

NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

36520 W. Twelve Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48331
Phone: (248) 848-1750 Fax: (248) 848-1752

Website: northcongregationalchurch.org
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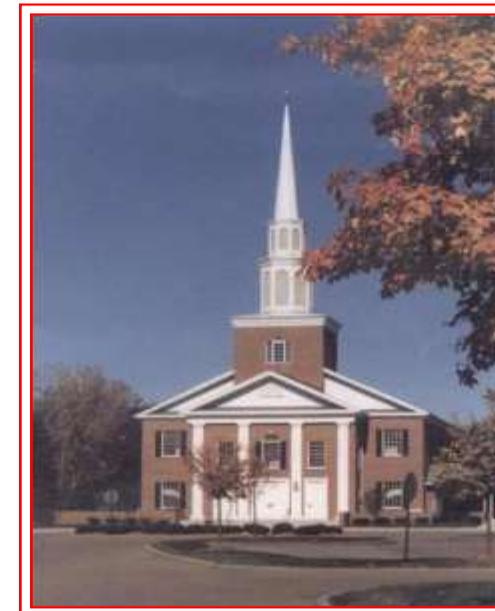
*North
Congregational
Church*

NORTH
NEWS

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“God Is Love: Pass It On”



We are gathered for worship of God and service to humanity.

SHOES TO SHARE THANK YOU

The National Council of Jewish Women/MI is deeply grateful for the participation of North Congregational Church in this year's very successful **Shoes to Share** project.

Much thanks goes, as well, to **Liane Jensen** for helping to sort the shoes, which numbered almost 5000 pairs! We collected shoes of all sizes and types and are distributing them to 23 different social service agencies throughout the metropolitan area. There will be many delighted recipients of warm boots, adorable toddler shoes, shoes for job interviews, sport shoes and sneakers. We thank you so much for your participation and hope you will be able to participate next year.

Jeannie Weiner and Gail Katz, Chairs of Shoes to Share





From the Minister...

Somewhat unbelievably, it's already Advent; the Church year has begun again, and we are once again preparing for the coming of Christ into the world. I know at my house, we surround ourselves with beloved objects and traditions, things and actions that connect us with our families and our past. It's one of the things we love so much about the season! But in the midst of this, there is also the remembrance that the coming of Jesus was disruptive in his time, and it still is. His birth and his kingship were nothing like anyone expected. His teachings echoed the sternest of the prophets of Israel. Traditions and familiar objects took a back seat to his primary proclamation: the Kingdom of God is at hand, and though it may be disruptive, we can trust God in the midst of all the changes.



In the spirit of renewal, rebirth, and change, what might each of us do differently this Advent and Christmas? What might express the presence of God's Kingdom among us? You'll find many opportunities to serve our neighbors with food, clothing, shelter, and warmth in this newsletter. Perhaps as a family you might choose one new activity to do together. There also times to gather as a church, to come together in the Sanctuary, away from the upheaval and cares of the world, and experience the closeness of friendship and love in Christ. Take some time from the busy schedule of events for that too!

And finally, I invite you to look within. In the carol "Joy to the World" we sing, "Let every heart prepare Him room." What space will he find prepared in our hearts, to inhabit and inspire so that we may love and serve in his name?

In the dark season of the year, our hearts are made merry by the lights and the decorations and the things we do to welcome once again our Savior, Jesus the Christ, into the world and into our lives. I wish you a Blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas!

Rev. Mary E. Biedron



Moderator's Notes

The holidays are here, along with the endless cycle of social calls, parties, potlucks, decorating, shopping, eating, and crowds at every store. It feels overwhelming as I try to juggle work and teens and family commitments and other holiday festivities. Once again, our family has decided to only do the things that bring us joy this holiday season. Being with our North Church family plays a central role.

How we mark Christmas at North Church has evolved but still brings us joy. My children have all aged out of the Christmas Pageant but they often help behind the scenes. We treasure the ornaments made at the Christmas Craft Workshop and give them a place of honor on our Christmas Tree. We shop as a family for items to donate to the Knitting Tree and other giving programs at church.



The highlight of our Christmas, and one that my non-religious family has respectfully scheduled around, is the youth-led Christmas Eve service followed by a cookie reception. I have given countless prayers of thanksgiving that we have not burned ourselves or the pews when we lit candles to sing "Silent Night".

So many people work hard to make Advent and Christmas special at North Church. I invite you to enjoy some of the many activities offered this Advent.

Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas!

Miranda Webster



Stewardship - 2019 Pledges

We have received pledges for 2019 from many of you. Thank you to everyone who has completed an Estimate of Giving card. If you have not yet made an estimate, and intend to do so, please e-mail your estimate to **Danny Hawkins** at NCC.BusinessManager@gmail.com. You may also complete an Estimate of Giving card and drop it in the collection plate or in the church office (extras can be found in the pews, on the Information table and on the Sign-up table). Danny will be following up with e-mails and phone calls in December to confirm we have heard from everyone who intends to make a pledge.

Offering envelopes will be available outside Fellowship Hall in December for those who have requested them.



Updating Your Online Giving for 2019

If you have changed the amount of your Pledge for next year and wish to continue having your Pledge paid automatically through our online portal you can go online to the Vanco site as you originally did, log in and then update the dollar amount to be paid. You may also contact Danny Hawkins at NCC.BusinessManager@gmail.com and he can update the amount for you through the Administrator log in.

Diaconate Benevolences... for the month of December

Congregational Library, Salvation Army,
Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion,
Multi-Cultural Multi-Racial Community Council
of Farmington/Farmington Hills

MASCOT³S



Mascot³s, is a social group open to all adult members and friends of the church. Please join us once a month for fun, food (always food) and fellowship.

December 1st, 7:00 p.m. – Christmas Party,

Food and Holiday cheer abound at the Sirovy's Christmas party, featuring games and a white elephant gift exchange. Each participant supplies one wrapped gift. Sirovys determine in what order they will take turns selecting them. The first person opens a wrapped gift. On subsequent turns, each person can open a new present or gets the choice to "steal" another person's unwrapped gift. Gifts are typically inexpensive, humorous items or used items from home. The goal of a white elephant party is to entertain rather than to gain. The term "white elephant" refers to an extravagant but burdensome gift which cannot be easily disposed of, based on the legend of the King of Siam gifting rare albino elephants to courtiers who had displeased him, that they might be ruined by the animals' upkeep costs.

February 15th, 7:00 p.m. - Euchre Party

This low key euchre tournament at the Hawkins' house includes a refresher/teaching session at 6:30 p.m. with play beginning at 7:00 p.m. Bring a dish to share, \$5.00 per person for a prize pool and quarters for the Euchre pot, should you and your partner fall short of your three tricks.

Please see the sign up sheet outside Fellowship Hall for additional information. Please contact **Danny Hawkins** at ncc.businessmanager@gmail.com with any questions or suggested activities.

Living Christmas Card

Each week in Advent, our Sunday School students will re-enact a scene from the Christmas Story in our beloved "Living Christmas Card." Students will be fitted for costumes during their Sunday School class time each week before they go to the tableau. All students will be participating each week. Be sure to bring your camera for the presentations following worship each Sunday!

12/2: "No Room at the Inn" (Luke 2:7)

12/9: "Angels Appear to the Shepherds"
(Luke 2:8-14)

12/16: "Herod and the Wise Men" (Matthew 2:1-8)

12/23: "Behold the Christ Child"
(Luke 2:15, Matthew 2:1-2) by students in all grades and the Nursery.



Women's Fellowship

Knitting Tree

Our Advent Knitting Tree is ready and waiting for donations of hats, scarves, gloves and mittens. The clients of the Lighthouse in Pontiac will appreciate your gifts, especially during the cold weather!



Christmas Stocking

Our Christmas stocking will be hanging in the Narthex. We are happy to accept donations of packages of socks for school-aged children (k-12).



We hope to cover the knitting tree and stuff the Christmas stocking as we have in the past...and we know we can do it with your help! We will be accepting donations for both the Knitting Tree and the Christmas Stocking until December 30th, for delivery to Lighthouse in January. Thank you for your generous spirit!



The Women's Fellowship

Cordially invites all women to attend

Christmas Confections

Featuring Musical Entertainment in the Sanctuary by

*Laurie Meeker and Jim Wilking and
David Bauer, Piano*

Followed by Dessert in Fellowship Hall

on

Thursday, December 6, 2018

7:00 p.m. at

North Congregational Church



There is no cost for this event, however, it is suggested that each guest bring a package of socks for school aged children (k-12).

All items to be donated to the Lighthouse in Pontiac.

Please use the sign up sheet outside of Fellowship Hall to indicate yourself, and how many guests plan to attend. You may call the church office at 248/848-1750.

