

**STAY AT HOME - STAY WELL
OCTOBER, 2020 NEWSLETTER, Part 1
CORONAVIRUS VERSION**

“Hope Does Not Disappoint Us” - Romans 5:1-5

From the Minister...



A TIME OF TRANSITION: As we transition into Autumn, it's a time of transition for North Church's organizational structure! At our Zoom program meeting on September 13, new board members were elected to our reorganized board structure. Since then, they've begun meeting to determine what activities we'll be doing – and how those activities will take place given the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. Some new, creative thinking will allow us to reach out to our membership and beyond, as meetings are all taking place online, and our fall and winter events, including Heritage and Advent activities, will have a new character. So this is part one of our October Newsletter; part 2 will come mid-month once we have activities and meetings firmly scheduled.

Meanwhile, we are still in ministry! We'll be going to Crossroads to make soup and sandwiches, and taking cookies baked by all of YOU and delivered to the church ahead of our serving day, October 25th. See the article by **Sara Lange** in this newsletter; the need is great since Crossroads is the only soup kitchen in Detroit currently open on Sundays. Follow the sign-up instructions to help out on-site that day, and watch for word on when to drop off cookies (homemade, 2 to a baggie) and hygiene products at the church so we can take them down.

Online worship continues on Facebook Live every Sunday at 10:30 a.m., and a Wednesday Inspiration, with a more informal reflection on scriptural themes, happens Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m. also on Facebook Live. If you can't make the Live broadcasts, you'll find these in the "videos" section of the North Congregational Church Facebook page as soon as the event is completed, and they will also be on the North Church website shortly afterwards. We're working on a new "look" for our online presence, so stay tuned for news about a redesigned website and a much more active Instagram account!

Meanwhile, remember that we are moved to worship and serve by a hope that does not disappoint us: the assurance of God's love and grace made known to us in Christ. Share this good news in all you do this month!

Faithfully,

Rev. Mary E. Biedron

VIRTUAL CHURCH

As we continue to stay safe by keeping our building closed, many parts of church have come online!



WORSHIP:

SUNDAYS, 10:30 a.m., live on the North Congregational Church Facebook Page, and available as a recording on the Facebook page and the church website afterwards, at <http://www.northcongregationalchurch.org/video-messages.html>.

Audio versions of the same may be found here:

<http://www.northcongregationalchurch.org/listen-to-a-sermon.html>.

Worship includes a children's message, scripture and sermon, music from the North Church archives as well as currently recorded music from our musicians, prayers, and a Virtual Coffee Hour where messages and greetings can be shared.

WEDNESDAYS, 3:00 p.m., a shorter time of inspiration from **Rev. Biedron** live on the North Congregational Church Facebook page; recordings will be available on that same page as well as on our website, NorthCongregationalChurch.org.

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS:

MEN'S BREAKFAST - In person, social distancing, at Moe's on Ten at 9:00 a.m. Contact **Steve Lange** at stephenlange@me.com for updates on their schedule.

BOOK GROUP on Zoom, October 21 at 1:00 p.m. See article for further information.

MASCOT'S – Meets via Zoom. If you would like to be included in the invitation email list for future meetings, please contact **Danny Hawkins**, NCC.BusinessManager@gmail.com.

Got an idea for a virtual fellowship? Interested in leading a Bible study or a class on zoom? Speak with **Rev. Biedron** or Program Director **Danny Hawkins**.

BOOK GROUP – October 21, 1:00 p.m. on Zoom

Email **Rev. Biedron** at ncc.seniorminister@gmail.com for the connection link.

Our October book is the novel, The Great Alone, by Kristin Hannah. It's a big story about a big place, Alaska, and the fate of a family who moves there to get away from the encroaching world and make a fresh start. Available in paperback and e-book from the usual sources, or through the library system.

Looking ahead to November 18 – We'll be reading the nonfiction book Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson. The prize winning author of The Warmth of Other Suns looks at the idea of caste, and how it has influenced racial assumptions and relationships in India, South Africa and the United States.



MASCOT³S

As we settle in for the long haul of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are not having any physical social gatherings for Mascot³s. Until we resume Sunday worship we will occasionally have virtual Happy Hours on Zoom to share laughs and catch up with one another. These have typically been on Fridays in the late afternoon. Please contact **Danny Hawkins** at NCC.BusinessManager@gmail.com if you would like to be included in the invitation e-mail list for future meetings.

