

March 2011

# *The Tie That Binds*

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
Cadillac, Michigan

## PASTOR REYNOLDS' RAP

<sup>13</sup>"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. <sup>14</sup>"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup>No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16, New Revised Standard Version)

Dear Friends,

Those of you who attended worship on February 6 may recall that, as part of the sermon that day, some "homework" was assigned. In the interest of refreshing memories and spreading the word to folks who weren't present, here is the assignment again:

...I challenge each of us to start keeping a **"Salt and Light" log** where we record the places in our personal lives and in this church's life where we see our own words and actions illuminating and magnifying God's presence in the world: God's love, compassion, and mercy. God's justice. God's passion for the poor, the suffering, and the forgotten. God's redemption. Shining through our unique stained glass windows, bringing out the God-flavor. If you feel comfortable doing so, please send me your lists—or highlights of your lists—from time to time. If I have your permission, we'll share those lists with one another and the people who seek us out on our church website through a **"Salt and Light" blog** we'll post there.

...Our output may start small, but, once our "salt and light" lenses are fully engaged, it may be hard not to see the subtle hand of God everywhere we look...

Think of this assignment as a bit of sleuthing, like the old "Where's Waldo?" series, except this time it's "Where's God?" and more specifically, "Where's God acting in and through my life and person, our church, community, and world?" We know through the bible's witness that God worked through history and oftentimes in collaboration with faithful people's efforts. As a "God is Still Speaking" church, we know this continues to happen to this day. Which means that we, as people of God, are blessed and called to be among the many unique vessels through which God works in the world.

Logging our contributions to God's realm may seem like a strange practice to take up as we prepare to enter into Lent on March 9. Many of us will be contemplating our own brokenness: our mistakes, weaknesses, and even sins. We will be humbling ourselves in order to prepare to receive Jesus' Good Friday sacrifice and God's great gift of Easter resurrection. An exercise in "tooting our own horns" may seem out of place amid dust and ashes and regrets. But the truth is this log is simultaneously partly about us and wholly about God. It is recognition of the intersection of God's creation (us) with God's plan (redemption). Even as we ponder where we've gone wrong in the past year, we can name, share, and grow into our Christian identities as salt and light ever more fully. And for many this log may indeed be an important safeguard against sliding beyond Lenten preparation into the dark,

destructive territory of shame. We can simultaneously hold our human finitude and imperfection with our identity as God's chosen and beloved children. And, in doing so, we are likely to become ever more what we have been named: God's salt and light in the world.

May God guide and bless each of our individual and collective Lenten journeys. And may we spread abundant salt and light near and wide.

Namaste,  
Pastor Carol

## SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR MARCH 2011

March 6	Exodus 24:12-18, Matthew 17:1-9	Dazzling Reign
March 13	Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Matthew 4:1-11	Abundant Grace
March 20	John 3:1-17	Bold Blessing
March 27	Exodus 17:1-7	Thirsty Voices

**\*\*Daylight Savings Time starts Sunday, March 13. Don't forget to spring ahead!\*\***

## FOLLOW-UP CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MARCH 13

Please plan to attend a congregational meeting after worship on March 13 to continue the budget and fundraising conversation begun in the annual meeting in January. We will need everyone's creativity and input to plan and implement strategies to bridge the significant budget gap that is currently projected for 2011.

## THANK YOU!

Many, many thanks to **Sandy [edit]** and **Vickie [edit]** and helpers for decorating, preparing, and serving up a fun and delicious beach party-themed annual meeting luncheon.

## COMMUNITY

### Gourmet Sundae Bar

Moomers presents "A Taste of Summer" benefiting Munson Hospice with a Gourmet Sundae Bar on **Saturday, March 12** from **noon to 9 pm** at Moomers on 7263 N. Long Lake Road west of Traverse City. \$7.50 for adults and \$5.00 for children. For more information, please call Munson Hospice at 231-935-8485 or [jgoodrich@mhc.net](mailto:jgoodrich@mhc.net).

### Six Steps to Success Program

A four-week journey of personal growth, along with tools/principles/systems that will elevate your life to the next level. We will break for Spring Break. Please call me with any questions, or to register: 231-876-0643.

