



Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ

432 Quarterline, Newaygo, MI 49337 * 231-652-6624

Jonathan Reidel, 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

- APRIL 2024 -



“El Señor”

So now you you are no longer strangers and aliens. Rather, you are fellow citizens with God's people, and you belong to God's household.”

Ephesians 2:19 CEB

The United States has always had a troubled understanding of itself as a land of immigrants. The earliest non-native settlers came often on religious or economic missions and seized land and resources from the previous occupiers of the terrain. I suspect that this has instilled a sense of nervousness in those who are their descendants. Will the people who are new to the land do the same to us-displace us, deprive us of what we believe is ours, and leave us destitute? Each wave of immigrants that has entered this country since the Pilgrims and the residents of Jamestown arrived has looked down upon those who followed. They have relegated them to poorer parts of town, have been overly selective about the jobs they offered them, and have often associated them with vice and moral decay. The Irish, the German, the Eastern Europeans, the Italians, the Jewish, the Chinese, and especially the African have all dealt with rejection. Often it takes the hard work and strongly committed communities to overcome prejudice so the current scapegoat can fight its way into the cracks of the American dream. Indeed the promise of land and economic opportunity, the freedom to practice their faith and the culture freely is what keeps them pushing onward. In Newaygo County, I wonder sometimes if some of the most misunderstood recent immigrants are those of Hispanic origins. I say this in full recognition that many have no difficulties whatsoever with their neighbors and have been appreciative and willing employers of Latinx people. Our area is mostly agricultural and many of our most able workers have left for better employment opportunities. Many Latinx are familiar with and skilled in farming and animal husbandry and are willing to abide by the long hours such work entails. Many are strong supporters of public schools, but are often unable to be present at



community events concerning school activities because they take place during times that they are working. As a pastor, I know how strongly devoted many Hispanic people are to their faiths, both Catholic and Protestant. The local Catholic churches have been conscious about this and have included Spanish language services and have reserved their sanctuaries for devotional exercises that are traditional to Central and South American churches. One that I have learned most recently about is the prayerful veneration or honoring of the blessed Host, the Communion bread, before a Mass takes place. Yet many of our Hispanic neighbors still prefer to worship in churches that are still predominantly Spanish-centered. I still hear remarks about how lazy and lacking industry Latinx people are even though I drive by orchards and farms and see mostly Hispanic people hard at work. I have driven through neighborhoods pejoratively termed 'taco village' and note, with some envy, the families gathered in supportive groups Sunday after Sunday. If I am honest with myself, most of my assumptions and misinterpretations of the 'new people on the block' come out of purely reactive ignorance. It is therefore my responsibility to make amends for that. The Apostle Paul reminds us that all of those who follow Jesus are family. They are not outsiders or strangers, but rather fellow citizens in God's created lands. They are not to be treated with hostility or indifference, but with charity and loyalty. Yes, destructive and illegal behavior may happen among those parts of our family, but it is not our duty to use the few wrong-doers as the basis for disdaining or misjudging whole groups of people. Far better would it be for us to challenge the wrong-doing, correct with compassion the causes of the wrong-doing, and foster the healing needed to make future misdeeds something not even worthy of consideration. This is not an attitude to be adopted and then quickly forgotten, but something that we should daily remind ourselves of. These are not aliens and strangers. These are members of our family-if not of the Christian clan then of the family of humankind. So how can I go about the process of doing just that? I can knock the rust off of the three and a half years of Spanish I took in high school and college and develop the art of untranslated conversations. I can dive deeply into Mexican and Latin American cuisine and develop a taste for the distinctive flavors of different cultural groups. I can accept invitations to quinceaneras and other celebrations so I can experience some of their joy. I can shop in mercados so I can discover such delicacies as pickled cactus (really, it is quite good) and chorizo (sausage). I can make a point of reading and listening to stories about the politics and current events for countries below our southern border, noting particularly the impact our economy and governmental policies have on them. I can expand my appreciation of their heroes and heroines and seek out fiction and movies that tell their stories. I can think of them as human beings, not just as taco truck cooks and farm workers living in rented housing on the edge of the truck farms. Only then will people become part of whatever the us among us is. Despite all the complexities and the divisions over legal and illegal immigration and our conflicted understanding of the nature of migrant labor, we can choose to see them as part of our American story. Ours is a staggered and argumentative story of a country trying to sort out who we are from the stories we carry over from the lands of our sojourning and from our dreams of what we want to do now that we are here. Even more deeply, we can see even the most recent immigrant as God's child, fellow citizens of the village we call Earth. We are in this together and do our best and most healing work together. So let us strive for that

