

The Churchmouse

www.newaygoucc.org

February 2012

Start With the Good Stuff

Most churches are used to dealing with problems. Note I didn't say they are used to solving problems, because many problems facing churches are bigger than what resources and talents they have. No church can change and correct population shifts, the challenges of aging, denomination squabbling, and the overabundance of churches. They can work around those issues, they can correct some of those effects of those challenges, but they cannot make those difficulties go away. Churches have either become quite good at fixing the symptoms, or at avoiding what is facing them, until it becomes a crisis. Churches are often good at

building up resources and hope or they are good at complaining and despairing. Either way, churches are good with problems, but problems will not help the church see the future God intends for them, or what hopeful and good work they could be, and are, often doing in the communities around them.

I am not against problem-solving, mind you, it is a necessary part of the work we do. If the furnace isn't working, fix it. If Sunday School lessons are boring, train your teachers or change your curriculum. If everyone is not hearing their favorite worship music, broaden your musical palate. If you need to offer classes in financial

management, life-skills, and other life challenges, scout your population for a good teacher and make room for a new class. Most of these problems can be dealt with if we approach them with a prayerful spirit and an open mind.

Problem-solving gets us through the present, but it's hard to build a future on because it focuses on what we don't do well, what we have difficulty facing. The future is challenging enough so it does not need to be met with only our weaknesses showing. Building a future depends on deepening the talents and gifts that God has given us and making sure we find out how they fit the community around us. It requires that we build on our assets, fine-tuning them so they meet real needs in this world. Since problem-solving tends to focus on the negative (what is wrong), it is not the best tool to use to determine what a congregation is good at and what it can build on. A far better technique for doing this is appreciative inquiry, which is simply taking the time to reflect on what the church already does well and truly enjoys and making plans to use those gifts

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Worship Schedule for February

February 5 - Communion

Mark 1:29-39

"Holding Up"

February 12 - Ask a Question Sunday

February 19 - Transfiguration Sunday

Art Sunday-Bring one of your children's art projects to share

Hymn Sing

Mark 9:2-9

February 26 - First Sunday of Lent

Psalms 25:1-10

Hymn Series "Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us"

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in better and more productive ways in the future.

Appreciative inquiry begins with the idea that every church, no matter what its size or its age, has gifts and talents that are unique and have helped them do good work in the world around it. Please understand what I am saying here-every church has gifts and talents that God has given it. There are no weak or useless churches; there are only churches that are not using their gifts well and in the way God wants them to use them. There are no exceptions to this rule. Any church that has

survived for longer than, say, six months has gifts that have been put to some good service to the church and to the community.

So how do we determine these gifts that we want to build on? How do we figure out what talents God wants us to use? That is your challenge for this month. Ponder over and perhaps write down some answers to the following series of questions:

Going over your time spent in this church, when did you feel most alive, most excited, and most motivated about being here? What made it exciting? Who was involved? What

happened? How were you involved? What did you feel? What do you value most about your church? What church activities are most important to you? Why?

Thinking back on your answers to the first two questions, which three events, activities, or experiences would you wish for your church based on those experiences?

I look forward to hearing about these blessings, both big and small, that come out your time of reflection.

Peace, Pastor Jon

Ash Wednesday Service

Start your Lent right with this special service of sharing the ashes and gathering and feasting around the communion table. We will meet in the sanctuary at 7 p.m.

on February 22nd. We will begin our Lenten sermon series on the sacred music of our lives and our Bible. We will reading from Psalm 51 and reflecting on the story behind and the deeper meaning of that wondrous hymn "Beneath the Cross of Jesus"



Raise the Roof Superbowl Party

will be held on Sunday, February 5, 2012
6:00 p.m. - ???

at Klaus & Debi's house
1383 East 98th St. Grant

Cost:
\$5 per person



All money collected will be donated to the roof fund.

Please RSVP to Klaus or Debi by
Friday, February 3, at (231) 834-9841



BBQ's, chips, pop

Watch the game,
play pool, play darts



Chili Cook-Off

Congratulations to the Mission & Social Action Commission for winning the "Best Chili 2012" award!



My name is Genny Cooper and This is My Story

My parents, Mary and Willard Stevens lived on a good size farm where Camp Henry is now. We had a big barn and all kinds of animals. My sisters, Norma and Mary, loved doing things on the farm. I went to the country school in our area and Etta Anderson was my teacher. They did not start me in Kindergarten, but right into first grade.

We moved into town when my dad got a job working for Charlie Laresn. My parents bought the house that used to be Reed's store. The house is just around the corner from our church. My brother, Phil, was born when we lived in Newaygo. We then moved downtown in a house across the railroad tracks. The house sat where Sandmold's driveway is now.

