

# NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH NOVEMBER, 2023 NEWSLETTER

“God Is With You Wherever You Go”

- Joshua 1:9



## *From the Minister...*

November already! This year seems to have flown by, and for me (and many of you) the upcoming holiday season will be sentimental. We're planning a busy schedule of events and activities for the next two months, and it's my hope I'll see many of you at them as my time for retirement draws near. I also hope you'll take some time to look over the articles and activities in this newsletter, and think seriously about your estimate of giving for the coming year. These estimates which will be presented and dedicated on November 5, help our leadership to effectively plan worship and fellowship activities, as well as keeping the church building maintained and offering aid to local, national, and international work that feeds, heals, and builds for people.

In this season of Thanksgiving, I am thankful for the many volunteers who take part in the ministries of North Church in ways from large to small. I'm grateful for the nurturing of this community, and glad that we can be a faith family for so many. In a time when social media is under much criticism, I'm also thankful that we can offer live-streamed and recorded worship services, as well as regular posts of encouragement in faith. Most of all, I'm grateful for all this church has been for me and my family, and as a new chapter begins in the life of this congregation, I look forward to seeing the new things that God will be doing at North Church.

In love, thanks, and gratitude,

*Rev. Mary E. Biedron*

## *Moderator's Notes...*

The first snow of the season fell upon us last night. For some a good thing, others may not quite be ready for the upcoming weather changes. But the changes in the weather also signal a time for the joyful holidays that are approaching.

We were glad to have some of the Pine Hill congregants join us for our Trunk or Treat event on October 29<sup>th</sup>. This event was promoted in the community and the community showed up. We estimated that over 100 local community members came through our indoor T&T setup! We look forward to having the Pine Hill folks join us for our Chili Cookoff and the Christmas Craft workshop.



November brings us Thanksgiving, one of my favorite holidays – time to spend with friends and family and give thanks for the blessings we have received. Here at North Church we celebrate our Pilgrim Heritage on **Heritage Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup> with a Chili Cookoff**. Look for the sign up sheets and prepare your best Chili, Soup or Dessert.

The Advent/Christmas time will be here before you know it and NCC will be prepared with a full schedule of events including the Christmas Craft workshop, Adopt a Family, “Blue Christmas” service and much more.

Invitations have been sent out for Rev Biedron’s retirement celebration. Please let any of the party committee members know if you have any questions or need additional information. We are looking forward to celebrating Mimi!

The Search Committee continues to review candidates and has shifted focus on hiring an interim minister after Mimi retires.

The Executive Council met on October 23rd and here are a few highlights:

Assets & Resources and Treasurer: A meeting with Comerica to review the NCC investment portfolio was held. A&R is also preparing the 2024 budgets approval of Executive Council and the congregation. Approval was also given for new speaker monitors in the sanctuary.

Diaconate: The Diaconate Board has continued to be busy with visits and contacts with our Shut-ins. They are also planning the traveling Advent Wreath.

Fellowship: Trunk or Treat was a huge success – we had over 100 local community members go through our T&T setup. Fellowship committee is also working hard on the Heritage Sunday Chili cookoff, Christmas Craft workshop, Mimi’s retirement celebration and Christmas Eve cookies. They are also looking to bring Pickleball to NCC in Fellowship Hall.

Missions: The Missions Board organized volunteers to work at Crossroads on October 8th. Warm clothing was also distributed from your generous donations.

Worship and Education: Approved the purchase of new music for the choir.

Everyone, have a great November and enjoy a Happy Thanksgiving with family and friends.

*“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”  
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)*

**Tim Sirovy**, Moderator



## ***NOVEMBER MEETINGS***

Women's Fellowship - Tuesday, November 7, at 12:30 p.m. – Plymouth Room  
Missions Ministry Board – Sunday, November 12, 11:30 a.m.  
Diaconate Ministry Board – Monday, November 13, at 6:30 p.m. (Hybrid)  
Assets & Resources Ministry Board - Wednesday, November 15, at 6:30 p.m.  
Worship / Education Ministry Boards – Monday, November 20, at 6:30 p.m. (Zoom)  
Fellowship Ministry Board – Tuesday, November 21, at 7 p.m. (Zoom)  
Executive Council – Monday, November 27, at 6:30 p.m.

## **NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES**

***DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME*...ends **Sunday, November 5th.** Please remember to set your clocks back one hour before retiring Saturday night.**

## **WORSHIP MINISTRY BOARD**

### **GUEST SPEAKER NOVEMBER 12**

While Rev. Biedron is away, we will welcome the **Rev. Carrie Orlando** to share the Sunday message. Recently retired from FCC Royal Oak, Rev. Orlando has been working on activities with the NACC including a clergy silent retreat. We welcome her with joy to our pulpit!

## **DIACONATE MINISTRY BOARD**

### **FROM THE DIACONATE -**

**We need your help!** The Diaconate is planning on sending Christmas cards to all North Church households again this year. If you have any leftover Christmas cards, we can use them. Please drop them in the basket on the Circle of Care table any Sunday during November or early December.

