



## **Clare Congregational Church Newsletter December 2025**

### **Contact Information**

**Contact:** Clare Congregational Church  
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**Web Site:** [clarecongregational.org](http://clarecongregational.org)

#### **Office Hours:**

10am-2pm Tues.-Wed.-Thur.

### **General Information**

**Sunday Morning Bible Study:** 9:30 am

**Sunday Morning Service:** 10:30 am

**Coffee Hour:** Fellowship Hall  
(after service)

**Potluck:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday each month

**Church Council Meeting for Dec.**  
December 16, 2025

**Women's Meeting:**

3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs. each month @ 12:00

## *Greetings From Pastor Connie*

“Merry Christmas”. If I was living in England I’d say “Happy Christmas”. You might Google, why the difference to learn why.

Many people including Christians, dislike the entire season of Christmas. I’m definitely not one of them! Recently I read, “Christmas Is Always,” by Dale Evans Rodgers. I’d like to share it with you.

Christmas was not just a starlit night in Bethlehem: it had been behind the stars forever.

There was Christmas in the heart of God when he made the earth, and then gave it away - to us. And it was the most magnificent Christmas of all that night in Bethlehem when H gave His own Son.

As Jesus grew up, Christmas was everywhere He went, in giving food, giving sight, giving life. For Christmas is giving.

But Christmas is also receiving. The Bible says, “As many as received Him, He gave His power to become the Son of God...” John 1:12. When we receive Christ, we experience completely the gift of Christmas.

Then for us, Christmas is truly always, Jesus said, “So, I am with you always...” Matthew 28:20.

And Christmas is Jesus.

“Merry Christmas”

Pastor Connie

### **Sympathy Notes**

Randy Recker’s Dad passed away on November 19th at Comfort Care. His funeral was November 24th at Clark Funeral Home with Pastor Connie officiating. Please keep Randy and Cheri in your prayers.

### **Moderator's Report**

Holidays are upon us, busy busy busy! Lots happening at the church.

Very successful bake sale at Jay's on the 14th of November. Around \$900.00 taken in as well as some great PR for the church.

If you noticed a little coolness in the sanctuary recently that issue has been resolved. Steve Schumacher had Martin's at the church last week and some repairs were made, problem solved. Steve has also had some repairs done to the roof! Thank you Steve.

Christmas program is December 14th. Plan to attend.

Nativity has been moved to the front of the church.

Lastly a huge thank you to Steve and Lynn for working on the historical room (Across from Pastor's office) They have spent many hours there and it looks great.

Merry Christmas to all!

*John Allen (Your Moderator)*

### **Kiwanis Donates**

Dr. John Allen, a Kiwanis member and worker at Stone Soup Kitchen presented Pastor Connie with a \$1,200.00 check to be used to purchase a gift card at a grocery store to help supply needs for Stone Soup. Thank you to the Kiwanis Club for your generosity.

### **Stone Soup Kitchen**

Let's celebrate the many ways Clare Congregational Church supports the Stone Soup Kitchen. Workers, donations, encouragers all help keep the kitchen open. Enough food was prepared to offer a home cooked Thanksgiving meal to 300 people. 52 pies were homemade. The Pet Milk and all the eggs were donated from the congregation. Servers and preparers were also members of the Clare Congregational Church. Pastor Connie now serves on the board of the Isabella County Soup Kitchen. They help keep Stone Soup serving with truckloads of donations. Thanks to everyone who participates.

### **Vote to Support Soup Kitchen**

Isabella Community Soup Kitchen, a strong supporter of Stone Soup has been nominated by Isabella Bank employees and selected as one of the 8 non profit finalists for the “Holiday with Heart” year end giving.

From November 24th—December 8th voting on line is open to the public. Go to Isabella Bank web site and follow the link. Please vote and encourage everyone you know also. Winners will be announced December 9th. 1st prize is \$10,000.00.

Thank you in advance!

### **New Hope Girls**

Christmas gifts are being delivered to the New Hope girls the week of December 20th. Presently there are six girls living at the home. Frank and Pastor Connie continue to visit them every week.

### **Clare County Baby Pantry**

The Clare County Baby Pantry has received donations to help keep babies, infants, and young children fed, diapered and clothed. Over 120,000 diapers were distributed. Thank you Angie Allen for donating your time to pack newborn back packs,

### **Newberry Elves**

Dave and Michelle Forsberg journeyed to Newberry carrying a truckload of cargo to cloth 4 children and their Mom. They also carried some toys, boots and winter outer ware. Pastor Connie received a beautiful thank you note from the Superintendent of the Tahquamenon Area School district. This district is the largest school district east of the Mississippi River, covering 1.524 square miles.