Rides are available upon request



More Holiday Events...

The Plarn Club..

will meet in Room 3 on **Wednesday, December 12th at 2:30 p.m.** Chris Lyons and the group make “plarn” out of plastic bags, which are then knitted or crocheted into mats for the homeless. If you would be interested in learning how to do this, at church and/or at home, please join us. We have a great time!

Book Group



We'll be meeting on **Wednesday, December 12, 1:00 p.m.** in the church Library to discuss Maya Angelou's Letter to My Daughter. This book is available in all formats (the author narrated the Audible version in her inimitable, musical voice!).

From an Amazon reviewer: “It's a book to read when you feel lost in the world, and in times when you're at peace with life. Angelou shares her past and her hopes for the future. She talks about her most painful moments and moments of incandescent happiness. In these stories and essays, she shares experiences from her life that have shaped her and that she has grown from, experiences she wants to pass on that others might benefit from. It's like a love letter to the world.”

Come join us in the busy holiday season, and take a little while to enjoy reading and sharing your thoughts and ideas about this “love letter to the world!”

Wednesday Ladies' Lunch Group

You are invited to join us for lunch each Wednesday of the month, at 11:30 a.m. Contact **Susan Lemon** for reservations.

- December 5 - Recipes
- December 12 - Big Tommy's Parthenon
- December 19 - Breakfast Club

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Men's Breakfast CLUB

A group of North Congregational Church men meet for breakfast at Moe's on Ten Mile (just west of Haggerty) every other Tuesday morning at 9:00 o'clock. If you are interested in a little lively conversation with your breakfast, please contact **Steve Lange** at StephenLange@me.com. He will add you to their e-mail list so you can get updates on their schedule.

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal Sunday, December 2nd

As we look ahead to the beautiful Advent season, we have many special traditions at North Church. One of these for our Sunday School children is the Christmas Pageant.

Our pageant includes scripture readings by the older teens and songs sung by the Children's Angel and Shepherd Choir. There are also tableaux peopled with Mary and Joseph, the innkeeper, angels and shepherds, the wise men, and the star keeper. Please encourage your children to participate in this Christmas program.

We want very much to include all the children who are interested. **It is absolutely vital that participants be present at the one practice we have after church. This will be on Sunday, December 2nd**, immediately after Sunday School. We're hoping that practice will start on time and run smoothly.



Pageant Sunday December 9th

All participants must be in the Sunday School wing **no later than 10 a.m.** to don their costumes, remove their shoes, practice their song, and read through the scriptures one last time.

Children not interested in being in the pageant should sit with their parents in the Sanctuary and then come to Sunday School when the pageant ends. We will have a “Happy Birthday Jesus” party at that time in the Music Room, and then return to our classrooms.

After the worship service, the Sunday School Department will present the Second Sunday of Advent's Living Christmas Card, “**Angels Appear to the Shepherds**” in the Link.

We do hope your family will participate. Please let us know your intentions as soon as possible by signing the Pageant sign up sheet that will be available by the middle of November.

Questions? Please contact **Karen Sirovy**, and mark your calendars!



Christmas Craft Workshop

Sunday, December 9th

Celebrate the joy of the season at the Christmas Craft Workshop! The Board of Christian Fellowship and Education will provide pizza and salad at no charge. The congregation is invited to sign up to bring appetizers and desserts.

Have your picture taken with Santa! Plan to make traditional craft favorites and also try some of the new crafts.

We hope you'll join us!

Lunch: 11:30 a.m.

Crafts: 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

(Cost varies depending on craft; tickets are \$.50 each)



December Food Donations

We will be coordinating food donations for three of our ongoing Benevolences this Christmas season:

- ◇ C.A.R.E.S. of Farmington Hills in Farmington Hills
- ◇ Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit, and
- ◇ Source of Universal Love (S.O.U.L.) in Farmington

Donations of non-perishable food items that are unopened and not past their expiration date will be delivered to S.O.U.L. and the Food Pantry. Monetary and gift card (Kroger, Meijer or Walmart) donations will be divided between the three organization for to fill their holiday baskets.



Christmas Cookies

***S.O.U.L. Annual Holiday Party
Saturday, December 15th,
1 - 3 p.m. at North Church***

Christmas Eve Reception

Each year S.O.U.L. invites needy families to their "Dreams Do Come True" annual holiday party. S.O.U.L. serves hot chocolate and Christmas cookies while children are having their pictures taken with Santa, and receiving their Christmas gifts. If you would like to donate cookies for the children's snack, please sign up outside Fellowship Hall to let us know. Thank you!

