

STAY AT HOME - STAY WELL

JUNE, 2021 NEWSLETTER – CORONAVIRUS VERSION

“Hope Does Not Disappoint Us”

- Romans 5:1-5

From the Minister...



Change is in the air! Can you feel it? As the effectiveness of the vaccines drive down the percentage of positive cases in our area, we are preparing to move back to many things that were cancelled, re-envisioned, and adapted during the pandemic. Acknowledging that we've been through so many changes already, we'll be going slowly, step by step, keeping an eye on the numbers and working always, always to keep people safe.

June 13 is scheduled to be our first in-person service. In the Moderator's article in this newsletter, Kevin Gromley includes details about this big step. We will be asking folks to wear masks – so that they can answer responsive prayers and sing (softly). We will not have the choir for some time yet, but there will be live solos. Sunday School will continue as a virtual-only experience until the fall. Some of the social times we all love so much will need to wait until we get further along in the reopening process. There's a lot to do! I've been working with Pat Butler on how to create in person services that can be live streamed, as we will continue our commitment to online worship and an online presence even after the building is back in use.

Even with all of these requirements, it feels so great to be planning to be together! I'm planning on us singing "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" and celebrating (socially distanced) communion, as we praise the God of resurrection, new beginnings, and work together to find and enact creative ways to spread the good news.

See you in church...in person or online!

Faithfully,
Rev. Mary E. Biedron



Moderator's Notes...

We have some big news! We plan to return to in person worship on June 13 – Executive Council approved our plans on Monday. This is contingent upon the status of the pandemic in our area, of course. But, if the current trends continue, we will be able to return to our building next month.

We will be reopening in stages set out by our Reopening Task Team (and thanks to them for their work). Initially, we will have worship in the sanctuary, spaced seating (every other pew), and masks required. There will be no coffee hour (but we will have the occasional special fellowship event outside). As we gain more experience and the pandemic conditions improve, we will move through phases to return to normal. In person Sunday School will likely return in the fall. Building rentals will be our last phase, return to full normalcy. We'll have more for you all on our procedures in forthcoming communications.

During this pandemic we have learned much more about being a virtual church. As you recall, we conducted a survey on that topic in the March – April time frame. Many of our members like the option of attending virtually, at least some of the time. So we are making plans to be able to continue to share our worship services on YouTube and our website. Initially, we will record our live services and share them afterwards. Later, we hope to be able to live stream our services on Sunday morning. This will require some new equipment in our sanctuary, which we are currently exploring.

Our annual program meeting will be June 27. We need a quorum, so please mark your calendars! At this meeting we will vote on new Board members and officers for the coming year. We will conduct this meeting via Zoom – to make the logistics simpler for everyone our Sunday worship will also be via Facebook live that day (and not in person).

It has been a long journey, with more road to be travelled. But I think we can all look forward to being back in our beautiful sanctuary to worship together.

Executive Council Notes

Executive Council met on May 24 and considered the following:

- **Assets & Resources and Treasurer:** As noted, our first PPP loan has been forgiven; we have received a second and expect that to be forgiven as well. Together, these represent over \$88,000 in funds for the Church. Due in part to these loans / grants, Church finances have improved this calendar year. Our HVAC system has been adjusted to maximize air flow in the building. Building & Grounds is investigating repairs to portions of our asphalt parking lot.
- **Diaconate:** Diaconate continues to keep in touch with our shut-ins. They are planning for communion on June 13.
- **Education:** The Education Ministry Board is planning for Sunday School to continue by Zoom during the summer, with a return to the classrooms in the fall. The Board is looking at a new curriculum for the summer months. They are also developing program ideas for the fall (e.g., speakers, public safety program).
- **Fellowship.** The Fellowship Board is planning an ice cream social for June 20, to be held outside the Church after worship. As conditions improve the Board is also looking at reviving Dinner for Eight. If you have suggestions for social events, please let them know!

- Missions: Our Missions Board continues to support Crossroads in Detroit. They provided hand-out kits on Mother’s Day for women who are Crossroads clients – it was a huge success.
- Worship: This Board is working with Rev. Biedron on procedures to continue to share our services on YouTube and our website after we return to in person worship. They are also coordinating with Diaconate to arrange communion on June 13. The Board and Rev. Biedron are working with Meadowbrook and Royal Oak Congregational Churches on a group confirmation class.
- Communications: This committee is looking at an electronic sign to replace our aging wooden sign on Twelve Mile. We have a quote from the sign company and will be asking some follow up questions. Rev. Biedron, Janice Thornton, and this committee have been working on a new website for the Church – stay tuned!
- New Business:
 - As noted earlier, our 2021 Program Meeting will be **June 27**. It is normally in May, but since it was delayed to September last year this gives the current Board members a bit more time in office.
 - Staff transition. Our business manager, Danny Hawkins, will be retiring in July (thank you, Danny, for all your work). We have transitioned Church payroll processing to the Paychex firm and are in discussions with local accounting firms to retain one of them for the Church bookkeeping.
 - New Board member training. On June 27 we will vote on new Ministry Board members and officers. There will be no Executive Council meeting in June. Training for the new Board members will be July 7 (it will be via Zoom and recorded, so it can be viewed later). Council will meet again in July.

May we all look forward to a future with hope.

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Matthew 18:20)

Kevin Gromley

JUNE MEETINGS on ZOOM:

Women's Fellowship Meeting – Wednesday, June 2 @ 7:00 p.m.

Diaconate Ministry Board – Tuesday, June 8th @ 7:30 p.m.

Assets & Resources Ministry Board – Wednesday, June 9th @ 7:00 p.m.

Missions Ministry Board – Wednesday, June 9th @ 7:00 P.M.

