

September 2012
The Tie That Binds
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Cadillac, Michigan

PASTOR REYNOLDS' RAP

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ...But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:11-13, 15-16, NRSV)

No doubt you've heard the popular saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, a similar statement could be made about churches. Say, "It takes a congregation to nurture and grow a church and its ministries?" We tend to think that most things church are the pastor's job, but the reality is that we are all ministers of the church, and it is the specific call of the pastor to "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:11). Not only this, but so many and varied are the gifts required for ministry that no one person could possibly possess them all. That's why we are the body of Christ, comprised of many different parts. We're each needed to play our unique role in that body's overall functioning.

With the busy lives so many of us lead today, not to mention the budget deficits our church encounters annually, properly equipping saints and fully exercising our gifts for ministry are increasingly difficult objectives for us to accomplish, but not impossible. At the board of trustees' retreat this past Saturday, board members and I discussed an assigned book, *The Church Mouse: Leadership Lessons from the Magic Kingdom* by Rev. Christopher W. Perry. The book covers a range of aspects of church life, from hospitality to dreaming and visioning to volunteer training to attending to the fine details and more; all for the purpose of attracting and welcoming new people, nurturing and assimilating them into the community, then seeing their lives transformed by God, training them in Christian discipleship, and launching them into positions of leadership in the church. Ideally this will be an ongoing cycle as leaders are shaped and eventually go on to mentor the next generation of leaders.

The ideas presented in this book energized and excited us as a group, but I think it's fair to say that they also overwhelmed us. You know how it goes: We get enthusiastic, but then we start talking about how small our congregation is. We start talking about how old we are. We start talking about how limited our budget is. And suddenly the moment is gone. Hope has left the building. And yet this need not be so. Many of the book's proposals required little to no money, and each of the ministry teams it discussed need not consist of more than a couple of people. Beyond this, when we're talking about ministry teams as opposed to committees, we're talking about people doing things we feel called to and are passionate about, things that, if anything, generate more energy within us, which in turn energizes those around us...so all of a sudden everything looks different, maybe even within reach. God has a tendency to work that way.

We would like to share this book and its innovative ideas with you and to involve more and more members and friends in the emerging vision and revitalization of our church and its ministries. If you're ready to take a leap of faith with us, please see me or one of our board members (**Donna, Penny, Sue, Tom, Sperr, Carol, Bob**). If we don't hear from you, don't be surprised if we tap you on the shoulder one day soon! We hope you'll journey with us into an exciting future for this progressive beacon-on-a-hill of a church.

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER 2012

September 2	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23	Be Love
September 9	Ephesians 4:25-5:2	Be Opened
September 16	Exodus 17:1-7, Numbers 20:1-11, Joshua 4, Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4	Water & Stones
September 23	James 3:1-12	First in Caring
September 30	Ephesians 2	ONA/Breaking Down Walls-- Rick Reineke Preaching

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Many thanks

-to **Troy** and **Bob** for hosting the annual board retreat, followed the very next day by their annual Sunday Fun-Day pool party.

-to **John & Dan** for hosting a lakeside pizza [on the grill] party/Sunday Fun-Day in the spirit of Candy. Unfortunately the weather wasn't quite conducive to sailing or playing in the lake.

Prayer List*

Please hold these members, friends, and family in prayer: **Lee, Dorothy, Brian, Margaret, Jenny, Ruth & Bill, Adam, Sherry, Skip & Carol, Tim**

*Please contact **Pastor Carol** to have a name added to or removed from the Prayer List.

PHOTO/ADDRESS DIRECTORY

If you haven't picked up your 2012 photo/address directory yet, please see **Donna** at the back of the sanctuary or in coffee hour on Sunday. For a **suggested donation of \$5.00** to cover production costs, you will get a binder of photographs and addresses for all active members, families, and friends of the church. Whether or not you are able to make this donation, you are invited to take a copy home with you.

