

# NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH MARCH NEWSLETTER 2023



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

## *From the Minister...*

Dear Friend in Christ,

**YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU!**

We are starting our nomination process for roles on our Ministry Boards, as delegates to regional, state, and national conferences, and some of the officers of the church.

As a Congregational Church, North Church depends on the work of members to carry out decisions and ministries of the congregation. Terms are typically three years, and the amount of work is a monthly meeting (in person or on zoom) as well as planning or carrying out events and activities of the Ministry Boards (which may be staffed by non-Board members, or friends of the church as well as those serving on the particular board). As we enter a time of transition and work to identify new ministries and opportunities to serve our community and our world, we need willing volunteers to serve in leadership.

If you are interested in knowing more about the opportunities and needs, please see Moderator **Kevin Gromley's** article in this newsletter. Then, prayerfully consider how you might share your time and talents, as you promised on becoming a church member, for the sake of North Church's ministry of loving and serving God and our neighbors.

If you are already serving, thank you! If you are cycling off, we are grateful for your work and encourage you to consider joining a different board or serving in a different way.

I give thanks for each and every one of you, and the work you do on behalf of the church and the world.

Faithfully,

*Rev. Mary E. Biedron*

## *Moderator's Notes...*



It is a time of change and renewal for North Church. As mentioned in my last note, **Rev. Biedron** will be retiring at the end of this calendar year. And, as always, in May we will meet as a Congregation to elect new officers and Ministry Board members.

We have formed a Search Committee to find Mimi's successor. I've asked the current Executive Council members to serve on the Committee; we still have room for three or so additional members. This Committee will consider the Church's needs and future direction, update the position description for senior minister, launch a search (utilizing NACCC resources), review and interview candidates, and make a recommendation to Council and the Congregation. If you would be interested in serving on this Committee please let me know.

Our Nominating Committee has also started work. The Nominating Committee will be working to find candidates for the open positions. For our Ministry Boards, the open slots are:

- Assets & Resources 2
- Diaconate 2
- Education 3
- Fellowship 2
- Missions 2
- Worship 2

These Boards are central to the life of the Church, directing and conducting Church activities in each of their respective areas. Membership on a Board provides direct input and influence on what our Church does and is. The time commitment is ten meeting per year (which may be via Zoom); it is important to have active members and a quorum at each of these meetings.

In addition to the Board positions the Nominating Committee will be seeking a new moderator. This is my fourth year, it has been an honor to serve, but it is time for a new face in this role.

If a member of the Nominating Committee approaches you about one of these positions, please give it careful consideration (and respond 'yes' if you can). Meanwhile, if you are interested in serving on any of these Boards, please let me know.

## **Executive Council Notes**

Executive Council met on February 27 and considered the following:

**Assets & Resources and Treasurer:** This Board has been working with **Janice Thornton** on various building maintenance issues. They approved monies to reopen our water fountains, providing paper cups with them.



- **Diaconate:** Lenten devotional books have been popular, a second order was placed and received. There are a few still available in the narthex, please limit to one per family. The Diaconate has also ordered more of the Care Notes pamphlets, you can find them in the link. Finally, we will be assembling Easter card packets for North Church members and friends on March 12 after worship.
- **Missions:** The next North Church Crossroads mission will be in the spring, possibly in April. The Missions Board is also planning to serve at Crossroads in the summer at one of their events for children.
- **Worship:** The Board, after reviewing current advisories, has approved masks optional for our Choir. Easter is April 9, preparations have been made; we will also have a Maundy Thursday service with communion. Rev. Biedron has started a Lenten lecture series – these are pre-recorded, you can find the first edition on the Church Facebook page.
- **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.
- **SEMACC:** Council approved North Church hosting the SE Michigan Conference to be held on Sunday, April 23, 2023.

*Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. (1 Peter 4:10-11)*

**Kevin Gromley**

### **DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME...**

***begins Sunday, March 12<sup>th</sup>. You are reminded to turn your clocks forward one hour before retiring Saturday night.***

## ***CROP WALK – May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023***

Each year, committed individuals around the country raise funds for world and local hunger relief by walking and soliciting pledges (primarily online).



The Farmington/Farmington/West Bloomfield Walk raised over \$54,000 last year, and we hope to meet or beat that total this year! The North Church Team has already formed and fundraising is starting!

