worship will bring back joyful “Alleluias” in celebration of the Resurrection of Christ in worship at 10:30 AM (online and in person) including brass accompaniment and the Hallelujah Chorus followed by special Easter treats in coffee hour in Fellowship Hall. Come and invite a friend to this joyful day, and to any or all of our Holy Week times of worship.

NOMINATIONS – The North Church **Annual Program Meeting will take place on Sunday, May 21** after worship in the Sanctuary (with zoom access as well). One of the important parts of this gathering is to elect board and committee members and officers who will lead the ministries of the church. Our Nominating Committee has done good work, but there are still some openings.

As a Congregational Church, we depend on the willing engagement of our members to do the work of the church...and of the Kingdom of God. Plan to join us, and consider where you might find your place of service!

SEMACC ANNUAL MEETING – April 23rd, 3-6:30 PM at North Congregational Church. The Southeast Michigan Association of Congregational Churches is made up of the 14 sister churches in our area, and leads cooperative activities such as book studies, conferences, local mission projects, and support to churches in our Association in many other ways. We will be hosting this year's meeting at North Church, so everyone's invited to attend, and to help us make it a great North Church welcome by volunteering as ushers, check-in table folks, and preparation, serving & cleanup of a casual dinner/social time beginning at 5:30 following the business and program sections. Watch for sign-up opportunities and come for the business session to learn much more about the Congregational Way in SE Michigan!

Faithfully,

Rev. Mary E Biedron

Moderator's Notes...



Holy Week nears – a time of sadness, of mystery, of joy, and of awe in the life of Jesus and his legacy for us. I hope you all have a chance to enjoy the remainder of Lent and Easter with family and friends, and to reflect on what those events so long ago still mean to us today.

Our Search Committee has begun work on finding **Rev. Biedron's** successor. We will be utilizing the NACCC's resources and process to help us (one of the major benefits of being a member of the Association). As part of that process, we will be reaching out to all of you in a survey to get your input on the challenges facing our Church and what qualities and experience we should seek in a new minister.

The Nominating Committee has also been busy. We have nominees for most of our officer and Board positions. We still have, however, three slots to fill on our Education Ministry Board. This Board plays an important role in the life of the Church. In addition to overseeing our Sunday School, this Board works with our Senior Minister to define adult education, youth programs, and other education programs that may generate interest in the community. If you would be interested in serving on this Board please let me know (you do not have to be a teacher or educator).

Our nominating process concludes in May at our annual program meeting. At this gathering the members will vote on accepting the nominees for the various positions. We will also hear reports from our various Boards, vote on some Bylaw updates, and consider any other business that requires member approval. This meeting will be **May 21** following worship. It will be a hybrid meeting so you may join via Zoom (although we encourage in person attendance for this meeting). So mark your calendars and please plan to join us.

Executive Council Notes

Executive Council met on March 27 and considered the following:

- **Assets & Resources and Treasurer:** This Board has been working with **Janice Thornton** on various building maintenance issues. A tree service was contracted and recently removed the fallen branches and tree in our courtyard and around our property. The next project will be replacing burned out lights in the sanctuary and around the building. **Danny Hawkins** reported on financial progress year to date through February – our revenues and expenses are both running better than last year and net are essentially on budget.
- **Diaconate:** Diaconate has been busy with preparations for Holy Week and Easter. Easter cards have been mailed to our members and friends. Easter flower delivery to shut-ins has been arranged. We will be serving communion at the Maundy Thursday evening service.
- **Fellowship:** This Board has also been working on preparations for Easter; we will have a special coffee hour following Easter Sunday worship. Beyond that, a euchre party is

scheduled for April 15. The Board is also planning to invite all those interested to attend a concert at the Hawk on Twelve Mile on May 18.

- **Worship:** Plans are in place for Holy Week worship services. We will be enjoying special music on Easter Sunday. There will be evening services Maundy Thursday and Good Friday (on line only for the latter).



Other Business

- **Communications:** For Lent and Easter we are running a Facebook ad, posting seasonal messages on our Twelve Mile sign, and running a seasonal themed slide at the Civic Theater. We are also advertising in the Patch news service.
- **Staffing:** Council discussed the possibility of adding a part time marketing and social media coordinator to our Church staff. We do not have anyone dedicated to this function at the moment. Were we to bring someone of this nature on he / she could assist with the transition to a new minister next year. Council will reflect and take up the issue again at our next meeting.
- **Board Structure:** Council discussed our Board structure and whether we should consider reducing the number of Board positions or consolidating Boards. Council will also reflect and take up this issue at our next meeting.
- **Pine Hill Church:** Council approved allowing our fellow Congregational church to rent our sanctuary for funerals, subject to our schedule availability.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)

Kevin Gromley

APRIL MEETINGS

Diaconate Ministry Board – Tuesday, April 11, at 7 p.m.

