

"A Symphony of Praise
and Service to God"



**105 E. Main
Street
Ionia, MI
48846**

**Service
9:30 am
www.ioniafirst.com**

**March
2017
Newsletter**



From the desk of Pastor Jon

As of March 1st we have entered into this year's season of Lent. Lent has the potential to be a life changing time of reflection and growth, but it can also be a time in which we simply check the boxes and move on. Each of us has that choice.

Let's be honest, it's easy to settle into routine and settle for a quick and tepid spiritual life. We like knowing what to expect. We enjoy having moments of contemplation that don't ask too much of us. We prefer to be risk averse if we can manage to live life that way.

Lent invites us out of the routine.

Traditionally a season of fasting, during Lent we have the chance to engage in what the Greeks called metanoia. Metanoia is usually translated as "repentance," but it's literal meaning is a "changing of the mind." Do we need to change our minds? Maybe.

In an ironic twist we need to look inward to see if we are too self-focused. In prayer, we ask to be shown what needs to be changed. Where are the places we have picked up habits of thought, word and deed that do not honor God? What are the things we need to put down? Then again, perhaps the change is not in giving something up so much as it is beginning something new. Maybe a new spiritual discipline is in order. Perhaps taking charge of a church outreach ministry. There could be one relationship that needs to be mended or begun. God uses the willing in all sorts of creative ways.

There will be a potluck dinner Wednesday evenings during Lent at Ionia First UMC. Lyons-Muir is invited to join. After dinner (which starts promptly at 6 p.m. – LM church can attest that I am not one to let warm food get cold), we're going to do something new and different for many: We'll be working on art.

When we were kids we were routinely given paper and pencil and told to draw something. Maybe our parents wanted us to be quiet, but kids love to be creative. We would color and draw to our hearts content – and it was good. However, at some point, most of us came to the conclusion that we weren't "good" at art and stopped. Over time, that part of us that used to take joy in creating something beautiful ceased to exist.

Jesus (Matthew 18) tells us we need to become like a little child. That can be scary, but what if that joy filled place within is just waiting to be found again? What if it's not about being good at something so much as it is about discovering what God is calling us to? We'll use art to reflect and hopefully to grow. Looking forward to seeing you there!

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UMW & Cassie Stewart News

Yesterday morning when I awoke, I discovered that I was completely engulfed in fog. What a weird feeling that gave me! I literally could not see the house across the street. It gave me a sensation of being all alone, shut-off from all, isolated, a bit perhaps confused, disoriented, perplexed. Have you ever personally felt "lost in a fog"? In a quandary? In a state of uncertainty, not knowing exactly what to do, how to do it, or even why to do it? From past experiences, however, we know that the sun will come out, the fog will dissipate and again the day will be beautiful. Our feelings will change, our attitudes become positive, and once more all will be well. And so, it is with life. We feel perplexed, but know that God will not inflict upon us anything that we cannot handle. Viewing the "lost in a fog," situation, it can even be applied to our church. We as a church (remember a church is not a building, the church is people) are at present lost in a fog, but we are confident that the sun will soon shine. We thank God for the ability and opportunity to learn, grow and refresh ourselves in new and different ways.

At present, our United Methodist Women's Board and the Cassie Stewart Circle have combined. Every woman in our congregation is considered a United Methodist Woman. All our women participate in some way in one or more of the various activities and mission projects that we pursue. The Cassie Stewart Circle for years has been just one of groups of women within our church with a specific set of goals. In the last two years, the circle decided they would rather be a "hands-on" mission group rather than meet with outside speakers monthly. That doesn't mean that this format can't change. The circle may revert to a "Monday afternoon tea and dessert with speaker" group or it may evolve into another format or join with another group.

This last month at a combined meeting, we completed the fleece lap robes which were started in January. They were delivered to Heartland Rehab and Care Center. Our next mission project, already in progress, is the collection of items for the Health Kits which will be packed and sent to UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). This project we hope will be completed prior to Easter. We thank all of you who have, or will have assisted us in making this worth-while, and very much needed contribution to UMCOR.

Peg Fell

You can find the list of items needed for the Health Kits on page 4 of this newsletter.

OPPORTUNITIES

UMW BOARD

The UMW Board has openings for several new members. Meetings are scheduled for the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30p.m. No particular talents are essential. Input of new ideas and incentives are needed for traditional and new events.

LENTEN POTLUCKS

March 1st is Ash Wednesday, and the first of our Lenten Potluck Suppers. We will meet in Fellowship Hall at 6:00 p.m. for a meal and short program. Please join us and bring a dish to pass and your own table service. This is always a good time, and a chance to get better acquainted.

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

Several positions are open on this board which meets the 2nd Monday of every other month at 7:00 p.m. For details as to qualifications, please make an appointment with Pastor Jon by calling the office (527-1860).

