

DECEMBER 2014
The Tie That Binds

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Cadillac, Michigan



A MESSAGE FROM PENNY PHELPS

Even though winter is officially still three weeks away, there's no doubt that the season of snow and cold is here. We have stocked up on "ice melt" so that we can insure safe travels from the parking lot to the church. We are making sure that the boiler is in great shape so that we can worship in comfort. We are "hanging the greens" – an old-fashioned expression meaning decorating the church for the Christmas season, and we are planning our annual Christmas Eve candle-light service.

At this time of year there always seems to be a tug-of-war between our list of wants and our list of "thank-yous." My mailbox is full of glossy catalogs, tempting me to spend, spend, spend on things my grandchildren might like (or that I might like). Television is even worse, not to mention the internet. Forget Black Friday – get your bargains NOW! If we can step back from all that pressure, if we can recognize the truly amazing gifts that surround us all the time, perhaps we can gain a better perspective on the season. How blessed we are to have our health, to have a warm shelter, to have family and friends, to have work that is satisfying, to have time and energy to help others. Yes, we worry and fret about our bills, about problems that we cannot resolve, but when we see the great need in our own community that groups such as the Salvation Army, OASIS, the New Hope Shelter, Feeding America, the Shepherd's Table, and Project Christmas strive to meet, we must be thankful for all we have – and for the ability to reach out.

Advent is the season of reflection. My wish for all of us is that we make time to look back on all that we have received, on love and acceptance, on skills and talents, on support in time of pain, on joy and laughter – so that when the great gift of Christmas comes, we are ready to meet it with open hearts.

Penny Phelps

A MESSAGE FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

We changed our UCC ad to reflect a full-time position in August. Since then, we have had 17 profiles sent to us. This brings our total, so far this year, to 41 applicants. The profiles are evenly divided between female and male candidates.

Currently, the Search Committee has 6 profiles that we are considering. Two of these profiles are brand new to us in the past week. We have meetings and interviews scheduled with 3 of these candidates for November and mid-December.

We remain confident our committee will find a great pastor for our church. The earliest we would anticipate this is in the Spring, since most pastors required 60-90 days' notice to prepare for the move. We want to thank the congregation for their continued patience and support of the search process.

EVENTS

Christmas Eve Service

This year's Christmas Eve candle-light Service will be held at
8pm on Wednesday December 24th, with Fellowship Hour afterwards.



Handmade Holiday Crafts Show

Be sure to put **December 6th** on your calendar! Next Saturday the church will once again host the Handmade Holiday Crafts Show, with lots of special gift ideas and a tasty lunch served by the church.

It will run from **10 a.m. until 3 p.m.**, with lunch from 11 until 2.

Bring your friends and neighbors and enjoy the holiday spirit.

Handmade Holiday Sale

December 6, 2014, 10:30 – 3:00 pm

Cadillac Congregational Church

200 E. Harris St., Cadillac, MI



Shop a variety of Local Artists
and Crafters for your
High Quality, Handcrafted items
for this Holiday Season



*The Church will have lunch
available for a small fee*



Keeping it Local 

COMMUNITY



Christmas Music Concerts



"Messiah" Singalong

Will be held at First Congregational Church UCC, Cadillac on **Sunday December 28th**, time to be confirmed.



The A.M.E.N. men's chorus

in conjunction with the women's Philharmonic Choir will be performing on:

Saturday December 6th at 7pm

at Lucas Rehoboth Church.

And Sunday December 7th at 3pm

At Cadillac High School Auditorium.



The Cadillac Women's Philharmonic Choir Christmas Concert and Tea

will be held on:

Monday, December 8th at 1pm

at Cadillac United Methodist Church.



"The Glorious Sounds of Christmas"

December 14th 4pm

At the Cadillac United Methodist Church, 1020 E Division St

Sponsored by "Healing Private Wounds"

Featuring: Pianist and recording artist Sandy Bode, Cadillac High School brass and strings quartets

Organ and piano duets by mother and daughter team Ruth Boonzaaijer and Rachel Potter

