

A JOYFUL NOISE!

January 2012

Happy New Year!! A clean slate. A whole new year to build on the successes of 2011 and to let go of the parts of last year that were not fruitful. Toward the conclusion of 2011 our church began looking outside our walls in new ways, recognizing our active mission in our communities and creating new activities. The Mission 1 campaign was a huge success as our church donated nearly 1,000 hours of community service, donated nearly 1,000 items of food to BACN, and donated over \$1,600 to Benzie Home Health Care!! The United Church of Christ was hoping to donate 1 million items of food nationwide by 11/11/11 and we did! I added the other two challenges starting in September and all our original goals were met and exceeded. It is amazing what we can accomplish when we set our minds to it.

Throughout all of 2011, the Board of Deacons prepared for a new venture in launching a Live Nativity on US 31. Sonny Rodriguez built a wonderful manger. Many volunteers pooled their resources to create fun costumes for Mary, Joseph, three kings, shepherds, and angels. We decorated the manger, brought in live animals in the form of a miniature pony, a goat, and chickens, and then several of us braved the elements for two hours on a Saturday night and two hours after church on a Sunday. We were greeted with smiles by people walking by, honks and waves from drivers, and several people who parked their cars and then walked over to talk with us and thank us for our witness to the community.

Building on these successes, we look forward to 2012 with new ventures, some known and some unknown. The Deacons will review the Live Nativity and prepare for next year. A mission trip to Missouri is being planned by the Christian World Service committee. Where do you hear God speaking for us to grow in 2012?

Pastor Dan Furman

Mission Trip

Our Christian World Service Board is exploring the concept of a summer 2012 mission trip to Missouri. This will be an intergenerational experience. All ages are welcome. Part of the trip will be educational with stops at Eden Theological Seminary a UCC institution, and visiting the Missouri Mid-South Conference office in St. Louis. Part of the trip will be tourism with stops to tour the St. Louis Arch and other sites. Part of the trip will be mission to help the communities that suffered tornado devastation in Joplin, Missouri. Tentative dates are June 17 - 23, 2012. If you are interested, please speak with Pastor Dan or Ruth Catton.

What's New in the Library

A Gathering of Hearts...The Best of Lori Wick......a collection of excerpts from Lori Wick's 20 year writing career. These short scenes will inspire and entertain you as you are drawn to the author's themes of faith and gratitude, love and romance, marriage and relationships.

Out to Pasture...But Not over the Hill

Over What Hill?...both by 80plus Effie Leland Wilder tell the story of the FairAcres Home, a retirement community in South Carolina. The main character is Hattie McNair, a journal keeper and "eavesdropper extraordinaire". Written as a personal journal and letters to a friend "on the outside", Hattie tells the stories of her neighbors. An unpretentious, often humorous, occasionally poignant look at aging.

Thank you, Joan Richardson, for the donation of these books.

Plain Wisdom: an Invitation into an Amish Home and the Hearts of Two Women...

Cindy Woodsmall, a best-selling novelist, and Miriam Flaud, a member of the Old Order Amish share a unique friendship. With nine children and sixty years of marriage between them, these two women share more than you would guess. These two honest and forthright women in sharing their stories make us laugh, make us cry in this celebration of God, womanhood, and for the search for the beauty that unites us all.

Thank you, Ann Nordbeck for the donation.

The Journey...I apologize for not getting this on the shelf earlier as it really is an Advent read. But it is also a story about Mary, the mother of Jesus and in that sense it is good any time of year. Author Hamilton takes a closer look at some common conceptions regarding the time before Jesus' birth and forces us to reexamine our assumptions about this beautiful story. Historical questions tracing Mary's steps from the announcement of the angel to the birth of Christ are addressed; as are the living conditions, the culture the politics of the time.

News From the Deacons

A huge thank you to everyone who helped with the Live Nativity! We have had some very positive feedback and feel it was a wonderful ministry for our community. A special thank you to Sonny Rodriguez for all the time and work he put into building and transporting the stable. He and his helpers did a wonderful job. Also a huge thank you to Marina Seger for the use of her animals, they really added to the atmosphere. Marina delivered the animals each day, which is no easy task, thanks again.

