

Writings From The Rev - January 2011

Wow! 2011, where did the time go? It's hard to believe that it has been two years since I first arrived to help all of you here at North Eaton Christian Church with your "In-Between" time. But now, if all goes as you and I have been praying, this will be the last time that I fill this space. Not that you've been praying that this be my last Writings From The Rev, but that we have all been praying for God to bring you a new Settled Pastor.

As an Interim Minister I feel like I can relate a bit to John the Baptist, in as much as you and I have been on a Journey to "Prepare the Way". And since there is a rural flavor to this congregation, even with it's very growing and changing community, the truth of the matter is, my main responsibility has been to till the soil. Preparing the way for new seeds of ministry to be planted. (Okay, I may have slipped a couple of seeds in there myself, but if they are not watered by you, I don't know what their future benefit will be.)

I am not sure how far I should continue to take this imagery? Let's just say that some of the ground has been an easy till, but to be honest there has been some hard spots, traditions, habits, opinions. And in the process I may have stepped on a couple of toes and bruised some feelings along the way, of which I am sorry.

I know that this Interim process could not have happened without the help of many people. I hope that you realize what a wonderful Church Staff you have. You only see a part of what they do for this ministry. From my vantage point I know for a fact that they all go above and beyond what is required or expected of them. What a blessing they have been for me and will be for your New Pastor. While they may be listed as "Part-time" or "Minimal-time" I want to express my sincere thanks to Londa in the Office, Polly with Youth and Christian Ed, the Worship Staff of Diana, Kim, Lanson, Dennis, Stephanie, our Bookkeeper Cathy, the Nursery Staff of Jan and Kim, and our dear departed friend Judy Ponting.

At the same time, that above and beyond character is also seen in some very special people who volunteer their time, energy, and skill in a variety of ways; from leadership within the congregation, to Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Worship, Maintenance, etc. So many things both great and small; from cutting grass, to lighting candles, plowing snow, baking cookies, folding bulletins, counting offering, sending cards, and on and on.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve this Church Family. You will have a special place in my heart, because you have helped me become a better minister for our Lord.

Just know that the Mission Field is ever expanding, so there is still more ground to be tilled. But for now, I believe North Eaton Christian Church to be good soil. So, remember what Jesus said about good soil and the seeds of faith, "*But the seed in the good earth—these are the good-hearts who seize the Word and hold on no matter what, sticking with it until there's a harvest.*" (Luke 8:15, The Message)

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The Elders would like to thank Rev. Ralph for the two years of service and spiritual guidance he has given to us. Words can not express the love and loss that is felt when a transition like this takes place. I know that Ralph will be guided by the Lord to his new ministry, so that he may help another church transition into a stronger faith journey with the Lord. Thank you Rev. Ralph! The Elders

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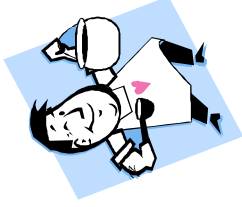
DATE—JANUARY 2011

Interim Minister: Rev. Ralph S. Wearstler
Christian Ed. And Youth Director: Polly Tallos
Secretary: Londa Blaine
Pianist: Kim Speiran-Wells
Music Director: Lanson Wells
Pathways Counseling and Growth Center: Dr. Ralph Thompson

NECC CHILI COOK-OFF/GAME NIGHT

IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN TO START GETTING YOUR CHILI APPETITE READY FOR ANOTHER FRIENDLY COMPETITION BETWEEN CHURCHES. THIS YEAR THE "CHILI COOK-OFF" WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE NORTH EATON CHURCH ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH AT 4:00 p.m. THE "WANEW" CHURCHES (WASHINGTON AVE, WESTLAKE, ETC.) WILL BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE. THIS IS A FAMILY EVENT WITH NO ADMISSION CHARGE, BUT A "goodwill offering" WILL BE TAKEN FOR THE Cleveland Christian Home.

EACH CHURCH IS ASKED TO PROVIDE AT LEAST ONE POT OF CHILI PER 8 PEOPLE ATTENDING. DIG OUT YOUR FAVORITE RECIPE AND ENTER IT IN THE COMPETITION. A SIGN-UP SHEET FOR CHILI, DESSERTS, AND OTHER ITEMS WILL BE IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO ENTER THE COMPETITION, PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE FOOD, FUN, GAMES, AND ENTERTAINMENT.



WE ARE HOPING TO HAVE LIVE ENTERTAINMENT PROVIDED BY THE MIDVIEW HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND. AFTER THE CHILI AND MUSIC, YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO STAY AND PLAY SOME BOARD GAMES. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO BRING ALONG YOUR FAVORITES.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT CAROL BOKMAN AT BOKMANS@ATT.NET OR CALL 440-891-1819.