The superintendent , Shawn Tebo expressed her gratitude to the Clare Congregational Church congregation for their generosity and kindness to help a family in need. The congregation was highly praised.

## **Our New History Room**

Honoring 150 Years of Faith:  
Our Church Unveils Its Newly Completed History Room

For nearly a century and a half, the Clare Congregational Church – founded in 1874 and proudly listed on the State and National Register of Historic Sites – has stood as a place of worship, community and continuity. Over the decades, generations of families have gathered within its walls to celebrate, mourn, learn, and grow together. Today, we are pleased to announce the completion of a project that pays tribute to that rich and enduring legacy: our Church History Room.

The History Room was created with a single purpose – to preserve and share the remarkable story of our congregation. Displays bring together photographs, letters, historical documents, records of early ministries, and artifacts that trace our journey from a small frontier congregation to the wonderful faith community we are today. Many of the items on display were lovingly donated or discovered in long-forgotten archives, offering insights into the people and events that shaped our Church.

In keeping with the building's historic status, special care was taken to maintain the integrity of the space, blending preservation with more modern updates. The result is a warm and inviting room that allows visitors to step into the past while appreciating the significance of the present.

The completion of the History Room is not simply the end of a project – it is the beginning of a renewed commitment to remembering where we have been and recognizing the faithfulness that has carried us through 150 years. We hope the room becomes a place for longtime members eager to reminisce, new members curious about our roots, and younger generations seeking to understand the legacy they inherit.

With gratitude for all who have formed our history and left behind their stories, we welcome you to our Church History Room and celebrate the remarkable history God has woven through our church since 1874. May this space remind us of the foundation laid by those whose stories made this space, and inspire us to continue building a future worthy of that heritage.

In 2019-2020 a Renovation Committee was formed to take on the ambitious task of updating and beautifying the interior of the main church building. This included a beautiful kitchen, fellowship hall, parlor, library, youth meeting room, classroom, nursery and offices. While there are still items on the Committee's "wish list", the History Room is a welcome addition to the other updated areas of our historic church building

## **Christmas Gifts for Jesus**

Earlier this year Pastor Connie read an article on giving gifts to Jesus to be used at the church. There are trees at the back of the Fellowship Hall that are decorated, but have no gifts under them. Presents can be placed under and around the trees. After Christmas Taidem, our nursery worker and Ryleigh will open them and distribute them to the proper places. A list of suggested items is as follows:

Napkins and Plates (Special Occasions)

-Holidays, Birthdays etc.-

Paper Towels

Tea bags

Coffee (Folgers Classic Roast)

To-Go Containers

Aluminum Pans (Throw away)

Styrofoam Cups (8oz.)

Bottled Water (Cases)

Dish Soap (Dawn)

Aluminum Foil

Parchment Paper

Food Storage Bags (All Sizes)

Electric Frypan (Large)

Card Stock (White 8 1/2 X 11)

AA Batteries

AAA Batteries

Return Address Labels

White Out Tape

Scissors (Adult Size)

Paper Clips (Large and Small)

Scotch Tape (Refills)

Copy Paper (White, 8.5 X 11)

Business Envelopes

Kleenex Tissues

Water (Cases of bottles)

Full Sheet Label Paper

## **Baby Quilts**



Trudy Irwin made 3 beautiful handmade quilts. If anyone is interested in purchasing one or all please see Wanda or Pastor connie. Proceeds will go to the General Fund. Trudy is amazing. Thank you for sharing your talents. These Quilts are beautiful—The pictures do not show the beauty and great work in them. If you'd like to see them, please stop by the church during office hours.

## **Bell Choir**

The bell Choir will be playing December 21st and Christmas Eve. The choir will be minus 2 ringers Christmas Eve. Please contact Frank Bongard if you would be interested in playing. Practices are Thursday at 1:30 in the sanctuary.

## **Advent Season**

This year the Advent season will focus on angels and their stories. Each Sunday will provide a unique message. Plan to attend worship at 10:30 Sunday mornings.

## **Wanda's Christmas Party**

Wanda's Christmas Party this year will be on Saturday December 6th at 6:00 pm. If you'd like to attend please contact Wanda to sign up. There is no cost to attend (there will be free will donation boxes on tables). You must sign up by November 30th so we know how many to plan for. It will be a Swiss steak dinner with lots of trimmings. It's always a lot of fun and John Andrews will be singing that evening. Hope you can make it! Wanda (989) 240-0717.

## **Potluck Sunday December 14th**

Plan to attend dinner after worship. The fellowship is always friendly. The food is delicious. Bring a dish to share and come and eat with a table of friendly faces.