**Where:** First Congregational Church

**When:** March 22 – April 26 (4 weeks with a break for Spring Break)

**Time:** 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

**Cost:** \$79 workshop; \$20 for book

**To register, contact Penney McRae at 231-876-0643 or [penneymcrae@charter.net](mailto:penneymcrae@charter.net)**

## EDUCATION

### **Lenten study series: TWELVE STEPS TO A COMPASSIONATE LIFE** by Karen Armstrong

A number of us would like to honor the spirit of reflection that the season of Lent represents by participating in a book study. Noted author Karen Armstrong (The Case for God, Islam: a Short History, The Battle for God, and many others) has just written a book that seems very appropriate for Lent: Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life. It isn't terribly long—193 pages—and is divided into a chapter for each step, so we could easily divide it into 6 weekly sessions.

Sara [edit], Mary D [edit], and Penny Phelps are each willing to take a turn at leading the discussion, and perhaps others would, also. We plan to meet on Wednesdays, from 5:30 until 6:30, to accommodate folks who work and still be done before choir practice. If another time works better for the group, we can talk that over. The book is available from Amazon for \$13.77, and if we order several there's no shipping charge. It's also available in a "Kindle" format, as well as audio book. The 6 Wednesdays would be March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6 & 13.

Please let us know if you're interested!

### **A Nutritional Health/Book Discussion Group: EAT TO LIVE** by Dr. Joel Fuhrman, M.D.

Sessions will begin directly after coffee hour and run about an hour on Sundays April 3,10,17, and May 1 and 8

Dr. Fuhrman is a board-certified family physician and nutritional researcher who specializes in preventing and reversing disease through nutritional and natural methods. Although "Eat to Live" is touted as a weight loss program, it is actually much more. By replacing nutrient-deficient high calorie food with nutrient rich high fiber food, this program can prevent or reverse many chronic and life-threatening medical conditions. Other 'side effects' besides losing weight are; sleeping better, reversing signs of aging, feeling better physically and emotionally, and increased energy!

The class will be facilitated by Sandy [edit] and will include some of her favorite related topics, including sprouting, green smoothies, cleansing, and medicinal herbs.

Please sign up on the sheet at the back of the sanctuary if you're interested. There will be a place to check if you would also like Sandy to order you a book from Amazon. It will save on shipping of we all order together.

## NURTURE & CARE

As was announced at the annual meeting in January, **Diane [edit]** has graciously agreed to serve as chair of a new Nurture and Care Committee. In this role, Diane will coordinate congregational care for members and friends who are grieving, returning home from the hospital, or suffering from continued illness. Among the services the committee seeks to provide are meals, transportation to and from doctors' visits, cards, and visits.

Diane is currently reaching out to volunteers whose names were gathered through last year's church and Love Inc. talent surveys. However, new volunteers are always welcome and needed. It would also be especially helpful if someone could serve as a back-up for Diane when she is out of town.

If you are interested in helping or are in need of a service the committee provides, please contact Diane [\[edit\]](#)

## MISSIONS

### **Our Mission Target for March: One Great Hour of Sharing**

**Penny Phelps**

Despite all our superficial differences, isn't it great to know that One Great Hour of Sharing is a cooperative effort by nine denominations to pool resources and tackle problems world wide? For example, last year, when floods devastated vast areas of Pakistan, OGHS gifts enabled Church World Services to distribute 16,540 food packages to help 91,200 individuals. In addition, temporary shelter supplies, household goods, medical supplies and tents were made available.

With so many worthy causes soliciting our aid, it's reassuring to think of our small contributions being combined with contributions from many other churches all over the country – and the globe – and then effectively distributed where the need is greatest. In 2009, the UCC received @2,833,600 for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. The largest portion of that, 64 percent, went to support developments in health, education, and agriculture, and another 25 percent was spent in relief of national and international disasters as well as refugees. Please help support the good work of this worthwhile special donation

### **After 26 Project**

Thank you so much for your donation to the After 26 Project!!

Donations like this keep us moving forward toward this very worthwhile cause.

