

Worship Helpers for December

USHERS:

2: Deb & Judy
9 Deb & Judy
16 Dorothy & Gloria
23 Dorothy & Gloria
24 Dorothy & Gloria
30

SOUND SYSTEM



Ken Bell

FELLOWSHIP TIME:

2: Deb & Judy
9
16: Linnea & Sue
23
30



Birthdays in December

2 Joyce Twining
3 Vicki Pantoja
4 Ella Mae Mercer
20 Dorothy Bos
25 Marilyn Melvin
26 Bill Leaver
30 Jeanne Leaver

Anniversaries in December

21 Wayne & Jane Porter
28 Ken & Jo North

Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ

432 Quarterline • Newaygo, MI 49337 • (231) 652-6624

Jonathan Riedel, Pastor

The Churchmouse

December, 2018





Human Rights Day

“God has told you, human one, what is good and what the LORD requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God.”
Micah 6:8 CEB

It has become a pastor’s habit to ruminate long and hard over the December newsletter column. After all, what more can be said about the month in which we celebrate Jesus’ birth in the hundreds of years since we co-opted the holiday from the Northern European Celts and Picts? I could paint gauzy and song-drenched depictions of shepherds, angels and stars, of a child nestled silently in hay and wrapped in the whitest rags you could imagine, but that would only strain every nerve the historian in me possesses. I could describe the hardness of the journey his mother took just before his birth, stress the political circumstances that made the journey necessary, and note sadly how quickly his family went on the run because of the ruthlessness of the powers that were, but most people want to hear Christmas carols this time of year, not laments. I wonder, at times, if it would better to let centuries of better writers speak and retain a respectful and appreciative silence.

But Christmas is too important to keep silent and my voice might be one that God uses to keep December 25th from fading into just another day for someone so, with fear and trembling, I stumble through helpless yet helpful words. So I peruse my calendar in search of the connections between our days to jar some speck of inspiration. I happen upon December 10th-Human Rights Day, a day set aside to recognize the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948 amid clashes between the capitalist and the communist worlds. This non-binding document urges countries to adopt policies that preserve individual and corporate freedoms, such as the freedoms of speech, of movement, of practicing one’s faith, to preserve privacy and safety, to seek asylum, to marry, and to pursue economic opportunity and social security. This was meant to be a blueprint for a more just and more prosperous world and, historically speaking, when countries are willing to keep their citizens’ rights healthy and possible it does create a more vibrant, fairer world. These basic rights are always a challenge to those who wish to consolidate power and to streamline the system by eliminate unnecessary opposition so it is pay at least yearly attention to them lest we forget how necessary they are to our health and well-being.

December Worship Schedule

12/02 Advent I Candlelighting

Communion
Luke 21:25-36

Things to Come

12/09-Advent II Candlelighting

Carol sing
Luke 3:1-6

Make Ready

12/16-Advent III Candlelighting

Carol Sing
Luke 3:7-18

Christmas Pageant

12/23 - Advent IV Candlelighting

Carol Sing
Luke 1:29-55

Moving

12/24 - Christmas Eve Service of Carols and Stories - 7:00 pm

12/30 - Pastor Jon Away

Carol Sing
Luke 2:41-52

(continued from page 1)

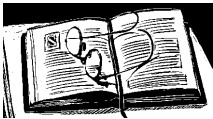
This dry talk prompts me to wonder about Christmas. What do human rights, important as they are, have to do with the birth of Christ? If we take the idea of the Incarnation seriously, my answer would have to be ‘everything.’ Jesus emerged into the maw of life. He was not an archetypal, paper doll baby. He was born poor in a world that valued mostly the wealthy. He was born a Jew in a world competing for the coveted Roman citizenship with all its accompanying Latinized cultural apparatus. He came into a world that exploited the builder, the craftsman, and the ditch-digger, and spent most of his life as a handyman. He grew up to be a rebel in a world that insisted, with sword and execution, on conformity. He was raised in a spiritual worldview that saw God who worked in history and who sided with the forgotten. He showed his disdain for the worship of money and fame. Jesus came indeed as more than just ‘one of us.’; he came as one of the least of us, one who walked with the sick, the rejected, the wrong-gendered, and the refugee. Jesus recognize the dignity and the hope of each person he encountered and, if they took his words and his touch seriously enough, changed them by meeting their deepest and most intense needs. He gave them dignity, freedom of movement, the safety of a home, and the hope of God’s enduring and empowering love. This often inspired these same men and women to lift up the poor, to share with the hungry, to care for the forgotten, and to speak to power on behalf of the oppressed even to the present day. Jesus gave each person who encountered him, then and now, certain God-given, inalienable, and precious rights that cannot be taken from them. What can this world strip away if it cannot remove from these people the knowledge that they are treasured and loved by God and are about good and healing work?

