

Dear Church Family,

November is an easy month for me to spend feeling thankful. My birthday, Joel's birthday, and Frankie's birthday all fall in November, so we spend the first half of the month celebrating family birthdays, and the last half in Thanksgiving, anticipating extended family gatherings and very good food.

But as I write this, it is the middle of October, and I feel tired and overwhelmed. There is so much to do, so many programs and events and opportunities. There are too many demands for my time and my money and my energy. I am not feeling all that thankful, I am feeling busy, irritable, and swamped.

Locally, my heart is breaking as Red Cedar school faces closure and tension about race and white privilege rises in our community. I am devastated by the end of state assistance that so many families need, and by the Michigan House of Representatives vote that would end partner benefits to many gay and lesbian families. I am saddened by the national political scene, where conversations turn ugly and progress seems out of reach. And I wonder how we live in a world where so many people are hungry, and so many others are overfed.

In times like this, as Thanksgiving seems so far away, I recall a piece of art I once saw. It may not have been great art; it may not have been an exceptional photo. But the image stayed with me: the crying child, the elderly man dressed only in his underclothes, a burned-out mountain shack behind them, just a chimney remaining...the charred debris of what had been the family's sole possession. The little boy clutches a pair of patched overalls and weeps, while the grandfather bends down, speaking to the boy. And beneath the picture are the words of that elderly mountain man, words spoken in the midst of devastation. "Hush, child, God ain't dead."

It is a vivid picture in my mind: the burned-out mountain shack, the half-dressed man, the weeping child, and those words "God ain't dead." It is a picture I need in the midst of all of life's troubles and failures; a picture we all need to keep in our hearts and minds.

God is alive. God is here. And God is at work. I truly believe that. And this is a reason for Thanksgiving, a reason to feel deep and profound gratitude. In the midst of the losses, the pain, the frustration, the busyness, God is doing something great. It reminds me of another wonderful quote, "There is a God, Kari, and it is not you!"

So, even if this is a hard month for you, too, let us be thankful for the God of love who is at work in this world, for the promise that God's grace is more powerful than our despair. Love wins. So let us hold on to faith, hold on to trust, hold on to hope, and give thanks with a grateful heart. I'll try it if you do....

God bless!
Kari

The Work of Transition* in a Congregation

First in the Series – What a Year Will Bring - October, 2011

Second in the Series –Coming to Terms with Our History

When you sit at the dinner table on Thanksgiving, listen carefully to how family members talk about a certain event in the past. One person shares some details, “Remember when...” Another says, “I don’t remember it that way” and shares other details. Someone else may have yet another perspective on how it happened. That’s history for you! It’s a matter of ‘where you were standing’ so to speak when something happened. Were you directly involved? Were you an observer? Did you have a vested interest in the outcome? All of this effects what you remember about how things happen.

As we hear about our history again and again, the opportunity to understand what really happened grows. We get a larger view of the truth of our reality. So, too, with a congregation. Each time we hear about an event, each time someone shares about what it meant to them, we are made more aware of the impact we really have on transforming people’s lives! What an opportunity!

So, to kick off the work of this time of transition we are going to recall and explore and affirm our history as a congregation.

One of the ways we can do this is included in the Exchange this month. On an attached insert you see a **Historical Grid**. On it are rows of questions to answer and across the top are time periods in which to think about the answers to the questions for yourself. Please take some time to consider your answers to all the questions or maybe just the one about which you feel the most strongly. (If two or more of you share this Exchange, you can get copies of the Grid from the office or from Pastor Jody.) Complete the grid and give it to Pastor Jody. She will compile the results and report in the December Exchange.