We are currently applying for grants and have our Cabin Fever event coming up on February 26.

Thank you again for your support!!

Karen Patterson

### **Back Bay Mission**

Dear Members of First Congregational Church:

Greetings from Biloxi! I want to offer thanks on behalf of our Board of Directors, our staff, and all those we serve for your recent gift of \$45.00 to Back Bay Mission.

As a new year dawns, Back Bay Mission remains steadfast in our unique ministry of compassion, change, and empowerment. Our enduring belief is that, with your help, we can make a real difference in lives and communities where transformation is needed. To those who suffer and see no reason to hope, our presence with them and our compassionate service offers a glimpse of a brighter future and new possibilities. In the midst of daunting issues like homelessness, poverty, and a lack of affordable housing, we bring a passion for change and the ability to initiate creative responses. Through your gifts, you are a part of all that we do; you are part of making a difference each and every day.

Thank you once again for your generosity to Back Bay Mission. Your continuing support is absolutely essential to this ministry. May God's blessings shower you with life abundant in 2011!

Peace,

Maria Watson, Director of Development

### **Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank, Cadillac**

I just wanted to let you know how much the First Congregational Church donated to us in 2010.

We received 61 pounds of food and \$2,061 in funding.  
These generous donations have helped us to provide 17,175 pound of food into our service area.  
It is amazing what we can do with the support of our friends and neighbors.  
We greatly appreciate everything that you do for us throughout the year.  
Laura Porter-Keller

### **New Hope Shelter**

Dear Friends at the First Congregational Church  
Thank you so much for your gift of \$45.00 to our ministry.  
Because of you we can serve those in need of a warm safe home.  
May God continue to bless you and your ministry.  
New Hope Shelter

### **RE-MEMBER**

Calling all veteran and would-be RE-MEMBER mission trippers!

For the second year, the United Northern Association will be sending groups to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation: a youth group in the summer and an adult group in the fall. On **Saturday, April 2 at 10:00 am**, a **RE-MEMBER Summit** will be held at First Congregational Church Gaylord. This meeting will be an opportunity for interested parties and folks who have gone out before to meet and have any questions answered. Commitments would need to be made ASAP after the meeting.

### **FUN!**

#### **Dinner with Friends**

With spring's return comes the return of Dinners with Friends (or Lunches, Breakfasts, or Brunches; depending upon your group's preference) as an opportunity to extend community fellowship beyond coffee hour. It's a fun way to get to know one another better in an even more relaxed environment.

How it Works:

- ❖ If you are interested in sharing a meal with church members and friends, add your name to the sign-up sheet at the back of the sanctuary. If you would like to host a meal in your home, please check the appropriate box.
- ❖ Once enough people have signed up, an event organizer will assign hosts to groups of approximately 7 other people and provide them with contact information for the participants.
- ❖ From there the group can decide on specifics together, such as whether they would like to gather around a particular theme or cuisine and whether they prefer to eat in a home, Fellowship Hall, or a restaurant in the morning, at noon, or in the evening. Creativity and personalization are strongly encouraged!
- ❖ Lather, Rinse, and repeat! Our hope is that Dinners with Friends will again become a regular part of the church's fellowship life, strengthening our ties to one another and providing opportunities to extend hospitality to newcomers in our church community.

\*Please note that this time around Pastor Carol will not attend every gathering, but will participate in at least one group and possibly more.

### **UNITED NORTHERN ASSOCIATION**

Our UNA **sister church** for March is **Benzonia First Congregational UCC**. Please lift up the congregation and its interim pastor, **Rev. Dan Furman**, in prayer during the coming month.

## Spring Meeting

The UNA Spring Meeting will convene on **Saturday, April 30 at 9:00 am** at **First Congregational Church Alpena**. This year's guest speaker is **Rev. Toby Jones**, author of *The Way of Jesus: Reforming Spiritual Communities in a Post-Church Age* and a northern Michigan Presbyterian pastor, living and working in a faith community modeled after his book.