### **ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS**

The **First Sunday of Advent is December 3rd.** The booklets will be mailed to our shut ins in time for the beginning of Advent. There will be a limited number of Advent Devotional Booklets available on the table outside the Sanctuary. Please feel free to take one.

## **POINSETTIA AND GIFT BAG DELIVERY**



We are in need of assistance from approximately 6 people to **deliver poinsettias** and a small gift to our shut-ins. This is a wonderful opportunity to do something special as a family during the holidays. Watch for a sign-up sheet on the Information/Circle of Care table or call the office to volunteer. The Diaconate will let you know the dates and details of your delivery.

## **ASSETS & RESOURCES MINISTRY BOARD**

### **Stewardship 2024**

**“God Is With You Wherever You Go”**

We feel the presence of God at our worship services and at our church meetings and fellowship activities, and we want to carry that presence with us out into the world.

We invite you to reflect on the Stewardship messages from worship and your own connection to the North Congregational community when planning your estimate of giving for the coming year. Pledges play an important role in the preparation of the church budget by providing a clear sense of our resources.

2024 Estimate of Giving Cards were mailed October 26<sup>th</sup>. You may return your pledge card during worship service on **Dedication Sunday, November 5**. We hope you can join us in person as we once again dedicate ourselves to the work of our church. The Stewardship Team will provide some special treats for Coffee Hour.

You may also mail in your pledge card, submit a pledge through the church website, or email the Treasurer at **NCC.ChurchTreasurer@gmail.com**. All giving estimates and actual contributions from our members and friends are kept confidential.

As we think about what North Congregational means to us and to the world, consider our mission and vision statements. “We are gathered for the worship of God and Service to Humanity. We are a Christian community growing in faith and spirit, welcoming and serving our neighbors with joy and love, worshipping together with mutual respect, and making a difference in our lives and our world.”

Faithfully,

The Stewardship Team

**Rev. Dr. Mary E. Biedron**, Senior Minister  
**Dan Beardslee, Danny Hawkins, Mark Payne, Bob Plummer, Nancy Scott**

# North Congregational Church

## Year-to-Date Financial Summary

### as of September 30, 2023



	<u>Year-to-Date Total</u>	<u>Year-to-Date Budget<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>Percent Difference vs. Budget</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
<b><u>Income</u></b>				
Pledges	153,444	139,425	10.1%	185,900
Other Income <sup>2</sup>	237,404	18,004	1218.6%	24,005
<b>Operating Income</b>	<b>390,847</b>	<b>157,429</b>	<b>148.3%</b>	<b>209,905</b>
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>				
Payroll & Benefits	163,589	165,534	-1.2%	220,712
Assets & Resources Min. Board (other)	34,970	37,814	-7.5%	50,419
Utilities and Insurance	40,684	33,150	22.7%	44,200
Building Maintenance	22,059	26,025	-15.2%	34,700
Grounds Maintenance	39,267	18,600	111.1%	24,800
Office Expenses	6,672	6,225	7.2%	8,300
Diaconate Ministry Board	485	955	-49.2%	1,273
<sup>3</sup> Education Ministry Board	(460)	1,838	-125.0%	2,450
Promotions	2,610	5,303	-50.8%	7,070
Fellowship Ministry Board	1,938	1,950	-0.6%	2,600
<sup>3</sup> Missions Ministry Board	24,735	27,000	-8.4%	36,000
Worship Ministry Board (other)	8,903	7,454	19.5%	9,938
<sup>3</sup> Music	16,965	21,513	-21.1%	28,684
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>362,418</b>	<b>353,360</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>471,146</b>

#### Notes

1. Year to date Budget is a pro-rated portion of the annual budget, it is not seasonally adjusted.
2. Includes an Estate gift of \$135,742.47, and IRS Employee Retention Credits of \$74,994.01
3. Actual and Budget are both net of Restricted funds usage.

## MISSIONS MINISTRY BOARD



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

Casa Colibri – Guatemala, Capuchin Community Center, Focus Hope, Multi-Cultural Multi-Racial Community Council of Farmington/Farmington Hills

### CROSSROADS

I would like to thank everyone who participated in preparing for, or serving at Crossroads on October 8, 2023. It was a great day for the clients as well as the volunteers. We had our expert sandwich makers prepare 900 ham/cheese/mustard sandwiches, and also turkey/cheese/mayo sandwiches. The soup of the day was chicken barley vegetable. I had a client approach me and say how grateful he was for the hot soup at lunch, because he was chilled from being outside all morning. We also included a banana, GFS cookies and a bag of chips with each lunch. By the end of the day, we had handed out 485 lunches. We also brought MANY bags of warm clothing and hygiene items which were donated by you. **Kemi Bello, Veronica Noye and Jeff Rockwell** braved the cold outside, and handed out almost all of the items brought to Crossroads from North Church.



If you find coats, hats, mittens or shoes that you no longer will need, please continue to bring them into church and place them in the supply room next to the library. I will be going back to Crossroads as a manager in December and January, and would love to take your gently used items to those in need.

