



**First Congregational**  
United Church of Christ  
Charlotte, Michigan  
October 2025  
Volume 2  
Issue 10

Never place a  
period where God  
has placed a comma

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## Still Speaking

Charloween is  
October 27!

Mary Normand  
Judy Johnson

Mary Kohmuench



My How  
we read!

Sunday  
October 5

## Leaders and Staff of the Church

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<b>Outreach</b>	Mary Normand	DavidNormand@att.net
<b>Soc. &amp; Env. Justice Team</b>	Mary Kohmuench	Mtheoharis@gmail.com
<b>Treasurer (Finance Team)</b>	Kathie Cook	Crkcook@hotmail.com
<b>Worship Team</b>	Jeannine Scott	Scottj21@msu.edu
<b>*Church Council</b>	3rd Thursday, 6:30 pm	Annex Large Meeting Room

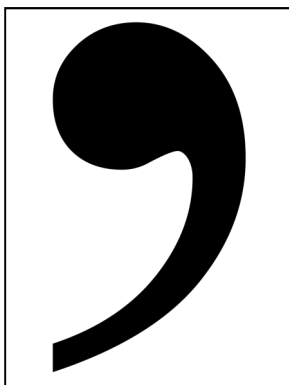
## Staff

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**Still Speaking** is the monthly newsletter distributed to members and friends of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Charlotte. We welcome inside and outside comments, creative writing, illustrative photos/art, and articles. We appreciate feedback; please send comments to the Editor @ [Editor@uccCharlotte.org](mailto:Editor@uccCharlotte.org)

**Editor:** [Editor@ucccharlotte.org](mailto:Editor@ucccharlotte.org) **Still Speaking** article deadline is the 25th of each month.

**About the cover:** October 27 is Charloween, formerly known as Almost Midnight Madness, a Charlotte tradition. This picture of Mary Normand, Judy Johnson, and Mary Kohmuench is from 2022. Congregants are invited to place juice boxes or Yoo-hoo boxes (NO Kool-Aid) on the counter of the Annex Small Meeting Room to be shared with area children that night.



## PASTOR'S CORNER

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Pastor Adam Droscha, with Bren Wood, Council President

Friends, October is stewardship month and I want you to know that our church is a rarity among community churches. Here are a few reasons for that rarity....

First, ***we are incredibly active***. It is remarkable how much we do for a church of our size! In a given week we not only have our Sunday church service, but we have multiple classes, music rehearsals, arts and crafts opportunities, men's and women's groups, and more. Our teams and ministries are constantly working on new projects, like our Art Team's installations and exhibits, our Church Life team organizing our Commons Concert series and other events, or our Outreach Team organizing 'Loads of Love' with neighboring churches to give away change at the local laundromat. It would take a book to narrate everything we do in a given year. We are a living, moving church and that is something to celebrate.

Second, ***our members and volunteers are consistent, creative, and committed***. At many churches now days, the staff does most of the organizing and work of the church in everything from events, programs, and outreach. But at First Congregational Church, though our staff does a lot of great work to keep us organized, our members and volunteers step up, take initiative, and put their hands to task in most of our projects, events, and programming. While it is easier than ever to find a consumer style church where there is little engagement from members, First Congregational Church is a community where being involved is 'being the church.'

Third, ***we have remained steady and thriving*** in an era when community churches struggle for either. Church attendance, participation, and membership have been on a steady decline for decades, especially in older community churches. As a result, many churches that fit that description face difficult decisions like selling their buildings, joining other congregations, or closing their doors altogether. By comparison, First Congregational Church is a success story. Not

only are we an active and participatory church, our membership and support have remained steady. Our membership, our programming, and our outreach are growing. Praise God!

One of the underlying reasons we have not only survived but thrived during this era when community churches like ours are shrinking and vanishing is because of the generous financial support we receive. While financial support is only one way to support the work of our beautiful faith community, it is the very important way that keeps our church staffed, keeps the lights on for our many programs and events, and helps fund our many important projects. Gifts, tithes, and pledges from dedicated friends like you go a long, long way at First Congregational Church. They not only support us, but they support our community and the reconciliatory work of Christ in the world.