I worked for Dr. Paine, the dentist, after graduation, and from there I went to work at Gerber for ten years.

Tom Cooper and I married and we decided to go into hotel management, which gave us a chance to meet many interesting people. Our first motel was in the mountains of Kentucky, and we stayed there for about five years. Our next move was to Huntsville, Alabama. It was a brand new motel just waiting for us. Well, during the wee hours of the night, there was a fire. I woke up to people yelling and I got nervous, when all of a sudden, a calm came over me and I hurried and started waking people up to get out. Nobody was hurt, thank God. The wind

was blowing and it was like a freight train moving through. People in the city said it was like a huge fire ball.

We then moved to another motel, a bigger one in the same city of Huntsville. This one had a restaurant, one night the cook put too many steaks on the grill and we had another fire.

People were orderly when leaving but one man was heard to say, "The service here is terrible."

There was a rocket center in Huntsville and our motel was about fifteen miles from it.

When they test fired a rocket we could feel the tremors from it. People came from all over the country to either work or just view the center. One night, a man came to our dining room and spoke no English. The waiter could not understand him and asked me to help. I didn't know if I could help or not. The man kept saying "citron" and we finally found out that all he wanted was a glass of lemon juice and water.

I love the mountain people, they are wonderful and kind. Another interesting thing that happened in Huntsville was four soldiers were sitting in the patio area when another soldier came into the area carrying a gun and looking for his wife. He claimed she was in the hotel with another guy. He was going to kill her. The soldiers calmed him down. When asked if charges were going to be pressed, the answer was he had enough to worry about because this happened about four times per week with him. I

still wonder some times what ever happened.

Our next move was to a Travel Lodge Motel in Indianapolis, IN. The motel was too close to the raceway. It is a wild place to be when the races are on because it is the 'party time' with younger people. They would keep people up all night having a big time. Tom would tell them to get to their rooms. One night, a girl was on top of a car with a group singing to her, "There She Is Miss America" at the top of their lungs. This was very late at night. Finally, Tom had enough of them and went out and said, "Enough now, get back to your rooms, now!", and they did.

There were a lot of snakes in Alabama and one day a copperhead crawled into the lobby and someone came and got it out. Another night, Tom was getting ready for bed and saw this long black thing curled up on our bed. He grabbed the thing and beat it to death. When he picked it up he found out it was his belt.

We moved to Sarasota, Florida, to the Bambi Motel. A family came for vacation and they had a darling boy about 6 or 7 who had a very bad heart and needed lots of care. I would give the mom a break every morning for an hour so she could get some rest. I often think about them and wonder what ever happened to him. We finally came back to Newaygo. Tom's mother still had Cooper's Inn, so we helped with it. One night we were very

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busy and a young mother came in with her little baby. The baby was crying and did not quit.

Emily Ranger went into the main room and came out with a rocking chair and sat it by the fire stove. She sat and quieted the baby, and some man said, "This is not like any restaurant I've ever been in." Well, it wasn't like most restaurants. If you wanted another beer or pop, you got up and got it yourself. If the seating was nearly filled up, you invited strangers to come sit with you. You took your dirty dishes to the kitchen and at times you brought out another person's food for them. It was like one big family. While waiting for food, you could play checkers or bring your own cards and join the fun.

We sold the Inn several years

ago and moved across the street into a doublewide with a basement on ten acres. I am so thankful Tom lived in this home before he died of heart trouble. It was a blessing he did not suffer.

After Tom died I decided to go back to work. The O&A hired me and I worked in the office on the hill. When they bought Smith Propane in Fremont I worked there for a while. They sold that so I was back in Newaygo. I worked for them for ten years.

I just remembered, when I was in high school, I worked at Foreman's Restaurant, where the insurance office is next to the Sportsman. The Foremans were such wonderful people and would let us girls off work so we could go to church on Sunday. After church we would go back to work and every

Sunday Maude Phillips would come in and always order the same thing.

Note from Nancy: I have known Genny and her family since I was about eight years old. We lived across the tracks from the Stevens on M37. I spent lots of time at their home visiting with them. Mrs. Stevens was a peach and soft spoken and put up with me hanging out there. The girls always took time to talk with me and put up with me. Genny has always felt like family.

Genny worked hard at Cooper's Inn and was always nice to everyone. She was always super nice to the children who were there and always talked to them and gave them a treat. In fact, one time I saw her give a man a treat because he was acting like a child. That still makes me laugh.

The Giving Tree

Thank you to everyone who has already donated to this winter's mission!

