



**105 E. Main
Street**

**Ionia, MI
48846**

Service

9:00 am

www.ioniafirst.com

616-527-1860

**July
2024
Newsletter**



THE PASTOR'S PEN

Ionia First

July 2024

Greetings in the Name of Christ!

I am delighted and excited to have been appointed to serve with the Ionia First and Easton churches as pastor for the next few years. It is an honor and privilege to be in ministry with you.

First, a brief introduction: I am Lamarr V Gibson, an ordained elder of the Wisconsin Conference. I began my ministry career in the Detroit Conference as a local pastor in 1993 and was ordained elder in 1997. Over a span of 30 years, I served four churches in Detroit, one church in Lansing, and three churches in Wisconsin. I have also served as hospital chaplain in Detroit and Madison and have a passion for pastoral care.

I am married to Linda Lee and we have three children (2 sons and a daughter), twelve grandchildren, and six great grandchildren. Linda is also clergy and served the Detroit Conference as pastor, district superintendent and later was elected bishop and assigned to the Michigan Area for four years, after which she was assigned to Wisconsin and I followed her there.

I am a native of Chicago, Illinois, living there for 43 years. I moved to Detroit when Linda and I were married. Before moving to Grand Rapids where we presently reside, Linda and I lived 13 years in Michigan and 17 years in Wisconsin.

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Continuation of “Pastor’s Pen”

Linda and I met in Nashville at a BMCR caucus convention and a year later were married. We have been married for 33 years and are looking forward to more delightful years together.

I was born into the Baptist faith but became a United Methodist in 1977 while tutoring children in a summer program at a United Methodist church. Because I liked the music and what the pastor said when he preached, I joined the church. I liked the ministries and activities of that church and soon became an officer of the church. Being a member of that congregation brought me to a greater awareness of God in my life and I began feeling called to ministry in the church.

I began my ministry journey seeking to become a diaconal minister, but soon realized I was called to be ordained. I pursued that path and gained the necessary educational credentials to be eligible for full membership in the Detroit Conference. But my educational pursuit did not end with graduation.

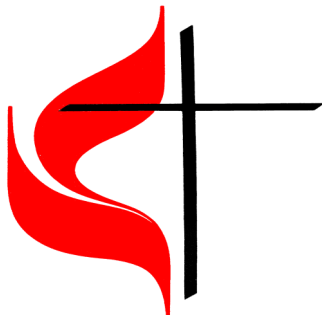
As I became more familiar with the demands of ministry and the needs of the persons I provided ministry for, I realized my knowledge for assisting people in need was inadequate. As a result, my educational pursuits continued as I served numerous churches and I earned several graduate degrees, including 2 doctorates.

I consider my theological views to be quite eclectic, ranging from conservative to very liberal views. I believe in viewing the scriptures critically and trying to understand the message the stories and writings it contains. Thus, I do take a literal view of the scriptures and am not bound by specific doctrines.

I am hopeful we can share our beliefs and experiences in a manner that is rewarding and fruitful for all. I look forward to visiting, worshipping, having fellowship, and creating ministry with you. Because God is with us, I know we will do good things.

Blessings,

Lamarr



EVERYONE IS WELCOME
Traditional Worship
Communion Every Sunday
Sunday Morning
Service at 9:00 Coffee Hour following
service

Administration Board Report

Holding Church services in the Chapel on Sunday, June 23, was a rewarding experience we'll repeat on June 30. As we prepare to welcome a new Pastor, and give thanks for the historic and inspiring building we continue to update for the future, I appreciate the guidance and support the Ad Board provides. Our meetings are open to everyone and if you have concerns or ideas to share please bring them to a meeting for discussion. Keeping Sunday as a day of worship and a time for prayer and reflection ensures that the entire congregation can face the days ahead and be comforted by the song that promises, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands."

**Linda Ciangi,
Ad. Board Chair**



S.P.R.C. -

Jan Powell

Everyone, so much is happening in July. A year and a half ago the S.P.R.C. of both Easton and Ionis First met to determine starting times of church because of Terry's two obligations. It was agreed that we would revisit the issue of starting time in six months. Six months turned into a full year. It was decided to switch the times. So, Ionia First will begin services at 9 am on July 7th.

Also, on July 7th, we will welcome a new Pastor, Lamarr Gibson. The S.P.R.C. has met with him twice. Earlier we met with Lamarr, John Kasper, Easton, and our S.P.R.C. On the 19th, we again met with him to answer and ask questions. He is a very learned man and a soft-spoken Christian.

Most of his preaching has been with the Wisconsin Conferences. I think you will enjoy what he can teach us.

“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint..” Isaiah 40;31

Jan

Missions

Missions for this July is the Stocks. By the time you read this, there may be a new Stock born. Elisha and Crystal will be welcoming their new addition soon. Please keep them in your prayers as they travel to Nairobi, Kenya, for the birth. Our church has sent them an Amazon gift card so that they can select exactly what they need.