We know that in this day and age there are countless places and causes asking for your dollar, and we know that we are blessed when we receive gifts like yours. We hope you will prayerfully consider pledging your financial support to First Congregational United Church of Christ in 2026 so that we may continue to be an active, growing, and loving presence in our community.



## October Giving Tree - Neighbors in Need Offering

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States.

One-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries.

In 2025 the Neighbors in Need Offering supported 26 grant recipients across the UCC who were engaged in projects of direct service and advocacy.

The Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) is the voice for American Indian people in the UCC. CAIM provides Christian ministry and witness to American Indians and to the wider church. Justice issues that affect American Indian life are communicated to the whole UCC by CAIM. Historically, the forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hockak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and northern Nebraska. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



## Outreach Moment

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Mary Normand, chair

### OCTOBER

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**Neighbors in Need** donations are being accepted through the month of October. There will be a jar in the front of the sanctuary where you can place your donation or you can place it in the offering plate. Please make sure you designate it for Neighbors in Need.

**Community Dinner** On October 1, we will be helping the Methodist church with their monthly community dinner. Due to the library book sale being at the Methodist church, we will host the dinner at our church. We are also providing, preparing, and serving the food.

**The Winter Coat** project is starting in October. This usually goes until the end of the year. There will be a jar in the front of the sanctuary for donations, you may give the money directly to Bill or Carol Yerkes who head this up every year, or place your donation in the offering plate designating it for Winter Coats. New or gently used coats are also welcome. There is a coat rack in the annex where they can be hung. Please indicate on the coat it is a donation. There also is a tub in the alcove of the annex where coats can be placed. Lets help keep everyone warm this winter. For those not familiar with this program, the coats are given to Siren/Eaton and Eaton Clothing and Furniture for their clients.

### NOVEMBER

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In November we will be collecting **warm socks for the homeless**. If you see a good sale on them, you might want to pick them up. In December we will be collecting warm hats, gloves, and mittens to be given to Siren/Eaton, Eaton Clothing and Furniture, and Helping Hands.

**Festival of Trees** is coming fast (the weekend after Thanksgiving). Please think about donating a tree, quilt, door decoration, or table decoration (you are not limited to these things) to this event. All monies raised goes to Eaton Clothing and Furniture to buy boots for their clients. On a personal note this is probably my most favorite event of the year. There are extra trees around if you need one. Amy Frost and Jeannine Scott head up this event every year. If nothing else, come out and look at all the things up for auction.

### MISCELLANEOUS

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Recently, Outreach purchased some Subway gift cards, for the office, for folks that stop in and need help with a meal. If anyone else would like to purchase gift cards to some fast food place, it would be appreciated. Sher generally handles these.

**In a world where you can be anything, BE KIND.**



## This is US!

The October Art Show with 4 members of the Art Ministry Team



"Life is a gift - enjoy every day!" words Chris Reist-Rush lives out daily. Owner of Purple Door Artisans, a self-taught painter and teacher gathers artists in her wake.

After 24 years a nurse and 20 years as a business woman (owner of Bags, Paper, and More), Chris brings everything from her previous careers into her present through painting, card making, quilts, basket weaving and more. Come see her work.

Judy Johnson, a retired teacher, finds inspiration for her artistic endeavors from the world around her.

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give," These words from Winston Churchill are a way of life for Judy, whose artistic expression includes Zentangle, Zentangle-doodle, and sketching using primarily pen, ink, and watercolor



Does a veterinarian every really retire? That's a question we have for Deanna Rendel, who continues to attend annual veterinary conventions in the course of her travels and donates artwork for the good of animals.

"All that is gold does not glitter; not all those who wander are lost." An avid reader, this Tolkien quote guides her approach to life.

Her artistic output primarily consists of quilts and cross-stitch, reflecting her minimalistic lifestyle.

Mixed media artist, Sandra Field believes that God has given everyone something to share with the World. This is a part of why she has pushed for an Art Ministry Team in our church.

"We are created to create!"

