

# NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2024

**“God Is With You Wherever You Go”  
- Joshua 1:9**



*Interim Minister's Notes,  
Rev. Christopher Richards*

**“The Beginning of Lent”**

*“Take up your cross and follow, deny yourself, for whoever wants to save one's life, will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me, will save it.” Luke 9: 23-24*

A Trappist monk once remembered Ash Wednesday at their Abbey near Huntsville, Alabama. In mid-winter it was usually cold and the monks would walk barefoot in single file from the main building to the chapel to receive the daubing of ashes, a visual reminder of their need for repentance.

The image of people stepping in the footprint of another for warmth on a cold day is apt for the beginning of Lent. The season of Lent begins early this year. The weather is chilly. We're looking for a little WARMTH... and along comes Ash Wednesday. As Christians, we come face to face with our humanity and mortality and understand that ashes are a symbol of both sorrow and a desire for repentance. Having spent a considerable amount of time in New Orleans with many of you from North, I/we can attest to the fact that Ash Wednesday is much more subdued than all the parades and parties that make up Mardi Gras! In fact, Mardi Gras is far more than one day of celebration as it stretches over many weeks in New Orleans. We love a parade and a party. Yet going beyond the mindset of culture and one's own frame of reference, Lent is the season of reflection and repentance. We slow down and move from a place of in-ward self-knowledge, toward a reconnecting of the Spirit's transforming action. Thomas Carlyle once wrote: “Of all the acts of humanity, repentance is the most divine. The greatest of all faults is to be conscious of none.” Jesus calls us to reflect and prayerfully consider life and our relationship with one another and God.

Join us on **Ash Wednesday, February 14, at 7:00 p.m.** and we'll stop long enough to have ashes daubed on our foreheads and walk barefoot in the footprint of Jesus and one another into this season of lengthening days called Lent.

Peace and grace,  
**Rev. Chris**

## *Moderator's Notes...*



January was another busy month at NCC.....a slow down after the Christmas holidays wasn't as slow as anticipated. The retirement of **Rev. Mimi Biedron** and the welcoming of **Rev. Chris Richards** started the month off. Rev. Richards has provided some great leadership and input into the future of NCC.

The month then ended with our Annual Business meeting along with a Salad Bar lunch provided by the Fellowship Board. It was a wonderful spread. And during the meeting it was announced that the Executive Council approved bestowing the title of **Minister Emerita** on **Rev. Mimi Biedron**. A title totally deserved and rightfully earned. Her new title will be included on our social media sites and future communications.

Will February calm down - nope. Lent starts in mid-February - information coming soon for everyone on the activities that Rev. Chris and the Worship Board have in place for the Lenten and Easter seasons.

Stay warm during these cold winter days!

*Tim Sirovy,*  
Moderator

## ***FEBRUARY MEETINGS***

Asset & Resources Ministry Board – Monday, February 12, at 6:30 p.m.

Diaconate Ministry Board – Tuesday, February 13, at 6:30 p.m. – Zoom only

Missions Ministry Board – Sunday, February 18, at 11:30 a.m.

Worship Ministry Board – Sunday, February 18, at 11:30 a.m. - Hybrid

Fellowship Ministry Board – Tuesday, February 20, at 7 p.m.

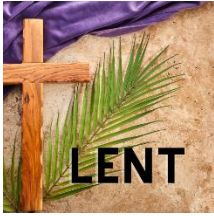
Executive Council – Monday, February 27, at 7 p.m.

## ***NORTH CHURCH ARTICLES AND ACTIVITIES***

### ***WORSHIP MINISTRY BOARD***

### **COMMUNION**

We will celebrate communion on **Sunday, February 4, 2024** during worship.



## AT NORTH CHURCH



Lent is a time of rearranging our time, marking out space and purpose. Like Jesus, we retreat away from one place to another. We intentionally change our routines, with the hope that we might see clearer. Jesus goes apart so he does not come apart.

