

February 2011
The Tie That Binds
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Cadillac, Michigan

PASTOR REYNOLDS' RAP

I have set before you an open door... (Revelation 3:8b, New Revised Standard Version)

Dear Friends,

With the second of our visioning sessions completed this past weekend, we are indeed standing before an open door. It is at once a door that God opens for us into the future...and a door that we open to one another and the community outside our doors. It is an invitation to worship, to fellowship, mission, and ministry. It is a door into possibility and growth, a door of discernment that enables us to lift up our spiritual gifts and values as people of God in Christ and empowers us to use them in the world in hopes that God's healing realm of love, understanding, peace and justice might be advance on this earth.

In more concrete terms, that means claiming and living out our unique congregational identity. It means knowing and utilizing our assets. At the visioning session a number of metaphors for our identity were offered up, including a bird feeder at which all different kinds of birds congregate and are nourished, an orchestra, a choir comprised of a diversity of voices, a place where questions are asked without the expectation of simple answers or even any concrete answers at all. Our next step will be to boil these images down into a few-word phrase or slogan that we can use in all our communications to name and introduce ourselves to the world around us. We will continue to dialogue until we can agree upon a phrase that is resonant for the vast majority of people.

At the meeting we also named a plethora of assets our congregation currently possesses. You will see these taped to the wall in Fellowship Hall, and I'd encourage you to peruse, ponder, and even add to them. On the basis of our many collective assets, meeting attendees began to articulate actions we could and would like to take in the immediate future. We were then invited to choose a single initiative to which we would like to commit to working. Among the actions proposed were

- Youth: Working to make our church more youth-friendly and to create worship and social activities geared to their interests and tastes
- Book Study: Re-creating a book study group that meets at the church in the evening, allowing people who work during the day to participate.
- Community Meals: Inviting the Cadillac community in to dine with us once a month as an act of hospitality and outreach.
- Bring-a-Friend: Making a concerted effort to invite friends who have no church home to attend worship and other church activities.
- Gratitude: Creating opportunities to thank members and friends of the congregation for their contributions to our church life.

Groups and plans have already begun to take shape around these ideas and more. If you were unable to attend the meeting and would like to participate, please see me, and I will point you in the right direction. To be continued...!

Wishing each one of you abundant grace, peace, joy, and hope,
Pastor Carol

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR FEBRUARY 2011

February 6	Matthew 5:13-20	Restoring Beauty
February 13	I Corinthians 3:1-9	From the Heart
February 20	Psalms 119:33-40, I Corinthians 3:10-11,16-23	Expanding Boundaries
February 27	Matthew 6:24-34	Putting Love First

WORSHIP

What is Taizé?

As you may know, First Presbyterian Church, our neighbor across the street, now hosts the ecumenical Taizé service that originated there before migrating to St. Mary's Episcopal Church and then here to First Congregational. Currently worship leadership rotates between **Pastor Carol, Rev. Paul Tomlinson** (First Presbyterian), and **Judy Coffey** (UMC of Cadillac), and music between **Rachel Whiteman** and First Presbyterian's organist **Dianne Case**. Our hope is that this ecumenical base will only grow as time goes on.

For those of you who have never experienced it, Taizé is an intimate, highly experiential form of worship and prayer. Here is a little bit about the origins and the look and feel of Taizé:

❖ A Community

In 1940, when he was just 25 years old, Roger Schütz, the son of a Swiss pastor, came to the village of Taizé in Burgundy, France. In the years that followed, he began sheltering Jewish refugees and praying in the village church. Others joined him, and soon a small community of brothers formed. Believing war in Europe would not cease until Christians stopped killing Christians, they committed themselves to a ministry of reconciliation. Slowly they made life-long commitments to communal life, donned white robes, and adopted a Benedictine style of daily life. Eventually they received Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant brothers from many countries, becoming a monastic model of ecumenism and a destination for European youth. Today, from March to November, as many as 6,000 young people come weekly to commune with the brothers. Focusing on three periods of daily communal prayer, participants delve into their spiritual journeys, explore their faith commitments, and worship with people from all over the world.

❖ A Form of Worship, Music, and Prayer

The worship celebrated at and inspired by the Taizé community is contemplative in style, providing worshipers with time to focus on God's presence within and without. The worship space is lit by candles and often decorated with one or more colorful icons depicting Jesus and scenes from the bible. Much of the prayer is silent.

The music is composed in a chant-like ostinato pattern (a short, simple phrase repeated many times). The phrases are often scriptural and sometimes quotes attributed to devout persons. Each expresses an essential reality, which is quickly understood, then slowly integrated into the body, attitudes, and actions. Often the phrases are in Latin, serving to unify worshipers in multi-lingual settings. Descants are sometimes sung above the chant. The length of each chant is guided by the spirit. Some may take as long as 5 minutes to complete. In this atmosphere of simplicity and

focused attention, participants are free to "rest" in the presence of God. For years, many of the songs were written for the Taizé community by one of its own brothers, Jacques Berthier.

FUN!

