

# SCIENCE

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sible for leading the service and reading from Eddy's book. The "Second Reader" then reads scripture from the King James Version of the bible. Both readers are responsible all week for praying for the congregation and the world.

Each week a message combining readings from Eddy's book and scripture is read throughout the world as a sort of simultaneous learning experience.

"Christian Science consistently teaches and practices Christianity on a full-time basis," explained Lois Nelson, who in the past has served as a reader for the church. "We believe in prayer as a healing agent."

With no minister, it provides a very democratic atmosphere within the church.

"With no minister and no hierarchy, it means each member has an equal voice in

everything," explained Schmidt.

The Church also holds a meeting each Wednesday night at 7:30 p.m. The public is also encouraged to attend. In addition to readings from "Science and Health" and the Bible, members also share their healing experiences.

"It is a sharing time of inspiration and thoughts," Nelson explained.

Nelson said that those who initially don't understand Christian Science find themselves in awe once they experience it. And as far as doctors and medicine go, the system is democratic and each member is encouraged to make his/her own decisions.

"We don't condemn (going to the doctor)," Nelson explained. "No one ever tells you that you must or must not do something. You are never required to do something you are not prepared to do."

According to Vickie Paradis, the church's current Second Reader, simple misunderstandings about the Christian Science religion cause a lot of misconceptions.

## Reading room celebrates 100th anniversary

Throughout its history, one way that the Christian Science church has reached out to the community is through the Christian Science Reading Room. Throughout the world reading rooms are set up as a community outreach for the Christian Science religion.

May 2004 marked the 100th anniversary of the Christian Science Reading Room in Traverse City. The first Reading Room was opened in the Wilhelm block in Old Towne in Traverse City. It was relocated to the Ebner building in 1941 and then in the early 1950s it was housed at the Michigan Theatre building. Finally, in 1971, The Reading Room moved to its present location at 118 S. Union Street.

The Christian Science Reading Room serves as a mission project for the church. Open to the public, the reading room offers materials for loan or for purchase. Visitors to the reading room can read from the Christian Science Monitor, Bible refer-

ence books or can visit [www.spirituality.com](http://www.spirituality.com).

Susan Schmidt is in charge of the reading room. As the only paid employee she is responsible for all scheduling, ordering of merchandise and the balancing of the books. She's been in this position for the past three years, although she has volunteered there for "decades," she said.

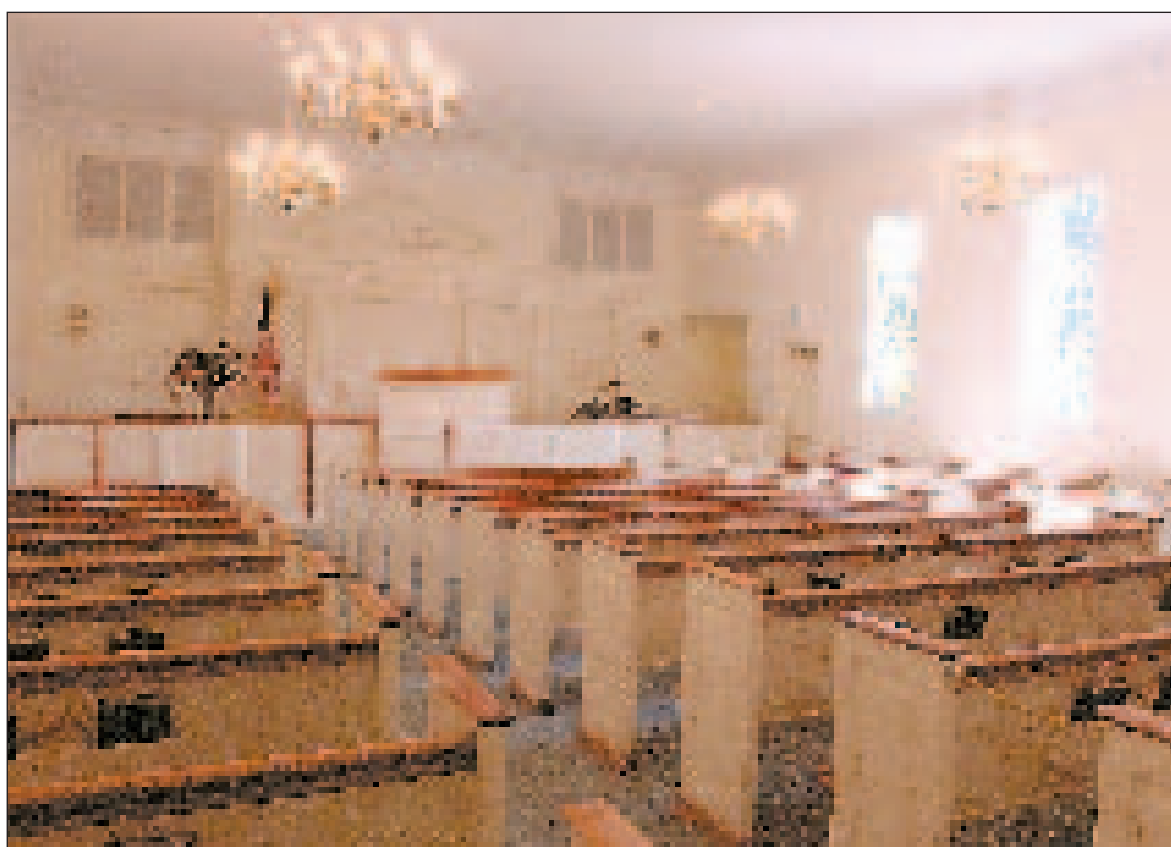
A retired teacher, Schmidt considers the reading room "one of those jobs that you love."

In addition to herself, members of the church volunteer their time to keep the reading room staffed.

The reading room is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

While the reading room serves members of the church, Schmidt said that they welcome community members.

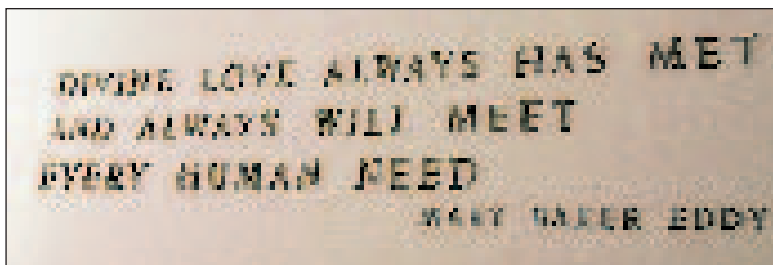
To celebrate the 100th anniversary, the reading room will be hosting an open house in the fall.



"If you look at the Key to Scriptures that Mary Baker Eddy gave us it helps you to understand these healing messages," she said. "The world focuses on disease, poverty and war. Christian Science focuses on healing, peace, gratitude and joy."

Paradis said the Christian Science Church shares the message of seeing people as a true reflection of God.

"One of my favorite quotes from Mary Baker Eddy is 'love is reflected in love,'" said Paradis. "And it's true, when you look at people with love, you see them with that love."



Record-Eagle/John L. Russell

Top, built in 1941, the First Church of Christ Scientist is next to the former Traverse Area District Library on Sixth Street. Above, a quotation from Christian Scientist founder Mary Baker Eddy adorns the church's wall.

Services are held each Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m.

Kristen M. Hains is a local freelance writer.

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