NECC WINTER JAM 2011 EVENT

On Sunday, January 30th the family and friends of the NECC are invited to attend the 2011 Winter Jam at the Wolstein Center in Cleveland. This is a Christian music/rally event that is appropriate for the whole family. Most of the performers are Christian Rock artists, some will share their faith story with us. Tony Nolan will also share a message with the audience. Tony's passion is about "helping people get it about God's great love and salvation!" **The cost is \$10 per person.** For more information, go to this website: www.heartfirst.com/winterjam/default.aspx. If enough show interest in attending we can arrange to use the church van or car pool. **Tickets are purchased at the door.**

If you have questions contact Carol Bokman at bokmans@att.net or Polly Tallos.

Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday, February 6

\$1 and/or 1 Can of Soup Goal: \$211 and 100 Cans of Soup

Most of us have never had to wonder where our next meal is coming from. But for more than 4 million Americans (one in six adults and one in four children) it is a very real concern. In an effort to ease that concern, the NECC Jr. Youth Fellowship will be standing at the sanctuary doors on Sunday, **February 6th to receive your \$1 donation and/or canned soup.** Monetary donations will be given to the Columbia Food Pantry. All soups and non-perishable food items will be given to the North Eaton Christian Church Food Pantry.

The youth will also be at Schild's IGA on Saturday, February 5th, asking patrons to donate a can of soup, paper products or other non-perishable food items.

Super Bowl Hoagies

\$4.00 each or 3/\$11

Orders taken throughout the month of January

Pick up—Super Bowl Sunday—Feb 6th



Sandwiches will have ham, bologna, salami and American cheese. Lettuce and tomato will be in a bag on the side. Hoagies are made fresh Sunday morning, ready to be eaten while you watch the game. You can place an order through-out the month of January.

The Youth are selling Super Bowl Hoagies to help support their events and Mission

THANK YOU TO OUR CHURCH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.....

The JYF, Chi Rho and CYF would like to thank everyone who baked and bought for the Christmas Cookie Sale. We sold over 100 pounds of cookies, most of that in a one hour time period! **We raised over \$800.**

The Chi Rho went shopping for the Cleveland Christian Home on Sunday, December 12th. Two groups shopped at Wal Mart with \$100 each to spend on the Home. While they were shopping Polly bought \$500 worth of \$10 Gift Cards. The Home and its sister agencies will give the Gift Cards to foster families, case workers and young mothers to get Christmas Gifts, home and school supplies, clothes, or whatever they need. The CYF will use their portion of the Sale proceeds to help cover the cost of their 2011 Mission Trip.



Breakfast with Santa was held on Saturday, Dec. 4th and approximately 45 children and adults attended. Melissa Folk and Cindy Hicks worked hard to make this event possible. Thank you to all who helped clean up afterwards. A special THANK YOU to Santa who made the long trip from the North Pole to be with the children.

During this season of giving, I want to thank every single person who has given of themselves and helped to make NECC a wonderful place to be a part of, especially to those who volunteer to fill elected positions, leaders for Sunday School and Bible studies, grounds & parking lot, financial duties, hospitality, and the countless others who are always so willing to support the mission and ministry of our church through countless different ways (many of them "behind the scenes" work). My gratefulness is seldom expressed enough through words but is felt daily. You are appreciated!

Melissa Folk, Chairman of Council

"My thanks to all the carolers who came to my home. When Rev. Ralph asked if you could come, I wasn't really in the Christmas spirit. I am so glad he insisted. What a beautiful "gift of love" you gave me.

Sylvia Ott

"My thanks to Rev. Ralph for the beautiful Memorial Service for our son, Howard. Thank you to the ladies for the delicious lunch prepared for us. The food was delicious and the group of men and women who hosted did a fantastic job. What a loving and caring church family to be a part of. Your love that surrounds us during this sad time helps to get us through each day. God bless you all."

Susie & Ernie Naylor & families

CONGRATULATIONS TO: Jim and Joyce Johnson who are the proud great grandparents of Joshua Andrew Shuster, born Dec. 8th, 6 lb. 15 oz.

OUR SYMPATHY is extended to: Michaelene and Paul Durbin on the death of Michaelene's mother, Mary Kleha. She was 95 years old. A memorial service was held in Detroit, Michigan.

Any memorial gifts will go towards a BRICK in our Memorial Garden.

MEET AND GREET (Saturday, January 8th)

WORSHIP and Potluck Dinner at NOON, January 9th

This is a schedule to introduce you to Rev. Charles Butcher and his wife Carol. Having you come in small groups will give you a more close up and personal time to meet and have any questions answered you may have. Please make this a priority. Rev. Butcher will preach on Sunday, January 9th at both services. At the end of each worship service a Congregational Meeting will be called and a written ballot will be cast. The results will be shared during our POTLUCK DINNER at NOON.