### **YOU CAN HELP BY...**

#### **WALKING**

Sign up to be on the North Church team and then send emails and social media posts to friends and neighbors to contribute to this worthy cause!

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

#### **DONATING**

We used to collect per-mile pledges in coffee hour, but the internet world now allows us to receive online (tax deductible) donations! Go to our team page above, to make a secure online donation to the whole team or to one of the walkers.

#### **SHARING**

We'll have info about our Walk going up on the church website, the church Facebook page, and other outlets; after you consider your own contribution spread the word!

Funds raised go for the work of Church World Service; Our local agency partners share 25% of the total raised by the Walk. They are: CARES of Farmington Hills, Neighborhood House, the Salvation Army Farmington branch, Yad Ezra Kosher Food Pantry, and Zaman International.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF CHURCH WORLD SERVICE and CROP WALKS AT <https://cwsglobal.org/>

### ***MARCH MEETINGS***

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

Education Ministry Board – Sunday, March 12, at 11:30 a.m.

Diaconate Ministry Board – Tuesday, March 14, at 7 p.m.

Missions Ministry Board – Wednesday, March 15, at 7 p.m.

Worship Ministry Board – Sunday, March 19, at 11:30 a.m. – Hybrid

Asset & Resources Ministry Board – Monday, March 20, at 7 p.m.

Executive Council – Monday, March 27, at 7 p.m.

## **NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES**

### **WORSHIP MINISTRY BOARD**

## **LENTEN PLANNING 2023 - PARABLES OF JESUS**

### **WORSHIP SERVICES**

**All unison readings are from the New Century Hymnal**

**LENT 2 – March 5, 10:30 a.m.** – “Parable: Laborers in the Vineyard” Matthew 20:1-16  
(Unison: Psalm 16)  
Lay Reader: Kevin Gromley

**LENT 3 – March 12, 10:30 a.m.** – “Parable: The Wedding Banquet” Matthew 22:1-14  
(Unison: Psalm 45)  
Lay Reader: Nancy Scott

**LENT 4 – March 19, 10:30 a.m.** – “Parable: The Bridesmaids” Matthew 25:1-13  
(Unison: Psalm 43)  
Lay Reader: Jeff Rockwell

**LENT 5 – March 26, 10:30 a.m.** – “Parable: The Last Judgment” Matthew 25:31-46  
(Unison: Psalm. 98)  
Lay Reader: Steve Fecht

### **HOLY WEEK**

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

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

**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

## **TUESDAY LENTEN LECTURES – online, pre-recorded – Tuesdays at 1 PM**

“Reading Matthew’s Gospel” – Rev. Biedron offers background on the gospel, some of its contexts, and some of its implications. About 20 minutes each.

#1 – February 28 – “Matthew in context”

#2 – March 7 – “Parables – what are they good for?”

#3 – March 14 – “Controversial Jesus”

#4 – March 21 – “The Upside-down Kingdom of God”

#5 – March 28 – “Failure? Or Fulfillment?”



## **WEDNESDAY INSPIRATIONS – online, live – Wednesdays at 3 PM**

Rev. Biedron shares scripture, reflection, music, and prayer for a midweek time of worship. About 20 minutes each.

March 1 – Callings – Matthew 4:18-22

March 8 – Challenges – Matthew 8:23-27

March 15 – Commandments – Matthew 10:5-14, 40-42

March 22 – Confusions – Matthew 13:1-10

March 29 – Community – Matthew 19:13-15

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

## **WORLD SABBATH DAY - Sunday, March 19, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.**

The Annual World Sabbath of Religious Reconciliation returns to in-person for 2023! Save the date for **Sunday, March 19, 2023**, at **Temple Israel**, 5725 Walnut Lake Road in West Bloomfield. Formal registration information to come.

The mission of the World Sabbath is to teach our diverse population in Metro Detroit that the work of building a community of justice, equality, respect, and peace is a calling that we all share – all of us, no matter what our faith tradition might be. But most important is the fact we are impacting our children, our teens, and our young adults. Plan to join us for an interfaith experience of music, dance, and prayer.



**Raman Singh**, Executive Director of The InterFaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit, is being honored with the 2023 World Sabbath Peacemaker Award.