Also, information from the Grids will be used on the second way we will explore and recall our history; which is a **Historical Timeline**. In the Social Hall in the coming weeks will be a Timeline printed on paper hanging on the wall. We would like everyone to add to the timeline (in a similar way that you did when you created the timeline for Karen as a memorial tribute). You could put on the Timeline when you joined Edgewood and what was so exciting or intriguing that you wanted to be part of it. You could put when you got married when babies were born or baptized and what you remember about what was going on when those things happened. You could record a significant program that you were involved in that brought meaning to your life. You could remember on the Timeline a mission trip that was transformative. You could identify a teacher who led a class that inspired you. You could put something of significance that was ac-

(Continued on page 3)

complished by a pastor. You could put on the Timeline an incident that was hurtful or sad and made you wonder. There is so much... all of you have been impacted by the mission and ministries of this community of faith! Please add your memories to the Timeline when it goes up.

One more way we can remember and honor our history as a community of faith is to invite those who are no longer here to come back and remember. Family members, college students, former members who moved away, others who drifted away for some unknown reason, all these and more were impacted by Edgewood United Church. Invite them back to share what they remember, that all our many memories may be more and more helpful as we ponder what God is saying to us during this time of transition.

Yours on the Journey,

Jody

*The work of transition for a congregation includes: 1) Coming to terms with history, 2) Articulating a new identity, 3) Leadership and decision making concerns, 4) Denominational relationships, and 5) Commitment to new vision and direction.

Welcome Chuck Gower, our new bookkeeper!

My name is Charles (Chuck) Gower Sr. I've been a Michigander since 1966; previously from Eastern Pennsylvania.

My business background includes 45 years in retail accounting and 14 years as co-owner (with my wife) of Sara's Lunchbox Express in downtown Lansing.

Married for 50 years with a family of 3 daughters and 1 son. My interests include fishing, travel and being a history buff.

Mission: 1

11.1.11 - 11.11.11
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Nov. 1-11, 2011...ONE UNITED CHURCH on a shared mission for 11 powerful days to feed the hungry and confront food-related injustice. This is MISSION: 1

- o In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will collect more than 1 MILLION ITEMS OF HEALTHY FOOD and other household items for local food banks and outreach services.
- o In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will make an extra-special push to gather online contributions of more than \$111,111 DOLLARS for Neighbors in Need food-related ministries, offerings that will be shared for hunger-action purposes with agencies of justice and compassion throughout the United States; and \$111,111 for East Africa famine-related ministries.
- o In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will offer more than 11,111 LETTERS to Congress asking our government to reform U.S. foreign assistance in a way that more effectively benefits hungry and poor people worldwide, helping to provide a major final push to Bread for the World's 2011 "Offering of Letters" campaign.

DURING THE FIRST 11 DAYS of NOVEMBER, an online tote board at ucc.org will tally our collective count of foodstuffs, donations and letters - information we'll update and celebrate in real time together.

And throughout the 11 days, the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries will organize church-member delegations to meet with Members of Congress to bring attention to our church's concern about hunger at home and abroad.

Most importantly, our UCC motto and Jesus' prayer "that they may all be 1" will become a focused, concerted mission emphasis across the whole United Church of Christ to educate ourselves and one another about food-related policy issues through sermons, seminars and conversations; to advocate on behalf of hungry people at home and around the world; to raise money for hunger-action purposes; and to share bread - and tuna, and peanut butter, and vegetables, and cereal - with our neighbors in need.

As we prepare for a month of celebrating the goodness of God in our lives, this is a way to give back, to bless the world with our abundance and witness to Spirit of God that makes us one. Check out the UCC website for more information and ideas.

Theology Corner

After the August 14 service several persons asked about the benediction. I don't know the source or history of the Franciscan Benediction which I used but it strikes me as consistent with the life and teachings of Francis of Assisi and with Matthew 25:31-46 - in abbreviated form: "... whatever you did not do for the least of my children, you did not do for me."

Jesus clearly challenges us to be agents of healing, world-changing action. If we affirm the words of love, we will feed the hungry, clothe the homeless, aid the sick – be agents of justice and peace. Leaving the sanctuary we are motivated by a litany of emotions – discomfort, anger, tears, and foolishness – that challenge our nonchalance and denial. One person said the Benediction challenges us to ask both why and why not. "Why are things the way they are...and why not work to change things for the better, to make a difference in the world."

May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, hunger and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor. AMEN.