SUNDAY MORNING SMALL GROUP

Would anyone be interested in having an adult small group for Bible study on Sunday mornings after church service. If so, please contact the church office. 527-1860.

(RE)MEMBERSHIP CLASS

will take place on March 11 from 10:00 am-2:00 p.m. All those interested in becoming or renewing their membership, please contact the church office at 587-1860.

CASSIE STEWART CIRCLE

To volunteer to participate in Hands on Mission Projects, plan to join the Cassie Stewart Circle which meets at 1:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month. Attendance at each meeting is not a requirement. Just come and assist whenever convenient. We promise a great fellowship, a time to share and get acquainted in addition to participating in a mission project. Activities vary each month.

NURSERY

We are in need of ladies to help in the nursery on Sunday mornings at 9:30. The more volunteers we have, the less often you will be asked to help. Contact Marie in the church office (527-1860)

MALAWI MISSION

I have recently learned that the Malawi Mission for prescription bottles has been closed. They have received over a million bottles. Praise God for caring people. There are, however, other missions that need these bottles, so we will continue to collect them. I have a list that I will be checking into to see where the need is the greatest, and I will also contact Elisha and Crystal Stock to see if there is a need that they know of in their area of Africa.

MEN'S GROUP

We have several opportunities for the women of this church to meet with each other, I wondered if there might be some men interested in starting a men's group. Perhaps getting together for breakfast and maybe a Bible study on Saturday or Sunday morning. Any men interested can contact the church office (527-1860).

Health Kits

So that you may be able to take advantage of sales, the following is a list of items we will be collecting.

Each kit will contain:

1 hand towel, 15 x 25 inches to 17 x 27 inches. Kitchen, cleaning and microfiber towels are not acceptable.

1 washcloth

1 comb It needs to be sturdy and longer than 6 inches. Pocket combs and picks are not acceptable. Rattail combs and combs without handles are acceptable if there is 6 inches of teeth.

1 metal nail file or clippers. Emery boards are not acceptable.

1 Bath-size bar of soap, 3 oz. and large size only. No Ivory or Jergens because of moisture content. Do not remove from original packaging.

1 adult size toothbrush. Do not remove from original packaging.

6 adhesive bandages, 1/4 to 1 inch size. Common household Band-Aids.

1 plastic bag. One-gallon size, sealable bag.

One dollar for toothpaste.

All items must be new. Do not wash any items because they will be considered used. These emergency kits are carefully planned to make them useable in the greatest number of situations. Due to the fact that strict rules often govern product entry into international countries. It is important that kits contain only the requested items, nothing more.



Some of us attended the event on February 19th at Grand Rapids 1st UMC, and had a lovely time. The music was wonderful. More information from our group will be coming soon

Answers for the January Fun Page

Hosea 1. b, 2. a, 3. d, **Joel** 1. c, 2. b, 3. a,

Amos 1. d, 2. b, 3. c, **Micah** 1. c, 2. b, 3. b



During the Celebration of Creativity worship weekend in May, the Community Prayer Tree initiative was launched. This endeavor is growing and developing organically through the leadership of Amy Buckingham.

Purpose: Ionia First UMC working in our community to create a deeper experience and a beautiful way to connect with others via the practice of "Prayer".

The tradition of creating a prayer tree -- was noted in Sandra Ingerman's book "How to Thrive in Changing Times" -- comes out of Siberia.

When we can experience our gratefulness for life we transform our perspective about what is happening in our own lives, our church, our community, our state, our country, and around the world. When we feel grateful, we can experience the beauty instead of the pain. We want to acknowledge those who are suffering and feel compassion. At the same time it's important to experience the beauty and the gifts that life brings us. This comes from ancient teaching that has been passed down through many cultures and many generations.

Let us together hold a positive vision for our community. Let us embrace ourselves, our loved ones and all of life with love. Love heals!

The Community Prayer Tree has been introduced to the audiences during the "Music & Art on the Green" events in June. Your participation is welcomed and we trust that you will encourage friends and strangers in our community to visit this place. . .and take the opportunity to add their prayer to the tree.

Doris Simpson would like rides to church. Anyone willing to volunteer, let the church office know. 527-1860.

Maybelle Drake would love to hear from us.