Our human rights are a gift from God, ones that should never be taken away from us without severe consequences. Prophets yesterday and today have warned us that when we strip people’s dignity from them we will pay as a society. God will let us reap just what we have sown-evil for evil, injustice for injustice, loss for loss. The more we strip away, the more we will lose. We will forfeit our good fortune and our possibilities because of the heart of Christmas. By God coming down to us in Jesus and giving us the ability and the hope of rising above the sordid and violent brokenness of our worst nature, God has given us back ourselves, our dreams, and our true freedom-our best rights. What better gift could we have been given?

The Rev. Jonathan D. Riedel
Pastor, Newaygo Congregational UCC

Thank You. . .

Pastor Jon and Ben would like to thank all of you for the many kindnesses shared this year. They are a blessing to us during this season and throughout the whole year.



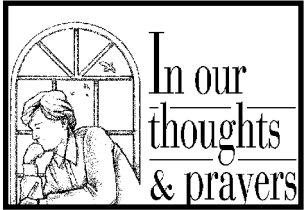
Sunday Morning Bible Study

9:00 am

We are studying the prophecies of Isaiah. Bring your questions; we’ll supply the Bibles.

Women’s Bible Study

Women’s Bible Study meets at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays



Al, Carolyn, Conrad Jr.,
Fred & Lucas, Maxine, Carolyn S. and
Marcia S.



Christmas Wishes



If you would like to send Christmas Greeting Cards to your Church family, you will find boxes on the table in the narthex to put your cards in.

Please be sure to check your boxes for your greetings.

Merry Christmas

Christ the King

John 18:33-37

Word Search Puzzle

T E S T I F Y F C Z N U H E Y
C D U Y W R T K I A W N U H Y
S E R V A N T S I G R O A G F
V W T A Q Z V P T N H R R F T
I F F Y J M G G J T G T E L U
V J A P W W T A C H U D K S D
K I N G W O I T R U T H O X T
P F S A Y I N G C H P O V M X
L Q E V E R Y O N E R C Q L N
A T A B R D N C M I I K I I R
C P A L A C E D N Q G L I S E
E T D P R I E S T N H S D T A
M P O Z W F A C T D T H E E S
V G I R P E O P L E W W A N O
N I B O R N M R N J P V Q S N

IDEA	PLACE	RIGHT	WORLD	SERVANTS
TESTIFY	KINGDOM	TRUTH	ARREST	LISTENS
FACT	PEOPLE	REASON	BORN	FIGHT
SAYING	PALACE	PRIEST	KING	EVERYONE

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3	4 Women's Bible Study 10 am	5 Choir Practice 5:30 pm	6 Circles	7	8
9 Circles Mtg. NO Bell Choir Practice Congregational Meeting	10	11 Women's Bible Study 10 am	12 Choir Practice 5:30 pm	13 Circles	14 Foot Care Laura in today	15
16 Christmas Gifts for our Christmas Families Due Today	17	18 Women's Bible Study 10 am	19 Choir Practice 5:30 pm	20 NCUCC Serves Circles Meal	21	22
23 Christmas Program	24 Christmas Eve Service 7:00 pm	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26 Churchmouse Deadline	27 NO Circles	28	29
30	31 New Years Eve	1 Women's Bible Study 10 am	2	3 Circles	4	5

Deadline for the January Churchmouse

Please send any information or articles you would like included in the **January Churchmouse** to the office by **Monday, December 26.**

You may e-mail information to: churchmouse@newaygoucc.org or leave a hard copy in the office.