The mission project, "The Giving Tree" will continue into February. It is adorned with laminated tags. Each tag will have an item that would be very helpful to a person or family in Newaygo County.

If you are willing to help families in need in Newaygo County, please visit the tree for some ideas. If you would like to take a tag with an item such as laundry detergent, shampoo and conditioner, toothpaste or hats and mittens, please bring the tag home with you as a reminder. When you bring the item or items to church with you, please put the items under the Giving Tree and return the tag to the secretary's mailbox.

In February, all of the items will be collected from the tree and delivered to places in Newaygo County that have expressed a need for these items.

For anyone who doesn't want to take a tag, feel free to bring in whatever items you are willing to donate, and leave them under the tree.

If you would like to make a monetary donation, please write a check or give cash to Jane Porter Sue Johnson. One of these ladies will use the money to buy products to add to the tree.

The items that are listed on the tags are:

- Toilet paper
- Laundry detergent
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Toothpaste
- Bar soap
- Dish washing soap
- Razors
- Deodorant/antiperspirant
- Feminine hygiene products
- Diapers



Adult Study Series Living within our Limits-the consolations of Imperfection”

What happens when you have everything and it's not enough? What happens when you keep trying yet you just don't quite get there? How can we live with the limits of the life and talents our choices and God have given us? On the Tuesdays of February and March at 7 p.m., we will gather in the Prayer Room for a lively discussion on Donald McCullough's book "THE CONSOLATIONS OF IMPERFECTION".

Here is a week by week breakdown on the topics we will be looking at closely:

February 7-The Limits of our bodies
 February 14-The Limits of our Relationships
 February 21-The Limits of Knowledge
 February 28-The Limits of Achievement
 March 6-The Limits of Being Good
 March 13-The Limits of Spirituality
 March 20-The Limits of Romance
 March 27-The Limits of Self-Confidence



Camp Talahi will re-open this summer!
Would you like to help?

Do you want to register for camp?

If you would like to help in any way, or if you are interested in the schedule of camp programming, please visit www.CampTalahi.org.

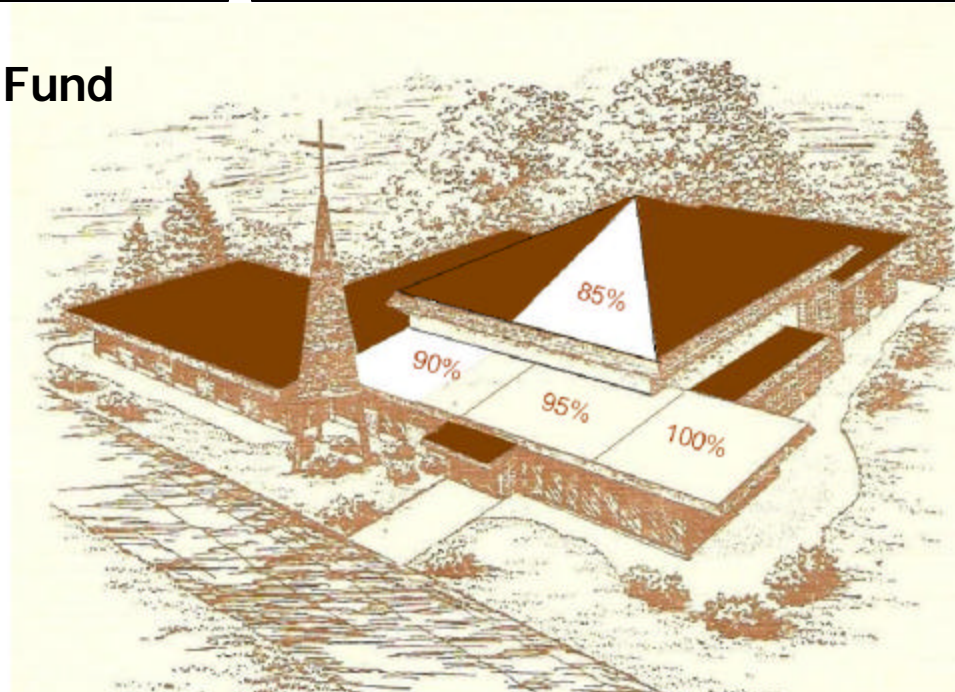
Men's Retreat - Spring Training March 16-18 - \$89

"Men, do you feel like an all-star in your house or a bench warmer? Either way come to Spring Training at Grace Adventures for a men's retreat full of excitement, enthusiasm, and encouragement. The Men's Retreat is held in beautiful West Michigan right next to the Silver Lake Sand Dunes for just \$89, includes meals, housing, snacks, on-campus activities for Friday and Saturday. Stay through Sunday morning for only \$10 more."