FUNd – raiser for DIL (Developments in Literacy) Schools

When: Friday, February 25, 6:00-9:30 pm

Where: Fellowship Hall, First Congregational Church

What: A Night of Food, Fun, and Music for a Cause,

Cause: Developments in Literacy (DIL) Schools in Pakistan. For a \$1500 contribution Individuals or groups can sponsor an entire classroom in a Pakistani school for a year. That's what we'd like to do. DIL is dedicated to providing quality education to disadvantaged children, especially girls, by establishing and operating schools in the underdeveloped regions of Pakistan, with a strong focus on gender equality and community participation. DIL schools in Pakistan emphasize educating girls because Pakistani boys have madrasas available to them to attend, where they often learn a version of radical, violent Islam. The "girl effect" is a recognized phenomenon whereby, if girls can become educated, the economic and political stability of a community improves. When economic conditions are substandard, radical ideology often takes hold. To quote Nicholas Kristof in the New York Times, "It costs \$1,500 to sponsor a D.I.L. classroom for a year, and that's just about the best long-term counterterrorism investment available."

Come and enjoy a supper of barbecue sandwiches, coleslaw, and dessert. There will be crafts available for sale and a musical line-up to tantalize the most discriminating music lovers.

Suggested Donation: \$8 per person, \$15 per family

Facebook

Please join our "UCC-Cadillac" group on Facebook! As our church activities grow, more and more information will be posted there. And for now it is a great, easy way to "gather" as a community, as well as to introduce our local Facebook friends to the church. Many thanks to **Sara Keinath** for creating and administering this group!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Board of Trustees invites parents (and anyone else who is interested) to meet with them in the Sunday School Room during coffee hour on **Sunday, 2/13** to brainstorm about ways to engage the kids during coffee hour each week.

UNITED NORTHERN ASSOCIATION

Our UNA **sister church** for February is **Atlanta Congregational UCC**. Please lift up the congregation and its interim pastor, **Rev. Ginny Titus**, in prayer during the coming month.

MISSIONS

Our Mission Target for February: OASIS & the New Hope Shelter Penny Phelps

“We don’t have any homeless people in our community!” If you’ve ever been to a large city and seen people huddled in doorways, a flattened cardboard box for a mattress and some makeshift blankets their only protection from the cold, it’s easy to come back to Cadillac and say “we have no homeless people.” But you’d be wrong. The fact that so many families wait in line for food distribution, that so many must rely on the free clinic for health care are clear indicators that more and more individuals and families are slipping through the cracks. Lost jobs, foreclosed houses – perhaps they’re “camping out” with extended family or friends, but the truth is, they’re homeless.

Desperation wears away at our dignity and humanity; a once loving relationship becomes abusive. Over the past few years the statistics on the number of women and children who’ve turned to OASIS for shelter and protection has risen dramatically. The number of men seeking shelter at New Hope has likewise gone up. Both agencies even offer help to families, not just individuals. We’re not in a position to take families into our homes, but we can help these agencies extend a hand. If you can, please contribute to the “Missions” fund in February.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for your generous donation to Project Christmas.

God Bless You,

Mona Sou
Chair

(\$364, numerous children’s books and other items were donated by the congregation in December.)

Many, many thanks to

- Members of the **Pastoral Relations Committee** and **Board of Trustees** for the delicious food and gracious hospitality served up at the visioning session
- **Penny Phelps** and **Tom [edit]** for spiffing up the closet in the Minister’s Study
- **Sara Keinath** and **Penny Phelps** for their capable and inspiring worship leadership in Pastor Carol’s absence
- **The congregation** for your generous Christmas gift to Pastor Carol

COMMUNITY

Hope Network Bowl A Thon, Feb. 27, 1-4 pm, Pines Bowling Center 5992 E. M-55

Join the Hope Network staff, friends, and family for a family-friendly fundraiser! All proceeds go directly to benefit Hope Network in Cadillac and the clients they serve.

Cost is \$4.75 per person for 2 games of bowling and shoe rental. Individuals are asked to bowl in teams of 4 and to collect a total of \$50 in pledges from sponsors. Pledges will be collected at the Bowl A Thon. See the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for Pledge sheets and additional information.

Hope Network is a non-profit Christian organization founded in 1963 to empower people with disabilities or disadvantages to achieve their highest level of independence. First Congregational currently contracts with Hope Network for our routine weekly cleaning.

FEBRUARY 2011						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 *Jazz. 8:30 am *Success 5:30-7:15 pm	2 *Jazz. 5:45 pm PRC 5:30 pm Choir 7:00 pm	3 *Jazz. 8:30am 5:45pm	4 *Jazz. 8:30am	5 *Jazz. 8:30 am
6 Communion Sunday Worship 10:30 am	7 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm	8 *Jazz. 8:30 am *Success 5:30-7:15 pm	9 *Jazz. 5:45 pm Choir 7:00 pm	10 *Jazz. 8:30am 5:45pm BOT 5:00 pm	11 *Jazz. 8:30am	12 *Jazz. 8:30am
13 Sunday Worship 10:30 am	14 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm	15 *Jazz. 8:30 am *Audubon Meeting 7 pm	16 *Jazz. 5:45 pm Choir 7:00 pm	17 *Jazz. 8:30 am 5:45 pm BOT 5:00 pm	18 *Jazz. 8:30am	19 *Jazz. 8:30 am
20 Sunday Worship 10:30 am	21 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm Items for Newsletter Due!	22 *Jazz. 8:30 am	23 *Jazz. 5:45 pm Taize Worship First Presb Church 7:00 pm	24 *Jazz. 8:30 am 5:45 pm	25 *Jazz. 8:30am Dinner & Concert FUNdraiser 6:00-9:30 pm	26 *Jazz. 8:30 am Free Clinic Pancake Brunch 10 am-12 pm
27 Sunday Worship 10:30 am	28 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm				*Non-Church activities that occur in the church.	