Food Donations for our Christmas Families

We are continuing the collection of Canned Goods for Christmas Families. Here is a list of foods needed. There is a box in the Hall for your donations.

Pie Crust Mix	Toilet Paper
Pie Filling	Laundry Soap
Mac & Cheese	Tuna Fish
Spaghetti	Taco Shells
Spaghetti Sauce	Taco Sauce
Canned Veggies	Snack Pack Pudding Cups
Canned Fruit	Snack Pack Jello Cups
Peanut Butter	Apple Sauce
Cereal	Pancake Mix
Cake Mixes	Potatoes
Frosting	Syrup
Soups	Fruit Juices

Donations must be in by December 16.

Thank You

Pick a Topic Sermons

Pastor would like to hear from you about which topics you would like Pastor Jon to feature during his *Pick a Topic* sermons. If you have a suggestion, you can call Pastor at 652-6624, put a note in the offering plate, or email him at



revjdriedel@gmail.com.



Treasurer's Report

October 16 to November 15, 2018

Income	Total Exp.
October 21	\$641.00
October 28	2,120.00
November 4	2,149.00
November 11	4,131.00
Total	\$9,042.00 \$10,544.14

Difference (\$1,502.14)

This is from the tables and chairs and the new setup for the accounting. No Worries

Phillips Fund	\$165,905.80
Family Fund	62,370.67
Neighbors in Need	208.00

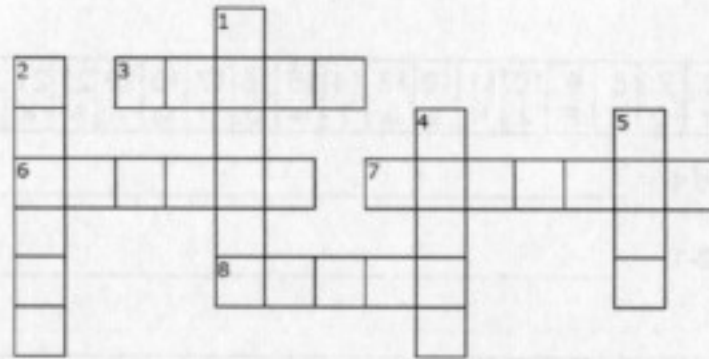
Thank you to everyone who donated money to buy the tables and chairs. We are so Blessed!

Dawn Anderson, Treasurer



The Church will be singing Christmas Carols at the Brook and Woodview Apartments this month. Please see bulletin for day and time.

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

3. The earth or universe
6. To make an effort to hear something
7. An area or territory ruled by king or queen
8. A statement proven to be or accepted as accurate or factual

DOWN

1. To capture and hold under the authority of law
2. Where a king or queen lives
4. To battle, quarrel, or argue; a conflict between two or more people
5. Brought into life by birth

ARREST	LISTEN	FIGHT	BORN
WORLD	PALACE	KINGDOM	TRUTH



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Christmas Pageant



The Christmas pageant this year will take place during the service on Sunday, December 23. The pageant, "Now Proclaim Messiah's Birth", will feature both adults and children.

For the children, practice for the pageant will be during Sunday School time on Sunday,

December 16. A quick meeting for the adults participating will be after church on Sunday, December 16 in the sanctuary. Both groups will be picking out their costumes at those times.

On the Sunday of the pageant, participants, please meet at 9:30 in the Sunday School room to get into your costumes.

If you would like to be in the pageant, or have any questions, please see Jane Porter or call Jeanne Leaver - 309-235-2274.

Thank You. . .

Thank you to all those who signed up for gifts and donated money for our adopted Christmas Families.

Please have your gifts at Church by Sunday, December 16th. They will be picked up on December 20th.

Come and Visit our Newly Furnished Fellowship Hall

Thank You to those who donated money to make this happen, it looks so nice!