A retired instructor in Clothing and Textiles, a fashion designer, and a small business owner, she is a lover of family, friends, travel, creating, and reading.





## Candlelight Dinner

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Sandra Field, Art Team

**Friday, October 17, 5:30 pm**

**Bess Fulton Room**

OPEN TO ALL

Join us for a Candlelight Dinner. Make it a date night. Bring your special someone, or just a friend. This event is sponsored by the Art Team and is in preparation for the Women's Retreat the next day. Chris Reist-Rush, 517-719-8889, [caureist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:caureist@sbcglobal.net), or Sandra Field, 517-575-8101, [yoursturlycollection@hotmail.com](mailto:yoursturlycollection@hotmail.com).



## Autumn Women's Retreat

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Sandra Field, Art Team

**Saturday, October 18, 9 am to 5 pm**

**13855 S. Jones Rd. Battle Creek, MI 49017**

**\$15 donation**

Calling all women!

Join us for a day of fellowship growth and empowerment at our Woman's Retreat. Leave feeling renewed, refreshed, and connected. This year's theme is "Seeing Through the Eyes of Love," looking at better and more healthy ways of seeing our encounters in life through the lens of love.

Please register in advance by signing up on the Welcome Card or on the chart created by Chris Reist-Rush. Questions should be referred to Chris Reist-Rush, 517-719-8889, email [caureist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:caureist@sbcglobal.net), or Sandra Field, 517-575-8101, [yoursturlycollection@hotmail.com](mailto:yoursturlycollection@hotmail.com).

Don't miss this opportunity to invest in yourself and your spiritual journey.



## Let's Take a Trip - Ziibiwing Center Tour

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Bill Oatman, Organizer, [www.sagchip.org](http://www.sagchip.org)

### **October 31. Contact Bill Oatman 517-983-3748 Car Pool options available!**

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan is comprised of three bands of Ojibway (Saginaw, Black River, Swan Creek), who lived primarily in the Eastern region of what is now Michigan. Our ancestors lived in this area for hundreds of years prior to the appearance of European settlers. Two hundred years after their arrival, they claimed all but a few acres of the land where our ancestors had made their homes. The last treaties we signed with the United States in 1855 and 1864, established the Isabella Indian Reservation. Totalling over 130,000 acres, this land was divided into privately-owned allotments establishing a permanent home for our tribal membership.

When our people moved to the Isabella Indian Reservation the conditions were extremely grim and our annuity payments were delayed, causing many of our people to succumb to hunger and sickness. During this time, Isabella County had some of the best stands of white pine in the whole state of Michigan and lumbermen were eager to swindle us out of our lands. Many of our people sold their allotments to lumber sharks for a small fraction of their value. For many, selling their allotment was the only way to feed their families. This, coupled with numerous shoddy deals between Indian Agents and timber barons, led to a rapid dispossession of our land base. Of the more than 1,500 allotments issued to our ancestors in the late 1800s, only a handful of these were owned by tribal members by 1934.

In 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) was passed, which sought to improve conditions for tribes in the United States. The IRA required tribes to adopt a constitution and elect a tribal council in order to be a federally-recognized tribe. We elected our first tribal council and adopted our constitution in 1937. At this time, our tribe acquired 500 acres east of Mt. Pleasant to establish a land base for our people.

Through the resiliency of our ancestors we have endured and overcome many obstacles that were placed before us.

The recent success of our gaming and entertainment operation has enabled us to better provide for the needs of our community. Housing, health care, and educational opportunities have greatly improved in the past 20 years for the tribal membership.

The tribe also provides opportunities for our non-Native neighbors as the largest employer in Isabella County.

Our economic success has also given us the means to reclaim the history of our people and share it with the rest of the world. The 34,349 sq. ft. Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways was established in May of 2004 with that goal in mind. Our cultural center and tribal museum honors the ancestors, who against tremendous odds, protected and passed down the cultural knowledge, language, and teachings of our people.