Submitted by Lynn Jondahl

Outreach and Mission

*Don't forget . . . the Outreach/Mission team will be selling
Equal Exchange coffee, tea, chocolate and olive oil on the first Sunday of every month.*



Thanksgiving Baskets ~ Tuesday, November 22

See Frank Dennis for more info!



Building & Grounds

We have heat! We had heat in the Sanctuary on Sunday October 23! We expect to have heat in the classrooms and offices as well from here on out. Most of the system should be up and running by November 1. The Myers Plumbing and Heating folks and their subcontractors have been working hard to keep us warm as the weather turned colder. The last few connections, system testing and cleanup should be completed before the mid-November target date. The Building and Grounds Team wants to thank everyone for their patience during the planning and implementation of this large project. We especially want to thank the congregation for their support, both moral and financial. We anticipate that there will be some kinks to work out and some fine tuning of temperature settings over the first month or so. Please continue to be patient and let us know if you think some adjustment is needed.

Theatre Room News:

Check out the three flower boxes that were made by Douglas Vorce with monies for the Theatre Room. The present flowers are being cared for by Jo Kistler and Elizabeth Anderson. Also, for our **Luther Revisiting**, Robert Anderson has placed on the East wall of the Theatre Room, an original 18th c. printed page from a Luther translation to German of Latin, Hebrew and Greek copies of the Pentateuch.

Submitted by Elizabeth Anderson

Member Ministry/Health Ministry Corner

ADVANCE PLANNING – A ROADMAP FOR LIFE

As parents, we do all in our power to provide a safe and secure world for our children. Yet, there are things we don't like to think about. One of them is what would happen to them in case of an unforeseen accident. What documents do you need to have in place to continue caring for them in the event of your untimely passing?

Already you may be averting your thoughts and eyes. These aren't easy questions to ponder. But, by envisioning the world you would want for your child, you can take steps now to protect their future.

There are a number of documents that are absolutely essential to have in place. These include:

- o A Will, which outlines a guardianship plan.
- o An Advance Directive or Healthcare Proxy, which describes your wishes regarding medical care and who you would want to make these decisions for you.
- o A Durable Power of Attorney for financial affairs, which designates someone to have access to your finances in case you are seriously incapacitated.

The Member Ministry/Health Ministry team can help you understand these documents and get you started on this important Roadmap for Life.

Submitted by Arlene Campanella

SAVE THE DATE

Plan to join us on Sunday, January 22, 2012, 3-6:00 p.m., for a program devoted to these very issues. We have presenters who are recognized experts in Advance Planning. They will outline the legal documents that are needed for each phase of our lives. There will be time for questions.

As we approach the holidays, we may think about exciting gifts and toys. Some of these are fads that will be quickly put aside and forgotten. For 2012, make a resolution to create a lasting Gift for Your Family.

Congregational Life

Dinners for Eight



Join us Saturday, November 12, 6:00-8:00 p.m. These are small dinners in the homes of members and friends and are a great way to meet new people and get better acquainted with old friends. Contact JoAnn Hubbard at hubbardjoann@yahoo.com.

Thanksgiving Day Potluck Brunch

Our annual Thanksgiving Potluck Brunch will be held on Thursday, November 24, 10 am to noon. This is a wonderful time of fellowship and amazing, delicious food! All are welcome – bring your family, friends and neighbors. Watch for the sign-up sheet in the hallway as well as the Sunday pink sheet, and sign up to bring (1) meat, eggs or cheese dishes, (2) vegetables or fruit, or (3) bread or dessert. Contact person: JoAnn Hubbard (351-0901).

What's so Super about Super Thursday?

It's a great time for good food and conversation! Super Thursday is a weekly meal at 5:45 p.m. (September through May) at the church featuring Edgewood cooks and time to connect with others. A great way to eat well on a weeknight with no dishes to wash! Adults \$4; Grades 7-12 & College Students, \$2; Grades K-6, \$1; Preschool & Cooks, Free! See Patty Good or Sally Burroughs for more information.





