

NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

DECEMBER, 2023 NEWSLETTER

“God Is With You Wherever You Go”

- Joshua 1:9



North Congregational Church
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ADVENT / CHRISTMAS at NORTH CHURCH

Worship and special events to mark this holy season!



Sunday, Dec. 3 – 10:30 AM – **FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT** - Worship in person and online; Communion, open to all.

Virtual only on the North Congregational Church Facebook page.

BLUE CHRISTMAS – “The Weary World Rejoices” As Christmas approaches and the strains of “Joy to the World” are everywhere, many of us are weary and sad in so many ways: from the loss of loved ones, to the state of the world, from personal tragedies to global catastrophe. This time of prayer, reflection, and music will create space to acknowledge those feelings and find comfort in God’s love.

Friday, Dec. 8 – 7:00 PM - **CHRISTMAS CONFECTIONS** - **The Women’s Fellowship** is pleased to announce the return of this popular event featuring the musical stylings of **Laurie Meeker and Jim Wilking** accompanied by **David Bauer** on the piano. After the entertainment in the Sanctuary, dessert will be served in Fellowship Hall. Mark your calendars for Friday, December 8, at 7:00pm. 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 is in the Narthex 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. Don’t wait! The deadline for signing up is Sunday, December 3.

Sunday, Dec. 10 – 10:30 AM – **SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT**, worship in person and online. During the service, we’ll offer the “DIY CHRISTMAS PAGEANT,” a special do it yourself event put on by attendees of all ages to recall and re-envision the Christmas story! Pick up a costume and a role (no speaking parts) in the Link and join in the fun!

Sunday, Dec. 10 - 11:30 AM – **CHRISTMAS CRAFT WORKSHOP** — Join us in celebrating the joy of the season at the Christmas Craft Workshop. A Light lunch will be served in Fellowship Hall following the church service. After lunch enjoy creating Christmas Crafts with your friends and family. There will be a variety of crafts for kids and adults. Plus a photo opportunity with the Jolly Old Elf himself!

If you would like to bring an appetizer or dessert to compliment the lunch, please drop them off in Fellowship Hall on December 10. Don’t forget to sign up in the Narthex!

Wednesday, Dec. 13 – 1 PM - **BOOK GROUP** – We’ll talk about “Christmas Cozy Mysteries” with emphasis on “Rest You Merry” by Charlotte MacLeod (available on Kindle) and enjoy some refreshments. Location - Rev. Biedron’s house.

Sunday, Dec. 17 – 10:30 AM – **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**, worship in person and online; featuring a service of Lessons and Carols from the Chancel Choir. A beautiful trip through the Christmas story in scripture readings, carols, anthems and songs.

Sunday, Dec. 17 – 11:30 AM - RETIREMENT PARTY– we will celebrate **Mimi Biedron** (and her family) on her retirement after 25 years as our Senior and Associate Minister at North Church. We will have a delicious luncheon immediately following worship service that day, served at a cost of \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 4-12 and children 3 and under eat free. A reflective program of memories, music, and gifts along with laughter and perhaps a few tears will round out the festivities. Don't forget to mail or drop off your RSVP so that we know you're coming.

Sunday, December 24 – 10:30 AM - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, with Christmas worship in person and online.

7:00 PM – CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE, with carols, scripture, and candle lighting in a beautiful joint evening service with North Church and Pine Hill Congregational Church. In person at North Church, live streamed on the North Congregational Church Facebook page.

WISHING YOU ALL THE BLESSINGS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS!

Rev. Mary E. Biedron



Moderator's Notes...

The Christmas decorations are going up all around us – Tis the Season! As the Advent and Christmas seasons come upon us, we can all participate in one or more of the many events coming up. A partial list is included in the Fellowship section below.

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!

As everyone is aware at this time we have hired **Rev. Christopher Richards** as our Interim minister. We are looking forward to working with him in 2024. He will be working with Mimi during December to smooth the transition along with attending services.

Pine Hill Church will be joining us for the Christmas Eve service and music will be shared by both organists.

The Executive Council met on November 27th and here are a few highlights:

Assets & Resources and Treasurer: The board has approved the 2024 Budget that will be voted on by the congregation on January 28th, 2024. Save the date for the Annual Business Meeting. The budget includes additional funds to repair portions of the parking lot, painting interior spaces and replacement of some older appliances in Fellowship Hall.

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: The Chili cookoff was a huge success and we welcomed several members from Pine Hill to participate in the contests. Upcoming events include The Christmas Craft workshop on December 10th; DIY Christmas Pageant also on December 10th; Mimi's Retirement Celebration on December 17th and Christmas Eve services – please look to provide 3 dozen cookies for after the service.

Missions: The Missions Board continues to provide needed items and support to our local and national beneficiaries. They also made fleece blankets during coffee hour one Sunday in November.

Worship and Education: New pulpit speakers are being installed this week.

Isaiah 9:6 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Wishing everyone a happy Advent season, a Merry Christmas, and a safe and healthy New Year!

