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# Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ



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**“An Open and Affirming Church”**

## “THE CHURCHMOUSE”

**October 2022**

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### Reconciliation Day

“I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. I pray that they also will be in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me.” John 17:21 CEB

Halloween is not the only occasion that some Christians celebrate on October 31<sup>st</sup>. For Protestants, it is the anniversary of the day Martin Luther nailed his 95 objections to Catholic Church practices on the main door of the cathedral in Wittenburg, Germany and, in the process, set off a series of church division, reformulations, and rebellions that we call the Reformation. He was not the first Christian to break away from Mother Rome; the Eastern churches stretching from Egypt to Russia had long since left the fold. He did not lead the first separatist movement; many times since the day of Jesus’ resurrection found church leaders prosecuting and correcting breakaway groups. He would also not be the last; the last two centuries alone have spawned Christian Science, the Latter Day Saints, the African American churches, and the Pentecostal revival, to name just a few breakaway gatherings of the Spirit. Much of the growth of Christianity around this planet has been due to its capacity to mutate then to divide, spreading to places it had never dared to go before, sure only only that the Spirit must be guiding them.

But schism is not the only trait that churches have in abundance. They can also come together. My own denomination is a fragile example of this reconciliation. It was born in the height of the ecumenical movement, a movement that urged the various factions of the Christian church to talk to one another and to discover what they had in common. It was the merger of two long-standing German Reformed traditions with the Congregational (the church of the Puritans) and the Christian Church (a mid-nineteenth century attempt to bring all the churches together). They balanced ways doing missions, conducting church business, voting for which stances they would make to deal with social problems, and how to care their churches and their pastors, despite being very dissimilar originally in how closely they worked with other churches and in how they saw church government. They debated, they argued, they made compromised, and they discovered ways to work in cooperation with one another. Somewhere along the line, some of my denomination’s calendar setters decided that another way to celebrate Reformation Day, a day where, for good reason, church unity went asunder, would also be a good day to recognize a day dedicated for reconciliation. Perhaps a new reformation is in order—a reformation of putting the pieces back together through conversation and prayerful consideration of what we

could learn from each other. Maybe God was now calling for us to find a way to worship and to do good deeds collectively because of all the good it does when we are able to work together.

So Reconciliation Day shares its space with Reformation Day now on my datebook. As one who has tried (and sometimes failed) to work with those whose theologies and ways of ministry reach far beyond the boundaries of my particular slant on things, as one who, during my service of ordination, was blessed by both a Methodist minister and a Catholic priest, I strive to discover what connects us. As one who has listened to Muslims describe their lives of prayer, who has witnessed bar mitzvahs, and who has absorbed the smells and the joys of Hindu celebration, I desire to see God wherever God appears. As one who has overheard many conversations about what matters most in life, I want to keep the words flowing so we can find ways to grow ever closer.

How do I envision this closeness? I keep returning to Paul's image of the body. For him, every part is vital. Leg or arm. Heart or nostril. Brain or colon. Some may seem prominent or important, but consider this-when your smallest toe is in agony do you not feel throughout your whole being? And as you recover from Bell's palsy, do you not rejoice when you are finally able to close your eye properly or control the flow of your tears? When in pain and when all is in working order, each part impact all the rest of who you are and should be cared for and strengthened. So the church is like a body and each person plays a part in its life or its lack of life. Each person is that important.

Now let us carry the metaphor further. Each church has a part to play in the greater sway of God's love-sometimes in ways beneficial and sometimes in ways destructive. Each congregation is an expression of something that God has in mind, but only when we listen carefully to God and when we follow in the ways that God is calling us. Each gathering of Christ's people is meant to be an example, a champion, an inspiration for every other gathering. We are here to learn from one another. We are here to avoid each other's mistakes and to provide models for alternative ways to go. Most of all, we are called to work together in ways that bring hope, justice, peace, and joy to not just those who gather in our buildings but in all the places we find ourselves.

Sometimes this gathering and working together has all the comfort of a lens repair or the adoption of an prosthetic leg. We blink, we stumble, we grumble, and we find ourselves working harder. We even discover we can do more than our formerly hobbled position allowed us to do. We put in more effort, listen harder, and try new things so we can gain confidence as we determine anew what we can and cannot do. Reconciliation is healing in that way. We are always in the ways of reforming, of changing to meet the ways ahead. Let us also be about the business of reconciling, so we meet those challenges better together.

The Rev. Jonathan D. Riedel-Pastor, Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ

### **Evening Prayer**

On Wednesdays at 7:00 pm Pastor Jon hosts, on a conference call, a time of meditation and prayers for ourselves and others. To join us, dial 1- 978-990-5000 then 283560#.

