

NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

JANUARY, 2024 NEWSLETTER

“God Is With You Wherever You Go”

- Joshua 1:9



Interim Minister – Rev. Chris Richards “Season of Transition”

In the 58th chapter of the book of Isaiah, there lies a wonderful, powerful expression of what it means to be the people of faith in community. The ancient prophet speaks the language of movement and worship, calling forth images of living beside life flowing streams.

“I’ll always show you where to go, I’ll give you a full life in the emptiest of places...

You’ll be like a gurgling spring, a well-watered garden...

You’ll be known as those who can fix anything, restore, rebuild and renovate...

Just keep your step on the Sabbath, treat it as a day of joy, God’s day of Celebration...a day you’ll be free to enjoy God!”

Isaiah 58: portions The Message Translation

The writer’s words echo the keeping of sacred time and making it alive and well! A call is made to uplift the fallen, feed those who are in need, and to protect one another! And in the day to day, of living, the writer reminds us that we are to support and uplift one another! What an important premise!

What is ancient is ever new! As a faith community, we have a special message to share with one another and our community. Come be with God, as we seek to lessen suffering; offer thankfulness to God in praise and reach out to each other by sharing words of encouragement. In a time of pastoral transition like this, every encounter of praise is an expression of hope.

As Isaiah professes, keeping the Sabbath allows us to stay balanced! Here at North, it is evident worship is the center pole of faith that leads to service.

As your interim minister I am honored to follow in Mimi’s footsteps, as well as Mark’s; a combined clergy leadership that spans forty plus years. In a time when pastoral/church leadership is often brief (2-4 years), North is on the other end of the spectrum. Longevity is valued! However, my role is to walk with you as a bridge to your next settled pastor. Having witnessed the outpouring of love shared by the congregation with Mimi, Glenn, and family on Sunday December 17 at her retirement reception, relationships are bound by multi generations.

May this season of transition help us focus on encouraging one another and the continued deepening of faith we share. As one coming alongside you all, I thank God and appreciate the wonderful staff, leadership team and congregation that is North Church. We’re better together as they say! Thank you for this invitation to serve.

Peace and grace, Rev. Chris

Moderator's Notes...



December has been a very busy month with Advent activities and preparation for Christmas. From the Christmas Craft Workshop to Christmas Confections to Christmas Eve Cookies to the traveling advent wreath, there have been many opportunities to enjoy this holiday season with friends and members of NCC.

We also were able to celebrate the ministry of **Mimi Biedron** as she heads off into retirement. I want to thank Mimi again for her many years of devotion and service to NCC. We know you and **Glenn** will enjoy a wonderful retirement time together.

And a very hearty welcome **Rev Chris Richards** as he becomes our Interim Minister starting in January. We are looking forward to working with you and welcoming you to the pulpit.

Our **2024 Business Meeting is scheduled for January 28th, 2024**. This will be an in person meeting along with a Zoom simulcast. We will review the May 2023 Annual meeting and review and vote on the 2024 Budget. Please plan to attend this short but very important meeting. A light luncheon will be provided afterwards in Fellowship Hall.

I hope everyone has a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Tim Sirovy, Moderator

NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES

CALL TO THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The annual Business Meeting of North Congregational Church will be held on **Sunday, January 28, 2024**, as ordered by the Executive Council, to transact business as specified in this Call or authorized by the Bylaws. At this meeting, the Treasurer will provide the annual financial report for the past year; the Assets & Resources Ministry Board will present the proposed annual Operating Budget for the current year to the membership for their consideration and approval; Executive Council and other Ministry Boards may present other items for the Congregation's consideration.

The meeting will be held in person and via 'Zoom' -- everyone will be able to attend via the internet or via phone dial-in (Facebook not necessary). Zoom link and instructions will be sent separately.

We will need a quorum, so please plan to attend this important meeting (after Sunday Worship) at **11:30 a.m.**

Judy Campbell, Clerk

INCORPORATING CHARITABLE GIVING INTO YOUR ESTATE PLAN

(Summary of Kiplinger magazine article from March 2, 2020)



Charitable giving may have significant tax implications that can lower your estate taxes at your death. Advance planning can help ensure that you achieve the most tax savings available while meeting your charitable goals.