If you would like to bring in cookies for the Christmas Eve Reception, please sign up at the Information Table. There will be a separate table in front of the stage, with pre-packaged cookies and treats for those in the congregation who have allergies.

Boxing Up

After the holidays, we'll need lots of helping hands to take down, clean, tend and store our Advent and Christmas decorations at the church. Watch for Sign Up Genius for boxing up opportunities, and check the website too, at northcongregationalchurch.org.





Adopt-a-Family sponsored by the Women's Fellowship

We are celebrating our gratitude for our many blessings by adopting two Farmington area families for the holiday. You may read a short history of their family life when you visit the Adopt-a-Family bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Our first family consists of a single Mom, her son, and a niece who came to live with them a year ago. Mom works full time and is fortunate to have her mother watch the children after school. Our second family consists of Mom and her two sons. Mom works part time because her youngest is not school age, and child care is so expensive.

If you would like to participate, please choose a gift from any of the suggested lists. Write your name on the line next to the gift. Take the corresponding gift tag as your reminder. When you purchase the gift, please ask for a "gift receipt."

Please include the gift receipt before wrapping the present, and lightly tape the gift tag to the outside of the package. **Please do not add bows. Bring your gift to church on or before Sunday, December 16th.** The Women's Fellowship will deliver the gifts to Neighborhood House on Monday, the 17th, so that parents can pick up the gifts before school closes on Wednesday, December 20th. Gifts may be taken to the Missions Room, in Pilgrim Hall, and placed on the counter in the labeled boxes provided.

If you misplace your tag, please write the recipient's name and the gift on a slip of paper and attach it to the present. We will replace it with a new tag.

If you would like to donate money, please use the envelopes provided on the Adopt-a-Family bulletin board. You may return the money/check to **Mary Voisin**, or the church office. Checks should be made payable to North Congregational Church.

We'd like to provide a joyous Christmas for these families and hope you will join in this project with us.



D
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LAY READERS

December 02 - Nancy Scott
December 09 - Kevin Gromley
December 16 - Jim Wilking
December 23 - Mary Voisin
December 30 - Lori Rhode

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

December 2
 Veronica Noye, Julianne Noye
December 9
 Brandon Webster, Miranda Webster
December 16
 Pete Shand, Art Lanier
December 23
 Sandy Greer, Jack Cooper
Christmas Eve
 Board of Ushers
December 30
 Steve Plummer, Donna Nordman

GREETERS

If you would like to be a greeter on Sunday morning before the worship service, please visit the Information Table, and sign up on the sheet provided.

December 2
 Gene and Sandy Greer
December 9
 The Maurer Family
December 16
 Carolyn Lafferty, Nelson Lowe
December 23
 Carol Turner, William Koester
Christmas Eve
 The Webster Family
December 30
 Dave Emery, Tina Lau



Congratulations to...

Aimee and Jennifer Crosswell on the birth of their daughter, Ellis Grace, on Tuesday, October 30, 2018.

Our Sympathy to...

Steve and Sara Lange and family, on the death of Steve's brother, Richard Perrin Lange, on Sunday, November 4, 2018.

The family of Lela (Lee) Detrich, who died on November 6, 2018. Her Memorial Service was held at North Congregational Church on Friday, November 16, 2018, with Rev. Dr. Mary E. Biedron officiating.

December Calendar

(Current version of our calendar can be found on our web site: northcongregationalchurch.org)



December 1, 2018 - Saturday

7:00 p.m. MASCOT'S - Christmas Party at the Sirovys' home

December 2, 2018 - First Sunday of Advent

9:00 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal
10:30 a.m. Worship, Communion, Sunday School, NO High School Class
Lay Reader: Nancy Scott
Advent Candle Lighter: Jean Burns
Living Christmas Card - "No Room at the Inn"
11:30 a.m. Pageant Rehearsal - Sanctuary

December 4, 2018 - Tuesday

9:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast CLUB - Moe's on Ten
7:00 p.m. Chancel Bell Rehearsal

