

SEPTEMBER, 2021 NEWSLETTER

“GO AND PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS”

- Mark 16:15



From the Minister...

This is Jesus' final instruction to his disciples and apostles in Mark 16:15. Our activities and studies this year will emphasize what we need to know and be able to do to share the good news; sermons this year will emphasize the stories and principles describing the good news of God's grace for all people.

Just as was the case in the time of Jesus and the early church, we are called today to proclaim the gospel in a challenging environment, to people who have lost faith and hope. We ourselves may also be struggling, but gathering in person and online for worship and service is an important way to strengthen our own resolve so that we can be agents of grace in the world. Moderator Kevin Gromley has prepared a thorough report on what is coming for the year, please do read his article below, and then join in however is best for you as we go into all the world with the good news.

Wishing you all grace and peace as we serve God together,

Rev. Mary E. Biedron

Moderator's Notes...



We are in the last few days before Labor Day. It has been an eventful summer, with a mix of news good and bad.

Of particular concern, of course, is the status of the coronavirus pandemic in our area. The good news is that Oakland County has a reasonably high proportion of the population fully vaccinated – 57% – and that current deaths from the disease are low, less than 2 per day. The bad news is that cases and hospitalizations are rising again. Consequently, we have suspended coffee hour until the numbers improve; attendees may socialize outside the Church after worship (mask wearing encouraged).

Executive Council considered and approved plans for the fall, as follows:

Worship: We plan to continue with hybrid in person and live stream Sunday worship. (While the delta variant is spreading, we believe that most / all of our in-person attendees are vaccinated.) Seating will continue to be spaced out, we will continue to request mask wearing. The service will have organ and soloist, the Choir will not return until case spread is lower (perhaps for Advent / Christmas). Coffee hour will be suspended until we see a reverse in the Covid-19 case and hospitalization numbers.

Sunday School: The Education Board has decided against resuming in-person Sunday School in the fall. Sunday School will continue to be via Zoom. The Board will organize monthly, outside events at the Church for the kids while weather permits (coordinating with Fellowship).

Rentals: We have a few requests for rentals starting in October, Life Line and a music recital (which would be in the sanctuary). We also plan to offer our space for the election in November. Our thinking is to proceed with rentals on a limited basis -- prior renters, music recitals, etc. We will not offer rentals to large birthday parties as we have in the past, and we will avoid Saturday rentals to give time for air to exchange before Sunday worship. This plan is subject to developments with the pandemic.

Rally Sunday: The plan is for this to be outdoors if the weather is good, no meal prepared.

I think these reflect a good balance of our desire for worshipping in person and prudent safety measures. Thanks to all of our Ministry Boards for developing these plans.

Council also considered Church priorities for the coming year. This serves as input to our staff evaluations, which will begin in September. Those priorities are:

- Complete the transition that followed Danny's retirement to our new accounting / payroll / program model
- Continue to work on developing our new Ministry Board structure, improve the ability of the Boards to solicit volunteers and form activity teams
- Finalize new bylaws (reflecting our new structure) and submit to the Congregation for approval
- Complete the transition to hybrid worship (in person plus live streamed) with improved AV equipment
- Increase the number of attendees at Sunday worship and children in Sunday School

Executive Council Notes

Executive Council met on August 23 and considered the following:

- Assets & Resources and Treasurer: The transition to utilizing an outside firm for the Church's accounting and bookkeeping continues. There have been some hiccups but overall the process seems to be working. Assets & Resources earlier approved tree trimming, which has been done

along Twelve Mile and around the Church. We are still awaiting approval of our second PPP loan (we expect full forgiveness).

- Diaconate: Diaconate continues to keep in touch with our shut-ins. The Board conducted its annual review of our member list and submitted recommended changes to Executive Council for approval. The Diaconate arranged for volunteers to provide rides for our Fox Run members and friends, which has been done for the last few Sundays.
- Education: Summer Sunday School continues via Zoom and is going well. As noted, virtual Sunday School will continue in the fall, with occasional outside events for the children.
- Fellowship. Fellowship is working on outdoor events for Rally Sunday, as well as other opportunities for virtual fellowship. If you have any suggestions, please let them know!
- Missions: Our Missions Board has secured several speakers for our next missions' month. They are working on arranging a joint work day at Camp Restore Detroit, teaming with Meadowbrook Congregational Church -- keep an eye on the Church newsletter
- Worship: We continue in person worship – the Board is looking ahead to the next steps in our reopening process.
- New Business:
 - Electronic sign for 12 Mile. Council approved expenditure to replace our aging, wooden sign on Twelve Mile Road with a LED sign. Communications is working on obtaining an updated quote. It will take 8 to 10 weeks to procure the equipment and install the new sign. Once the design is approved by the City we will be putting the sign on our wish list and asking for donations to help defray the cost.
 - Council meetings will continue via Zoom for the time being.