## EASTER PLANTS



On **Easter Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**, our Sanctuary will be filled with beautiful flowering spring plants. Order forms may be found on the Sign-up table in the Narthex, and as an attachment to your newsletter when it is sent out. Please complete the form and return it with your payment. **The deadline for placing orders is Monday, March 27, 2023.**

Diaconate representatives will pick up the daffodil plants and gifts for our shut ins on Palm Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. All other plants must be removed after the Easter service on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **DIACONATE MINISTRY BOARD**

**The Diaconate needs your help!**

## EASTER CARDS

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 Easter cards to all the households in the church directory.

On March 19, 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 get you a packet.

## FLOWER AND GIFT BAG DELIVERY

We need assistance from approximately 7 people to deliver flowers and a small gift to our shut-ins. Watch for a sign-up sheet on the Circle of Care table or call the office to volunteer. Flowers and gift bags will be available for pick-up and delivery on April 2 (Palm Sunday).

## PILGRIM POSTAL PALS

The Diaconate's March recipient is **Cedric Fricke**. Cards will be available on March 12 and 19 (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. Cedric is celebrating his 95th birthday and we can help make this incredible occasion even better!

## **EDUCATION MINISTRY BOARD**

MI PF MARCH 2023



**RETREAT HAS BEEN  
CANCELLED**

We are looking forward to meeting again!

Who: Youth from across the state, grades 6 - 12

What: We're getting together to get to know each other and have fun

~~When: March 18<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 5pm~~

~~Where: Arbor Grove Congregational Church, 2621 McCain Rd, Jackson, MI~~

## **MISSIONS MINISTRY BOARD**

MISSION BENEVOLENCES...for the month of March

Center of Congregational Leadership, One Great Hour of Sharing,  
Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies

## **KROGER COMMUNITY REWARD PROGRAM**

Dear Members and Friends of North Congregational Church,

The Kroger Company Family of Stores is committed to bringing hope and help to the local neighborhoods we call home. Our stores are on a mission to not just be a part of, but to help create a stronger community. We recognize that every community has unique causes that need support. We thank you for being such an important organization in our community.

If you would like to participate, helpful instructions may be found on the link provided: <https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>. Community Rewards is easy to use, the more your shop with us, the more money your organization - North Congregational Church - will earn!

We are committed to carefully protecting our customer's personal information. In order to meet their expectation of privacy, we have adopted a simple policy to never share a customer's personal information. Our privacy policy applies to Community Rewards participation as well.

Thank you for being such an important organization in our community,  
Kroger Community Rewards Staff



## **FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY BOARD**



### **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, March 7 and 21**. If you would like to join them, please contact **Tom Modick** at [moto126@aol.com](mailto:moto126@aol.com).

### **CONCERTS AT THE HAWK**

Join some NCC members for an upcoming concert at **The Hawk** - Farmington Hills' community center located at the former Harrison High School. Please let **Tim Sirovy** know if you would like to join the dinner crowd that meets ahead of the concert. Tickets are available from The Hawk; the link is [bit.ly/hawktickets](https://bit.ly/hawktickets). Ticket prices range from \$15-\$25. We would like to make the concert a fun fellowship group outing for whoever can attend.

**March 11th - Steve Taylor**, singer-songwriter is a local favorite with acoustic originals and familiar covers. Come sing along.

### **BOOK GROUP – Wednesday, March 15 at 1 p.m. – In person and on Zoom**

The North Church Book Group has been meeting for over 20 years! Each month (except January and July) we gather in a combined in person and zoom presence to discuss a wide variety of books (not strictly religious ones) and the ways that they speak of matters of faith or human nature. We typically meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. and it's always an interesting and fruitful conversation!

To receive a zoom link, or a monthly reminder, please email **Rev. Biedron** at [ncc.seniorminister@gmail.com](mailto:ncc.seniorminister@gmail.com)

Here are books for the next several months, so that you can plan to order or reserve your copy from your favorite book source.

MARCH – The Thursday Murder Club – a whodunit British mystery novel, by Richard Osman

APRIL – Lucy by the Sea - a novel about relationships during the lockdown, by Elizabeth Strout

MAY – The Mystery of Mrs. Christie - a novel of historical fiction, by Marie Benedict

JUNE – The Sentence - a novel about a bookstore and a mysterious presence, by Louise Erdrich

AUGUST – Demon Copperhead - a novel about an irrepressible boy whom nobody wants, by Barbara Kingsolver

SEPTEMBER – Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow - a novel about a creative partnership in the world of video game design, by Gabrielle Zevin