Elisha continues to have adventures with his flying to remote spots. Recently his plane had a flat tire. He was to fly to 7 locations to deliver missionaries. Elisha could keep the plane on the runway when he experienced the flat tire. It is difficult to change a 4-ton Cessna's tire without the proper equipment. It took two pilots a day to change the tire. He had another close call last year on the same airstrip when lightning hit him.

Jan, Peg, Millie, Marilyn

Trustee News

Repair work on the East door is coming right along. This door had several additional problems so is taking a little longer to refinish. When this door is finished, we will be moving on to the front doors. We will be doing the front doors in two steps as this is the only handicapped door to the main floor.

Painting in different areas of the church is coming along. It is hoped we will have sufficient funds to completely paint the areas which have been neglected.

We want to welcome the new Pastor, Lamarr Gibson and his wife, Linda Lee. He will be taking over this July and the first service will be July 7th. The Trustees look forward to working with him.

We have delivered the food for IM Kids. They are feeding close to 850 kids per day now and feel this number is going to increase. This is due to the lay-off of workers from the chicken processing plant. The front pews are now empty and need to be filled again. I cannot express to you how much this food is needed.

Trustee meetings for this month only will be on the **Second Wednesday of the month at 10:00 a.m.** Everyone is invited. July's Meeting is the 10th.

See you in Church, be Safe,

Joe

Community Drawers News

Hello everyone,

Happy July. Seems like 3 weeks ago we were wearing winter clothing now it is HOT.

I want to Thank everyone who helped us this past Wednesday in the horrible heat at Community Drawers. We only had Eight families but we were able to help them fulfill their needs.

I was honored to accept on behalf of Community Drawers on June 16, 2024, an Impact Award given by the United Methodist Foundation in the amount of 2,500.00. Believe me when I say that we will use this money carefully. The Impact Award was given to us do to the fact we last year impacted the lives of over 1000 people. Thank You Everyone for all the support you continue to give to Community Drawers.

We have a small need that some of our homeless clients have asked us if we could supply. We have need for some small, what we used to call gym bags, made out of a nylon material with a zipper or a drawstring closure. We give the clients large plastic bags with their items, but when you are homeless these bags do not last. If you have some left over from grandkids, or some you just do not use please consider donating them to Community Drawers. Nothing fancy just cloth bags.

Please everyone stay cool in this extremely hot weather and stay safe.

Take Care,

Becky Brown, Chairperson Community Drawers,

Reminders

IM KIDS 3rd Meal

- This is an ongoing mission. We are helping to feed over **850** kids each day for their third meal. They are accepting the following items:
 - Peanut butter
 - Jelly or jam
 - Fruit bars
 - Applesauce cups
 - Fruit boxes
 - Snack packs
 - Juice boxes - must be 100 % juice
 - Dry cereal
 - Brown paper lunch bags
- **Please Help fill the two Front Pews of our Church. We will deliver it to where it needs to go.**



IM SAFE CAC

Ionia Montcalm Secure and Friendly Environment
Child Advocacy Center

July Birthdays

Rebecca Brown	01
Joel Kilgore	18
Andrew Badder	23
Glen Joy	27
Sue Manicu	29
Ron Rozeboom	30
David Fedewa	31

July Anniversaries

A.J. & Katie Mayer	06
Mitch & Sari Marcer	25



Prayer Requests

Brent Spencer - Airforce

Phil Kahl
Roberta Sterner
Ethel Clark & Family

Please send prayer requests to
616-527-1860 or Email to
Bluebirdm66@yahoo.com

July Liturgists

07	Eric Asher
14	Rebecca Brown
21	Deanna Hotchkin
28	Jan Powell

July 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4 Independence day Community meal at 6:00 p.m	5	6
7	8	9 Moms support group 7:00	10. Trustee @ 10:00 am	11 Community meal at 6:00 p.m.	12	:13
14 Noisy Offering	15	16	17 1:30 to 4:30 - Community Drawers	18 Community meal at 6:00 p.m.	19 !	20
21 Mission Sunday	22	23 Moms support group 7:00	24	25 Community meal at 6:00 p.m.	26	27
28	29 DEADLINE FOR NEWS LETTER ITEMS	30				

Finance Report, May 2024
Remaining Balances as of 05/31/2024
Special Funds (Designated Giving)

Memorial fund	1,879.16
Board of Trustees	17,770.24
Children's Ministry	8,099.48
Camp & School Scholarships	1,777.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	83.70
Community Drawers	3,364.33
Music on the Green	998.19
Holiday Concert	3,823.99
Monthly Mission	915.00
General Evangelism	5,541.46
General Outreach	3,708.14
Funeral/Wedding/Flowers	655.62
IM Kids 3rd Meal	200.00

General Fund (Church Budget)

Income	5,313.91
Expenses	9,330.21
Surplus (Deficit)	(4,016.30)
Ending Bank Balance	4,140.82

