

STAY AT HOME - STAY WELL

SEPTEMBER, 2020 NEWSLETTER – CORONAVIRUS VERSION



From the Minister...

NEW PROGRAM YEAR BEGINS!

When we locked the doors of the church on March 13, we had no idea that we'd be out of the building for such a long time. But although the building is closed, the church is not! The summer has brought a great deal of creative thinking as worship services have moved to Facebook Live, meetings and Sunday School and coffee hour to Zoom, and church members have continued to be active in ministries and missions in a world that very much needs our good news that grace, reconciliation, justice and compassion are possible.

2020-21 THEME: "HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT US"

Our theme for the coming year reflects that affirmation that we have much to offer our world, and that the "wilderness time" we are experiencing all aspects of life during the pandemic can also be a time of growth and learning and trying new things. The phrase is taken from Paul's letter to the church in Rome, a church suffering under the iron fist of the Empire, a church working to reconcile the differences between its Gentile and Hebraic members, a church that rose to leadership when the Roman Empire destroyed Jerusalem, along with the Jewish Temple, and the Christian community living there. In a time of unimaginable changes, Paul encouraged that church to hold to the faith:

*Romans 5:1-5 - Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and **hope does not disappoint us**, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

We too are living in unimaginable times, that present difficulties AND opportunities. I look forward to the ways that we will live into our faith, into a new governance structure, and into new ways of sharing the good news of God's love made known to us in Christ.

Faithfully,

Rev. Mary E. Biedron

Moderator's Notes...



I write this in the waning days of August. It has been a strange summer for us and for our country. We look to the fall – school, sports, the end of the summer vacation season – with uncertainty, but with hope.

We are in the midst of planning for our Annual Meeting. It will be September 13 via ‘Zoom’, with members attending via the internet or by phone in. The Church office has sent out information on the meeting and on items that will require voting (including new Board Members and Officers). Other meeting materials are on the Church website. Please review them and mark your calendars!

The work of the Church continues, for today and for our much-anticipated return to worship in our building. Fellowship Hall has been upgraded with new sound panels (it looks *much* nicer). Rev. Biedron continues her virtual Sunday worship and Wednesday inspiration series. Our Boards continue to meet and do their work for the Church.

Executive Council Notes

Executive Council met on August 24 via ‘Zoom’. Council considered the following:

- Annual Meeting. Council reviewed the preparations for the Annual Meeting.
- Financial Status. Our Treasurer, Trustees, and Business Manager continue to monitor Church finances closely. Our endowment continued to recover somewhat as markets improved in August, but is still down from February. Through July, normal Church income was down about \$12,463 (primarily rentals and cash offerings); expenses were down about \$5,907 (primarily reduced Board expenses) for a net negative impact of \$6556 versus last year. As noted earlier, the Church received a \$43,700 Payroll Protection loan. We have continued with all our staff, so we expect this loan to be forgiven. *Note: please continue your pledge donations; you can do so in the Members’ Corner on our website or by mailed check to the office (Danny will get it).*
- Communications. The Communications Committee is working on obtaining a quote for a new sign on Twelve Mile Road. Our current wooden sign is nearing the end of its life. The Committee is looking at designs for a modern electronic sign, in an enclosure that fits with our building architecture.
- Voting. The Church is a polling location. The primary elections were August 4. The City utilized Fellowship Hall – there were no reported issues. We have updated our ‘hold harmless’ agreement with the City to cover any potential liability from Covid-19.
- Following the Annual Program Meeting. After September 13 we will have new Boards that reflect the new Church organizational structure approved during our February Business Meeting. We normally have a single orientation session for the new Board members. This year office staff and the Moderator will meet via Zoom individually with the new Boards to

orient them and plan immediate steps. Consequently, the next Executive Council meeting will probably be in October.



- Virtual Church. It is clear that our worship services will continue to be online for some time. Rev. Biedron noted that she plans to continue some form of this even after we return to worship in our building. The Church’s social media and online presence is important for our future. Last month Council approved Rev. Biedron’s exploration of engaging a consultant to help us ‘up our game’ in this regard. We have engaged Crue Digital; the cost of this will come from our Communications budget.

This was the last meeting of the current Council. I would like to thank them, and our other Board members and volunteers, for all their work for the Church over the last year. They all made my job easy.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42)

Kevin Gromley

CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Program Meeting of North Congregational Church will be held on **Sunday, September 13, 2020 by video teleconference via “Zoom” and will begin at 11:30 am EDT** as rescheduled by order of the Executive Council.

As with many activities around the world, the face to face Annual Program Meeting that would have been held in May, was cancelled due to concerns and guidelines regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

At this meeting, the following business will be conducted: Approval of 2020 Annual Business Meeting Minutes, Ratification of Executive Council action for the prior year, Election of Officers, Board members and Delegates to affiliated organizations and other business as may be submitted.

Notice of intent to attend is requested **by September 8, 2020** by email or phone to the North Church office.

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.

MEETINGS:

TRUSTEES – by Zoom on September 9, 7 p.m.

DIACONATE – by Zoom on September 9, 7:30 p.m.

ANNUAL MEETING – by Zoom on September 13, 11:30 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL – by Zoom on September 28, at 7 p.m.

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, September 16 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 – September 16 at 1:00 p.m. on Zoom

Our September book is the memoir Born A Crime by the South African comedian, host of the Daily Show Trevor Noah. His story illustrates how someone can arise from great hardship with imagination, and can see possibilities beyond temporary obstacles. Available in book and Audible form; the author narrates the recording with great use of accents, expression, and passion. Come join the conversation! Email Reb. Biedron at ncc.seniorminster@gmail.com to receive the zoom code for the meeting.



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**, 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.

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: www.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**

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.

Contact: Christine Burk • 248-975-9684 • burkc@oaklandchn.org

OCHN Launches Referral / Resource Page for Oakland County Veterans

OAKLAND COUNTY, MI (August 19, 2020) – Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) recently launched a veterans’ referral / resource page on their website for veterans, family members of veterans, and community partners and organizations seeking to connect veterans to services in Oakland County.

Reasons for referrals can include connectivity to VA services and benefits as well as connecting individuals to substance use services, mental health services, discharge upgrade, financial assistance, housing, prison reentry, transportation, employment, and disability resources.

“The referral process will help Oakland County veterans connect to resources, benefits and services that are due to them for their service and sacrifice while in the United States military,” said OCHN’s Veterans Navigator, **Chaka McDonald**.

The steps to complete the referral process:

- Complete the Veteran Referral Form by visiting: veteran.oaklandchn.org
- Fill out the referral document
- Sign the Release of Information (ROI)
- Upload the ROI and send with the referral form
- Upload the DD214 and/or any pertinent documentation that needs to be shared
- Referrals will be received by OCHN-Access Department and OCHN’s Veterans Navigator
- OCHN staff will follow-up and schedule a day/time for the OCHN’s Veterans Navigator to contact the veteran, family member, or referring agency
- The veteran, family member, or referring agency can also call the main Access number to request to speak with OCHN’s Veterans Navigator: 248-464-6363

Any additional questions can be directed to Oakland Community Health Network’s Access Department at 248-464-6363.