Education Ministry Board – Monday, June 14th @ 7:00 p.m.

Fellowship Ministry Board – Tuesday, June 15, at 7 p.m.

Worship Ministry Board – Sunday, June 20th @ Noon



NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES

CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Program Meeting of North Congregational Church will be held via Zoom at noon on Sunday, June 27th. The meeting agenda will include reports from boards and committees, and the election of officers, boards and committee members and representatives to national and state Congregational groups of which we are a part.

As a Congregational church, it is the right of the membership to fully participate in the leadership and development of the church. At the same time, it is the member's responsibility and opportunity to become involved in the process. We hope that you will plan to attend OUR Annual Meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS NEEDED!

Annual Meeting reports are due by Friday, June 11th. Board chairs, council members and association representatives are reminded to begin work on their report, and when finished email the report to ncc.churchoffice@gmail.com. Thank you!

USHER ORIENTATION MEETING

Saturday, June 12 @ 10 a.m.

We will hold a short, in person, orientation meeting at church to review the new procedures that have been put in place for Ushers, due to Covid 19.

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 **June 1st, 15th, and 29th** in June. If you would like to join them, please contact **Steve Lange** at stephenlange@me.com.

BOOK GROUP ON ZOOM

Wednesday, June 16th @ 1:00 p.m.

Join us to discuss this month's book selection: The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek: A Novel By Kim Michele Richardson.

This is the story of Bluet, the last of the Kentucky Blues—real-life people born with blue skin in the dusty hills of Troublesome Creek. In 1936, nearly twenty years old and blue-skinned, Bluet has used up her last chance for “respectability” and marriage. Instead, she joins the historical Pack Horse Library Project and becomes a librarian, riding up treacherous mountains on a mule to deliver books and other reading materials to the poor hill communities.

Along her dangerous route, Bluet confronts many who are distrustful of her blue skin. Not everyone is so keen on Bluet's family or the library project, and the impoverished country folk are quick to blame a Blue for any trouble in their small town.

Topic: Book Group

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89957950624?pwd=ZDJqRld1bU9vbktHTTBPWE83MDcwZz09>

Meeting ID: 899 5795 0624 Passcode: 372505

MISSIONS MINISTRY BOARD NEWS:

Starr Commonwealth, Albion, has been a long time North Congregational Church benevolence and a guest speaker during a past Mission's Month. Starr offers community-based programs, educational and behavioral health services, and professional training and coaching to heal trauma and build resilience in children, adolescents, and the professionals that serve them.

Last month, in response to an urgent request from the U.S. federal government, Starr Commonwealth opened its Albion campus to help alleviate the humanitarian challenge at the southern border. A leader in healing trauma and building resilience in children, Starr has welcomed 240 unaccompanied migrant children ages 12 and younger as it works to unite them with their family or sponsors.

Starr Commonwealth has a link to make Amazon purchases for items these migrant children need. Please visit the webpage link below if you would like to help.

“Thank you so very much for reaching out with a kind offer to support the children we have welcomed to our campus. We have gathered the many ways our community can lend a helping hand. The children and all of us at Starr thank you so much for your warmth and your generosity.”

Amazon Link: <https://starr.org/universal-hope-campaign/>

**Thank You,
Lori Rhode Missions Board Chairperson**

NAPF / HOPE Annual Meeting
Sunday, June 20th through Sunday, June 27th

Given the unfortunate circumstances we are still dealing with the NAPF-HOPE Planning Team decided to make the best of it and for the first time ever, NAPF-HOPE for 2021 will be virtual!

Each church group will complete one registration form and will then receive a kit a few weeks prior to the conference which will include the usual conference swag, like t-shirts, booklets, & new this year... facemasks!

- Each church group will then plan their own week, but will have access to four pre-recorded messages by four different individuals that have spoken within the last five years at NAPF-HOPE.
- Each group will also be encouraged to do a local mission project.
- Finally, on Sunday, June 27th in the afternoon/evening, we will do a LIVE virtual gathering which will include fellowship, worship, mission project sharing, & communion.

More details are being worked out. We encourage the youth and young adults of your church to participate in this year's one of a kind conference. We will be miles apart; however, we are always connected to one another in faith.

Look for more details as they become available at <https://www.naccc.org/youth1.htm>

YOUTH UNITED SERVICE CAMP
Tuesday, August 3rd through Thursday, August 5th

Camp Supplies Needed-SEE ITEMS BELOW
(Drop-off items at North Congregational Church on Sunday, June 20)

Farmington area youth, grades 6-12, can give back to the community in the 2021 Youth United service camp experience. The camp celebrates the multi-cultural diversity of our area when youth from a variety of faith and cultural backgrounds play games, do service projects to benefit CARES of Farmington Hills, a village of hope in our community that demonstrates the power of treating all neighbors with compassion and dignity. Through this summer program youth learn about the common ground we share in our faiths and families.

Youth United 2021 will follow a hybrid model to avoid large group gatherings, combining mornings of virtual Zoom based activities and afternoons with the option of in-person or at home sessions of projects which will benefit the CARES campus.

Registration information is on the North Congregational Church website on the Summer Camps page or via the Youth United registration link: <http://bit.ly/youthunited21>

Youth United is collecting a variety of materials for activity boxes for the camp participants. Items include: jigsaw puzzles, coloring page, paint by number sets, crayons or colored pencils, bubbles, clean plastic bottle caps, and clean plastic bottles such as soda, juice, or milk jugs to be used to make bird feeders. Non-perishable food items for the CARES free market and hygiene care items such as small packs of tissue, hand sanitizer and new socks to fill personal care packs are also being collected.