Soloists Kathy Wheeler and Emily Meeuwes

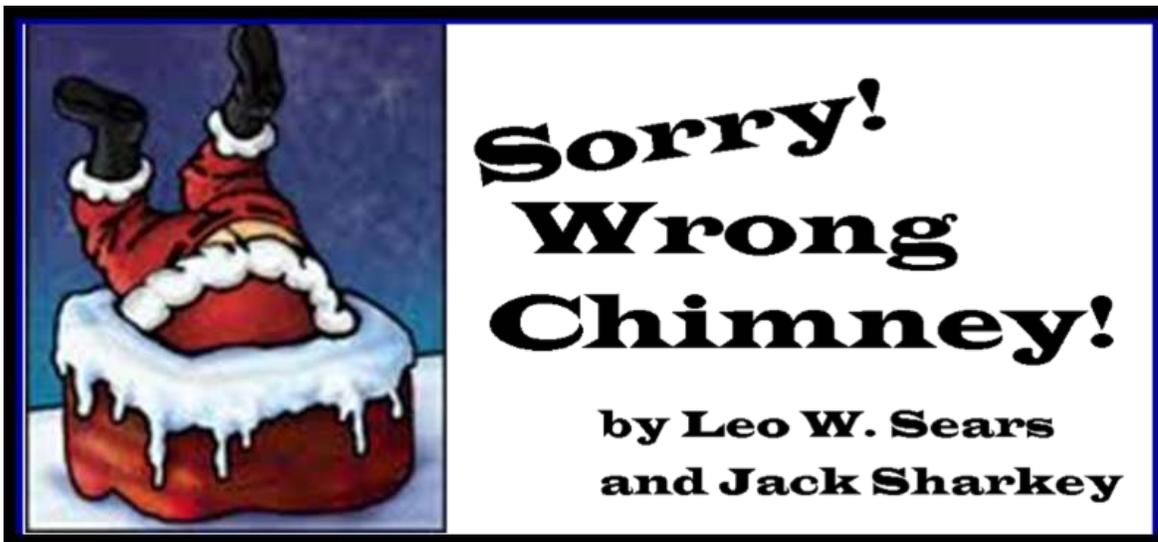
A light supper will be served after the concert. A free offering will be taken to benefit HPW

Footliters



HO-HO-HO!

for a jolly good time, come see...



Underwritten by Dr. M.R.S. Nair

PERFORMANCES

7:00 - December 5, 6, 12, 13

2:00 matinee - December 13

Tickets \$10 in advance from The UPS Store, Brinks Art & Frame Shop, Peebles and Majestic Hair Design in Lake City . \$12 at the door

David moonlights as a department store Santa so he can buy his wife a fur for Christmas. She suspects he's having an affair. Hypnotism, a notorious Santa burglar and a confused policeman add up to a rollicking tale of hilarious Christmas entertainment.

The Cast

Jessika King, Tammy Watson, Kyle Parsley, Robert Houseman,
Andy True, Martha Stenman, Scott King

Dinner & Theatre

Enjoy dinner at the Depot and then *Sorry! Wrong Chimney!*
at 7:00 in the Cadillac High School Auditorium

Friday, December 12th Dinner from 5:00-6:30

10% discount on your dinner when showing your theatre ticket

Tickets available at the Depot



POINSETTIAS

It's time to order poinsettias for the sanctuary!

If you wish to join in this time-honored tradition of purchasing a plant to create a blaze of color at the front of the sanctuary, please fill in the form below and either bring it to church or mail it in.

The deadline is Sunday, December 14th.



Poinsettia Order

I/We _____ wish to order
(Name)

_____ poinsettias at \$8 each in memory / honor (circle one) of:

_____.

Enclosed is my/our payment of \$_____.

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE UCC

Sponsor a Back Bay Mission Christmas Basket!

You can make Christmas a joyful season for a poor, homeless, or at-risk family on the Mississippi Gulf Coast by sponsoring a Christmas Basket or Backpack through Back Bay Mission.

Every year, the Mission distributes Christmas Baskets and Backpacks to poor and homeless individuals and families in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties. The baskets have everything necessary for a festive Christmas dinner. The backpacks have appropriate Christmas food items for people without access to kitchens, as well as other daily living supplies. This year, 150 individuals and families signed up for backpacks and baskets. You can sponsor a basket with a gift of \$25 to the Mission's food pantry. Simply send a check to Back Bay Mission - 1012 Division St. Biloxi, MS 39530 and write 'Christmas Baskets' in the memo line. You can also make a gift the Mission's website: www.thebackbaymission.org. Just enter 'Christmas Baskets' in the comment field. Any additional funds, beyond what is needed for the Christmas Baskets and Backpacks, will be used to support the Mission's food pantry.

Thank you for making Christmas special for a family on the Mississippi Gulf Coast!

Treasurer's Report

Summary Financial Report as of 10/31/14

Penny Phelps

2014 Budget	\$99,550
Portion of budget to come from Reserve	10,000
Portion of budget to come from General Fund	89,550
Average Monthly Expenses (\$89,550/12)	7,462

<u>Month</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Accum. Deficit</u>
Jan.	\$2,406	\$10,185	-\$7,779	\$7,779
Feb.	7,877	5,268	+ 2,609	5,170
Mar.	6,364	12,445	- 6,081	11,251
Apr.	6,178	8,886	- 2,708	13,959
May	5,316	4,688	+ 628	13,331
June	7,880	8,791	- 911	14,242
July	5,337	2,052	+ 2,385	11,857
Aug.	6,568	3,369	+ 3,199	8,658
Sep.	4,523	4,889	- 366	9,024
Oct.	6,130	4,292	+ 1,838	7,186

Once again we had a strong month which reduced our deficit even more. Rejoicing over a deficit of \$7,000 seems odd, but it is much better than the deficits we have faced in the past few years. The trustees are grateful that members and friends of the church continue to support it so that First Congregational Church can be an important presence in our community.