North Church is scheduled again to support Crossroads Soup Kitchen on **Sunday, October 20, 2024** (next October). Mark your calendars now :) I also hope that we will be able to support another summer lunch program for the kids at Crossroads, and also work as partners with the Muslim Community Mosque sometime in 2024. We are currently planning those dates.



Check out some of our pictures from North's day of service at Crossroads. There's always room for you!

### The 2023-2024 Missions Board

Sara Lange, Becky Smathers, Jeff Rockwell, Linda Cooper, Matthew Shand, and Steve Plummer

## ***WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP***



### **KNITTING TREE AND SOCK PROJECT**

Women's Fellowship is sponsoring The Knitting Tree and The Sock Project this Advent season. Beginning **Sunday, December 3rd**, the Knitting Tree will be in the Link area ready to receive hats, gloves, mittens and scarves.

The large Sock will be displayed on the railing leading up to the balcony. The Sock will welcome your gift of socks for school age children. (K through 12th grade)

The tree and the sock will be available throughout the Advent Season. All gifts will be delivered to Crossroads in January. Thank you for your generous donations. The children also say "Thank you".

### **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES**

Women's Fellowship is once again organizing North Church's **Adopt-A-Family Project**, and we need your participation. This has been a well-loved philanthropy supported by our congregation for many years, and this year the need to help Farmington families is as great as ever.

We will be obtaining the names of two families this Christmas from Neighborhood House. The Women's Fellowship Committee will be making a rolling bulletin board display containing tags and sign-up sheets noting each recipient. The display board will be in the link November 12th, 19th, and if needed, November 26th. Your job is to do the Christmas shopping by signing up to purchase a gift, and taking the corresponding tag. The unwrapped gift should be returned to church with its tag attached on November 26, December 3rd or 10th.

This can be a great activity to do as a family, or on your own. The Women's Fellowship group will be wrapping and delivering the gifts before Christmas. If you can't go shopping, but would still like to participate, a manila envelope will be put on the bulletin board where cash or check donations may be placed.

Please consider being a part of the North Church Adopt-A-Family Project. As we practice our theme this year "God is with you wherever you go", let us spread that love and joy we receive with our neighbors and those in need.

Thank you,

The Women's Fellowship Committee

## CHRISTMAS CONFECTIONS



The Women's Fellowship is pleased to announce the return of Christmas Confections! This popular event will feature the musical stylings of **Laurie Meeker** and **Jim Wilking** accompanied by **David Bauer** on the piano in the Sanctuary. After the entertainment, dessert will be served in Fellowship Hall. Mark your calendars!

**Friday, December 8, 2023**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
North Congregational Church

Everyone is invited and there is no charge, but we suggest that each guest bring a pair or package of socks for school-aged children (K – 12). All donations will go to Crossroads Soup Kitchen in Detroit.

A sign-up sheet will be in the Narthex beginning Sunday, November 12 to help us with our planning. You can also contact the church office (248-848-1750) to RSVP. Take several of the flyers and invite your family, friends, and neighbors.

## **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, November 14** and **28**. If you would like to join them, please contact **Tom Modick** at [moto126@aol.com](mailto:moto126@aol.com).

### **HERITAGE SUNDAY**

**November 19th is Heritage Sunday.** In addition to celebrating our Congregational heritage and the history of North Church we will have our chili cook-off, so get those crock pots ready! If you would like to bring chili, soup or dessert please sign up in the Narthex. The Golden Chili and the Palladian Ladle are waiting for the new winners to claim them! We also need judges, so bring your appetites and join us for this fun event.

### **BOOK GROUP**

The Book Group will gather in person and on zoom on **Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 p.m.** to discuss Tom Lake by Ann Patchett.

From an Amazon review: Ann Patchett is a gifted writer and once again her unique ability to create characters within an engaging plot is well developed. The story of early romance, missed opportunities, and chosen paths revolves around Tom Lake, a community summer theatre production in Michigan. Patchett weaves a story told from the main character





who aspires to be an actress but is conflicted with the reality of the demands within the acting profession. A side story includes the quaint setting of a cherry fruit farm and Patchett flawlessly describes the scenery of the farm and daily life.

The novel is connected to the famous play, “Our Town” by Thornton Wilder. Rereading (or reading) “Our Town” in advance will help as we discuss this story by one of our book group’s favorite authors.

## **FACEBOOK POSTINGS**

At the beginning of November, we are switching our Facebook postings over to Olivia, she is the person that manages our church website.

If an event is to be posted on Facebook, the information needs to be sent to me, and I will check it and pass it along to Olivia.

**I am asking that the chairs of the boards, and others, email me the following information ahead of the event that is to be posted on Facebook.**

- 1. Name of the event**
- 2. Start date of the event**
- 3. End date**
- 4. Brief description of event**
- 5. Any pictures you may want to post**
- 6. Any further info**

This is a work in progress, I am relying on the people handling the church events to email me the Facebook information to generate the post.

Please contact me with any questions or suggestions you may have, please bear with us as we navigate through this transition time!

*Janice Thornton*