If any men from NCUCC are interested, please see the flyer on the bulletin board, or visit GraceAdventures.org for more information

Phillip's Fund Roof Fund Repayment

As you will read on the financial and calendar insert page, 84.9% of the funds borrowed to pay for the new roof have been repaid to the Phillip's Fund. The picture on the right shows how much of the roof is left to be filled in. Thank you for your continuing support of this project!



A letter from Albert G. Daviou, Rector of Saint Elizabeth' Episcopal Church

in Dahlonga, Georgia to Rev. Jonathan Riedel and Rev. Mary Frens about the Tinai Water Project
NCUCC and St. Mark's participated in.

Dear Jon and Mary,

Please accept my deepest gratitude for participating in the Tinai Water Project. Not only did your participation enable the successful completion of the project—water now flows in Tinai—but we have joined hands of love that now stretch from Dahlonga, Georgia, to Newaygo, Michigan, to Tinai, Tanzania. It was only a blessing that you could be a part of this. I am so sorry that I was unable to be present for the night of joyful entertainment.

So you know, I do not yet have the final numbers either for cost or income. I do know that our fundraising exceeded the budget, and so we will be able

to continue the work beyond even the gift of water to the people of Tinai. When we have the final numbers, I will present them to our vestry with a recommendation. Please know that all the funds will go support the people of Central Tanganyika. There are at present several considerations. One is paying for training required to oversee the water project; another is building a school in the village which requires four more rooms; a third is to build a couple of homes for the teachers. All of these are important needs. Another idea is to create an endowment fund at Msalto Theological College for the training of indigenous clergy:

also a great need. Msalto is about halfway between the capital of Dodoma, Tanzania, and the village of Tinai. Again, we will report to you on the final outcome of these deliberations. Pat and I feel warmly about our time in Newaygo and Fremont. We still have friends that we hear from, from time to time. It was a great place to begin our ordained ministry and nurture our children. Please extend our greetings to all those of St. Mark's Episcopal and Newaygo United Church of Christ, and if opportunity avails itself, to the people of St. John the Divine, Fremont.

Faithfully

Albert G. Daviou

Cc Jackie Barrett

CROP Walk Update

The 28th Annual Newaygo/Grant CROP Hunger Walk was held on Sunday, October 2, 2011. It began at the United Methodist Church with a soup lunch. At 1:00 p.m. the walk began, following the paved walkway along the Muskegon River. A total of 163 walkers raised \$11,292, with 19 NCUCC walkers raising over \$1,064. Vicki Pantoja raised the most money out of the group of NCUCC walkers and was presented with a pin. One fourth of the money was given to the Love INC food pantry. The Fremont Area Community Foundation matched this money, so \$2,823 grew to \$5,646! The remaining money, \$8,469, was sent to Church World Service for use locally and around the world. A huge thank you to you, our faithful congregation for once again giving so generously.

Linnea Godfrey, Mission Chair



GAME NIGHT!

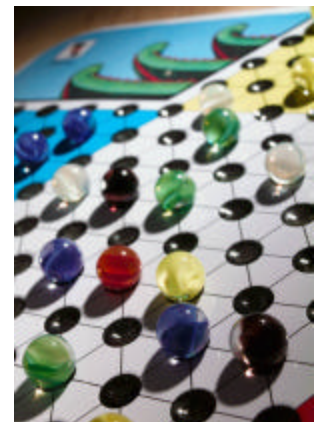
You are invited!

On Saturday, March 10, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Sherry has invited everyone from NCUCC to her house for game night!

Please bring finger foods or dessert to share with everyone!

Sherry has lots of games to play, but if you have a favorite to bring along, that's fine!

If you need help with directions or if you have any questions, please speak to Sherry.



Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire

by Jim Cymbala and Dean Merrill, Zondervan 1997

Reviewed by Judy Corey, M.R.E.

The story of the rebirth of the Brooklyn Tabernacle in one of New York City's most desperate and hopeless stories, yet is a modern-day miracle. Dying as its 20 members sighed what seemed like the church's last breath, in a neighborhood where every problem of the human race made life precarious and joyless, prayer and God's limitless Holy Spirit power, combined with lots of hard work and faith, changed this church into a 6000-member dynamo. What church wouldn't be thrilled by that adventure?

"From this day on, the prayer meeting will be the barometer of our church. What happens on Tuesday night will be the gauge by which we will judge success or failure because that will be the measure by which God blesses us. . . This is the engine that will drive the church." Cymbala stated boldly after a personal battle to give up control and trust God, and miracles happened.