WORSHIP & WELCOME

Rally Day

This year's Rally Day will happen on **September 16**. During worship we will formally **recognize last year's choir members and Sunday school teachers**, then **commission this year's choir and teachers** to their respective ministries. In addition, we will hold our 3rd annual **Water & Stone Ingathering Ceremony** to share a bit of our summer vacations with one another in a meaningful way.

In preparation for the ingathering 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've 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.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Summary of 8/18 Meeting

FINANCIAL REPORT- Total income from July 1 to July 29, 2012 was \$9,911, which included income from the Art Fair food booth.(\$1,694). Total deficit to date is \$11,745. **Carol** suggested a fund raiser auction, using congregants' talents and donations. It was suggested that a committee might work on

looking for additional resources and ideas. Linda suggested a book called Putting Fun into Fund Raising as a starting point. **Sue** will research and find members who are willing to work on developing a plan.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Stewardship: 2 more pamphlets will be inserted in bulletins for next 2 Sundays. **Donna** requested we share them with other church members and friends we have contact with outside of church.
- Worship and Welcome: The birthday/anniversary cake and decorations provided by **Bob** were well received and the coffee team contributed some healthier choices as well
- Christian Education: Safe Church Policy - Request for Central Registry forms are to be completed by those who will be working with children. It was asked if these forms would also provide intra-state background checks or should we get another form. **Sue** will check with DHS on this. It was also suggested that if there is any cost for additional background checks that the individual would be asked to pay their own fee or split it with the church. The pastor, Board Members, and teachers are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect of our children or adults to the Department of Human Services. Booklets and contact numbers were provided to Board members.
- Sunday Fun-Day: A special "thank you" and "hooray" for the swim party hosted by **Troy** and **Bob** at their beautiful home on August 12. Wonderful attendance, food, and fun made it a very special occasion. The last planned Sunday Fun-Day on August 19 at John Smith's home is in memory of **Candy** who originated these outings.
- ONA: Carol recently spoke with Grand Rapids St. John's UCC pastor **Rev. Bill Lyons**. He would like to offer a community wide class at our church, which teaches people to use different methods of biblical interpretation to understand "What the Bible Really Says about Gay Christians (May Surprise You)." Classes would be 1.5 hrs and run for 7 weeks. It is suggested that a meal be planned for each session. Registrations needed with suggested donation

PASTOR'S REPORT - With board approval, **Carol** will be scheduling pulpit exchanges with Zion Lutheran Church and First Presbyterian Church.

Semi-Annual Meeting

The Semi-Annual Meeting will be held after worship on **September 23**.

Treasurer's Report

Penny Phelps

As of the end of July, the facts are pretty grim. Listed below are the current figures:

Total Budgeted Expenses for 2012 -- \$85,958

Monthly expenses (\$85,958/12) -- 7,163

Income breakdown by month

	<u>Needed</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Deficit</u>
January	\$7,163	\$5,655	-\$1,508
February	7,163	4,854	- 2,309
March	7,163	3,735	- 3,428
April	7,163	5,217	- 1,946
May	7,163	7,530	+ 367
June	7,163	4,525	- 2,638
July	7,163	6,880	- 283

Current Deficit - \$11,745

You can see that contributions to the General Fund exceeded projected expenses only one month so far this year. Not even the extra injection of the Art Festival Food Booth boosted our July income up to the necessary level.

So the question is, what can we do to meet our expenses? Even though \$85,958 seems like a large amount to maintain a small church, it isn't. We have many fixed expenses, such as insurance and utilities and salaries (modest as those are). We've been fortunate so far this year not to experience any extraordinary expenses; the board is doing everything it can to hold the reins.

We are interested in any suggestions you may have about ways to bring in extra funds. The bottom line, however, is that we must all do what we can to support our church. If you are behind on your pledge, please make every effort to catch up. If you do not pledge, please prayerfully consider what you can do to increase your support of the church.

