

# Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ

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

Jonathan Riedel, Pastor

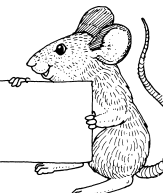
**“An Open and Affirming Church”**



*No matter who you are,  
no matter where you are on life's journey,  
you're welcome here!*



## The Churchmouse



February 2023



*Kin-dom*“Jesus said, ‘I assure anyone who has left house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, or farms because of me and because of the good news will receive one hundreds of time more now in this life.’” Mark 10:28-29 CEB

The realm of God is not consigned to a place. It is expressed in relationships I realized this while I was in quarantine for Co-Vid in a hotel room in Lisbon, Portugal. On the surface, I had little to find discomfiting. My accommodations were small but comfortable. I had a window I could open for fresh air and traffic noise. My credit card and my phone made it easy to order three meals a day. I had space enough to walk when I felt up to it. The floor was tile so I did not run a groove into some carpeting. I spent my time reading, resting, writing, sweeping crumbs into my wastebasket, and watching endless reruns on British television. I even spent time trying to parse sense out of the Portuguese newscasts. I remained, however, a long five days. Many of us who travel abroad know the feeling of disconnection common in a country that does not speak the language you know the best. Many Portuguese speak English fluently but their life experiences, their customs convey private meanings that no foreigner can penetrate easily. I must admit that I enjoy traveling with a busload of strangers that speak my tongue. We share something in common that provides some shade when I am confronted by the novelty of another land. During my quarantine, I must admit, I found myself alone. At least, so I thought. I felt the twinge of fear that often comes with challenging situations. One version of a traveler's night unspools as thus: you are sick in a land you are unfamiliar with. You do not know where to turn if things should take a turn for the worse. You are unfamiliar with your options. This is a thought best chased away and yet here I found myself in its midst. It is easy in such situations, no matter how comfortable, to become self-pitying. But something would not let me stay in those depths. I quickly discovered how to make international connections and contacted my travel agent and my



son to tell them what was happening. My son called my church to get prayers started. At the end of my first day, I heard a knock on my door. It was a tour guide who lived nearby. My travel agency had gotten a hold of her and asked that she checked on me. Since she had recently recovered from the illness herself, we discussed my symptoms and what I needed to be on the look out for. She assured me that she would call my son and reassure him. She urged me to open the window and get some fresh air and the sound of life into my room. Then she gave me her number and promised me that she would visit again in two days. When she did, she brought me more books to read and told me not to worry about returning them. Her husband was Canadian and had plenty of English language books. The travel agency itself phoned daily to arrange for alternative flights and to answer questions. I know that I repeated many questions, but no one showed the least bit of impatience. I also read the note that one of my fellow travelers left behind sharing their experience with Co-Vid isolation in a foreign land and insisting that I call them when I got home. Most of all, I am grateful to the hotel's desk crew. They ordered meals, purchased Tylenol, printed flight schedules and e-tickets, and checked diligently each morning to see how I was faring. I suspect that they were as happy as I was when I went for a walk around the city block to celebrate the end of my quarantine. I share this tale not to ask for sympathy. Many have suffered from this disease longer and harder than I did. In the end, I was minorly inconvenienced and I am grateful that I was vaccinated. Rather, I tell it to reflect on a truth that continues to impress itself upon me. We are built and maintained by community. The contours of our lives, for good or ill, depend on the company we keep. I would dare carry this one step further: our realization of what God's realm truly is also dependent on who we talk to and who we listen to. Whether it is a place of exclusion and judgment or a place of gracious love. Whether it is a pecking order or an opportunity to find more freedom. Whether it is a terrain of fear or a plain of hope—all of this depends on who we chose to be kin to.

Jesus found he had to address this quickly in his ministry. From the start, his ministry of inclusion and care caused the religious authorities to reject and exclude him. These same authorities rejected those who chose to walk in his footsteps as well. I suspect that they often wondered if the good news they chose to listen to would turn out to be all that good; they had left their family and friends behind. They have felt the sting of exclusion. Were they choosing a path of utter loneliness? So Jesus offered them and us these words of assurance. You will never be alone. Follow me and you will always find family, even where you least expect it. Embrace all of God's creation and you will always discover a home. You may leave some behind, but ahead of you lies people waiting to meet you. You will never, ever be alone. Sometimes I am asked what I think about the Kingdom of God. I reply that I am not much for monarchies. More seriously, I offer this reflection. I search for the kin-dom of God. Who has God asked me to help? Who is family to me? Who has God placed in my life to offer me help when I so need it? Who is my neighbor, even among the strangers I do not recognize? I know I found a strange kin-dom of caring souls in isolation in Portugal. I have found the same in every place I have ever lived. This kin-dom has given me reason to live and to thrive. It has also given me to reason to be kin those who need help in living and thriving. All grace comes from that.

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



# Pastor's Statistics for June through December 2022

Here is Pastor Jon's activities for the remainder of 2022 for your records."