Here are five ways to structure your charitable giving into your estate plan:

Give Appreciated Stock

Consider giving appreciated stock to a charity during your life. If you give the stock to charity, you will receive a charitable income tax deduction equal to the full fair market value of the stock at the time of the gift and will avoid capital gains taxes.

Charitable Rollover

Individuals who are over 70½ may donate up to \$100,000 per year to charities directly from their IRA as a Qualified Charitable Distribution. This will count towards any required minimum distribution an account holder must take from the IRA. This can be a good strategy for individuals who do not “need” the distribution to cover living expenses.

Bequest in Your Will or Revocable Trust

A very simple and direct way to benefit charity at your death is to leave a bequest in your will or revocable trust. The gift can be for a charity’s “general purpose,” meaning the charity can use the funds as it sees fit, or for a specific purpose that you detail. Charitable bequests are eligible for the estate tax deduction and will reduce estate taxes.

Name a Charity as the Beneficiary of Your Retirement Account

It is relatively simple to name the charity as a beneficiary of all or a percentage of your non-Roth retirement accounts (IRA, 401(k), 403(b), etc.). Because the charity is tax-exempt, after your death it can withdraw the assets from the retirement account without having to pay income taxes on the withdrawal.

Consider a Charitable Remainder Trust

You can benefit a charity and a family member by creating a charitable remainder trust (CRT) and naming the CRT as the beneficiary of your IRA. A CRT is a split interest trust where an individual you choose will receive annual payments from the CRT for a period of time. When the individual’s interest in the CRT terminates, the remaining amount is distributed to charities of your choosing. Due to the many rules surrounding the creation and operation of a CRT, an attorney is essential to create it properly.

As you can see, there are many ways to benefit charities, either during your life or at your death. Which way you choose can have different tax implications. Taking into account taxes with your charitable giving can ultimately increase the amount received by not only the charity, but your loved ones as well.

DIACONATE MINISTRY BOARD



Diaconate members put together some care packages and poinsettia plants and delivered them to our shut-in members of the congregation. It was so nice to bring them some Christmas cheer.

The Diaconate wishes to thank everyone who took a Christmas card packet and sent out cards to the friends and members of North Congregational Church. We had fun putting the kits together and we are now in short supply of Christmas cards and need to restock our card cupboard. If you are out shopping the "after Christmas sales" and find Christmas cards at a bargain price, we will have a donation box in the Narthex for the Month of January. We would also use any leftover or unused cards you might have in your home.

Looking forward to revisiting our Pilgrim Postal Pals project and we will choose a recipient at our next board meeting. Wishing everyone a very Happy New Year.

WORSHIP MINISTRY BOARD

COMMUNION

We will celebrate the Sacrament of Communion next on **Sunday, February 4, 2024** during worship.

EPIPHANY RETREAT – SATURDAY, JANUARY 6, 2024

Rev. Charles Packer will be holding an Epiphany Retreat in the Plymouth/Bradford Room on **January 6th**, from **9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.** Please bring a snack, drink and something for lunch with you. More details to come!

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY - MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024

Join us for a full day of celebrating the life and legacy of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior. All of the day's event will take place in person at Farmington Community Library's Farmington Hills location.

FARMINGTON/FARMINGTON HILLS

January 16: Stop in the children's departments at the Farmington Community Library at 10 a.m. to [make a sign](#) for the march that begins at 11 a.m.

January 16: Celebrate the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. with a [full day of events](#), starting with a march down 12 Mile Rd. at 11 a.m.

January 16: Join an [interactive presentation](#) to learn about Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy presented by Detroit Association of Black Storytellers member, Anthony Lucas at 2 p.m.



January 16: North Farmington and Farmington High School [contemporary performance](#) at 3 p.m. in honor of MLK Day.

January 16: [MLK Family Day](#) at Painting with a Twist at 1 p.m. & 7 p.m.

MISSIONS MINISTRY BOARD

December has been a busy month at North! Celebrating Advent, sharing Blue Christmas, listening to special music, enjoying Christmas Confections, congratulating Mimi on her retirement, and joining with Pine Hill for our Christmas Eve services....whew! Our dance cards have been full. After all this activity, do you find yourself thinking “now what?”. I might have a few suggestions.