Our semi-annual meeting is just a few weeks away – let's see what creative ideas we can generate by then.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA)

Upcoming Events

- ***September 6:** Task Force Meeting, 6:00 pm at Troy's and Bob's home
- ***September 21:** Dinner and a Movie, tbd, 6:00 pm
- ***September 23:** Study Session #7 (presentation during Semi-Annual Meeting)
- ***September 30:** ONA Guest Preacher: Rick Reineke
- ***October 21:** Study Session #6
- ***November 11:** Study Session #5

In addition, for those who have missed some of our **ONA Film Series** and would like another chance, **Bob** and **Troy** have graciously offered **Tuesday, 9/18** as a day they'd be willing to have people drop by their home for a **make up screening**. The movie most requested by the group will be played. **Please RSVP 48 hours in advance.**

Building an Inclusive Church Workshop

October 25-27

For information and to register, visit www.WelcomingResources.org/CommunityOrg.htm, Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids. FULL SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

New Class!--"What the Bible Really Says about Gay Christians (May Surprise You)"

Beginning **October 2** we will have the honor of hosting this **7-week** class, which will be open to the community and taught by **Rev. Bill Lyons**, the pastor of **St. John's United Church of Christ in Grand Rapids**. Sessions will run from 5:30- 7:00 pm and include dinner for a suggested donation of **\$5.00**. Penny will be recruiting kitchen helpers in the near future.

Here's a little background information borrowed from a recent Between the Lines article:

A Grand Rapids pastor is changing the way people are reading the Bible with a 7-week Bible study for the entire community. Over 20 people of various ages, races, and faiths came to the first workshop to talk about what the Bible means in today's society. It's not about what the Bible says so much as understanding that no one has exclusive insight into what it says. "When we read the Bible we are interpreting it," says Reverend Bill Lyons. "No person simply reads the Bible. Even if you know Hebrew and Greek and are reading the original text, you're still interpreting it. The Bible was written in a specific time and place. And it was written by people who each had their own contexts and filters."

Long story short, there is some interpretive wiggle. Even as an expert with 26 years in ministry, a BA in Bible, two masters degrees, and an American Bible Society Award for

Biblical scholarship, Lyons contends that he is not here to tell others what to think, only to open peoples' minds to look at the Bible for guidance and inspiration, not absolutes.

The first class covers how to read the Bible, as well as the many ways the Bible has been interpreted and used. Subsequent classes focus on relationships and sexuality in general and on the parts of the Bible most often used as "evidence" that God is against gays.

"Some people call them 'Clobber Passages,' but I don't use that term," says Rev. Lyons.

"Properly understood, they aren't clobber passages; that's just how they're used.

Understood in their context, these 7 passages are trying to teach us God's values and boundaries for healthy sexual relationships - gay and straight. The Bible says nothing about gay Christians. Today's understanding of what it means to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender was outside of the worldview of the contributors to the body of literature we know as the Bible. Christians today try to apply what the Bible says to same gender relationships, often failing to understand the people who produced the Biblical corpus in their context."

Another term Lyons avoids when talking about the Bible is "gay marriage." "The Bible speaks of our relationships regardless of who our relationships are with. The Bible does 2 things: it prescribes things, and it describes things. Descriptions are formed with ancient worldviews, and they describe situations that were observed at the time the text was written. Prescriptions are laws from God, like the commandments. Nowhere in the Bible does it prescribe or command marriage or that marriage can only be between one man and one woman," he said. "When we talk about relationships, we talk about all relationships. When we talk about marriage, we talk about all marriage. The Bible says the same things to gay Christians that the Bible says to all Christians, for being a Christian is possible by grace through faith, sexual orientation and gender identity notwithstanding."

Rev. Lyons is a gay man who has been in a committed relationship for 11 years. He has adult children with his former wife, whom he still considers a good friend, and is very close to his children. He was ordained in the Independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ in 1985, but in 2000 "grew beyond" his calling there and found the United Church of Christ, a denomination more in line with his progressive values. "I did everything that the fundamentalist evangelical teaching told me to do regarding my awareness of my sexual orientation. All the prayers I said asking to change my orientation, God said no to."

UNITED NORTHERN ASSOCIATION

Fall Meeting

The UNA Fall Meeting will be held at **Atlanta Congregational UCC** on **September 22**. Details to follow as they become available.