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

***If you call the church and need to leave a message, please call the
652-6624 number.***

The other number for Pastor is not working.

Thank You



April 2024

Noon Forum on Tuesdays

The Politics of Jesus

Yes, Jesus did have a political viewpoint. For him, it was not about parties and campaigns. It was more about who was included and how God wanted us to care for one another, how we build up the body of humanity. Join as we meet in the prayer room to discuss the keys points of Jesus' political philosophy. Here is a list of topics:

April 09-Expose the Workings of Oppression

April 16-Call the Demon by Name

April 23-Save Your Anger for the Mistreatment of Others

April 30-Take Blows Without Returning Them.



Treasurer's Report

**February 18, 2024 to
March 10, 2024**

	Income	Total Exp.
February 18	\$2,134.00	
February 25	6,000.00	
This is money from the Phillips Fund to help pay for the Fire and Property insurance.		
March 3	1,909.00	
March 10	1,979.00	
Total	\$7,186.00	\$7,117.58
Difference		68.42
Phillips Fund*		\$163,226.70
Family Fund		\$ 80,489.98

Thank you for generosity!

Dawn Anderson
Treasurer

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.

Wednesday Night Prayer

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

Deadline for the May Churchmouse

Please send any information or articles you would like included in the May **Churchmouse** to the office by **Friday, April 26**

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

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/184864699096> 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 and Facebook page following each service.

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

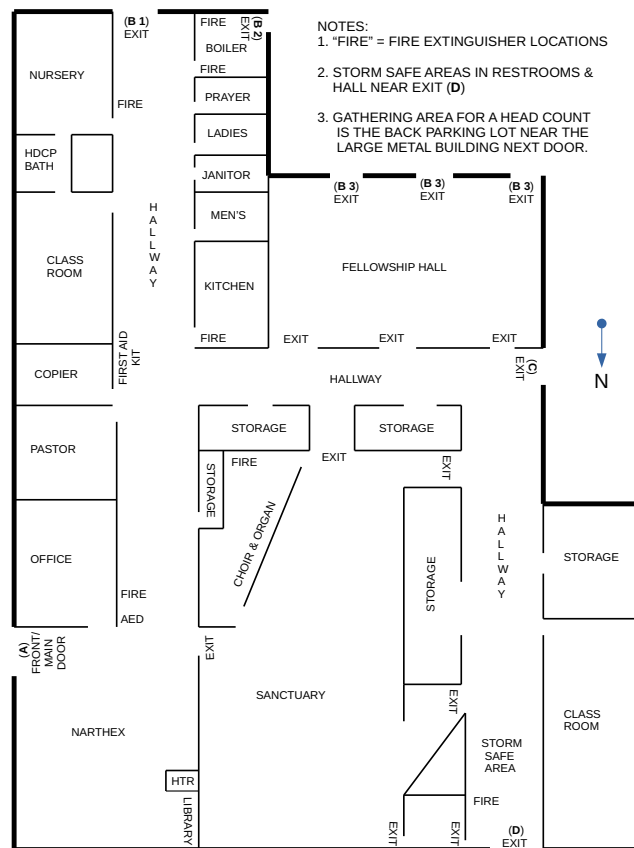


Fire and Storm Safety





A member of the Newaygo Fire Department did a walkthrough of our building. This was to help both us and the fire department in case of an emergency. The following items and recommendations were discussed:

- ◆ For fire department use, the locations of the closest fire hydrants, the layout of the building, including the main electrical panel and the gas and electric meters were documented.
- ◆ All exit doors will be identified inside and outside by letters/numbers. If someone needs to be rescued and is able to use a phone, the caller needs to identify the closest exit door and/or the room they are in.
- ◆ Safe areas in case of a severe thunderstorm or a tornado are both restrooms and past the last classroom in the back hall behind the pulpit.
- ◆ In case of a fire, exit the building safely and quickly using the closest door.

