

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

**PASTOR REYNOLDS' RAP**

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers." For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, "Peace be within you." For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good. (Psalm 122:6-9, NRSV)

Dear Friends,

As we approach the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, it's hard not to have mixed feelings about these past ten years, as well as the various 9/11 commemorations that will soon be taking place. We continue to grieve the devastating loss of life that occurred that day—thousands of innocent lives taken in little more than the blink of an eye. With only six degrees of separation, it's a very rare person who does not know someone directly or indirectly who was personally impacted by this tragedy. While our pain may be in degrees, it is universal nonetheless.

In the days and years that have followed, it sometimes seems that we have only continued to accumulate losses in relation to these events, losses almost too numerous to count. Several that come to mind for me are loss of innocence, loss of freedoms and civil rights, loss of national direction and perspective, loss of economic stability, loss of religious and ethnic tolerance, and even greater loss of lives of our own and the purported enemy alike. Undoubtedly, you can add a few of your own.

Perhaps what these individual losses add up to is a cumulative loss of our celebrated American identity, or at least the illusion of that identity. Despite our forefathers' virtuous proclamations, prejudice, civil injustice, economic challenge, war and violence have long had a place in the lived American experience. Yet never before have they been cast in such bold relief, for all the world to see. It's a little like the Wizard of Oz being caught behind the curtain and exposed as a mere human being instead of the superhero everyone had imagined and, indeed, hoped.

Now it seems there are more and more loud voices emerging in attempts to pull that curtain back into place and restore the myth of American exceptionalism. But it comes at the ongoing cost of human justice, dignity, quality of life, and life itself. If we continue down this road, I venture to say the 9/11 terrorists will have won, if they have not done so already. And, in so doing, they have called both American and Christian ideals into question.

It all sounds pretty dire, and it is, but it's important not to lose sight of the fact that God is with us in this far-flung mess, and that the gospel of Jesus Christ is comprised of words of **hope** for times such as these. As a UCC church, we have a unique Christian perspective to offer the world, and it is perhaps more important than ever to raise our voices above the fray to have the word of God's extravagant grace and inclusivity heard. Yet to be congruent with our message and our unique identity, we might consider starting with a whisper instead of a shout. It might actually attract more attention.

Here's how UCC Associate General Minister Edith Guffey put it in her August 22 piece, "This Time, We Can Do More than Pray:"

On September 11, 2001, in the face of the attacks and the incredible loss of lives, all we

could do was pray. As we approach the 10th Anniversary of September 11th, I hope we pray for all who feel the loss of precious family members and friends - but we can do more this time. We can speak up when we hear comments or witness acts of aggression or insult based on racial and/or religious differences. We can be proactive in teaching acceptance of all of God's children and refuse to act out of fear and ignorance. Fear cannot be the winner here. I hope that is how we honor those who died on September 11<sup>th</sup>. —Excerpted from <http://www.ucc.org/911remembrance/Edith-s-Letter.pdf>

May we be so bold. Amen.

God's Grace and Peace to each one of you,  
Pastor Carol

## PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Please note that I will be away on vacation and attending a UCC workshop from September 19-October 1. If you have a pastoral care need in my absence, please contact Mercy Hospital chaplain **Rev. Ed Gilbert** at 231-342-4397.

As on ongoing reminder, below is my regular work schedule. There are also meetings that occur monthly on Wednesday or Thursday evenings and even Saturday mornings, as well as visits, coffee, or meals shared with church members and friends, which typically occur on Thursdays or Fridays.