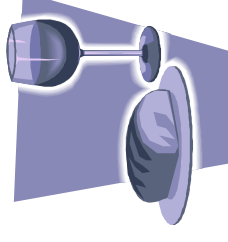
9:00	Trustees	9:45	Church Staff	10:30	Worship Team/Choir
11:30	Lunch/families with children and youth	1:00	Christian Education		
1:45	Women's Groups	2:30	Diaconate		
3:00	OPEN SESSION (one hour—Everyone welcome)				
7:00	OPEN SESSION (one hour—Everyone welcome)				Desserts served.

Serving Schedule — January 2011

8:00 Brian and Shari Insley

9:30 Beth Wilson (TL), Kevin Wilson, Ken & Cindy Hicks,
Carol Bokman, Marlene Black, Carol Swartz, John Klinect,
Bill Chapman, Diana Tyler, Maddie Stevanus

ELDERS—Ralph Thompson, Glenn Swartz



Mark Allen Chapman Concert @ NECC

Eve Circle is once again bringing the talented Mark Allen Chapman here to North Eaton on Sunday, **January 9th, 3:00 p.m.** Don't miss this one! Invite your family, friends and neighbors to join you for an afternoon of beautiful music. There is no charge to attend. A "free will" offering will be taken.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Holly Gross
- 4 Roberta Balogh
- 5 Sandy Gross
- 6 Dan Gross
- 6 Erin Martin
- 7 Jen Wilson
- 9 James Purdy
- 10 Richard Blaine
- 11 Hope Swindell
- 12 Betty Brown
- 13 Helen Literati
- Fran Early
- 14 Chris Hensley
- *Larry & Eileen Weber (61)
- Mike & Paula Krasnevich
- 15 Lucy Vernadakis
- 16 Bill Cromling
- Marty Belfi
- 18 Laura Kuhn
- Alberta Amos
- 20 Allison Cihla
- John Klinec
- 23 Carol Bokman
- 26 Karen Klinec
- 27 David Houston
- 30 Hanna Susak
- 31 Matthew Gross



FEBRUARY Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 2 Loretta St. Andre
- 3 Joyce Johnson
- 5 Eleanor Smith
- 6 Fran Walker
- Linda Ickes
- 7 Beth Wilson
- 8 Marie Ternes
- 9 Linda Johnson
- Susie Naylor
- 12 John Haupt
- 14 Bonnie Hicks
- Tim Tyler
- Mary Bengough
- James Hensley
- 15 Kristen Hicks
- Jacob Zawoyski
- 17 Glenn Swartz
- Chrissy Baughman
- 18 Amanda Klein
- 19 Gene Yost
- 20 Stu Hicks Sr.
- 21 Royce Klein
- 22 Madeline Blaine
- 23 Breanna Bokar
- 24 Jill & Tom Hartness
- John & Karen Vilevac
- 25 Jim Bokar
- Laura Carpenter
- Brian Insley
- 26 Jeff & Chris Hensley
- 28 Taylor Baughman
- 29 Edna Carpenter

Historical moment in time — NECC Fire of 1943

The numbers of persons who remember the fire that leveled the church building are becoming fewer with each year. The memory is fading, but the tenacity and strength of character of that congregation has become a part of the present congregation's DNA. Since the fire the congregation has moved forward in spite of several trials and internal struggles. It has not only moved forward, but has expanded its areas of ministry and building several times.

The NECC was the only congregation in Eaton Township and was therefore the center of the community's spiritual life. As the building was engulfed by the flames students stood in the window of the Eaton school watching their beloved building go up in flames. Many stood there with tears rolling down their cheeks. There was no established fire department in the community and no way to effectively fight the fire. The members could do little than watch the flames destroy the place filled with memories. Confessions of faith, baptisms, marriages, funerals, inspiring sermons, positive educational experiences, new friendships formed, memorials given, came to their minds as the old stone church began to crumble. Some would wonder, as they watched, how they would ever replace the building. They could never reclaim the sacred space of the past, but would they be able to build a new place for sacred happenings? It was the middle of the Second World War. There were global concerns with which to contend.

This undefeated congregation began putting things together. They met for about five years in the Eaton school, the town Grange, and the Town Hall. It took a great deal of time for this patient congregation, but a new building was built on the land where the old stone church had stood. This new building was to be more accessible to the elderly and those with disabilities. To this day, there are some who remember their love for the old stone church who have said, "We didn't know it then as we watched our much loved church go up in flames, but now we know that that fire was a blessing for the future. No one is shut out of the new building. It is truly open to all."

As NECC took a tragic and hurtful event and built a more positive understanding, they met the challenge of the community's need for a fire department. The Eaton Township Fire Department was created by the members of NECC and was built right next to the new church building.

(Dr. Paul H. Durbin wrote this article for our REGIONAL ASSEMBLY this Summer)