Toby's new book offers the nation's first viable alternative to the dying institutional church. His seven principles offer groups of spiritually minded seekers and questioners everywhere a way to experience the benefits of genuine Christian community. In his own words: "The song 'Learn to be Still' by The Eagles contains the line, 'We are like sheep without a shepherd.' There is an almost identical messages in Mark 6:34 and for the words 'learn to be still,' see Psalm 46:10," Jones said. "This is an example of a sort of literal, word for word use of biblical material...I am also interested in the less literal, more thematic use of biblical material like we see in U2's 'I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For,' which contains lines like: 'You broke the bonds and you loosed the chains. Carried the cross of my shame, of my shame,'" he said. "I think God is alive and working in the culture, and I look for God's presence there. I want to take Jesus' persona, and I want to emulate it. He attended weddings and made more wine for the reception."

If you are interested in hearing Toby speak and participating in this year's meeting, please see **Pastor Carol** or **Penny Phelps** for a registration form.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Summary of 2/10 Meeting

Laura [edit]

- Visioning Process - the Work Continues

The Board continues to discuss the outcomes of the Visioning Meeting and methods for going forward with the recommendations that came out of that process. Concerns remain about how to go from talk to action. Below is a listing of those suggestions/actions:

- ❖ Youth: Dave Gaunt did reach out to Tyler Boolman and the Campos, but hasn't had a chance to report back to the board.
- ❖ Community Meal: Penny Phelps and Pastor Carol are spearheading this initiative.
- ❖ Bring a Friend to Church: Sara Keinath suggested that a Sunday in May be selected for this and will help organize this event.
- ❖ Book Study: The group is still seeking a leader/organizer.

- Challenges of Budget Shortfall

The Board also spent considerable time discussing the \$18,000 budget shortfall and brainstormed about different possibilities to raise money. These included: a silent auction, and holding fundraisers when events/activities were being held in Cadillac. Further, there was interest in investigating the Meijer Community Support program that gives back a percentage of receipts to organizations/charities of designation when members use their Meijer credit cards or pay with cash - at Meijers. Melissa Thompson will get the application for this and one of the board members will make a presentation about this program to the congregation in the near future.

- Upcoming Events/Happenings

- ❖ Feb. 25 - Music FUNdraiser for DIL (Developments in Literacy)
- ❖ Feb. 27 - Neutral Pulpit for Community Church in Ludington
- ❖ Dinner with Friends - will soon have sign-up sheets available for those who would like to participate in this.

- ❖ Ash Wednesday - March 9 - Special Ash Wednesday Service possible
- ❖ Apr. 20 – Host CAMA (Cadillac Area Ministerial Association) Lenten Breakfast
- ❖ Apr. 21 – Possible Tenebrae/Maundy Thursday Dinner and Service
- ❖ Possible Free Health Clinic Banquet- details to follow

MARCH 2011							
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
		1 *Jazz. 8:30 am	2 *Jazz. 5:45 pm 7pm choir PRC 5:30 pm	3 *Jazz. 8:30am 5:45pm	4 *Jazz. 8:30am	5 *Jazz. 8:30 am	
6 <b>Communion Sunday Worship 10:30 am</b>	7 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm	8 *Jazz. 8:30 am	9 *Jazz. 5:45 pm 7pm choir Ash Wednesday	10 *Jazz. 8:30am 5:00pm BOT 5:45 pm	11 *Jazz. 8:30am	12 *Jazz. 8:30am	
13 <b>Sunday Worship 10:30 am Congregational Meeting</b>	14 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm	15 *Jazz. 8:30 am  *Audubon Meeting 7 pm	16 *Jazz. 5:45 pm  7pm choir	17 *Jazz. 8:30 am 5:45 pm	18 *Jazz. 8:30am	19 *Jazz. 8:30 am	
20 <b>Sunday Worship 10:30 am</b>	21 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm  <b>Items for Newsletter Due!</b>	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	26 *Jazz. 8:30 am Worship Planning 9:00 am Pancake Brunch 10:00 am	
27 <b>Sunday Worship 10:30 am</b>	28 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm	29 *Jazz. 8:30 am	30 *Jazz. 5:45 pm 7pm choir	31 *Jazz. 8:30 am 5:45 pm	*Non-Church activities that occur in the church.		