**Monday, Tuesday** Sabbath/Days Off\*

**Wednesday** Sermon and Worship Study and Preparation

**Thursday** Office Hours 1:00-5:00 pm (Please call or e-mail ahead for an appointment.)

**Saturday** Sermon Writing and Final Worship Preparation

**Sunday** Worship and Coffee Hour

\*Please note that, with the exception of pastoral care emergencies, phone calls and e-mails received on my days off will be returned on Wednesday or Thursday. Please direct emergency calls to my cell phone: 231-884-9884. If it is not an emergency, please leave a message in my church voicemail box: 231-775-7632 #1. Thank you.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

September 4 Acts 17:22-28

September 11 Romans 14:1-12

September 18 Psalm 104:1-20a, 24a

September 25 tbd (Penny Phelps Preaching)

Progressive Christianity Point 3:  
Seek community that is inclusive  
of ALL people

## UNITED NORTHERN ASSOCIATION

Our UNA **sister church** for September is First Congregational UCC **Onekama**. Please lift up the congregation and its pastor, **Rev. Frank Haines**, in prayer during the coming month.

### Fall Meeting

The UNA Fall Meeting will be held at First Congregational UCC of **Benzonia** on **October 1**. The guest presenter will be **Rob Voyle**, who is an Episcopal priest, psychologist, executive coach, and director of the Clergy Leadership Institute. His specialty is **Appreciative Inquiry** (the technique

**Rev. Cheryl Burke** used with us during our visioning sessions). A **boundary training class** for clergy and lay persons will also be offered on Friday. Details to follow as they become available.

## WORSHIP

### Rally Day

Please join us on **September 18** as we welcome back and formally commission our **choir members** and **Sunday school teachers**, receive **new members** into our church family, and engage in our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual **Water & Stone ritual** to share summer memories with one another in a meaningful way.

Reminder: In preparation for the ritual, **please collect a little water or a small stone from a place you have visited over the summer and bring it to worship that day.** If you have already completed your summer travels or if you did not venture far from home this year, local stones, tap, or lake water are equally worthy symbols. If we receive enough water, it will be sanitized for use in baptisms. With last year's collection, the stones will form a congregational cairn.

### Flowers

The Board would like to revive the tradition of having fresh flowers placed on the communion table each Sunday as a way to visually enhance our worship and bring a little bit of the outdoors' beauty inside. This is an opportunity to share your garden's bounty with the congregation, as well as to remember a departed loved one or honor a living friend or relative. If you would like to participate, please add your name and dedication information to the Sunday worship sign-up list.

## JOYS AND CONCERNS

### Prayer List

Please hold these members, friends, and family in prayer: **Lee M, Dorothy C, Brian B, Rita & Dick, the Lakin Smith family, Joyce & Mike, Margaret, Skip, the Campo family, the Teasdale family, Jenny, Barbara**

### Thank You!

Many, many thanks to **Gert** and **Sperry** for the improvements to the women's restroom they sponsored and oversaw, to **Pat** for creating holders and an organizational system for our name tags, and to **Troy** and **Bob** for offering us an extravagant welcome at their home this summer, as they hosted so many fabulous church events--from the choir party to the Board of Trustees retreat to the August Sunday Fun-Day.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Summary of 8/8 Meeting

**Laura, Clerk**

\*Fund raising efforts continue to dominate much of the board discussion.

\* A Fall/Holiday Bazaar is planned for **November 12**.

\*Movie cards may be purchased in November - look for more details about this fund raising effort in October.

\*Robin is updating the church photo directory.

\*September 18 - New Member Sunday - several new members will be welcomed to First Congregational

**\*Mark Your Calendars! The Semi-Annual Meeting is October 2, after worship. \***

\*Sunday School News: A small group is looking at Sunday School curriculums and it is proposed that Sunday School be held after church service, during coffee hour.

\*Clean up of the Rainbow Room so that it can be used for Sunday School and other meetings.  
\*Coming soon - A Jam Making Event! Keep tuned for announcements regarding making jam for welcome gifts for visitors. All help is welcome!

### Treasurer's Report

**Penny Phelps**

Pledges received through 7/31/11	\$34,018.99
Total Funds available for Budgeted Expenses	49,350.27
Average monthly expenses (including payroll and operations) total approx. \$7,320 per month x 7 mo. =	51,240.00
At this point in our fiscal year, we are <b>short</b>	1,889.73

Thanks to the super effort on the part of all those who helped with the Arts Festival Food Fair, we did reduce the shortfall by \$1,000 in July. Let's keep the momentum going for the rest of 2011!