You may know the Brooklyn Tabernacle through its famous choir. Jim Cymbala's wife, Carol, was an untrained but inspired musician

who has composed, accompanied and led this huge choir into reaching out to thousands through music and joy. The choir's CDs and live performances have ignited people's thirst in learning more about this Jesus Christ of hope and transformation.

While the UCC is not a Pentecostal church, many of us have expressed interest in recent years in the UCC becoming more Holy Spirit oriented. This book is well worth the read. Cymbala emphasizes the importance of prayer warriors and openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In this dangerous and self-centered age, God's power can revitalize congregations and individual lives.

Cymbala reminds us that the church must be "saturated in prayer" to be truly blessed, and our church has already seen miracles. We are a prayerful and loving church, but we need more Holy Spirit power to be guided into more of God's will in our community. Pastor Jon, Church Council and many members are working together to find out how best to help our community. Perhaps we need to ask for God's Spirit to work

even more amazingly with the great love and compassionate spirit that already hallmark NCUCC.

"The old saying is true: If you have only the Word, you dry up. If you have only the Spirit, you blow up. But if you have both, you grow up." Cymbala challenges us to open up (both personally and corporately as a congregation) to the amazing potential of God through the Holy Spirit. He reminds us that "the principle he (God) laid down long ago is still true: 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.' (Jer. 29:13) O God, split the heavens and come down! Manifest yourself somehow. Do what only you can do." This should be the prayer of every Christian.

Reread the outrageous risks of faith men and women of both the Old and New Testaments took with God's promises to guide them. I'm so glad that our former member Marian Hopp introduced me to this brief, remarkable book. Please take a look at it in our church library. It could empower us even more and grow NCUCC into a dynamic neighborhood rescue center!

Note: if you have read a book you think should be in our church library, or one that you think should be reviewed, please contact Judy Corey, Jackie Barends, or Pastor Jon.

Save the Date!

The Congregators are back!

If you are between the ages of 22 and 42, save the date of Friday, March 30, 2012. You will be receiving a special invitation in the mail with details in February. Childcare will be provided at the church!

Announcements

Assisting us in January:

Pastors: Rev. Jonathan Riedel

Ushers: Bud and Bill

Greeters:

February 5 - Dick & Gloria

February 12 - TBD

February 19 - TBD

February 26 - TBD

Fellowship Time Hosts:

February 5 - Miriam

February 12 - Al & Marcia

February 19 - Dorothy

February 26 - Bud & Marilyn

Liturgists:

February 5 - Linnea

February 12 - Dawn

February 19 - Barbara

February 26 - Wayne

Children in Worship:

February 5 - Kathy and Gretchen

February 12 - Kathy and Kimberly

February 19 - Kathy and Vickie

February 26 - Kathy and Amanda

Bulletin Sponsor for February:

Nancy Carlson

If you have signed up to sponsor bulletin covers in the next few months:

Please pay the treasurer for the bulletins and note "Bulletin Sponsor" on the check or envelope. Thank you!

2011 Donation Receipts

As we start a new year, it is once again time to start preparing our records for filing our income tax returns. If you would like a receipt for your 2011 tax deductible donations to NCUCC, please let me know. Ken Bell, treas.

Deadline for the March Churchmouse

Please send any dates that you would like included on the calendar or any articles that you would like included in the January Churchmouse to Kimberly by Tuesday, February 21.

You may email them to
churchmouse@newwaygoucc.org
or leave a hard copy in the office.

Note Cards are Available

Note cards with a drawing of our NCUCC on the cover, and blank on the inside, are available. A bundle of 12 cards sells for \$4. Please see Ken for information.

Worship on Wednesday

Every person, of every age, is invited to come to the church for this time of fellowship called Worship on Wednesday.

In February, Worship on Wednesday will meet on the 11th at 5:30 p.m. for a potluck dinner and a lesson from Pastor Jon called "Why Do We Sing In Church?" On the 22nd we will also meet in the Fellowship Hall at 5:30 p.m. for a potluck dinner, followed by a time of crafts. At 7 p.m. the Ash Wednesday Worship Service begins in the sanctuary.

Lenten Soup's On Schedule

All donations received from the offerings at Soup's On will be used to benefit local agencies.

Date	Location	Providing Soup
February 29 th	St. Bartholomew	St. Bartholomew
March 7 th	NCUCC	NCUCC & St. Mark's
March 14 th	Newaygo United Methodist	Newaygo United Methodist
March 21 st	River Valley Community Church	River Valley & New Community
March 28 th	Family of God Comm. Church	Family of God Comm. Church