## Countdown to the Congregational 89th Annual Bazaar!

Amy Krizek, co-chair

### THE OCTOBER TO-DO LIST:

**CRAFTING!** Your favorite crafts are a large part of our profit. If you need pricing ideas or assistance, a crafty group meets Thursday mornings in the annex large meeting room 9am until noonish. Just drop in! Tags for pricing available at BAZAAR display in the Bess Fulton Room .

Bring your crafts in anytime now to the craft group meeting on Thursdays from 9 am to noon. The last drop off for crafts is November 5 in the Annex Large Meeting Room.

**JEWELRY**—Check through your jewelry chests one more time! We are seeking vintage and costume jewelry for the Bazaar Jewelry Shop. Thank you!

**COOKIES!!!** Bake your best recipe and label it for “nuts” and “gluten” and the recipe name. Drop them off in the Annex Small Meeting Room (the Bazaar Bake Shop) no later than Thursday, November 6, 12pm. *Psst... You will be called as a reminder!*

### SIGN UP FOR YOUR NOVEMBER TASKS!

Calendar schedule and Work NEEDS are posted in Bess Fulton Room and on the back of the Welcome Card on Sunday mornings.

Of GREAT need:

Meat Cutters, Wednesday, November 5, 12pm

Servers and Carry Out packers for dinner Friday, November 7, 3 pm—7 pm





## 2025 Bazaar Calendar

Amy Krizek, co-chair

**\*\*PLEASE KEEP AND POST AT HOME\*\***

Come help whenever you can. Thanks!

### OCTOBER

Thurs ALL of Oct      9 am - noon Crafting in the Craft Room

#### 3rd week

Oct 19-25      Menu/Publicity Distribution (\*Dine-in or TAKE-OUT only)  
Tues Oct 21(tentative)      10am Squash Cooking– Contact Mary N if you can help

#### 4th week

Oct 26-Nov 1      Menu/Publicity Distribution (\* Dine-in or TAKE-OUT only)  
Tue Oct 28      10 am Beet Pickling– Contact Mary N., if you can help  
Thurs Oct 30      8:30 am - Mix batter for muffins (Dyna)  
10 am - Salad Dressing (Barb A & Amy Smith)

### NOVEMBER (BAZAAR WEEK!!!)

Sun Nov 2      after worship      Ask congregation HELP move chairs from annex  
Bring crafts & Country Kitchen donations anytime

Weds Nov 5      1 pm      Meat cooking, & cutting (Mary N, AmyK- Need HELP)  
10 am      Cinnamon Apples, Cranberry Relish, Lemon  
Muffins

Thur Nov 6      8 am      Prep apples for pie, celery– NEED HELP  
10 am      Pie Baking – (Pam R, Mary K – NEED HELP)  
12 pm      Cookie packaging - annex

Fri Nov 7      8 am      Bake Bran Muffins  
8 am      Cinnamon Rolls/Croissant prep

	9 am	Dining Room Set-Up (HELP!!!)
	9 am – 6 pm	<b>CRAFTS FROM THE CONGREGATION</b> (Annex open)
	9:30 am – 1 pm	Conversation CAFE - open
	3 pm	Pie cutting
	4 pm – 6:30 pm	Bazaar DINNER – dine in or carry out (– NEED HELP)
Sat Nov 8	9 am – 2 pm	<b>CRAFTS FROM THE CONGREGATION</b>
Sun Nov 9	after worship	Coffee Hour in Lounge – last day of sale
Mon Nov 10	9 am	Annex clean-up
<b>FOLLOW-UP DATES</b>		
Weds Dec 3	10 am	Bazaar Wrap Up Meeting – all Chairs
Mon Dec 8	1 pm	Blanche Moyer Circle – appetizer potluck
<b>ANNUAL Women’s Fellowship Meeting</b>		
Sun Jan 11	after church	Potluck in the lounge – All people of the church are welcome to approve annual Women’s Fellowship budget



Still Speaking



September 2025

# **Crafts from the Congregation 2025**

**Friday, November 7th - 9:00 am – 6:00 pm**

**Saturday, November 8th - 9:00 am – 2:00 pm**

*89th year!*

Sponsored by the Bazaar & Women's Fellowship

**Family DINNER: Friday, 4:00 pm – 6:30 pm**

## **CRAFT Lounge**

**Co-Chairs: Judy Johnson 543-7768 and Jan Shall 269 832 5114**

Bazaar sells crafts created by individuals who donate their special handmade/homemade items. Beginning Sunday, Nov 2 after Church, bring any item you are willing to donate for our sale to the Annex. Pricing these items by YOU is very important and appreciated.