### Photo Directory

Reminder: A new photo directory will be issued in October. Please see **Robin** if you would like to add or update your photo, and let us know if you have candid shots to share. A sign-up sheet for directories will be issued soon. The cost will be **\$6.00 per copy**.

## MISSIONS

### Our Mission Target for September: Feeding America (Food Bank) Penny Phelps

The headlines seem to roll off a continuous spool, like an old eight-track player: foreclosures are increasing, unemployment is rising, families are caught in a vicious spiral of lost jobs, lost insurance, lost homes. One service that is keenly aware of the problem is Feeding America, our regional food bank. Laura Porter, the manager of the Cadillac office, oversees the needs of agencies in ten counties, and whether it's a large community like Cadillac or Traverse City, or a small community, the need is persistent and growing. As people lose their homes to foreclosure, they find themselves moving in with family or friends, and as those households expand, they find that they need help to feed everyone under their roof.

The Rotary Club has become an essential go-between, helping families get the food they need from the food bank. Twice a month, on the first and third Thursday, a truck brings 10,000 pounds of food to town and parks behind Goodwill. In exchange for no more than minimal information (name, address, phone number and reason for need) – mostly in case of a re-call – volunteers help 200 families select 50 pounds of food each.

Our gifts can go a long way in helping Feeding America help others.

### Re-Member

There will be a fundraiser for the October mission trip to Pine Ridge Reservation at Culver's on Boon Road on **Monday, September 19** from **5-8 pm**. We'd like to recruit as many FCC "Celebrity Servers" as possible to act as greeters, order runners, and cleaners. In return for our efforts, we will receive any tips and 10% of net sales. This is a fun activity, and the responsibilities are easy enough to learn in a 15-minute training session. Please add your name to the sign-up list at the back of the sanctuary or contact **Dave G** or **Pastor Carol** if you'd like to lend a hand.

## COMMUNITY

### Movies for the Mind

Resumes on **September 25**. Film details will be circulated when they become available.

FUN!

### **Bread and Fish Sunday Supper**

Larry and Connie invite us to their home on **Berry Lake** on **September 11** at **1 pm** for an afternoon of swimming, boating, fishing, bird watching, yard games, sipping, and supping. They will provide fish chowder, vegetable venison soup, apple cider, coffee, and water and invite us to bring any form of bread (yeast, gluten free, sweet, yeast free...) with a dip or topping (olive oil, cheese, fruit spread, hummus, Nutella...). If you would prefer some other soup or beverage feel free to bring some. In case of cold and/or rain, the soup will taste even better, and we'll build a fire in the fireplace and play indoor games. For more details, please pick up a flyer at church.

### **Third Sunday Fun-Days**

If you have ideas for future Fun-Days, please speak to **Sandy G.**

## EDUCATION

### **A Course in Miracles**

The Course in Miracles group has moved from Berkana into our church. They meet the **2<sup>nd</sup>** and **4<sup>th</sup>** **Thursday** of each month from **10:00-11:30** and invite anyone interested in living a more spiritual and fulfilling life to join them. A **\$3** per person donation is requested for use of the church building.

The Course is a profound, contemporary text for learning to forgive grievances, open to inner peace, and awaken to the love of God. For anyone who seeks to make positive change in his/her life, A Course in Miracles teaches a way to universal love and peace. Although it is Christian in statement, the Course deals with universal spiritual themes.

### **Sunday School**

Sunday school resumes **October 1** and is undergoing some changes! A task force is currently reviewing curriculum, as well as considering alternate meeting times (during coffee hour?) and locations (in the "Crow's Nest?"). In addition, we are exploring the possibility of creating two sections in order to increase age appropriateness. If you have constructive feedback you'd like to share, please speak to **Laura, Linda, or Pastor Carol**. And we always need teachers! Please see **Laura** if you would like to lend a hand!