A special thank you to all the women who helped to sew the costumes. They included, Gillian Soholt, Barb Brian, Penelope Olson Roxane Miner, Chris Gehring, Liz Ehman and Chris Jones. Chris Gehring also helped in the kitchen serving chili and cocoa and cookies. Thank you to Mark Thompson for making three new crooks and to Mary Thompson for painting them.

Our cast of Nativity players included: Pastor Dan Furman, Carolina Jones, Carol Dye, Jim Sheets, Johnna Titsworth, Guy Titsworth, Chris Jones, Ron Olson, Penelope Olson, Mary Thompson, Mike Jones, Steve Walton, Liam Jones, Sonny Rodriguez, Mia Jones, Natalie Dawe, Akaylia Hamilton and Stephanie Dawe.

We hope you were able to participate in the Advent Workshop, the Cookie Walk or drive by the Live Nativity to help prepare yourself for the birthday of Jesus. We hope you found comfort and hope at our Christmas Eve services and look forward to beginning 2012 with communion on January 1st. Please join us to start the New Year with Christ at the center of your life.

The Board of Deacons is planning a Chili Lunch followed by board games on January 29th right after church. Please join us for food, fun and fellowship.

JANUARY SPECIAL DAYS...**January Birthdays**

Happy birthday to the following members of the church family!

| | |
|----|------------------|
| 4 | John Robson |
| 6 | Jay Pettitt |
| 6 | Bud Cleghorn |
| 11 | Beulah Eby |
| 11 | Esther Rodriguez |
| 12 | Tad Peacock |
| 17 | Judy Johnson |
| 18 | Jean Voight |
| 19 | Mark Weaver |
| 21 | Donovan Haase |
| 25 | Helen Dewey |
| 26 | Mary Rodriguez |
| 29 | Debra Rafferty |
| 30 | Linda Joy |
| 31 | Kelsey Neveu |

January Anniversaries

Congratulations!

| | |
|----|----------------------------|
| 18 | Harold and Marsha Case |
| 30 | Gerald and Joan Richardson |

Women's Fellowship News

Our next meeting will be March 7, at 1:00. We now have our kitchen put back together. There is some painting to finish and the dishwasher to be moved. We will be stripping the wax off the floor and finish the painting in January. If anyone has some time to help we would appreciate it. More chairs are being ordered as we have the money.

We have accomplished alot this year and it shows. We thank all of you for your support.

Volunteer Opportunity

We have church members who would like to come to church but have no transportation. If you are willing to pick people up on your way to church, please contact the office or Pastor Dan.

THANK YOUs

Thank you to all the "Centerfolds" who helped put together the December issue of the Joyful Noise: **Jean Bowers, Mickey Austin, and Jean and Wally Edwards.**

Thank you to all **those who participated in the Christmas Giving Tree.** The gifts were distributed to area families who were all very grateful to receive them.

Thank you to all of **our children and youth** for participating in this year's Christmas Pageant, "Carriers of Light." Excellent job! The congregation seemed to enjoy the program.

Thank you to **Chris Jones** for filling in while our secretary, Nancy, took some vacation days in December.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR JANUARY VOLUNTEERS -

| | <u>COFFEE HOUR</u> | <u>NURSERY</u> | <u>GREETERS</u> |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1/1 | Deacons | Katrina Smith | Jean and Wally Edwards |
| 1/8 | Penelope Olson | Carol Dye | Penelope and Ron Edwards |
| 1/15 | Helen Dewey | Linda Jenema | Steve Walton |
| 1/22 | Potluck - Council | Kris Richards | Chris Gehring |
| 1/29 | Chris Gehring | Helen Dewey | Agnes and Jerry Slater |

Church Family Update

You are invited to remember in your prayers some of our members who are home-bound, in assisted living, or are facing health concerns: Doug Joy, Marylou Patee, June Trost, Norm Stewart, John Robson, Marjorie Call, Buck and Dorothy Hall, Ruth Masters, Liz Ehman, Betty Peters, Barb Nason, Bernice Rankin, Mona McElderry, Bruce Jenema, Jo Danford, and Betty Henry

Reminder

If you, a loved one, or a church member you know is in the hospital, please let the church office know so that Pastor Dan may visit. Due to privacy laws, hospitals no longer contact the churches to let them know church members are hospitalized. The church wants to know so that we can support you during this time of need.