## **What's Happening at NCUCC      October 2022**

### **Events, Anniversaries and Birthdays**

Worship is in person and on ZOOM at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84864699096>  
or phone 1-312-626-6799 ID: 848 6469 9096

Pastor Jon's Tuesday noon class is in person. Will also be on ZOOM by request  
or due to bad weather. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84229731057>  
or phone 1-312-626-6799 ID: 842 2973 1057

Wednesday Night Prayer Time 7:00 pm. Call 978-990-5000 then 283560#

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Sa. 1:	Mo. 17:
Su. 2: Worship w/Communion 10 am World Communion Sunday "All Together Now" Luke 17: 5-10	Tu. 18: Noon Forum - Sabbatical Learnings ONA Committee Meeting 1:30 pm Marcia S. b'day
Mo. 3: Ethaniel T. b'day	We. 19: Prayer Time 7:00 pm (phone-in) Mark P. b'day
Tu. 4: Noon Forum - Sabbatical Learnings Milan P. b'day	Th. 20:
We. 5: Prayer Time 7:00 pm (phone-in) Nancy H. b'day	Fr. 21: Andrew & Sarah R. anniv.
Th. 6: True North 6-8 pm	Sa. 22: Austin T. b'day
Fr. 7:	Su. 23: Worship 10 am "Just Worship" Luke 18: 9-14 Pastor Jon. b'day
Sa. 8: Dick W. b'day	Mo. 24:
Su. 9: Worship 10 am "Planting Life" Jeremiah 29: 1, 4-7 Rosemary S. b'day	Tu. 25: Noon Forum - Sabbatical Learnings Sue C. b'day
Mo. 10: W&PC 10 am (in Pastor's office)	We. 26: Prayer Time 7:00 pm (phone-in) Dave & Joyce T. anniv.
Tu. 11: Noon Forum - Sabbatical Learnings	Th. 27: November NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
We. 12: Vaccine Clinic 9-11 am Prayer Time 7:00 pm (phone-in)	Fr. 28:
Th. 13:	Sa. 29: Ed R. b'day
Fr. 14:	Su. 30: Worship 10 am "Love That Turns" Luke 19:1-10
Sa. 15:	Mo. 31: Trunk or Treat 6-8 pm
Su. 16: Worship 10 am	

**Members and friends in need of Prayers:** Cynthia J., Katy L., Allen R., Dorothy R., Ed R., Marilyn S., Carolyn S., Fred V., Karen V., Gloria W., Donna, Nikki

## **Newsletter Deadline**

The deadline for articles to be put in the November issue is Thursday, October 27.

Email articles to: [newwaygoucc@gmail.com](mailto:newwaygoucc@gmail.com).

## **Noon Forum** - Sabbathical Learnings

We will spend the rest of our season of ordinary time mulling over what Pastor Jon gleaned from his sabbatical journeys through many churches in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. To prepare for our conversations, please look at the last 11 entries in Pastor Jon's travelogue. We meet on Tuesdays at noon in the entry area of the church. The topics we will discuss are meant to stand alone so you do not have to attend each session to benefit from what we will study together. Here is a schedule of what we will discuss:

10/04-Buildings

10/11-Technology

10/18-Collaboration

10/25-Prayer

## **Vaccine Clinic**

NCUCC will be hosting a vaccine clinic Wednesday, October 12 from 9 to 11 am. The local health department will be administering both Flu and Covid vaccines.

## **Trunk or Treat**

From 6 to 8 pm on Halloween we will hand out candy to the local children. We will meet outside, barring bad weather. Costumes and decorated cars are encouraged. Donations of candy are also appreciated. We always have fun at this event so please plan to join us.

## **Ways to Worship with Us**

Here is a reminder of the different ways that our worship services are available to you.

- Everyone is welcome to attend our services in-person every Sunday at 10 am.
- You can also access a live audio/visual broadcast using ZOOM on your computer or smart phone by using the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84864699096>  
Those without internet access can call the following phone number and Meeting ID:  
1-312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 848 6469 9096.
- If you would like to access the services on your own schedule, they are added to our website [www.newwaygoucc.org](http://www.newwaygoucc.org) and Facebook page following each service.
- Links to Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve services are provided as needed.

## **Handbell Choir**

The Bell Choir will resume practice Sunday, October 9 following worship. If you are not a current choir member and are interested in playing the bells, please feel free to come to practice. You do not need to have previous experience or know how to read music. Practices are held every other week following worship.

## **Treasurer's Report    Aug 16 – Sept 15, 2022**

Income:

Aug 22	\$ 74.00
Aug 29	\$ 1,084.00
Sept 4	\$1,453.00
Sept 11	<u>\$2,730.00</u>
Total	\$5,341.00

Expenses      \$5,592.74

Difference    (-\$ 221.74)

Phillips Fund    \$160,184.97

Family Fund    \$ 68,571.91

The Sabbatical Leave cost the church only \$400.00 over what we had saved for this project. (We would have had exactly the correct amount but the government raised the mileage allowance so all our professional friends who traveled to help us received (rightly so) this extra money).

Thanks you to all who helped out during this sabbatical time !!!!!!!

All bills are paid and we can concentrate on our new and exciting projects for our church. Everyone join in the new endeavors, Please.

Dawn Anderson    Treasurer