As well, like our Lord, we often grow closer to God by sacrificing something in our lives that distracts us from this relationship. Even Jesus needed a place where he could focus not on all that he was called to do (healing, miracles, teaching, etc.) but on his intimacy with his Father. Going out into a wilderness refocuses our attention from all that demands our attention. Today, many folks are showing their true spiritual colors by putting down their smart phones and devices during Lent, much like people did for years with food, drink or bad habits that annoy the life out of ourselves and others. The frequency of receiving and sending emails, texts, news, advertising and the avalanche of information that is ever growing; has become our new health crisis. To say people are distracted today, no matter their age, is an understatement.

This Lenten season is a timely reminder of a spiritual practice that is ancient, but ever so needed. Lent parallels the forty-day period Jesus spent in preparation of the ministry to which he would change the world. His sacrifice was immense.

**ASH WEDNESDAY, February 14, 2024 - 7pm at North**

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## WORSHIP AT NORTH CHURCH

### **Sunday Worship February 2024**

Celebrating the Sacrament of Communion

Message: "More Than Memories"

Text: The Gospel According to Mark 14: 22-24

Hymn: "We Gather Together" #421 NCH

Hymn: "Alleluia! Gracious Jesus!" #257 NCH

Hymn: "Let Us Break Bread Together" #330 NCH

Recessional Hymn: "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" #393 NCH

### **Sunday, February 11 - Lincoln Remembered**

Message: "Magnanimous Faith"

Text: Psalm 30: 4-5

Hymn: "Our God, Our Help" # 1 PH

Hymn: "Take My Life and Let It Be" # 404 PH

Recessional Hymn: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" # 228 PH



**ASH Wednesday Service, February 14, 7:00pm**  
The Beginning of Lent "Words of Fasting and Feasting"

**Sunday, February 18 - The First Sunday in Lent**

Message: "Lent and Letting Go"  
Text: The Gospel According to Mark 1: 9-15  
Hymn: "All Creatures of Our God and King" #64 PH  
Hymn: "Lord Jesus, Who Through Forty Days" #211 NCH  
Recessional Hymn: "On a Hill Far Away" #195 NCH

**Sunday, February 25 - The Second Sunday in Lent**

Message: "A Quest for a Question"  
Text: Luke 20: 1-8  
Hymn: "When in Our Music God is Glorified" #561 NCH  
Hymn: "I Love to Tell the Story" # 522, NCH  
Hymn: "Rejoice, You Pure in Heart" #345 PH

**Sunday, March 24 - PALM SUNDAY**



"Palms to Passion"  
Scripture and Music Worship based on the Gospel of Matthew

**Thursday, March 28 - MAUNDY THURSDAY**

Vegetarian Potluck and Lord's Supper (Communion) in Fellowship Hall



## DIACONATE MINISTRY BOARD



### LENTEN DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. There will be a limited number of Lenten Devotional Booklets available on the table outside the Sanctuary soon. Feel free to take one. Reading the devotion each day as a family is an opportunity to remember the importance of Lent in the life of the church and prepare ourselves for Easter.

### PILGRIM POSTAL PAL

This month our Pilgrim Postal Pal is **Bob Daniels**. Valentine cards are available now on the table in the Narthex. The cards are addressed and stamped and all you need to do is pick out a card, add a personal note and drop it in the mail.

## MISSIONS MINISTRY BOARD

### BLANKET SUNDAY - Sunday, February 18

When disaster strikes Church World Services responds quickly by providing critical supplies to organizations on the ground. These items include blankets, CWS hygiene kits, and emergency clean up buckets. Tens of thousands of these supplies are shipped each year reaching people who need them.

Your donation of \$10 supplies one blanket, \$25 supplies a blanket and a CWS hygiene kit.

Here at North Church, Blanket Sunday is a long-standing event which we have supported. Thank you! Under circumstances where someone has no home to go to the donation you make now truly brings comfort in a crisis.