Calling All Worship Leaders

Have you ever sat in your pew and listened to someone read the Scripture or lead the Moment for Mission and thought to yourself that you could do that? If you would like to be a lay reader in the Spring or Summer of 2012, please let Pastor Dan know and he would be happy to work you in the schedule.

UCC Sister Church of the Month

As part of our continuing efforts to work together as a community of faith, in worship we pray for UCC churches in our United Northern Association. You are invited in January to pray for the ongoing mission and ministries of First Congregational United Church of Christ, Manistee.

Memorial Garden

On the north side of our church property is a beautiful memorial garden for members and friends of the church who would like their cremated ashes interred on our sacred grounds. For \$250, you may reserve a one-square foot plot that covers future opening and closing as well as a memorial plaque to be placed on the stone located along the walkway. Please speak with Pastor Dan for more information. Donations for perpetual care are also welcomed.

Flowers

There is a new sign-up sheet outside the church office for altar flowers for 2012. If you are interested in supplying flowers for the new year, please sign up for a certain date (or if you are unable to be in worship call the church office to make arrangements). You may then bring in your own flowers or donate \$25 to the church to make the arrangements with a local florist. If you would like the bulletin to reflect your donation, please let the church office know who the flowers honor or memorialize as well as identifying yourself as the donor.

GoodSearch.com

With the arrival of a new year, remember that if you use the Internet, you can earn money for the church using www.goodsearch.com. One penny per search, or more for internet shopping, helps the church. So far, the church has earned \$40 just from Internet searches and shopping. Designate us by entering our church name as the charity of your choice.

JANUARY 2012

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SAT |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|-----------|
| 1 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship | 2 Church Office Closed 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 7:00 AA - Barn | 3 10:00 Christian World Service 10:00 Yoga-Barn 6:30 - Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn | 4 12 Noon - AA 2:00 MS Support Barn 6:30 Bell Choir | 5 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn | 6 12 Noon - LOWV Library 6:00 AA - Barn | 7 |
| 8 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship | 9 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 11:00 Commodities Distribution 12-5 - Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn | 10 10:00 Yoga -Barn 7:00 Council 7:00 WAA - Barn | 11 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 4:00 Deacons 6:30 Bell Choir | 12 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 1:00 - Finance 5:30 NA - Barn | 13 12 N - LOWV Library 6:00 AA - Barn | 14 |
| 15 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship | 16 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn | 17 10 Yoga - Barn 5:00 Trustees 6:30 Kiwanis 7:00 WAA - Barn | 18 12 Noon - AA 1:00 - Circle I Lunch at Cold Creek Inn 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:30 Christian Ed | 19 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn | 20 12 N - LOWV Library 6:00 AA - Barn | 21 |
| 22 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Potluck 12:15 Annual Meeting | 23 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn | 24 10 Yoga - Barn 7:00 BSO 7:00 WAA - Barn | 25 12 Noon - AA 2:30 Knitting - Barn 6:30 Bell Choir | 26 10 Central Wellness Exercise - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 5:30 NA - Barn | 27 12 N - LOWV Library 6:00 AA - Barn | 28 |
| 29 10:15 Church School 10:30 Worship | 30 10:00 Central Wellness - Barn 12-5 - Bridge Club 7:00 AA - Barn | 31 | | | | |

First Congregational Church, UCC
901 Barber Street, P.O. Box 234.
Benzonia, MI 49616
Phone: (231) 882-4922

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC BENZONIA, MICHIGAN

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Daniel E. Furman | Minister |
| Chris Stone | Treasurer |
| Mary Rodriguez.. .. | Financial Secretary |
| James Sheets..... | Church Moderator |
| Christy Case | Choir Director |
| Rosemary Miller | Assistant Choir Director |
| Jean Edwards..... | Newsletter Editor |
| Carol Dye & Katrina Smith..... | Christian Ed Coordinators |
| Hope Kochis | Custodian |
| Nancy Eggleston | Secretary |

Office phone: 231-882-4922

Office fax: 231-882-7992

Office hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

<http://www.benzoniacongregational.org>

Office Email: secretary@benzoniacongregational.org

Pastor Email: pastordan@benzoniacongregational.org

For pastoral emergency, call 231-930-7067