Women’s Fellowship - Wednesday, April 12, at 12:30 p.m. – Plymouth Room

Worship Ministry Board – Sunday, April 16, at 11:45 a.m. – Hybrid

Asset & Resources Ministry Board – Monday, April 17, at 7 p.m.

Fellowship Ministry Board – Tuesday, April 18, at 7 p.m.

Missions Ministry Board – Wednesday, April 19, at 7 p.m.

Executive Council – Monday, April 24, at 7 p.m.

NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES

WORSHIP MINISTRY BOARD



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

All unison readings are from the New Century Hymnal

PALM SUNDAY – April 2, 10:30 a.m. – “The Triumphal Entry” Matthew 21:1-11
(Unison: Psalm 118, Page 701, 2nd version)
Lay Reader: Tim Sirovy

MAUNDY THURSDAY – April 6, 7 p.m. – Communion – “Given for You”
Matthew 26:17-30
(Unison: Psalm 116)
Lay Reader: Jim Wilking

GOOD FRIDAY – April 7, 7 p.m. – Virtual only – “Forsaken” Matthew 27:27-61

EASTER – April 9, 10:30 a.m. – “Do Not Be Afraid!” Matthew 28:1-10.
(Unison: Psalm 118, Page 700, version 1)
Lay Reader: Susie Hawkins

WEDNESDAY INSPIRATION

On-line, live – Wednesday at 3 PM

Rev. Biedron shares scripture, reflection, music, and prayer for a midweek time of worship.

April 5 – Our Days of Awe – Matthew 26 & 27 (selections)

EASTER PLANTS

On **Easter Sunday, April 9th**, our Sanctuary will be filled with beautiful flowering spring plants. All plants must be removed after the Easter service .

On **Palm Sunday, April 2nd**, Diaconate representatives will pick up and deliver the daffodil plants and gifts for our shut ins.

DIACONATE MINISTRY BOARD



PILGRIM POSTAL PALS

The Diaconate's April recipient is **Chris Lyons**. Cards will be available on **April 9** and **16** (if there are any left). They are addressed and stamped and all you need to do is pick up a card, add a personal note and drop it in the mail. We know Chris will appreciate knowing we are thinking about her!

FOX RUN DRIVERS – PLEASE HELP!

Beginning on April 2, we will provide rides to our Fox Run members. We have been able to assist them the last couple of years and they were so happy to attend church! You would need a vehicle that has room for two walkers and the ability to assist passengers and maneuver walkers in and out of your vehicle. We have several volunteers already, but the more volunteers we have the less often you would be scheduled. There is a sign-up sheet on the Circle of Care table. Your help would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, contact **Sandy Greer**.

SPRING HOUSEKEEPING

The Diaconate is cleaning out their closet. So far, we have encountered a couple of things that could use a good home. Watch for them to appear on the Circle of Care table and help yourself!

MISSIONS MINISTRY BOARD

MISSION BENEVOLENCES...for the month of April

NACCC Hurting Churches Fund, NACCC Congregational Church Development,
NACCC Missionary Society Administration, NACCC Christmas Fund,
NACCC Missions

CROSSROADS SOUP KITCHEN

Save the Dates! The Missions Ministry Board has been busy making plans to participate in the Good works at Crossroads Soup Kitchen, and we'd like you to join us when possible. I know your calendar fills up quickly, so here's a heads up on what we are thinking.

The Farmington Muslim Community Mosque reached out to us again, to see if we could partner with them for a day of cooking and serving lunch at Crossroads. We have reserved **Sunday, July 23rd** as that date.

North Congregational Church will also be making and serving lunch independently at Crossroads on Sunday, October 8th. Historically, North Church has served 2 Sundays every year at Crossroads. During Covid, we decreased the frequency to once a year. The number of clients currently coming every Sunday for a warm meal is 400-450 people. The hope by management at Crossroads is that instead of serving mostly soup and sandwiches, the sponsors will provide more of a complete meal. **Also, per the Health Department, no homemade cookies may be brought in for distribution.** All desserts must be made in an industrial kitchen. Lots of changes, but the mission remains the same. Any menu ideas, shoot me an email or grab me at church.