You can make a donation by writing a check and placing it in the Offertory Stand in the Narthex, please reference Blanket Sunday. You can also go online to 2024 Blanket Sunday, click on Downloads, 2024 Bulletin insert, and scroll to the third page to use the QR Code to donate directly.

### FLEECE AND THANK YOU PROJECT

We will be doing a Fleece and Thank You project again on **Sunday, February 18th**. We'll cut the blankets on the 18th and tie the blankets on Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. Come to Coffee Hour and join us!



## ***Crossroads***

Many thanks to everyone who brought in warm clothing, hats, gloves and socks to church this past Christmas season. Your generosity was overwhelming and greatly appreciated. A few members from North, along with some members from Pine Hill went to Crossroads on December 31st and January 7<sup>th</sup>. We distributed your gifts to over 450 clients both days. Crossroads was initially established by Father McLaren, an Episcopal minister, to feed homeless men living on the street in Detroit. I think our gifts were a great addition to that vision.

We did not have many children come to Crossroads those days, and yet had many coats, hats, gloves and socks for them. Those clothing items were taken to the Oakland County Foster Closet and were eagerly accepted. Again, your donations have made a difference to many in need. Thank you!

Looking ahead, North Congregational Church will be working with the **Farmington Muslim Community Mosque on Sunday, May 5th** at Crossroads to prepare and serve a wonderful meal. You can start bringing in needed hygiene items and placing them in the supply room by the library at church. **Suggested items** are toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, deodorants, razors, shaving cream, shampoos and conditioners. Travel sized items are appreciated, but if you happen to have a BOGO offer for a full-sized hygiene product, that would be great too. Crossroads is now sponsoring a shower truck every other Monday at their facility, so the hygiene kits we assemble are used frequently.

If you happen to still have warm clothing (coats, hats, men's jeans, men's shoes), please feel free to bring those items into church, and place them in the Supply Room. Unfortunately, there are still some cold days ahead, and we can take your clean, gently used items to Crossroads, and hand them out as needed.

The 2024 Missions Board

## **FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY BOARD**

### **MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB**

A group of North Church Men meet every other Tuesday at 9 a.m. for breakfast at Moe's on Ten. They will be meeting on **Tuesday, February 6th and 20th**. If you enjoy breakfast and would like to join them, please contact **Tom Modick** at [moto126@aol.com](mailto:moto126@aol.com).

### **BOOK GROUP – Wednesday, February 21 at 1 p.m. – In person in the Library and on Zoom**

In February we will be reading *Warrior Girl Unearthed*, by Michigan based author, Angeline Boulley. Boulley's debut novel *Firekeeper's Daughter* was the Great Michigan Read for this past year and a New York Times best seller. In *Warrior Girl Unearthed*, we return to Sugar Island and follow the story of Perry-Firekeeper Birch.

An excerpt from Goodreads:

*...when she attends a meeting at a local university, Perry learns about the “Warrior Girl”, an ancestor whose bones and knife are stored in the museum archives, and everything changes. Perry has to return Warrior Girl to her tribe. Determined to help, she learns all she can about NAGPRA, the federal law that allows tribes to request the return of ancestral remains and sacred items. The university has been using legal loopholes to hold onto Warrior Girl and twelve other Anishinaabe ancestors’ remains, and Perry and the Misfits won’t let it go on any longer...*



Book group typically meets the third Wednesday of each month. Check your weekly church planner for updates on schedule changes.

Looking ahead: March—*The Long Haul: A Trucker’s Tales of Life on the Road* by Finn Murphy. April—*West with Giraffes* by Lynda Rutledge. May—*Absolution* by Alice McDermott.

## **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS**

The Knitting Tree was beautiful this past Advent season. It held 26 pairs of mittens and gloves, 20 hats and 8 scarves. The large sock on the railing in the Narthex held 448 pairs of socks. There were many different styles, colors and sizes. Every item was appreciated by the person receiving it. All items were donated to Crossroads in Detroit.

Thank you to all the contributors. Women's Fellowship appreciates your generous spirit.