### **Spanish Class**

Ten people have signed up for **Miguel's** Spanish language classes! Based on the feedback received about timing, the group will meet at the church on **Tuesdays** from **4:30-5:30** beginning **September 13**. After Pastor Carol and Miguel have met to discuss the materials needed, a separate e-mail will be sent to class members with additional details.

## VISION

### **Accessible to All (A2A)**

From September 29-October 1, **Pastor Carol** will attend the **Widening the Welcome II: Inclusion for All** Conference in Columbus, OH. A collaborative effort between the **UCC Mental Illness Network** and the **UCC Disabilities Ministries**, this event seeks to provide education about disabilities, mental illnesses, and brain disorders; tools to develop Mental Health Ministries and A2A Covenants in congregations; and opportunities to share best practices. Pastor Carol hopes to return to Cadillac with lots of new ideas and resources to share. The timing is perfect, as our Board is exploring ways we can become more and more welcoming to people of all abilities.

## **Open and Affirming**

\*The **August 17** ONA "pre-task-task force" joint meeting with **United Church of Wayland** and **First Congregational UCC Coloma** was fruitful and energizing and sent us home with lots of helpful resources, information, and stories to ponder. We look forward to sharing some of these with you at the October 2 Semi-Annual Meeting. At that time we will also vote together on whether we as a congregation would like to embark upon a more formal exploration of the ONA process. To get involved, please contact chairperson **Karma** or **Pastor Carol**.

\*Although you haven't heard much about it recently, **Pastor Carol** has continued to work behind the scenes with CAPS Superintendent of Schools **Paul Liabenow** and Human Services Leadership Council Director **Ken Nydam** to create a support group for gay and questioning high school students, with our church as a start-up home base. We are getting closer; in fact, it could happen as soon as September. We are now in the process of clearing out the Crow's Nest for that purpose (as well as for Sunday school classes). We will prepare a more formal "wish list" as this ministry but, for now, if you have beanbag chairs or a TV to spare, please let **Pastor Carol** know!

## **Whole Earth**

On **September 8** from **6:00-8:30**, **Transition Cadillac**, in collaboration with the **Cornerstone Community Garden** will offer a **Home Food Preservation Class**. Join in the fun of community canning and learn safe, efficient ways to preserve LOCAL fruits and veggies. Take home something for your pantry! This "ReSkilling" workshop is for beginners as well as those with experience preserving food and will be taught by our own **Shari Spoleman**. A Suggested donation of **\$10.00**. Register early; space is limited to 20. Produce and supplies will be provided. Handouts will also be available. To register or for more info, call 231-779-5463.

## **The Center for Progressive Christianity**

At our Semi-Annual Meeting on October 2, we will decide as a congregation if we would like to affiliate with the Center for Progressive Christianity at this time. That is, we will decide 1) whether we are able to affirm for ourselves the 8 Points the Center uses to define Progressive Christianity and 2) whether our church will be added to the list of Progressive Christian organizations and individuals maintained on the TCPC website. In preparation for this vote, Pastor Carol has sought to educate the congregation by preaching on one or more of the Points each month. So far she has covered the following: **Points 1 & 2** on **May 22**, **Points 4 & 8** on **June 5**, **Point 7** on **June 19**, and **Point 6** on **July 31**. In the coming weeks, the series will conclude with an **August 28** sermon on **Point 5**, a **September 25** sermon on **Point 3**, and a **final sermon tying it all together** on **October 2**.

If you missed any of the sermons in the series or if you need a refresher, you are encouraged to visit the sermon tab of our website (<http://www.firstcongcadillac.org/sermons.html>) to read transcripts of those sermons or listen to the audio versions.

As you know, the 8 Points were originally drafted in 2003 and were updated even as we began to explore them earlier in 2011. The current version follows on the next page.