- ◆ After exiting the building due to any emergency situation, everyone is to gather in the back parking lot by the large metal building next door for a head count.
- ◆ Attached is a layout of the building which identifies the location of all rooms, exits, safe areas, fire extinguishers, the AED and first aid kit. An enlarged copy of the layout will be framed and placed in the narthex near the office. This will also allow visitors to familiarize themselves with the building. The fire department will also have a copy in their computer system.
- ◆ We have also been offered the opportunity to have a class for people of the congregation to become CPR certified. This class would be limited to 6 people. If you are interested in this class, please notify the office.



April, 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 7:00 Prayer	4 NA Meal	5	6
7 Worship Svc. 10 am In person, phone & Zoom	8	9 Noon Class 	10 Mission & Social Action - 4 pm 7 pm Prayer	11	12	13
← Pastor Out of Town →						
14 Worship Svc. 10 am In person, phone & Zoom	15 10 am Worship & Pastoral Care in office & on phone	16 Noon Class 	17 7:00 Prayer	18 Board of Directors 1 pm in Fellowship Hall	19	20
21 Worship Svc. 10 am In person, phone & Zoom	22	23 Noon Class 	24 7:00 Prayer	25	26 Churchmouse Deadline	27
28 Worship Svc. 10 am In person, phone & Zoom	29	30 Noon Class 				





4 - Tom Mee
 10 - Jose Hauser
 25 - Gretchen Mee



5 - Marty & Sherry Losey
 30- Don & Sue Cornell

Worship Music

A variation of an old saying goes something like this: you can make some of the people happy all of the time, and all of the people happy some of the time, but can never make all of the people happy all of the time. The above saying has become very apparent when it comes to the music used during our worship services. Some people like us using our beloved organ while singing from the hymnals and screen and some don't. Some people like the recorded music with a vocalist while singing their version of the words on the screen only and some don't. Some people like using various recorded versions (band, piano, organ) while singing from the hymnals and screen and some don't. Over the last few years, in an effort to find musicians willing to perform for our worship services, we have done extensive research contacting high school and university music programs, putting the word out on Facebook and contacting people in person all with no success. Also, due to copyright issues, we are limited to the recorded music we are able to use. Therefore, we are looking at the options we do have. During the month of April, in an effort to make some of the people like all of the music all of the time, and all of the people like all of the music some of the time, and most likely never make all of the people like all of the music all of the time, we are going to implement the following music format: ♦ One Sunday during the month we will have the organist with all music sung from the hymnals and screen. ♦ The other three Sunday's the music will be as follows: The Prelude will be an upbeat band version of the first hymn. The First Hymn will be sung with a recorded version (piano or organ) and vocalist using the words on the screen only. The Second Hymn (immediately following the sermon) will be a short softly played music interlude (piano or organ with no singing) to give everyone a time to reflect on the message they just heard. The Last Hymn will be a recorded version (band, piano or organ) and sung from hymnal and screen. It is important to realize that we all have different likes and ideas of the kind of music we should use and to respect those differences. Throughout the month, please let Pastor Jon or Ken know your opinions of this format. Finally, if anyone knows of anyone who might be willing to perform their music during worship, please give us their contact information.

April Worship Schedule on ZOOM

Worship is in person and on ZOOM at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/184864699096> or phone 1-312-626-6799 ID: 848 6469 9096

April 7 - Second Sunday of Easter
 John 20:19-31
 "Ask a Question Sunday"

April 21 - Fourth Sunday of Easter
 John 10: 11-18
 "Flocks"

April 14 - Third Sunday of Easter
 Luke 24:36-48
 "One of Us"

April 28 - Fifth Sunday of Easter
 John 15:1-8
 "Where Do You Live?"