Men's Breakfast CLUB

The group of North Congregational Church men who meet for breakfast at Moe's on Ten Mile (just west of Haggerty) every other Tuesday morning at 9:00 o'clock has resumed live breakfast gatherings. If you are comfortable meeting indoors in a socially spaced environment and 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.

CROSSROADS – Sunday, October 25

North Congregational Church will be sponsoring and working at Crossroads soup kitchen on **Sunday, October 25**. As in the past few years, we will be partnering with the Farmington Community Mosque to prepare and serve the meal. Even though we are still apart, there will be multiple ways in which you can participate with our mission of feeding some of the neediest people in Detroit.

Like your own "new normal", Crossroads has been facing many changes since the pandemic. Crossroads shut down for the first time in almost 50 years from mid-March to mid-May. When they reopened in May, they went from feeding 600 clients every Sunday to about 150 clients. The number of clients has been steadily increasing, and currently they are serving 300-340 people every Sunday. The staff at Crossroads are unsure where the rest of their clients have gone. There are 7 soup kitchens that function in Detroit on any given day - Crossroads is the only soup kitchen open every Sunday. All of the other soup kitchens in the metro Detroit area have also seen a 40-50% decrease in their numbers. Why the decrease in clients? There are a few theories. Many people received the \$1200 stimulus check, perhaps allowing for less dependence on supplemental food. The amount of money placed on bridge cards was increased until recently, again, allowing for more independence with food purchases. Sadly, some staff

wonder if the homeless, those most vulnerable to the Covid 19 spread, did not survive the peak of the Covid 19 crisis. We may never know.

On October 25th we will be making 650 turkey or roast beef sandwiches, 60 gallons of homemade chicken vegetable soup, serving some of your wonderful homemade cookies and handing out hygiene kits to the clients. We can certainly use your help :) **Due to the decreased numbers of clients, we are seeking 10 volunteers for the morning shift and the same number for the afternoon shift from both NCC and the Mosque.** Also, due to the smaller numbers of lunches served, we will start serving at 11:15am, and be done by 1:30pm. Clean up will be quick, and we'll be out the door by 2pm. The morning shift will be from 8:15 - 11am, and the afternoon shift will be from 10:30am - 2pm. Email me if you would like to come down to Crossroads for either or both shifts. Have you honed your baking skills during the pandemic? How about making cookies, placing 2 cookies per baggie, and dropping them off at the church during a designated time? Again, email me to let me know you've "signed up". Have hygiene items you'd like to donate (toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, razors, shaving cream, small hand sanitizers, etc.)? We'll collect them at the church and assemble the hygiene kits on the 25th at Crossroads.

Crossroads has only been serving "to go" meals since they reopened in May, keeping the clients outside and the volunteers inside. Due to the upcoming cold weather, they are hoping to bring the clients inside in some capacity starting in October. We will wear masks and practice social distancing, however, Crossroads may operate more like before, by giving clients the option to eat indoors. They don't know at this time what the volunteer/client interaction will look like, but I do want volunteers to be aware that most likely they will have contact with clients if serving lunch on the 25th. I will keep you updated as new practices are incorporated.

Most importantly, please keep the staff and clients of Crossroads in your prayers. If you access the Crossroads website (crossroadsofmichigan.org), one of the first things you will see is their slogan "Hand up and the Gift of Hope". As Rev. Biedron has been telling us recently, hope does not disappoint us. As our church building remains closed, please be a part of our church which continues to be active in missions and ministries, in whatever way you can.

Thank you,

Sara Lange

LIGHTHOUSE OF MICHIGAN

Home of South Oakland Shelter

Lighthouse has been working hard to help ensure their families are taken care of during the COVID-19 crisis. They are now serving thousands of individuals each week with emergency food. They need our help!



Volunteer Opportunities

Food Distributors - Volunteers will help with room set-up, unload pallets of food, help carry food to vehicles, and more.

Warehouse Drivers - Volunteer drivers are needed to support the pick-up of food at various locations throughout the metro-Detroit area during this tremendous time of need.

Pack Food Boxes - Volunteers will pack non-perishable, shelf stable food in Waterford to be delivered to seniors and other vulnerable populations.

Deliver Food Boxes - Volunteers will deliver emergency food boxes to seniors & other vulnerable populations. Food boxes will be delivered contact-free via porch pick-up.

Unload/Load Truck - Volunteers will help unload and load food boxes onto a truck in Waterford.

Pontiac Food Pantry - Volunteers will sort, pack, and distribute emergency food boxes to individuals in need.