## New 8 Points 2011 Version

# By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean that we are Christians who...

- 1 Believe that following the path and teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;
- 2 Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;
- 3 Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to:
  - Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics,
  - Believers and agnostics,
  - Women and men,
  - Those of all sexual orientations and gender identities,
  - Those of all classes and abilities;
- 4 Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;
- 5 Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;
- 6 Strive for peace and justice among all people;
- 7 Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth; and
- 8 Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion, and selfless love.



"The 8 Points" (version 2011)  
The Center for Progressive Christianity  
ProgressiveChristianity.org

It has been a year and a half since time and talent surveys were last completed by the congregation, and, things for many of us have changed significantly since then. Please help us to update our records by completing the 2011 version below and depositing it either in the offering plate on Sunday or in the box outside of Pastor Carol's office. Thank you.

**MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE (2011)**  
**SKILLS & INTERESTS**  
**First Congregational Church, Cadillac, MI**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Gifts and Skills: (check all that apply)**

- Music:
  - Vocal
  - Piano Instrument \_\_\_\_\_
- Cooking
- Sewing
- Arts & Crafts; special interest? \_\_\_\_\_
- Languages: Which? \_\_\_\_\_
- Carpentry skills
- Financial Management
- Computer skills/tech support

**Activities of the Church: (check all that interest you)**

Choir

- Teaching Sunday School: Particular age? \_\_\_\_\_
- Working with Youth
- Cooking for Special Events
- Helping with Coffee Hour on Sunday mornings
- Serving as Liturgist during worship services
- Ushering during church
- Greeting before church
- Worship Planning
- Mission and Outreach
  - Helping with monthly Benefit Pancake Brunch (last Saturday)
  - Re-Member trip to Pine Ridge Reservation
- Nurture and Care
  - Visiting and/or Sending Cards to members who are ill or shut in
  - Providing Meals
  - Driving members to/from church
- Event Planning (for fellowship or fundraising)
- Church Communications and Publicity
- Gardening and Landscape Assistance
- Building Maintenance
- Board membership: Particular interests? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments or things we missed:

## SEPTEMBER 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 *Jazz. 8:30am 5:00pm  <b>Pre-ONA Task Force 4:00 pm</b>	2 *Jazz. 8:30am	3 *Jazz. 8:30 am
4 <b>Communion Sunday Worship 10:30 am</b>	5 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm	6 *Jazz. 8:30 am	7 *Jazz. 5:45 pm  <b>Choir 7:00 pm</b>	8 *Jazz. 8:30am 5:00pm  Miracles 10:00 am  <b>BOT 5:45 pm</b>	9 *Jazz. 8:30am	10 *Jazz. 8:30am
11 <b>Sunday Worship 10:30 am</b>  <b>Bread &amp; Fish Dinner 1 pm</b>	12 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm	13 *Jazz. 8:30 am	14 *Jazz. 5:45 pm  <b>Choir 7:00 pm</b>	15 *Jazz. 8:30 am 5:45 pm	16 *Jazz. 8:30am	17 *Jazz. 8:30 am
18 <b>Sunday Worship-- Rally Day &amp; New Members Sunday 10:30 am</b>	19 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm  <b>Items for News- letter Due!</b>	20 *Jazz. 8:30 am  Audubon 7 pm	21 *Jazz. 5:45 pm  Taize Worship First Presb Church 7:00 pm	22 *Jazz. 8:30 am 5:45 pm  Miracles 10:00 am	23 *Jazz. 8:30am	24 *Jazz. 8:30 am  <b>Worship Planning 9:00 am</b>  <b>Pancake Brunch 10-12</b>
25 <b>Sunday Worship 10:30 am</b>  Movies for the Mind 6:00 pm	26 *Jazz. 4:30 pm 5:45 pm	27 *Jazz. 8:30 am	28 *Jazz. 5:45 pm  <b>Choir 7:00 pm</b>	29	30	*Non-Church activities that occur in the church.