December 5, 2018 - Wednesday

11:30 a.m. Wednesday Ladies' Lunch Group - Recipes

December 6, 2018 - Thursday

7:00 p.m. Christmas Confections - Sanctuary / Fellowship Hall

December 9, 2018 - Second Sunday of Advent

9:00 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal
10:30 a.m. Worship, Children's Christmas Pageant, Sunday School, and High School Class, following the Pageant
Lay Reader: Kevin Gromley
Living Christmas Card - "Angel Appear to the Shepherds"
11:30 a.m. Pizza and Salad Lunch - Fellowship Hall
12:00 p.m. Christmas Craft Workshop - Fellowship Hall

December 10, 2018 - Monday

Deadline for poinsettia and wreath orders

December 11, 2018 - Tuesday

7:00 p.m. Chancel Bell Rehearsal

December 12, 2018 - Wednesday

11:30 a.m. Wednesday Ladies' Lunch Group at Big Tommy's Parthenon
1:00 p.m. Book Group - Library
2:30 p.m. Plarn Club - Room 3
7:30 p.m. Diaconate Meeting - Plymouth/Bradford Room

December 14, 2018 - Friday

Consent Agenda Minutes/Reports are due

December 15, 2018 - Saturday

1:00 p.m. S.O.U.L. Holiday Party - Fellowship Hall

December 16, 2018 - Third Sunday of Advent

9:00 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal
10:30 a.m. Worship, Children's Message, Sunday School, High School Class
Lay Reader: Jim Wilking
Living Christmas Card - "Herod and the Wise Men"
Deadline for Adopt-a-Family gifts - Missions Room, Pilgrim Hall
Diaconate cookie assembly and distribution - Bradford Room

December 17, 2018 - Monday

7:00 p.m. Executive Council Meeting - Plymouth Room

December 18, 2018 - Tuesday

9:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast CLUB - Moe's on Ten
7:00 p.m. Chancel Bell Rehearsal

December 19, 2018 - Wednesday

11:30 a.m. Wednesday Ladies' Lunch Group - Breakfast Club

December 23, 2018 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:30 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal
10:30 a.m. Worship, Special Music, Sunday School, High School Class
Lay Reader: Mary Voisin
Living Christmas Card - "Behold the Christ Child"
12:00 p.m. Teenagers Rehearse Christmas Eve Service / Christmas Party





1:00 p.m. **Office Closed**
6:45 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal
6:45 p.m. Teenagers gather in the Plymouth Room
7:30 p.m. **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**
Christmas Eve Fellowship and Reception in Fellowship Hall

December 25, 2018 - Monday - *Merry Christmas!*
Office Closed

December 30, 2018 - Sunday
10:30 a.m. Worship and Carols - Plymouth/Bradford Room
Lay Reader: Lori Rhode
NO Child Care

December 31, 2018 - Monday - *New Year's Eve*
Office Closed

Happy New Year!

January Newsletter...

Newsletter articles are needed by the **15th of each month**. Please e-mail your article to Debbie in the church office at ncc.churchoffice@gmail.com. Thank you!



*May you have the gift of Faith
the blessing of Hope
and the peace of His Love
at Christmas and Always.*

Merry Christmas...
from the North Church Staff

*Mimi Biedron, Laurie Meeker, Patricia Butler,
Danny Hawkins, Janice Thornton, Debbie Skindell*

**POINSETTIA
ORDERS
WILL BE
TAKEN
THROUGH
DECEMBER 10**



**CHRISTMAS WREATHS & POINSETTIAS
CHRISTMAS DECORATING – NOVEMBER 25**

Fragrant wreaths and beautiful poinsettias decorate our church each year during the holidays. This year, you may donate a wreath or poinsettia as a memorial, a tribute, or a celebration of the spirit of Christmas.

Wreaths will be on display **December 2nd - January 5th**. Poinsettias will be present from **December 16th - January 5th**; they may be designated to be given to a shut-in or taken home following the Christmas Eve worship service.

The donation for a wreath is \$18.00; \$9.00 for a poinsettia. Checks should be made payable to **North Congregational Church, Flower Fund**. **Orders will be taken through December 10th**. Donations may be made by filling out the form below and returning it to the church office, or mailing it to:

**North Congregational Church,
36520 W. Twelve Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48331**

I wish to place a Christmas _____wreath _____poinsettia.
____ I will take my plant on Christmas Eve _____ Please deliver to a shut in.

The message should read:

A gift from _____

a. Given in memory / celebration of:

b. Or, write your own message:

Signature _____

Phone _____