## **Craft Sessions**

**Chairs: Dyna Lehman 983-8825, Judi Cates, Stephanie Tighe 517 667 8448**

We hope you are working on homemade items at home. Group craft workshops happen on many Thursday mornings 9am. Watch your bulletin and emails for details. Ideas are welcome! Join us for these crafting sessions.

## **Jewelry Shop**

**Chair: Sharon Oatman 402-3297**

Vintage jewelry of all kinds is "repurposed" on this very popular Jewelry Shop. Please try to get your "gems" dropped off in specially marked boxes at church by Oct 19 for pricing.

## **Country Kitchen**

**Chair: Chris Reist 517-719-8889**

Country Kitchen sells home grown and home-baked products. Especially good are breads, pies, jams, garden produce & herbs. Bake ahead and freeze!! Members and friends drop off labeled donations in the Annex starting Sunday, Nov 2.

**COOKIES, COOKIES, Cookies!** homemade holiday style cookies are needed! Dropped off in the Annex after 3pm on Tuesday,, Nov 4. Help with packaging is needed.

## **Hospitality**

**Co-Chairs: Judi Cates 667-6659 & Pam Rinckey 543-2901**

**Cashiers/Baggers:** Friday, Nov 7, 9 am. -4:30pm, Saturday, Nov 8, 9am - 2pm.

**Conversation Cafe Friday 9:30am-1pm**

**Chair: Jenny Bohms**

Enjoy FREE beverages and relaxed conversation with other Bazaar customers and friends in the Church Lounge. Cinnamon Rolls, Large Buttermilk Cookies or Turkey or Egg Salad Croissants as a cash purchase or your Country Kitchen goodies can be enjoyed in this venue.

**Pie Baking**

**Co-Chairs Mary Kohmuench 973-897-9471 & Pam Rinckey 543-2901**

Thursday, Nov 6, 10am Workers and donations for pie fruit ingredients needed.

Pies are sold at the Luncheon by the slice and large and small size pie during Bazaar.

**Bazaar Family DINNER Friday 4:00pm - 6:30pm**

**Co-Chairs: Amy Krizek 652-1579, Mary Normand 543-9487**

Our Bazaar Family dinner held in the Bess Fulton Room, Dine in or Carry out. Dinner includes choice of Entrée (Hot Chicken Salad, Vegetable Quiche or specialty Beef & Noodles), beverage and two sides. Add a slice of one of our signature homemade pies!

**Meat Prep:** Tuesday, Nov 4, 1:00 pm. Workers needed to chop cooked beef & chicken.

**Veggie Prep:** Thursday, Nov 6, starting at 9 am. Workers needed to peel apples.

**Servers/Cashiers:** Friday, Nov 7, 4:30pm. (Treasurer: Pam Rinckey)

**Dining Room**

**Chair: Bill Oatman 543-5178**

Set up Thursday, Nov 6. Help is needed Friday night 4pm—6pm to keep our guests served during the dinner. If you can pour coffee, greet friends, serve meals, contact Bill.

**Pie Cutting and Carryout pre-packing:** Friday, Nov 7, 3pm.

**Dishwashing Brigade**

**Co Chairs: Bren Wood 973-8791028 & Anna Mitchel 652-9957**

Thursday Nov 6 11am – 4pm prep & pie crew; Friday, Nov 7, 4-8 pm. Earth-friendly china plates are being used and we need dishwashers and pot scrubbers.

**Publicity**

**Co-Chairs: Dyna Lehman 543-1292 & Amy Krizek 517 652 1579**

Help with distribution of publicity information and menus to local businesses and organizations. Starting week of October 19.