Tim Sirovy, Moderator

MIMI'S RETIREMENT PARTY

Sunday, December 17th we will celebrate **Mimi Biedron** (and her family) on her retirement after 25 years as our Senior and Associate Minister at North Church. We will have a delicious luncheon immediately following worship service that day, served at a cost of \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 4-12 and children 3 and under eat free. A reflective program of memories, music, and gifts along with laughter and perhaps a few tears will round out the festivities.

Invitations have been sent out. Please be sure to return your Retirement Celebration RSVP directly to the church. Do not return it in the envelope that was included in the Stewardship campaign mailing. We will also have a table set up after church in Fellowship Hall to RSVP and pay for your meal on 2 upcoming Sundays -- December 3rd & December 10th.

The Retirement Planning Committee members are **Karen & Tim Sirovy, Susie & Danny Hawkins, Margaret & Bob Plummer, Jennifer Murray, and Sara Lange**. You can contact any of the members with questions, comments or suggestions.

We are looking forward to this special occasion and would like to see as many of you as possible to celebrate Mimi.

DECEMBER MEETINGS

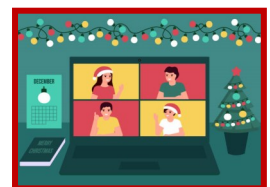
Fellowship Ministry Board – Sunday, December 10, after the Christmas Workshop

Assets and Resources – Monday, December 11, at 7:00 p.m.

Worship /Education Ministry Board - Monday, December 11, at 6:30 p.m. (Zoom)

Diaconate Ministry Board – Tuesday, December 14, at 7:30 p.m.

Executive Council – Monday, December 18, at 6:30 p.m.



NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES

WORSHIP MINISTRY BOARD



COMMUNION

We will celebrate Communion on **Sunday, December 3rd** during worship.

Join Us at
Advent Worship



ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTERS

First Sunday of Advent - December 3: Jim and Nancy Wilking

Second Sunday of Advent - December 10: Karen Cowen

Third Sunday of Advent - December 17: Veronica Noye

Fourth Sunday of Advent - December 24: Carol Turner and Jan Henzie

Christ Candle, Christmas Eve: Steve Fecht

TRAVELING ADVENT WREATH

The Traveling Advent Wreath, has become one of our newer traditions, featuring North Church members and groups recorded while lighting an Advent candle. These will be shown during the Wednesday Inspirations.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



Beautiful poinsettias decorate our church each year during the holidays. This year, you may donate a poinsettia as a memorial, a tribute, or a celebration of the spirit of Christmas. The cost of a poinsettia is \$11.00. Order forms may be found on the table in the Narthex, attached to the Church Planner, and included in this newsletter. **All orders are needed by Monday, December 4th.**

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE – Sunday, December 3, at 2:00 p.m.

Virtual only on Facebook Live

“The Weary World Rejoices.” As Christmas approaches and the strains of “Joy to the World” are everywhere, many of us are weary and sad in so many ways: from the loss of loved ones, to the state of the world, from personal tragedies to global catastrophe. This time of prayer, reflection, and music will create space to acknowledge those feelings and find comfort in God’s love.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



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".

ADOPT - A - FAMILY UPDATE

(Sponsored by Women's Fellowship)

On behalf of Women's Fellowship, a big THANK YOU goes out to everyone who picked up a gift tag or donated monies to make Christmas better for two Farmington/Farmington Hills families. Adopt-A-Family has been a favorite benevolence of North Church for a number of years. Upon last check, there were a few gift tags available on the bulletin board in the link if you would still like to participate.



Please bring your unwrapped gifts (along with the gift tag and receipt) to church on December 3 or December 10. You may place them on the designated carts in the link. Women's Fellowship will be wrapping the gifts on Thursday, December 14, and delivering the packages to Neighborhood House the following week, in plenty of time to appear under their family's Christmas tree.

We truly appreciate everyone's generosity and efforts to help provide some warm clothing, delicious food, and a few special gifts to some of our less fortunate neighbors. As we continue to serve God by responding to the needs of our community, know that you are living the values of North Congregational Church.

CHRISTMAS CONFECTIONS IS BACK!

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

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



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MISSIONS MINISTRY BOARD

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

One of the traditions many families observe during the holiday season is a countdown to December 25 via an Advent calendar. There are many variations on this tradition. Since this is the season of giving, a new “reverse” method of counting down the days until the 25th is an alternative way to celebrate the blessings of the season. It is another option for sharing the bounties we enjoy with people whose basic needs are not being met.



If you would like to do a “reverse” Advent calendar, print the calendar attached to the church bulletin, celebrate the days of December by purchasing the items during Advent. The items can be brought to church the first week of January, (**Door 4 only**).

MISSION BENEVOLENCES...for the month of December

Adopt-A-Family, Salvation Army, Camp Restore - Detroit,
Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion,
Mission Contingency (relief efforts and one-time need), Mission Disaster Relief Fund,
Multi-Cultural Multi-Racial Community Council of Farmington/Farmington Hills

DIACONATE MINISTRY BOARD

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS

There are a limited number of extra devotional booklets available on the tables in the Narthex. Feel free to take one for yourself or give one to someone who might appreciate having it for the season.