Monthly Lunch

We will meet on the third Monday, November 21 at 12:00 in the Theatre Room. Please bring your lunch and beverage. From 12:30-1:30, Lynn Jondahl, longtime member of Edgewood Church, will speak on the pertinent and politically controversial topic, **“LET’S TALK TAXES.”**

Lynn Jondahl was ordained a UCC minister following graduation from Yale University Divinity School and served as a campus minister at MSU. Following that, he ran and was elected to a seat in the Michigan House of Representatives. During his 22 years in the Legislature, he chaired the House Taxation Committee for 12 years and played a key role in many taxation issues, including those focused on education finance reform. After leaving the Legislature to run for Governor in 1994, he became Co-Director of the Michigan Political Leadership Program at MSU, serving from 1995-2002, as well as Executive Director of the Michigan Prospect for Renewed Citizenship from 1996 until his retirement in 2009. He serves on the boards of many organizations including, the Michigan Tax Information Council and the Michigan Budget and Tax Policy Project Advisory Board.

His long experience in state government and participation in many civic organizations has prepared him to speak on the following topics that relate to taxes and taxation: *how taxes define our public priorities as well as pay the bills; some facts and myths about taxation; the elements of an adequate, fair and stable taxation system; and some of the ways in which the system can be changed to provide greater economic justice to its citizens.*

Submitted by Marguerite Mahler

Book Group

The Book Group meets the **third Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m.** in the library. If you like to read and enjoy lively discussions of an interesting variety of books—novels, biographies, memoirs, essays—come join us. Newcomers always welcome!

	<u>Book</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Facilitator</u>
Nov. 21 5pm	Uncle Tom’s Cabin	Harriett Beecher Stowe	Nancy Muhlbach
Dec. 19	Still Alice	Lisa Genova	Sylvia Stevens
Jan. 16	The Whistling Season	Ivan Doig	Beth Moore
Feb. 20	The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks	Rebecca Skloot	JoAnn Hubbard
Mar 19	Room	Emma Donoghue	Margaret Brattin
Apr 16	The 19th Wife	Davis Ebershoff	Trudy Bower
May 21	House Rules	Jodi Picoult	Mary Ellen Heater
June 18	State of Wonder	Ann Patchett	Judy Karandjeff
July	No Meeting		
Aug. 20	MSU Community Selection		
Sept. 17	Book Selections for the Year		



EDGEWOOD ARTS FESTIVAL/VARIETY SHOW

JANUARY 29, 2012 ~ SAVE THE DATE!

Stewardship

Please bring your pledge cards to church! We are wrapping up our Stewardship Drive as we support the wonderful ministries here at Edgewood and seek to serve and experience God. If you have not yet brought in your pledge card, please either bring it in to the church office or it in this week!

Stewardship Team: Marcia Beer, Eli Burton, Peggy Dunn, Meghan Pineda and Patti Spinner

Worship

INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE

This year, the annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held at Edgewood **Monday, November 21 at 7:00 p.m.** This is a wonderful opportunity for us to host our brothers and sisters from other faith communities, as we celebrate Thanksgiving together. Please be sure to join us for this wonderful worship opportunity, as we experience the joy of a joint choir, and the gift of hearing scripture, liturgy, and meditations from different religious traditions. Community choir will be singing *A Canon of Thanks*. Rehearsal is at 6:00 p.m. All are welcome!

Advent Preparations

Advent will arrive sooner than we think. There are many ways in which the church prepares for the Advent-Christmas season and we need help of many kinds. Please consider how you might help us prepare.

1. Advent wreath lighters: individuals or families who light the wreath during worship and lead the congregation in prayer.
2. Sanctuary decorators: a group that gathers on a Saturday in December to hang the garlands and wreaths that grace our worship space.
3. Christmas Eve cookie bakers, set-up and clean up folks: folks who bring in treats or serve those who gather for our Christmas Eve services, an important act of hospitality.



Contact the office at 332-8693 or watch the "Pink Sheet" to let us know how you can help.



Just rinse off the dishes & press this button!



Hey Jan, is dinner ready?



Getting ready for Super Thursday!