Services Led-16

Special Services Led-2

Mileage 992

Individual Visits 307

Hospital Calls 1

Church-Related Meetings-33

Community-Related Meetings-22

Adult Education/Classes-16

1 week of vacation

3 Months of Sabbatical



February 2023, \_\_\_\_\_



## Treasurer's Report

**December 16, 2022 to  
January 15, 2023**

	<b>Income</b>	<b>Total Exp.</b>
December 19	\$1,175.00	
December 30	785.00	
January 3	2,949.00	
January 8	955.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,864.99</b>	<b>\$5,627.26</b>

<b>Difference</b>	<b>236.74</b>
<b>Phillips Fund</b>	<b>\$161,962.13</b>

<b>Family Fund</b>	<b>\$ 69,695.68</b>
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<b>Christmas Veterans Project</b>	<b>\$ 635.00</b>
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Welcome to this new year with so many possibilities for us all to Praise God

Dawn Anderson Treasurer

## Deadline for the March Churchmouse

Please send any information or articles you would like included in the **March Churchmouse** to the office by **Thursday, February 24.**

You may e-mail information to: [Churchmouse@newaygoucc.org](mailto:Churchmouse@newaygoucc.org) or leave a hard copy in the office.



# The Beatitudes

*"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me."*

Matthew 5:11 (NIV)



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

KINGDOM  
HUNGER  
THIRST

MERCY  
HEART  
MEEK

EARTH  
SPIRIT  
PURE

FILLED  
BLESSED  
POOR

MOURN  
INHERIT  
HEAVEN

## Zoom Information

**Worship** is in person and on ZOOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84864699096>  
or phone 1-312-626-6799 ID: 8423 2973 1057

**Pastor Jon's Tuesday noon class** in person & on ZOOM

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

## 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.

♦

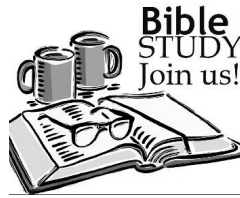
If you would like to access the services on your own schedule, they are added to our website [www.newaygoucc.org](http://www.newaygoucc.org) and Facebook page following each service.

Links to Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve services are provided as needed.

## Prayer Room/Chapel

Anyone who wishes to have a small quiet place to pray or meditate is welcome to use the room across from the nursery to do so.

The room is open during the secretary's office hours and on Sunday morning.



## Tuesday Noon Forum Prayer Workshop

Why is being thankful good? How does gratitude build a better society? How can we best express our thanks? Join us as we do a close study of Diana Butler Bass's book GRATEFUL.

We meet in the church entry area each Tuesday at noon. Here is a schedule of topics:

**02/07 - The Prologue - No Thanks**

**02/14 - Feeling Grateful**


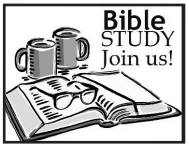
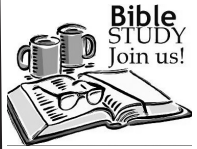

**02/21 - Heart Matters**

**02/28 - Habits of Gratitude**

## Wednesday Night Prayer

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

# February, 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:00 Prayer	2	3	4
5 Worship Svc. 10 am Communion phone & Zoom	6 Worship & Pastoral Care 10am Pastor's Office & on Phone	7 <b>Noon Class</b> 	8 Mission & Social Action in person 4:00 pm  7 pm Prayer	9	10	11
12 Worship Svc. 10 am by phone & Zoom ZOOM	13	14 <b>Noon Class</b> 	15 7:00 Prayer	16	17	18
19 Worship Svc. 10 am by phone & ZOOM	20	21 <b>Noon Class</b> 	22 7:00 Prayer	23	24	25
26 Worship Svc. 10 am by phone & ZOOM	27	28 <b>Noon Class</b> 				





# Happy Valentine's Day!

Chicken Scratch NY



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

Ball Gown  
 Boy Friend  
 Cards  
 Chocolate  
 Crush  
 Date  
 Diamond  
 Fairy Tale  
 Girlfriend  
 Heart  
 Love Song

Pink  
 Proposal  
 Red  
 Romantic  
 Serenade  
 Slow Dance  
 Strawberry  
 Sunset  
 Tuxedo  
 Valentine

## Smile Awhile. . .

Why is 'dark' spelled with a k and not c?

*Because you can't see in the dark.*

Why is it unwise to share your secrets with a clock? *Well, time will tell.*

When I told my contractor I didn't want carpeted steps, *they gave me a blank stare.*

Bono and The Edge walk into a Dublin bar and the bartender says, *"Oh no, not U2 again."*

Prison is just one word to you, but for some people, *it's a whole sentence.*

Scientists got together to study the effects of alcohol on a person's walk, *and the result was staggering.*

I'm trying to organize a hide and seek tournament, but *good players are really hard to find.*

I got over my addiction to chocolate, marshmallows, and nuts. *I won't lie, it was a rocky road.*

What do you say to comfort a friend who's struggling with grammar? *There, their, they're.*

I went to the toy store and asked the assistant where the Schwarzenegger dolls are and he replied, *"Aisle B, back."*



## Birthdays in February

2 - Jo N..  
23 - Ben V.



Thank You for all your prayers, cards, visits and phone calls during my recent fall. A Special Thank You also to Linnea for all the delicious food she has delivered to me. All of your kindness and love is so much appreciated and has helped me get through this long time of healing. I am coming along exceptionally well and hope to be back to my duties very soon.

Blessings to all  
Gloria

## February Worship Schedule on ZOOM

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

### February 05-Fifth Epiphany

Communion

Matthew 5:13-20

*"Restoring Beauty"*

### February 12-Sixth Epiphany

Ask A Question Sunday

Matthew 5: 21-27

### February 19-Transfiguration Sunday

Matthew 17: 1-9

*Chagall's Vision*

### February 22-Ash Wednesday Service-

7 p.m.

Communion and Sharing of Ashes

### February 26-First Lent

Matthew 4: 1-11

Songs of the Season-

*Lonesome Valley*

