



Clare Congregational Church Newsletter

January 2026

Contact Information

Contact: Clare Congregational Church
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Clare MI 48617

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Web Site: 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: 2nd Sunday each month

Church Council Meeting for January
January 13, 2026

Women's Meeting:
3rd Thurs. each month @ 12:00

Greetings From Pastor Connie

Happy New Year and God's blessings sent your way. As you read this article many of you will already be putting away Christmas decorations. Some of you will comment, "Well, we made it through the season," and others may be planning for the coming Christmas.

St. Francis of Assisi once stated, "It is in giving that we receive." I can't agree more. Dale Evans Rogers wrote "Christmas is Always. Christmas was not just a star-lit night in Bethlehem; it had been behind the stars forever."

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

Christmas is also receiving. In the Bible it says, "As many as received Him, to them gave His power to become sons and daughters of God..." "John 1:12

As many as received Him! When we understand that receiving can be even more important than giving—at Christmas! When we receive Christ, we experience completely the gift that is Christmas.

Jesus is Christmas and He said "Lo, I am with you always..." Matthew 28:20.

As a new year begins let's renew our walk with a loving Jesus who went about doing good.

"Happy New Year."

God's blessings,

Pastor Connie

Moderator's Report

Another year nearly history. They seem to go faster and faster. Our church is vibrant and growing. Thanks be to God.

Our new railing behind the altar is awesome. Thanks to Don Jones for getting it done.

I was unable to attend Wanda's party on the 6th but was advised it was a great success. Thanks Wanda.

The church is in full Christmas mode. It looks great. The nativity outside is better than ever. The angels in the sanctuary windows are lovely as well as the ones "in the air" by the altar. All who participated in the decorating are to be commended.

There was a notice in the bulletin relative to "bad weather" Sundays. There is a "who to call list available in the office if you don't have one. In the event of poor weather there will be an effort to open the church for those who wish to have fellowship, etc.

The council this past week decided to try to address the poor lighting issue by purchasing individual reading lights that can be handed out by request by the ushers. We'll try these and see how they work and how they are received.

John Allen (Your Moderator)

Stone Soup Kitchen/Votes Paid Off

Thanks to everyone who voted for the Isabella Soup Kitchen administered by Sarah Allen Atkins to receive the \$10,000.00 prize sponsored by Isabella Bank and Trust. The Isabella Soup Kitchen won. Thanks to Barb Murphy for all her effort in making people aware. Pastor Connie sits on the board and was especially excited. The Isabella Soup Kitchen helps support other kitchens including the Soup Kitchen in Farwell

Bell Choir

Frank would like to continue to practice through out the new year if there are enough ringers to play. No practice till further notice. Thanks to all those who played in December and at Christmas Eve service. If anyone wishes to play please let Frank know ASAP. Many snowbirds have left and new ringers are needed.

Our New History Room

Thanks Steve and Lynn Schumacher for putting together our History Room. Awesome job! Everyone needs to step into the past in this finished room. There is a lot of history to look through. Very impressive.

Women's Meeting

The women met on December 18. We voted to spend money on many items needed in the church office and kitchen, including some new pots and pans, plus some of the supplies we always purchase for the kitchen and fellowship hall. We also voted to buy new replacement plastic covers for the tables. A nice luncheon was provided by Wanda and Pastor Connie. A very successful meeting. Our next Women's meeting will be on Thursday, January 15, 2026.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who helped with the nativity. Pastor Connie said it was the most beautiful one she ever saw. Also thank you to everyone who brought a gift to put under the tree as a "thank you" to Jesus for all He's done for each of us. Major thanks to Wanda and her elves for the decorations inside and outside of the church. Thank you to everyone who made the Advent Season lovely.

We received this lovely card from Gwen and Terry Tisdale. If you'd like to reach out to them with a card or note, I'm sure she would welcome hearing from you.



Thank you all for still
remembering us. I look
back on our joyous
Sundays spent with
you all. You are in
my "Memory Bank" now

Affectionately
Gwen Tisdale
(Terry too)

Terry & Gwen Tisdale

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Adult Sunday School

No Sunday School on January 4th. Class will resume on January 11th at 9:30 am. We will begin a new study by Max Lucado entitled, "Traveling Light."

New Hope Girls

Pastor Connie and Frank continue to go to the house every week. Christmas gifts were delivered to them. Behavior has been an issue for the girls.

Building Trustees

11/20/2025—I met with Hawk electric to discuss the possibility of improving lighting in the sanctuary. We also discussed the condition of the existing wiring and whether we could improve the current lighting without upgrading the current wiring. Hawk Electric said someone would e-mail me an estimate. As of December 15, I have not receive an estimate.

On the same date I went to Seiter Electric to ask if someone could meet with me at the church to also discuss improving the lighting in the sanctuary and to evaluate the current wiring. Seiter said they could not come to the church to meet with me before the first of the year.

11/22/2025—The nativity trailer was moved to the front of the church with the help of John Allen.

11/25/2025— New handrail was installed on the rear steps to the sanctuary.

11/26/2025— 120 lbs. of salt was added to the water softener.

Steve Schumacher (Head of Maintenance)

Christmas at Pioneer High 2025



Tuesday, December 16, 2025, was a special day for our Student Outreach Program at Pioneer High! A group representing the Church joined the Pioneer High students to celebrate Christmas with a traditional Christmas ham dinner. The students enjoyed glazed spiral cut ham, green bean casserole, cheesy potatoes, dinner rolls, ice cream sundaes, homemade fudge, and other treats. We also provided them with throw blankets, multi-color ink pens, and bags of candy. In all, over 40 meals were served to the students and staff at the school. Our next outreach meal at Pioneer High will be Easter Dinner sometime in March.

We would like to thank everyone who supports this program by donating their time, food, money, and returnable bottles and cans. Your contributions are greatly appreciated by all of us involved in this program and everyone at Pioneer High!

We also received a very nice thank-you card at the church from the Pioneer School thanking us for all that the church does for them!



January Birthdays

Michelle Forsberg	01/07
Leeann Keppner	01/29

January Anniversaries

Jerry & Ivah Forsberg	01/30
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Facts & Figures: Month of December

Date	Attendance	Offering
Dec. 7	33	\$2096.00
11	Mail	1100.00
14	36	1476.00
22	33	1499.00
24	94	1745.00
28	18	985.00

Serving Month of January

Officiating:	Pastor Connie Bongard
Liturgist:	Dr. Kurt Keppner
Ushers:	Jim & Melinda Lard
Accompanist:	Johanas Durkin
	Fletcher Wernholm



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