Sister Church

Our UNA sister church for September is **First Congregational UCC Onkama**. Please lift up the congregation in prayer during the coming month. If you wish to send them a card, their address is **8347 Zosel Street Onkama, MI 49675**.

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

Concerned About The Global Ecological Crisis?

Does the Bible have anything to say about it? Where is the HOPE? Come to **Edgewood United Church UCC in East Lansing October 27-28**. Speaker will be **Dr. Ellen Davis**, Professor of Bible and Practical Theology at Duke University Divinity School and the author of 8 books. Her research

interest focuses on how biblical interpretation affects the life of faith communities and their response to urgent public issues, particularly the environmental crisis.

Saturday, October 27: Reserve your seat for a noon luncheon and lecture. Deadline: October 14
Call: 517-332-8693 Email: cindy@edgewooducc.org Cost: \$10

Sunday, October 28: Preaching at the 10:00 am Service

Sponsored by the Truman A. Morrison Memorial Lecture Series

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE? ARE YOU SURE?

Don't wait until the last minute; you must be registered at least 30 days before the election. Make sure you are properly registered and ready to vote with the following short voter registration guide for Michigan. <https://docs.google.com/open?id=0B1keuJQY1x0kUW1QVlh0RW9ISm8>.

MISSIONS

Our Mission Targets for September: Feeding America (Food Bank)

Although the economy has stabilized a bit, foreclosures and unemployment continue to plague our area. According to the Michigan League for Human Services (<http://www.milhs.org/reminder-we-have-a-long-way-to-go>),

- The Michigan poverty rate has grown almost 25% over the past decade,
- Michigan has the 16th highest poverty rate in the nation, and
- 1 in 6 Michiganders lives in poverty, including 1 in 4 children.

One service that is keenly aware of these statistics and the challenges they pose is Feeding America, our regional food bank, which oversees the needs of agencies in 10 counties. The Rotary Club has become an essential go-between, helping families get the food they need from the food bank. On the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month, a truck brings 10,000 lbs of food to town and parks behind Goodwill. In exchange for minimal information (name, address, phone number and reason for need) volunteers help 200 families select 50 lbs of food each.

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

Cadillac Area CROP Hunger Walk

This year's Walk, 27th Annual Hunger walk for this area, will be held on **September 23**. Walkers will depart from Rotary Park at **2:00 pm** and walk from 2 to 7 miles. Registration and other materials are to be delivered to the church August 30. It would be great if someone could retrieve them and help to organize a group of FCC walkers to participate for this important cause this year.

Love INC

We recently received a letter from Love INC indicating that they running low on **bathroom tissue, laundry detergent, and all sizes of infant diapers** for the fall session of their "Higher Ground" program and requesting that we and other local churches designate a week for the collection of these items. Let's plan to do this **Sunday, 9/16 through Sunday, 9/23** when so many of us will be returning to church for Rally Day and the Semi-Annual Meeting.

"**Higher Ground**" assists families with emotional, social, mental, spiritual, and physical needs through family-based classes and provides an opportunity for all participants to earn points by their attendance and participation, which may then be redeemed at the Higher Ground on-site "store" for cleaning products, household items, clothing, etc.

FUN!

Chat & Craft Group

The Chat & Craft Group is now meeting on **Thursdays** from **9:30-11:30 am** on **Connie's** screened-in porch overlooking Berry Lake. All FCC crafters are invited to bring hand work for a time of casual conversation and crafting.

Please note that on **August 30** we will meet at **Karen's** home and take a field trip to her neighbor's home (See details below.). In addition, there will be no meeting on **September 6**.

Craft Class: Make your own **Pressed Leaf Bird Bath!**
Karen's neighbor, **Kay Weston**, has offered to teach this class for a **minimum \$10 fee** to cover her costs.