CARE NOTES

CareNotes are written for people dealing with intensely emotional situations who are looking for concise, easy-to-read guidance and support. You will find a collection of these Notes, dealing with a variety of subjects, on the table in the Link. Please feel free to take one or more CareNotes home with you.

PILGRIM POSTAL PALS

The Diaconate will begin the New Year with Postal Pal cards going out to a particular person to lift their spirit, offer birthday or anniversary wishes and/or get well wishes, or condolences. Stamped and pre-addressed cards will be made available for you to pick up, add your own message and mail. Please consider taking and writing a note whenever these are available. Look for the name and cards in your January newsletter and weekly Planner or Bulletin



FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY BOARD

MASCOTTT's White Elephant gift exchange - Saturday, December 2nd, at 7 p.m.

Come and enjoy Christmas games and Holiday cheer. Please bring a dish to share. Don't forget a White Elephant gift! 1 per person. Please RSVP Karensirovy@gmail.com or sign up on the sheet provided on the Information Table in the Narthex.



CHRISTMAS CRAFT WORKSHOP - Sunday, December 10th

Join us in celebrating the joy of the season at the Christmas Craft Workshop. A light lunch will be served in Pilgrim Fellowship Hall following the church service. After lunch enjoy creating Christmas crafts with your friends and family. There will be a variety of crafts for kids and adults. Plus a photo opportunity with the Jolly Old Elf himself! If you would like to bring an appetizer or dessert to compliment the lunch, please drop them off in Fellowship Hall on December 10. And don't forget to sign up on the sheet in the Narthex.



MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

A group of North Church Men meet every other Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. for breakfast at Moe's on Ten. They will be meeting on **December 12th** and **26th**. If you would like to join them, please contact **Tom Modick** at moto126@aol.com.

BOOK GROUP - Wednesday, December 13, at 1 PM

We'll talk about "Christmas Cozy Mysteries" with emphasis on "Rest You Merry" by Charlotte MacLeod (available on Kindle) and enjoy some refreshments at **Rev. Biedron's** house.

CHRISTMAS EVE COOKIES



The Fellowship Board is looking for cookie bakers to share their cookies with the congregation on Christmas Eve. **Please bring 3 dozen cookies to church by Wednesday, December 20th.** We are celebrating the season and hoping to stay safe by handing out individual bags of cookies to the congregation following church service. Your cookie donations will be included in treat bags to spread joy to you and our North Church families and friends. If you would like to bring cookies, please sign up on the information table.





*The gift of Love,
The gift of Peace, and
The gift of Happiness—
may all these be yours.
Wishing you a season full
of light and laughter.*

Merry Christmas... from the North Church Staff

***Mimi Biedron, Laurie Meeker, Patricia Butler,
Janice Thornton, and Debbie Skindell***



Reverse Advent Calendar

North Congregational Church

Purchase the following items and place them in a basket or box each day during Advent to celebrate the season by sharing our blessings. All items may be brought to the church the first week of January (Door 4 only); the filled boxes, baskets and bags will then be delivered to CARES.

- 1) Can of tuna or salmon
- 2) Can of chicken or ham
- 3) Canned soup: chicken noodle, tomato, mushroom, bean, split pea
- 4) Canned vegetables: green beans, tomatoes, corn, peas, carrots, beans
- 5) Canned fruit: pineapple, mandarin oranges, pear, peach, pie fillings
- 6) Canned meal items: beef stew, spaghetti sauce, ravioli
- 7) Boxed cereal, or oatmeal
- 8) Dried beans: navy, black, lentils, or chick peas
- 9) Bag of Rice
- 10) Box of Pasta, 1 lb.
- 11) Jar of Peanut butter, plastic bottles please
- 12) Powdered or Condensed Milk
- 13) Ground coffee or box of tea bags
- 14) Paper towels
- 15) Toilet paper or box of facial tissues
- 16) Laundry detergent
- 17) Shampoo, Suave, VO5
- 18) Bar soap
- 19) Can Opener
- 20) Toothbrush or Tooth paste
- 21) Baby Diapers size 5-6
- 22) Household cleaner or Disinfectant
- 23) Adult Incontinence products all sizes
- 24) Feminine hygiene product



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Beautiful poinsettias decorate our church each year during the holidays. This year, you may donate a poinsettia as a memorial, a tribute, or a celebration of the spirit of Christmas.

Poinsettias will be present from **December 10th – December 24th**; they may be taken home following the Christmas Eve worship service.

The cost of a poinsettia is \$11.00. Please make your check payable to **North Congregational Church**. **The deadline for orders is Monday, December 4th**. Please fill out the form and return it to the church office, or drop it in the offertory stand in the Narthex.

I wish to place _____ poinsettia(s) for Christmas.

The message should read:

A gift from _____

a. Given in memory, in honor, or in celebration of:

b. Or, write your own message: _____

Signature _____

Phone _____