Have you looked in the storage room next to our library lately? North Church and Pine Hill folks have been actively bringing in warm clothing items for those in need. All of these clothing items will be taken to **Crossroads** and handed out on **Sunday, December 31** between **10:30-2**. Would you like to help? Feel free to send me an email or call, and I will put you on the list of volunteers. How would you like to help take the donated food from the **Reverse Advent Calendar** to CARES during the first part of January? Let me know when it's good for you to help, and we can make a date of it.

Remember making the blankets for **Fleece and Thank You** this past fall? We will be making 3 more blankets on Sundays in February while enjoying coffee hour. Keep an eye out for details in the Sunday bulletins. Would you like to help plan a game night for the clients at Lighthouse? Any interest in packing food at Forgotten Harvest? There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer. Talk to any member of the Mission's Committee on a Sunday, and we can certainly see about getting a group of interested volunteers to have a great time providing service to others.

FYI - North Congregational Church will be providing and serving lunch at Crossroads Soup Kitchen on **Sundays May 5, 2024** and **October 20, 2024**. Save the dates!

Hope to hear from you soon!

The Mission's Board: *Sara Lange, Becky Smathers, Linda Cooper, Steve Plummer, Jeff Rockwell, Matthew Shand*

MISSION BENEVOLENCES *for the month of January*

NACCC Shared Ministries, Minister's Discretionary Fund

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the Reverse Advent calendar. All items dropped off the first week in January will be delivered to CARES. Thank you for your generosity!



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, January 9th and 23rd**. If you would like to join them, please contact **Tom Modick** at moto126@aol.com.

NCC BOOK GROUP – Wednesday, January 10!

Hello Book Group friends!

If you find yourself on this email list and don't wish to be, please reply to me and I will take you off my distribution. Likewise, if you think I have left someone off, please let me know.

Going forward we are going to be taking turns moderating the book group. I have agreed to start in January. Please note the date for January has been moved up a week due to scheduling conflicts.

Book Group will be on **January 10, 2024** at **1:00** in the **church library**. The book is Yellowface, by R. F. Kuang. *From Goodreads Choice Award* –

Winner for Best Fiction (2023) - Athena Liu is a literary darling and June Hayward is literally nobody.

White lies - When Athena dies in a freak accident, June steals her unpublished manuscript and publishes it as her own under the ambiguous name Juniper Song.

Dark humour - But as evidence threatens June's stolen success, she will discover exactly how far she will go to keep what she thinks she deserves.

Deadly consequences...What happens next is entirely everyone else's fault.

With its totally immersive first-person voice, *Yellowface* grapples with questions of diversity, racism, and cultural appropriation, as well as the terrifying alienation of social media. R.F. Kuang's novel is timely, razor-sharp, and eminently readable.

There are multiple copies at the Farmington Community Library, but there is a short wait list. It's also available on Hoopla through FCL in audio and eBook form.

We will continue to have a zoom option for book group. I will send out another email with the zoom link closer to the date. But I believe it is always the same log in, so if you have an old email, you likely have the passcodes.



Celeste Schwartz

LIFE LINE SCREENING – January 19

Life Line is the nation's leading provider of preventive health screenings, and offers affordable, non-invasive and painless health screenings at North Congregational Church on **Friday, January 19, 2023**. A package of five screenings to identify risk for stroke, heart disease and other chronic conditions will be offered. (See flyers on the Information Table.) These 5 vital screenings are offered for only \$139 and take 60-90 minutes to complete.

Register by calling toll free 1-888-653-6441, text the word "circle" to 797979, or you can go online at <https://lsa.social/HSC>.

JANUARY 2024 PF GET TOGETHER

It's time to get together, Michigan PF! Our Get Together will be a one-day event at **Mayflower Congregational Church in Lansing** on **Saturday, January 20th**, from **10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.** All 6th through 12th graders are invited! Attached is a flyer with further information; it includes a QR code and a link so registration can be quick and easy.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at kssb_brown@msn.com, or by phone 734/397-8628.

Sharon Brown

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the ADOPT-A-FAMILY program for Christmas. Every tag was chosen from the bulletin board, which meant all the wishes would be fulfilled for the two families receiving the gifts.

The packages were delivered to Neighborhood House and then picked up by the parents. It was a pleasure for Women's Fellowship to organize this project, but we could not have done it without your generosity. THANK YOU.