

Clare Congregational Church

Newsletter

January 2023

Comments from Pastor Connie

“Happy New Year” and God Bless you. 2023 is right around the corner. I’m excited about God’s plans for our congregation. Recently I read some startling statistics. In 2019, 250 pastors left the ministry every month. Last year over 1500 pastors left the ministry every month. Over 1300 pastors were asked to leave. After reading these statistics I spent time praising and thanking God for the privilege of serving you. When I think of your willingness to be involved in community outreach, I feel blessed. Knowing how kind and loving you have been to Ryleigh, I celebrate her extended family. Each Sunday I am grateful for your allowing me to worship outside the box. The Easter Drama and the Christmas Comedy appeared to be well received. New faces have been noticed during worship.

The church is always clean and inviting. Decorations fit various occasions. The outdoor Nativity attracted positive attention. All of the outdoor Christmas decorations added to the beauty of the church.

Learning to love each of you has been a pleasant experience. Laughing and learning together has been enjoyable. Teaching an adult Sunday School class has been the high point of my week.

May God richly bless you and draw you closer to Him. My prayer this year is to increase our congregation and attract children to come and worship with us.

During Advent I have felt rejuvenated. My mind is filled with new projects and activities. I’m excited to see the way God opens doors of opportunities in 2023. Thanks all of you for being a part of the “family” at Clare Congregational Church .

God’s blessings sent your way,

Pastor Connie

From the Moderator's Desk

Moderator— Karen Jones

Tis the season to be jolly. AND jolly it was all through advent. No one ever knew what to expect. December 11th the modern story of Jesus's birth brought laughter as I tooted my horn. Really! I blew the baritone. The church delighted all who drove by the beautiful Nativity where sheep watched over the baby Jesus. No clean up committee was necessary. LOL.

Girls at New Hope House will be surprised at a car full of gifts are delivered. Pioneer High students were fed and gifts given as Santa appeared to determine who was naughty or nice. Bill Newkirk was the only name on the Naughty list.

All through the year people were busy making the world a better place. Miracles continue and lives are forever changed. New faces have appeared and we are blessed.

2023 is awaiting for more opportunities to serve others.

So, from your moderator, Karen Jones, "Merry Christmas" and see you Christmas Eve. Don't be on the Naughty list!

As always—Thanks be to God!

To contact church office:

office@clarecongregational.org

989-386-7582

Office Hours: Tuesday through Thursday, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

To contact Pastor Connie: 989-506-6659

Church website: clarecongregational.org

Christmas Sunday

There will be no service on Christmas morning. The council decided not to have service so families can celebrate together in their own homes.

Pioneer School (Deodorant Needed)

Praise God for being able to spread Christmas joy to the kids at Pioneer High. The students were excited we were there. They ate the food and thanked us. Santa was there. Bill and Paula made them gifts. Thanks to everyone who helped in any way.

Baby Pantry Buckets

The cleaning buckets were a MAJOR hit. Thank you Dr. Allen and Angie for overseeing this project. Everyone knows, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness!"

Outdoor Nativity

The Christmas story is told in many ways. Numerous people have stopped by and enjoyed the beautiful Nativity. Thanks to everyone who helped financially, physically or has been involved in any other way.

Advent Services

Love, Hope, Joy, and Peace candles and readings occurred during Advent and the Christ candle will be lit at the Christmas Eve service. Thank you to all the readers. The candle table was beautifully constructed by Alan Reiss and Karen McGuire. Wanda had a hand involved also. The Congregation was blessed.

Sewing Day

Several ladies have ask about a sewing date to gather at the church and work on projects. January 19, 2023 anyone interested to sew, plan to meet at 1:00 and stay until 3:00. The church has 2 new machines if someone wants to attend and doesn't have a machine. Bring a project to work on. Pastor Connie will also have ideas to share. Cutters are also welcome.

Women's Meeting

10 ladies met at the Doherty for a lovely luncheon. Laughter and stories were shared and a sense of joy was experienced. The church is blessed with women who serve.

Membership Classes

If there is anyone who would like to join the Clare Congregational Church, please contact Pastor Connie.

Sunday School

No Sunday School on January 1st., but classes will resume on January 8th at 9:30 am. Classes available for all ages.

Christmas Outreach

Wow! 110 gift bags and gifts for all the staff were delivered by Jim Colville to Three lakes Academy in Curtis. Lots of excitement there. Ruth's sister Amie, filled my car with beautiful gifts for the girls at New Hope. The women's fellowship purchased a Little Caesar's gift card for a pizza party for the girls. Others donated socks, nail polish, candy, popcorn, hair supplies, gum and beanie babies. The supervisor is planning to have each girl send a note of thanks. I personally want to tell you, "I love each of you." Serving a congregation who is willing to carry the "Good News" to others through giving is such a blessing. 75 cleaning buckets were handed out. People were helped with gas cards, food, hats, mittens, cookies and numerous other items. God bless all of you.

Unwanted Christmas Items

If you find you have decorations that you no longer want, use, or need, please donate them to the church. If we don't use them they will be going in a sale next year that we will be putting on. Thank you.

Game Day

Some people have asked for a game day on potluck Sunday. If you are interested please let Wanda or Pastor Connie know.

Christmas Bags

If anyone has extra Christmas bags left over and would like to donate them, the church can use them. Several groups are already thinking about next year's Christmas outreach. Christmas bags will be needed.

Happy New Year!

Can you believe it?

2023

Enjoy the Holidays,

And remember the reason!

January Birthdays

Michelle Reynolds 1/07



January Anniversaries

Congratulations Jerry & Ivah Forsberg 01/30

Facts & Figures: Month of December

Date	Attendance	Offering
Dec. 4	30	\$ 2088.00
11	66	\$ 2457.00
18	26	\$ 3820.00

Serving: Month of January

Officiating:	Pastor Connie Bongard
Accompanist:	LuAnne Humphrey
Liturgist:	Dr. Kurt Keppner
Ushering :	Lynn and Steve Schumacher

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Nursing Home/Assisted Living:

Dick Snyder: 401 Orchard Ave. Clare MI. 48617



Health/Healing & Other Needs:

Bill Franklin	Tom Johnson	Christopher Jackson	
Sean Gallagher	Patty (Humphrey) Hazen	Scott Taube	Mike Humphrey
Dave Stevens	Holly Kwiatkowski	Dan Finney	Jim Bertley
Becky Evans	David Jackson	Matthew Fretz	Mike Moore

Please help keep the prayer list current; if you know of changes, you may call the office (386-7582), leave a note for the secretary, or send an email (office@clarecongregational.org)