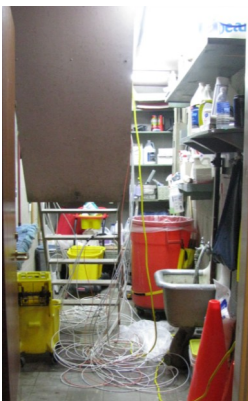


STAFF!



Patty & her pals!
(Margaret, Louise & Jo)

Blood Drive



First the mess . . . then the heat!

CE CORNER
by Emily Barr

There is a new addition to the Child Care wing...the Wishing Tree!

You'll find the Wishing Tree on the wall outside of the preschool room. On the tree are items that the child care team is wishing for. These are typically going to be small items such as a box of Kleenex or a bottle of hand sanitizer, but may also include bigger "wish" items as the need arises. If you would like to support the child care program in this way, please "pick an apple" from the tree and bring in the item named on the apple. We appreciate your support of the program and thank you in advance for your contributions! If you have any questions about the Wishing Tree please contact Debbie Richmond at dreichmond123@hotmail.com or 339-1030.



Please welcome our newest Childcare Provider, Lauren Babcock! Lauren lives in Lansing with her 3-year-old daughter, Ramona. In her free time she enjoys music, baking, and crafting. Lauren looks forward to meeting everyone at Edgewood and is proud to work for a church that is Open and Affirming.

Reverse Trick-or-Treat: YOU can make a difference! It does not matter if you are 6 or 86, receiving or giving candy away on Halloween! Be part of the solution by participating in the *Reverse Trick-or-Treating* project. Reverse trick-or-treating is an initiative of Global Exchange with participation of Fair Trade chocolate companies under the leadership of Equal Exchange. This particular project and purpose was to highlight and distribute the important message about how fair trade can help end poverty and abusive child labor, and protect the environment in cocoa farming communities. **Stop by in the Social Hall and grab your Fair Trade Certified chocolates and flyers!**

Rake n' Run: Save the date of Sunday, November 13th for our annual Rake n' Run! Rake n' Run is one of service projects youth do throughout the year. It will take place during church school. Middle school and high school youth are invited to bring their rakes and join in the fun. Youth will rake yards of Edgewood folks who are not able to do this task. Since the event takes place during church school, the perimeter of the project will be limited to the neighborhoods surrounding the church. Youth will come back to church after raking for a pizza lunch.



Youth Fellowship News

Marcia Beer, our Youth Fellowship Coordinator, has taken a family leave to be with her son, Tim, who is recuperating. Please continue to keep Marcia and her family in your prayers. Marcia is expected to return to Edgewood at the end of December. During her absence, many parent volunteers have signed-up to help lead Youth Fellowship.

Looking ahead:

- o Wednesday, November 16th: MS & HS; NO scheduled meeting for November 23rd.
- o Saturday & Sunday, December 3rd & 4th: Youth Weekend to Chicago
- o Wednesday, December 14th: MS & HS; NO scheduled meeting for December 21st.

Edgewood United Church Staff
A Just Peace Church
An Open & Affirming Church
Web page - edgewooducc.org

Ministers: Every Member
Pastor: Kari Nicewander
Interim Pastor: Jody Betten
Office Administrator: Cindy Winter
Christian Education Coordinator: Emily Barr
Adult Choir Director: Monty Bieber
Youth Ensemble Director: Marcia Beer
Children's Choir Directors: Stephen Gasteyer, Brandon Grafius & Jon Ritz
Bell Choir Directors: JoAnn Hubbard & Marcia Beer
Organists: Mary Ann Baumgartner & Jan Bernsten
Bookkeeper: Chuck Gower
Building Manager: Ken Dagner
Social Media/Communications Intern: Vanessa Levin-Pompetzki

Guided by the love of Jesus Christ, Edgewood United Church seeks to be a community of healing, hope, and hospitality for people of all nationalities, races, sexual orientations, gender identities, types of families, marital statuses, ages, and abilities. Indeed, we celebrate the diversity that God has created.



The Edgewood Exchange

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November 2011 Edgewood Exchange