**Questions: Call Amy Krizek 652-1579 or Mary Normand 231-6647**

*There are LOTS of opportunities to get involved! Here is a list of the different parts of the Bazaar that all come together for a fun-fellowship-filled two days.*

## When We Come Together . . .

**Sunday Worship**, 10 am In Person and on Facebook, @ucc48813 and website: ucccharlotte.org

Learning Opportunities	Meeting Times	Contact Person
Words and Tangents	Sun, 8 am, Annex/Library	Jan Shall, JanShall00@gmail.com
Godly Play	Sun, 10:20 am	Lexi Konietzko. akonietzko129@gmail.com
Devotional Bible Study	Mondays, 10 am and 4 pm	Adam Droscha, pastor@uccCharlotte.org
Prayer Group	1st & 3rd Thur, 10:30 am	Sandra Field yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Mental & Spiritual Wellness Support Group	Summer Hiatus	Kate Durda, KateDurda@gmail.com
Pub Theology	2nd, 4th Thurs. 7 pm, Riedys	Adam Droscha pastor@uccCharlotte.org
Adult Bible Study	Tuesdays, 6 pm, LMR	Curt Scott, CurtisJScott@hotmail.com
Coffee Hour with a Pastor	Evelyn Bay, Tuesday, 10 am	Pastor Droscha, pastor@uccCharlotte.org
Healthy Lifestyle Class	Last Saturday, 10 am, LMR	Deb Cogswell, cogswell2003@gmail.com
Music		
Choir Practice	Wednesday, 7 pm, Lounge	Ramona Kime, Ramona.Kime@gmail.com
Bell Choir	Wednesday, 4 pm, Sanctuary	Jenny Bohms, rjbohms@yahoo.com
Committees & Groups		
Art Ministry Committee	2nd, 4th Tues, 11 am, Art Rm	Sandra Field, yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Blanche Moyer	2nd Monday, 5:15 pm, LMR	Judi Cates, JudithCates68@gmail.com
Church Life	Sept. 2nd Mon. 6:30, SMR	Amy Frost, frostamy58@gmail.com
Communications	3rd Monday, 6:30 pm, SMR	Matt Slot, MattSlot@gmail.com
Prayer Shawl	1st & 3rd Sat, 9:30 am, Lounge	Amy Krizek, Mom_Krizek@hotmail.com
Social & Environmental Justice Committee	2nd Sun, 11:30 am, Annex LMR	Mary Kohmuench, mtheoharis@gmail.com
Women's Fellowship	As Needed	Mary Normand, DavidNormand@att.net
Men's Group	2nd and 4th Saturday, 10 am	Larry Taylor, TaylorLT1752@att.net



## *Still Speaking*

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

106 South Bostwick - Charlotte, MI 48813  
office@uccCharlotte.org [www.ucccharlotte.org](http://www.ucccharlotte.org)

Office Hours  
Monday to Thursday 9a - 2p  
517 543 1310  
Sunday Worship Service 10 am  
In Person, Facebook, YouTube



Instagram



Find us on  
Facebook



## Calendar Highlights

A full calendar of events can be found at  
[www.uccCharlotte.org/calendar](http://www.uccCharlotte.org/calendar)

October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - Crafting for the Holiday Bazaar, 9 am to Noon  
October 5 - Banned Book Read-In, Church East Lawn  
October 9, 23 - Pub Theology, Riedy's Pub and Pizza, 7 pm  
October 14, 28 - Art Ministry Team Meeting, 11 am  
October 17 - Candlelight Dinner, 6 pm  
October 18 - Women's Retreat, Seeing Through the Eyes of Love, 9 am - 5 pm  
October 25 - Healthy Lifestyle Class, 10 am, Annex LMR  
October 31 - Let's Take a Trip, Ziibiwing Center, 8:45 am leaving from the church parking lot

### **Items that occur weekly include:**

Devotional Bible Study, Mondays at 10 am and 4 pm, Annex Large Meeting Room  
Coffee Hour with a Pastor, Tuesdays at 10 am, Evelyn Bay's  
Bell Choir Practice, Wednesdays at 4 pm, Church Sanctuary  
Choir Practice, Wednesdays at 7 pm, Church Lounge