The pandemic continues to test our patience and resolve; may we continue to live and endure with faith and hope.

“Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

Kevin Gromley

SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

Women’s Fellowship – Wednesday, September 1, at 12:30 p.m., Plymouth Room

Assets & Resources Ministry Board - Wednesday, September 8, at 7 p.m.

Missions Ministry Board – Wednesday, September 8, at 7 p.m.

Education Ministry Board - Monday, September 13, at 7 p.m.

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

Fellowship Ministry Board – Tuesday, September 21, at 7 p.m.

Worship Ministry Board - Sunday, September 26, at 11:30 (in person with a Zoom option.)

Executive Council – Monday, September 27, at 7 p.m.

NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Just a quick reminder that this week is the last week of “Pirates Who Pray”, and that we will NOT have class next week due to Labor Day.

I am excited to say that we will be doing a once a month in person Sunday School class that is mindful of all CDC and local COVID 19 precautions, and coordinates with the Fellowship Board activities: such as Rally Day, Trunk or Treat, Thanksgiving, etc.

We will be having our first in person class on Rally Day, September 12th, during Church service at 10:30, with Rally Day activities afterwards. We will not be having a bounce house, but we will have an activity similar to our Easter event. Food maybe provided by Fellowship. More details on that to come.

During class time, students will be picking up their leaflets or pamphlets, and some art supplies they will need for fun activities at home. As for now, the rest of our classes will continue to be on Zoom. We will continue with the break out rooms as we did in the spring.

Please feel free to forward this information on to your friends and family. We look forward to seeing everyone on September 12th!

Please reach out to me if you have any questions, or concerns. Michelle Sibley, Education Board Chairperson. 248-890-1481.

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, September 7th and 21st**. If you would like to join them, please contact **Steve Lange** at stephenlange@me.com.

BOOK GROUP

Going forward, we will meet in person in the church library AND live on Zoom (a hybrid experience!). Zoom contact info is listed below.

Wednesday, September 15th at 1 p.m. – We will be discussing "**The Lost Vintage**" by **Ann Mah**. From the Amazon review: "Sweetbitter meets The Nightingale in this page-turner about a woman who returns to her family's ancestral vineyard in Burgundy to study for her Master of Wine test, and uncovers a lost diary, a forgotten relative, and a secret her family has been keeping since World War II."

Topic: Book Group Discussion

Time: 1 PM September 15th - in person in the library on on zoom (below)

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

Meeting ID: 899 5795 0624

Passcode: 372505

MISSIONS MONTH

Missions Month Begins September 19, 2021. For four Sundays, the Missions Ministry Board will highlight missions that are supported by you, the members of North Congregational Church.

Sept. 19: Mark Phelps, Executive Director, Samaritan Counseling Center

The Samaritan Counseling Center of Southeastern Michigan provides professional therapeutic counseling and educational services to all God's people seeking wholeness through emotional and spiritual growth.

Sept. 26: Georganne Ehlert, Livonia Days For Girls Team

Days For Girls is a global organization whose purpose is to establish menstrual equity everywhere. The local team sews and packs feminine hygiene kits which are distributed on mission trips. Girls receiving the kits get basic health education information and the opportunity to continue their schooling.

Oct. 3: Camp Restore NC Volunteers

Camp Restore is a mission service camp in the 9th precinct of Detroit which partners with the local community to achieve projects which bring hope. Camp Restore Detroit is an outgrowth of Camp Restore New Orleans which began during relief efforts after hurricane Katrina.

Oct. 10: Anil Kumar, Salvation Army of Farmington Officer & Pastor

The Salvation Army provides a variety of programs year-round which help communities thrive.

Lori Rhode, Missions Ministry Board Chairperson

NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH GOLF OUTING

Please join us for the North Church Fall Golf Outing at Farmington Hills Golf Club beginning at **3:30 p.m. on the afternoon of Sunday, September 12th.** We will play a nine-hole scramble (beginners welcome) followed by dinner at the Greek Island Bar & Grill at the golf course. Non-golfers are welcome to join us for dinner. The cost for golf will be \$26, and is payable at the golf course. Dinner is a la carte. A signup sheet will be outside Fellowship Hall or you may contact Fellowship Ministry Board Activity Team to sign up.

MISSION BENEVOLENCES for the month of September

Crossroads – Cash donation, Farmington Neighborhood House, Interfaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit, South Oakland Shelter – shelter expenses