## **Christmas Eve Service**

A candlelight evening service will be presented on December 24th at 7:00 pm. Children friendly. The service lasts one hour. The church will be decorated and the Christmas story will be presented.

## **Cookies Needed**

The Clare Church of God offers a "Walk Through Bethlehem" and has over 1,000 people experience it. Each year they put out an appeal for cookies to give those participating. Last year Pastor Connie took 12 dozen. Cookies are needed for December 12th, 13th and 14th. If anyone is willing to donate a dozen or two, please let Pastor Connie know.

## **Adult Sunday School**

"Merry Christmas" and thank you for attending Sunday School. Each week the lesson is presented, everyone adds by their presence, comments and laughter. Pastor Connie truly enjoys your willingness to meet and learn from one another. The table is crowded but there is always room for one more!



## **Building Trustees**

In mid November, the Building Trustees had the roof of the church and fellowship hall inspected by Britton Roofing. It has been 11 years, since 2014, that the roof was installed. It is in very good shape, but required minimal repair to insure its integrity. Numerous rubber boots around the roof vents and resealing of flashing were done for a total cost of \$1500.00. The repairs have been completed.

The Building Trustees continue to oversee the care and maintenance of our beautiful and historic building.

If you have any building questions or concerns, please reach out to me, Steve Schumacher, chair of building maintenance at 989 424-8737.

## **Women's Meeting**

The Women's meeting for November was cancelled due to Holiday scheduling. We will be meeting in December on the 11th at the church. Pastor Connie and Wanda will provide the luncheon. Just come and enjoy.

Thanks everyone who helped with Jay's Bake Sale, those who baked, those who worked, and those who bought all the goodies. We made over \$900.00 this year. A record for our bake sale.

## **Holiday Bazaar**

A major "thank you" to everyone who helped make the bazaar a success. The total collected was over \$2,300.00. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship. Lots of laughs were heard as members of the congregation pitched in. Thank you for all your hard work.

## **Snowbirds**

Our prayers continue to be with our snowbirds. We miss you and pray you are healthy, happy and missing us. "Merry Christmas" and a "Blessed New Year". God's blessings sent your way.



## **Thanksgiving at Pioneer High**

On Thursday, November 20, a group of volunteers from the Church joined together to serve our annual Thanksgiving dinner to the students and staff at Pioneer High School. This Youth Outreach activity has been a part of our program for close to ten years, except for the covid years, and is highly anticipated by the students and staff at PHS, as well as the volunteers who serve the meals and, in many cases, helped prepare the meal. This year's menu consisted of turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, sweet corn, dinner rolls, juice, and brownies for dessert. The students enjoyed the meal and were very appreciative of our efforts to provide it for them. We would like to thank all of the volunteers who prepared food and/or served the meal that day. Without them, this program would not exist.

Our next major Youth Outreach event at Pioneer High will be our annual Christmas dinner. This event is scheduled for Tuesday, December 16. More information will follow as we get closer to the 16<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, we provide personal care items, positive reinforcement rewards, and educational support supplies for these students.

This entire program is accomplished through the donations we receive to make it happen. Everyone in the Church, and beyond, who has donated their time, food, money, and returnable bottles and cans can be very proud they have played in making this program successful!



### **Pioneer**

### **Outreach**

The congregation helps put smiles on students faces attending Pioneer High School under the leadership of Bill and Paula Newkirk.



## **December Birthdays**

Marcus Chin	12/04
Nancy Bandfield	12/05
Darcel Nicholas	12/08
John Allen	12/11
Wanda Agle	12/11
Angela Allen	12/12
Bill Newkirk	12/15
Sue Leverence	12/22
Dee Lawens	12/23



## **December Anniversaries**

Frank and Pastor Connie	12/27
Bill and Sue Leverence	12/28

## **Facts & Figures: Month of November**

Date	Attendance	Offering
Nov. 2	31	\$1491 .00
9	42	2460.00
16	30	1383 .00
23	36	1652.00
30		

## **Serving Month of December**

Officiating: Pastor Connie Bongard  
Liturgist: Dr. Kurt Keppner  
Ushers: Bill and Paula Newkirk  
Accompanist:



## **REMEMBER IN PRAYER:**

**Prayer List:** Phyllis Carrigan, Patty (Humphrey) Hazen, Mike Humphrey, Jerry Forsberg, LuAnne Humphrey, Ivah Forsberg, Donald Hemstreet, Connie Johnson and Nancy Orr.

Please help keep the prayer list current; if you know of any changes, or additions, please call the office at 989 386-7582, leave a note for the secretary, or send an email to: [office@clarecongregational.org](mailto:office@clarecongregational.org)