Emergency Shelter Meals - Purchase & drop off meals for their emergency shelter residents - lunches and/or dinners.

Donate

During the COVID-19 pandemic South Oakland Shelter has increased its client population to 90 from the usual 30-35 by accepting all qualified applicants and waiving the usual 90-day shelter stay limit. As such, Lighthouse is currently spending about \$90,000 per month to house and feed their South Oakland Shelter guests.

You can help by donating at: <https://lighthousemi.org/how-to-help/give/>

ASSISTANCE AND DONATIONS



North Congregational Church: COVID-19 Helping our Parishioners

We may have people in our congregation who are unable to acquire food or medications on their own - either because of mobility limitations, illness, or underlying health issues - during the COVID-19 outbreak. **Danny Hawkins** has coordinated a group of people who are willing to make deliveries to these parishioners to provide for some of their basic needs. We will be pairing up those in need with volunteers for a NO CONTACT delivery of the necessary items. Please contact **Danny** at **NCC.BusinessManager@gmail.com** or **248 217-1750** if you are a parishioner in need of a food or pharmacy delivery.

Food Banks: To find a food bank in your community, please visit the following websites:

- * Feeding America: ww.feedingamerica.org/takeaction/coronavirus?s_onsite_promo=lightbox
- * Meals on Wheels: www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/find-meals
- * Gleaners Community Food Bank: Distribution sites for families and children in Metro Detroit
- * Lighthouse: www.lighthousemi.org/update-on-covid-19/

CARES of Farmington Hills:

Serves Farmington, Farmington Hills (248-474-8231), Southfield, Redford, Livonia, Novi, Northville, and West Bloomfield.

Food Pantry Hours are listed - You must call for an appointment.

- * Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:30am - 2:30pm
- * Thursday, 9:30am - 2:30pm; 5:00pm - 6:30pm
- * Saturday, 9:30am - 11:30am

Salvation Army: Grocery and food, including meat

- * Monday – Friday – 9 AM – 3 PM Emergency Food Assistance
(Only by appointment - Please call ahead of the time and make an appointment, so the food bag will be ready to grab and go)
- * Wednesday – 10 AM – 12 PM (Drive thru Food assistance – groceries and meat)
- * Thursday – 4 :30 PM – 5 PM – Drive thru grab and go dinner to add on to the food bags.

Days for Girls:

We are always in need of Women's cotton underwear brief or hipster style (NO thongs or boy shorts) Sizes 5, 6, 7 and 8. Colors are great, but we can dye whites. Please no words, weapons, or animals (birds and butterflies are okay.) We also need washcloths (we like the cheap 100% cotton from Walmart) and hotel sized soap too. There is still a need for masks. Please turn in what you have made, and let us know if you know of a group that needs any. Thanks!

S.O.U.L. (Source of Universal Love): Food and necessary items

- * Alcohol, Lysol, Hand Sanitizer, Antibacterial Wipes, Disposable Gloves
- * Non-perishable Food
- * Gift cards for Food or Gas
- * Order on Amazon and your donation will be delivered directly to SOUL. Click on the link below: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1IAO7BVZ1TLPM?ref=wl_share

S.O.U.L. Holiday Party - Saturday, December 19th, 1-3pm

In order to follow the guidelines established by the State of Michigan for Covid-19, the party will be held at our **SOUL office parking lot located at 23023 Orchard Lake Road, Building F, Farmington, Michigan 48336**



With the increase of families anticipated this year due to the pandemic, we are now accepting wish lists for ages 12 and under only. It is our hope and intention to provide gift cards to those ages 13 and up.

Please include the following with your wish lists:

- Current name, address, email and phone #
- Separate list for each member under the age of 12 to include... full name, age, sex, and descriptive list of item desired (sizes, names, etc.) **please be specific
- Include name, age, sex of all members in the household to be included in the gift card program. (those age 13 and up)
- Include your pet(s). Please tell us type of dog, cat, etc., along with size, age and name

Send wish lists ASAP to: soulnonprofitorg@gmail.com.

Contact Patty with questions or for more information at [\(248\)672-0616](tel:2486720616)

NOTE: A current or updated intake must be on file in order to be a part of our holiday program.
New clients must contact Patty prior to any wish lists being accepted.

Save The Date:

SOUL Thanksgiving Giveaway

Sunday, November 22nd from 11a.m. - 5p.m., at the SOUL office-parking lot located at 23023 Orchard Lake Road, Building F, Farmington, Michigan 48336.

Please contact Patty at **(248) 672-0616**, if you would like to be put on the list.