201 Allred Rd.

Apt. 501

Byron, GA 31008

Phone: (478)654-6899

Email: maybelle.drake@yahoo.com

PLEASE PRAY IN THE NAME OF THE LORD FOR:

(E-mail prayer requests to sharron67@charter.net)

Prayers for those in the military:

Adam Cook-Green Beret, Afghanistan

Nick Murray-Aircraft Carrier, Bremerton WA

Andy Hoort-Nurse, Ret. Royal Oak, MI

Ross Marshall, Navy, Submarine, Groton, CT

Daniel Zander-Major U.S. Army Ft. Lewis-McChord

Duane Baliff

Austin Campbell - Air Force

Prayers for:

Carol Newkirk

Stuart Weisgerber

Phyllis Whitelock

Steve Lampman

Julie Englehart

Don Fell

Elisha & Crystal Stock

Robert Zander

Doris Simpson

Elizabeth Smith-

Ron Beach

Jimmy Griffith

Gladys Stout

Mark Workman

Mary Cusack

Barb Helmer

| | Attendance | Giving | Needed |
|-------------|------------|------------|---------|
| January 29 | 42 | \$2,607.43 | \$3,000 |
| February 5 | 63 | \$3,498.00 | \$3,000 |
| February 12 | 44 | \$1,440.00 | \$3,000 |
| February 19 | 52 | \$ 885.00 | \$3,000 |
| February 26 | 49 | | \$3,000 |

Missions Report

Lent. A busy time of year for all of us, and the Missions Committee is no exception. We are gearing up for the children's Easter Basket Hunt. No, not Easter Egg Hunt. This year will be a bit different. The children will go on a treasure hunt with clues to find their own Easter Basket. Each child will have their own set of clues which will lead them to their basket. We hope this will be as much fun as running all over to find eggs.

Remember the Lenten Potlucks which begin on March 1st at 6:00 p.m. Bring your own table service and a dish to pass.

"The command of Jesus is to make disciples, not church members"

Nathan Stearman

Alaska Conference SDA

BIRTHDAYS

March

4 Dick Christiansen
6 Mayeilleen Bartosh
7 Kendra Badder
8 Deanna Hotchkin
10 Marge Bowne
13 Billie Horwood
14 Nancy Haight
16 Charlie Frost
20 Steven Manciu
22 Gene Clark
29 Katie Felice



March Anniversaries

29 Al & Marge Irby

March

Greeters

March 5 Lucille Leslie
March 12 Ken & Ann Felice
March 19 Jackie Christiansen
March 26 Nancy Haight

Note: If you have agreed to serve as a greeter on a Sunday morning, but find that you cannot do so, please call Peg (527-2433) or the church office (527-1860).

March

Nursery

March 5 Noelle Podoll
March 12 Marie Church
March 19 Melissa Wagner
March 26 Marie Church

We can always use more people to help in the nursery. If you would like to volunteer, please call Marie Church (616-755-3207) or the church office (527-1860).

Fun Page

H O U S E A G J K L D E N A R I U S
E R S A Z L Q S M E O L B C T V N T
A M T N U S O W E D S E I D S L G E
V O L D N I W N S E P R D E N I V W
E W R S T L R L T E A B L P W E R A
N A L O R O C K Z S D E E W N F S R
K I N G D O M E D E R I H I W M E D
B H I J L F O M A R C E N G B P C R
O U A N G E L S S O A G N H E O I L
A I R R M W H L T T T O P E S L O A
I L H P V L R Q L R S W H A M N J V
V E L E V E N T H P A S T R A Y E W
H A D F I R S T D G L A B O R E R S
E G K N R U V T E X A D Y U D F A N
L R T Z W B I S O W R A N C A D Q U
V I N E Y A R D E L B M U R G L M T

The words in this puzzle are from four of Jesus' parables. Can you name them?

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. ANGELS | 11. HEAVEN | 21. SAND |
| 2. ASTRAY | 12. HIRED | 22. SEED |
| 3. DENARIUS | 13. HOUSE | 23. SHEEP |
| 4. ELEVENTH | 14. IDLE | 24. SOWED |
| 5. ENEMY | 15. KINGDOM | 25. STEWARD |
| 6. EVENING | 16. LABORERS | 26. VINEYARD |
| 7. FIRST | 17. LAST | 27. WAGES |
| 8. FOOLISH | 18. RAIN | 28. WEEDS |
| 9. GRUMBLED | 19. REJOICES | 29. WHEAT |
| 10. HARVEST | 20. ROCK | 30. WIND |

March 2017

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|-----|------------------------------|--|
| Mission: Church Camps | | | 1 Ash Wednesday 6:00 pm Lenten Potluck | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 Communion | 6 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen 7:00 pm Trustees | 7 9:30 am Friend- ship Committee 1:30 pm UMW | 8 6:00 pm Lenten Potluck | 9 | 10 | 11 10:00am - 2:00pm Membership Class |
| 12 Noisy Offering | 13 1:30 pm Cassie Stewart 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen 6:00 pm Finance 7:00 Ad Board | 14 | 15 6:00 pm Lenten Potluck | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 Mission Sunday | 20 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen | 21 | 22 6:00 pm Lenten Potluck | 23 | 24 Newsletter Deadline | 25 |
| 26 | 27 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen | 28 | 29 6:00 pm Lenten Potluck | 30 | 31 | |



105 E. Main Street
Ionia, MI 48846

Service 9:30am

Check it out!

www.ioniafirst.com

*Remember
Lenten Potlucks
Begin
Wed. March 1st
At 6:00 p.m.*