When: Thursday, August 30, 9:30-11:30am

Where: Meet at **9:30 am** at **Karen's**

How: Call Karen to register as **class size is limited to 6**. (may leave a message)

Sunday Fun-Day(s)

No Fun-Days have been proposed yet for September. Please contact **Pastor Carol** if you have a proposal or would like to extend an invitation to the congregation.

WHOLE EARTH

Transition Cadillac (www.transitioncadillac.org)

Shelley Youngman

***August 30 Fermentation** with **Angela Norman Meadows** and **Fay Gradowski**. Learn how to make sauerkraut and pickles with Call **775-0921** to register.

***September 12 Root Cellars & Other Food Hideaways (6-8 pm)** with **Jim & Julie Peterson**. This workshop will provide basics on how to store food for Winter without canning or freezing. You will see old and new style root cellars, learn what to store where, and the best methods for doing so. Dress for a short hike. **18882 140th Ave. in LeRoy**

***September 20 Movie & Popcorn Night!** The Power Of Community: In 1990 Cuba's economy went into a tailspin. This film tells of the struggle and the creativity of the Cuban people during this difficult time. Cubans share how they transitioned from an industrial agricultural system to organic methods of farming and local, urban gardens. Discussion afterwards facilitated by **Craig Schaaf**.

***September 30 Harvest Celebration!! (4 pm)** This event will be held at **Fox Hill Event Center** and is open to all. Entree and dessert (ingredients sourced from local farmers), created by chef **Brian Williams** of the Blue Heron, will be included in the price of the ticket. Side dishes will be an OOOOBY potluck! ("Out Of Our Own Back Yard"). Bring a dish prepared primarily from local ingredients, to share with others at your table. Local musicians and fun, educational activities for all ages! Bring along your surplus produce for donation to a local food pantry.

***October 18 Good Grief Gardening Debrief** with **Craig Schaaf** from Golden Rule Farm and **Theresa Williams** from Wexford Conservation District. Share the joys and challenges of this season's gardening experiences with other gardeners.

NB: Unless otherwise noted, all events start at 7 pm and are held at the church.

PASTORAL CARE

Due to HIPAA privacy rules, hospitals do not notify pastors when parishioners are hospitalized. When in doubt, please assume the pastor is unaware of a hospitalization and pass the word along to her. On days off (Mon, Tues), please direct emergency calls only to her cell phone (**884-9884**). Thanks!

NURTURE AND CARE TEAM

Diane can coordinate rides to church or doctor's appointments and meal delivery for those recuperating from surgery, illness, injury, grief or a family emergency.

SEPTEMBER 2012						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 *Jazz. 8:30 am
2 Communion Sunday Worship 10:30 am	3 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	4 *Jazz. 8:30 am Spanish 4:00 pm	5 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	6 Craft Group 9:30 am Office Hours 1-5 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	7 *Jazz. 8:30am	8 *Jazz. 8:30am
9 Worship 10:30 am	10 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	11 *Jazz. 8:30 am Spanish 4:00 pm *GALLEY 7:00 pm	12 *Jazz. 5:30 pm *Transition Cadillac Movie Night 7 pm	13 Craft Group 9:30 am Office Hours 1-5 *Jazz. 5:30 pm BOT Mtg 6:30 pm	14 *Jazz. 8:30am	15 *Jazz. 8:30 am
16 Rally Day Worship 10:30 am	17 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	18 *Jazz. 8:30 am Spanish 4:00 pm	19 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	20 Craft Group 9:30 am Office Hours 1-5 *Jazz. 5:30 pm News-letter Items Due!	21 *Jazz. 8:30am ONA Dinner & a Movie Night 6:00 pm	22 *Jazz. 8:30 am UNA Fall Meeting, Atlanta
23 Worship 10:30 am Semi-Annual Meeting	24 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	25 *Jazz. 8:30 am Spanish 4:00 pm *GALLEY 7:00 pm	26 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	27 Craft Group 9:30 am Office Hours 1-5 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	28 *Jazz. 8:30am	29 *Jazz. 8:30 am Outside Wedding in Church
30 ONA Worship 10:30 am						

*Non-Church activities that occur in the church.