Additionally, I agreed to work as a soup kitchen manager one day per month at Crossroads. Since I will be downtown on a regular basis, it will be easy to get donations to Crossroads. I will be putting up a clothes rack in the Missions room. If you have seasonal clothes (spring and summer only) that you would like to donate, please bring them to church, and hang them up on the clothes rack. The Missions Board was also thinking that we might like to make hygiene kits to be taken to the soup kitchen and distributed on **April 23rd. Let's bring in hygiene items, and assemble hygiene kits during coffee hour on Sunday, April 16th.**

Lastly, the Mission Ministry Board would again like to participate in the Children's Summer lunch program this year. Those dates have yet to be chosen, so stay tuned. We had lots of fun painting rocks with the kids, after serving them delicious hot dogs for lunch last year.

Lots of opportunities for community service, and for helping some of the most underserved people in Detroit. Please feel free to reach out to any member of the Missions Ministry Board with your ideas or desires to help. We hope to have a great summer working alongside you!

Sara Lange, on behalf of the Missions Ministry Board:

Lori Rhode (chairperson), Jeff Rockwell, Matt Shand, Becky Smathers, and Linda Cooper

FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY BOARD

EASTER SUNDAY

Following the Easter service, the Fellowship Ministry Board will be providing “enhanced” treats during coffee hour on Easter, including cookies and cheesecakes.

MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

A group of North Church Men meet every other Tuesday at 9 a.m. for breakfast at Moe's on Ten. They will be meeting on **Tuesday, April 4 and 18**. If you would like to join them, please contact **Tom Modick** at moto126@aol.com.

BOOK GROUP – Wednesday, April 12 at 1 p.m. – In person and on Zoom



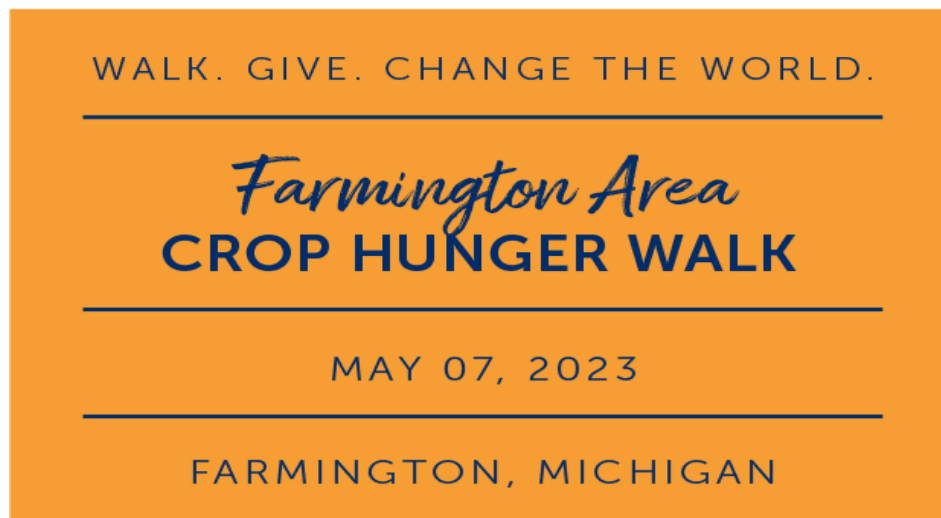
This month we're taking up Elizabeth Strout's novel Lucy by the Sea – about a writer and her ex-husband's quarantine exile to Maine, and how the isolation and the anxiety of the pandemic led to withdrawal as well as to self-discovery.

Our May book is The Mystery of Mrs. Christie by Marie Benedict, a history-based novel that imagines the story behind the 11-day disappearance of the great British mystery writer Agatha Christie.

All are welcome! Come and join the conversation! For zoom information, contact **Rev. Mimi Biedron** at ncc.seniorminister@gmail.com

EUCHRE NIGHT IS BACK!

On **Saturday, April 15th**, the Hawkins's will host a Euchre night at their home. There is a signup sheet in the Narthex, or you can give **Danny** or **Susie Hawkins** a call to let them know that you will be attending, or if you have any questions. Thanks!



<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2023/team/north-congregational-church-farmington-hills-mi>

We're fundraising online at the North Church team page above, and walking through downtown Farmington starting at 1:30 pm at First United Methodist Church on May 7th! We walk in solidarity with all people who suffer from hunger and food insecurity. All are welcome!

Funds raised support the International and national work of Church World Service – as well as our five local hunger-relief partner agencies which share 25% of the total raised: CARES of Farmington Hills, Neighborhood House, Salvation Army Farmington, Yad Ezra Kosher Food Pantry, and Zaman International.

To learn more about our walk, to start or join a team, or to donate, contact **Rev. Mary Biedron**, Walk Coordinator, at 248.910.6755 or see crophungerwalk.org/farmingtonmi.