We hope that folks will recognize how vital the church is in their lives and fill out the pledge cards enclosed with the stewardship letter. Very soon the budget committee will be meeting to project our income and expenses for the coming year, and as with our own personal budgets, we need to have a sense of the income we can expect in order to make it work. Although we have certainly benefited from the generosity of our temporary pastors, we know that our expenses will be much higher once we have a settled pastor in place. The role of pastor is critically important in providing leadership as we move forward, and we must be willing to support that leadership.

MISSIONS

Karma Chapo

Our December Mission

The Stewardship committee decided that the December mission for our church would be the United Church of Christ's Christmas Fund.

The Christmas Fund offering (sometimes called Veterans of the Cross offering) is an expression of appreciation and caring to those who served as clergy (and certain lay employees) who are now retired or disabled and financially strained. During this holy time of year, the offering is a profound gift. It helps provide pension supplements, health premium subsidies, emergency assistance to active or retired clergy families, and Christmas gift checks to hundreds of retirees and to those who are disabled.

In these times of economic stress, our retired clergy may be experiencing financial emergencies with few avenues of help. Your contributions to the Christmas Fund could provide some relief to those who have served the church. Please consider giving a special donation to the Christmas Fund.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Prayer List

Please hold these members, friends, and family in prayer:, Brian Belleville, Margaret Leemon, Jenny Freese, Ruth Pitts, Adam Keinath, Aaron Eckert, Bill Bryan, Bill Allinder, Miguel Monge, Terry Oss, Jim & Sharon Thompson, Charles Raymond's family, Marge Mattison, Vicki Rice.

Sunday Morning Schedule

Date	Usher/ Greeters	Liturgist	Fellowship Hour		Sexton	Preacher	
DEC 7	Sandy & Dave Gaunt	Laura Porter	<i>Birth-day Sunday</i>	Sue Wachowski	Dave Gaunt	Barbara Huitema	
DEC 14	Ann Lockwood & Ginny Donley	Charlotte Barfield	Kelly McCann		Robin Corbin	Barbara Huitema	Mission Moment Karma
DEC 21	Robin & Lowell Corbin	Todd Elkins	Karen Anderson		Carol Nilsson	Barbara Huitema	
DEC 24	(Christmas Eve)	various	Trustees		TBA	Barbara Huitema	
DEC 28	Joyce & Mike Oatley	Ann Lockwood	Penny Phelps		Sara Keinath	Barbara Huitema	

DECEMBER 2014 *Non-Church activities that occur in the church.						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<u>1</u> *Jazz. 5:45 pm	<u>2</u> *Jazz.8:30 am	<u>3</u> *Jazz.5:45 pm Choir 7pm	<u>4</u> *Jazz. 8:30am 5:45 pm	<u>5</u> *Jazz.8:30 am	<u>6</u> *Jazz.8:30 am HANDMADE HOLIDAY SALE 10:30am-3pm
<u>7</u> Worship 10:30 am	<u>8</u> *Jazz. 5:45 pm *Symphony Board 7pm	<u>9</u> *Jazz.8:30 am Seed Savers Club 7-9pm	<u>10</u> *Jazz.5:45 pm Choir 7pm	<u>11</u> *Jazz. 8:30am 5:45 pm	<u>12</u> *Jazz.8:30 am	<u>13</u> *Jazz.8:30 am
<u>14</u> Worship 10:30 am POINSETTIA ORDERS DUE	<u>15</u> *Jazz.5:45 pm	<u>16</u> *Jazz.8:30 am	<u>17</u> *Jazz 5:45 pm Choir 7pm	<u>18</u> *Jazz.8:30 am 5:45 pm BoT 6:30 pm	<u>19</u> *Jazz.8:30am	<u>20</u> *Jazz.8:30 am
<u>21</u> Worship 10:30 am	<u>22</u> *Jazz. 5:45 pm	<u>23</u> *Jazz. 8:30 am	<u>24</u> *Jazz.5:45 pm 8pm CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE Newsletter items due	<u>25</u> *Jazz. 8:30 am 5:45 pm	<u>26</u> *Jazz.8:30am	<u>27</u> *Jazz.8:30 am
<u>28</u> Worship 10 :30 am Noisy offering	<u>29</u> *Jazz. 5:45 pm	<u>30</u> *Jazz.8:30 am	<u>31</u> *Jazz.5:45 pm			