

"A Symphony of Praise
and Service to God"



**105 E. Main
Street
Ionia, MI
48846**
**Service
9:30 am**
**www.ioniafirst.
com**

**Sept.
2016
Newsletter**



From the desk of Pastor Jon

Conference

To confer – grant or bestow, to share ideas.

Hebrews 10:25 (NLT)

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

The United Methodist Church overuses the word conference. We have: the church or charge conference, the district conference, the annual conference (which is the name of a meeting and the name of the year round level of the church), the jurisdictional conference and the general conference. I'm not sure how we ever have a meeting without calling it a conference.

These gatherings I've named each has a purpose. Some of it is business and I's are dotted and T's are crossed. Some of it involves theological debate about what we believe about God and how we should be living God's will out on earth as a church. Some of it involves worship (my personal favorite part). We gather to confer with one another in many ways, for different purposes, to share our hearts and minds with one another and with God.

Church is a delicate thing these days and the administration of such an animal can be tricky. As the hymn *And are We Yet Alive* says, "What troubles have we seen? What mighty conflicts past? Fightings without and fears within, since we assembled last." Conferencing can be messy. It can also be dull, the details aren't always that exciting. Yet for all that, gathering is important.

We confer to remind ourselves of who we are. We confer to evaluate our mission. We confer to share, albeit briefly, about the direction of our shared life together. It's good.

So, this September 25, at 3 p.m. at the Lyons-Muir Church, I want to invite you, the member of the Lyons-Muir Church and Ionia First United Methodist Church, to confer with me. We'll be joined by our District Superintendent Bill Haggard and enjoy fellowship. Let us not give up gathering together as some have done. But let us encourage one another, Christ will return.

Peace,

Pastor Jon

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United Methodist Women's Board and Cassie Stewart Circle Report

The lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer! Where did they go? It seems as though we were just waiting for a few warm days. And what did we get? Just remember those 90 degree temperatures when in a few months, we are back in the 10's and 20's.

Your Ionia First United Methodist Women have been anything but lazy this summer. Hazy? Well, I can't remember very many hazy days either. But crazy? There have been many of those.

In June, We supported the **Music and Art on the Green concerts**. Members worked on various committees promoting the three evenings of entertainment by enticing performers to participate, contacting the schools for art, working on publicity, welcoming attendees, being ambassadors, and then selling hot dogs. It was a fun activity, but also one that required "expenditure of effort.

Preparing for the **UMCOR School Bag** project has really been an interesting time. First we requested donations of heavy material and you came through with more than enough. The Cassie Stewart Circle spent two meetings cutting out the bags and handles. Then there was the sewing. Some of the material was so heavy that several needles were broken. After numerous hours of work, we created 55 school bags.

Then there was the request for **the school supplies** and again we were delighted with the number of items donated. Pencils, crayons, erasers, rulers, scissors and paper!!! There are going to be many little boys and girls benefitting from your generosity.

Now the school supplies and school bags will be taken to the United Methodist Women's Meeting which is scheduled for September 17th in Alma. Our donations will be combined with those from other churches in our district and eventually UMCOR will receive them and, in turn, needy children perhaps in a foreign country or in our country will be thrilled to have school supplies to enhance their education. And yes, the bags and contents were blessed on August 28th.

Now, at the same time we were working on this project, we were also preparing for and organizing the **Trash and Treasure Sale**, the proceeds of which benefit several mission projects including camperships, gifts for those less fortunate than us, support of our Sunday School program, remembering shut-ins, and other special requests. Oh, Yes! It was a hot time under the tent! Items that were not sold were donated to the Service Center, Enrich and Goodwill. Did any of you witness Miller pushing a conference table on a dolly down Main Street to Enrich? Did anyone get a picture of that spectacular endeavor?

Interspersed with all these mission projects, we prepared to honor our own. On September 17th in Alma at our **West Central District Annual Meeting**, United Methodist Women from all areas of district will be honored and awarded for various services rendered in their individual churches. The names of several members of our church have been submitted. Of course, what makes it exciting is the fact that these nominees are kept a secret until revealed at the various churches on Women's Sunday. On September 18th here at First you will have the opportunity of congratulating our awardees. Also, at that same service, we will be delighted to welcome Innocent, an African-born new American citizen and minister, who will share his trauma-filled life story and his new goals as he re-locates with his family to our country. So, mark your calendars...Sept. 18th, **Ionia First United Methodist Women's Sunday**.

That's our report from June, July and August. We are now ready for September! Plans are now being made for the fall and even into December. Cassie Stewart Circle voted to continue meeting and focusing on mission projects rather than have speakers. The year's schedule will be announced soon.

The UMW board is looking forward to organizing and sponsoring the **annual bazaar**. The tentative date is November 12th. Please be aware that the bazaar will not be sponsored by the Church Women United and the Service Center. It will no longer be just for church organizations to participate but we will welcome other organization's participation as well. So if you are a member of another group that might want to join us for this event, please have them contact Peg.

Then, of course, in October we will begin preparations for our Christmas Basket project.

continued from page 2

There are many opportunities just waiting for some interested and energetic persons to say "Yes, I'd love to." to the "Can you help? Would you like to help?" request. I have said it before and others have also, when you volunteer it is a very, very rewarding experience. You join with "old" friends, you make "new" friends, you get to know each other better, you get to practice your skills and learn new skills, you may work hard and get tired, but it is a good tiredness! You don't have to ask, or even come to every meeting, but just come! We will greet you with open hearts and arms. The **UMW board** meets the first Tuesday of every month at 1:30 p.m. and the **Cassie Stewart Circle** meets the second Monday of each month at 1:30 p.m. Meetings are usually close to an hour but sometimes we get engrossed in some activity and spend more time. If you can't stay the whole time, we'll understand.....but "Y'all Come."

Coffee Fellowship at Ionia First UMC

September, like the school year, typically kicks off the year for the Church as well. During the summer season there has been an initiative to seek ways of welcoming new comers to our church family. As we are truly a multi-generational church, we face the challenges of a rapidly changing culture. In the world of "hospitality", each generation has it's comfort zone. Modern Church structures are designed around the open concept of providing welcoming and hospitality as one enters the building.

Historically, coffee fellowship was held in what was referred to as the "Memorial Room", now the location of the café. The good news is that when attendance for coffee fellowship out grew that room, the function was moved to Fellowship Hall. Like many churches in our community and country, we have experienced a period of decline. The need to have our coffee fellowship function adjacent to our Sanctuary and main entry area, has been recognized.

As a new sermon series begins this fall, we are making plans to relocated our coffee fellowship function to the cafe room. Modification to the space and service area are being made to address the expressed comforts of those who participate in the coffee fellowship activity. We expect to maintain, the traditions such as the "Birthday Cake" Sunday (the last Sunday of every month), etc.

Beginning on **Sunday - September 25**, the congregation will be invited and encouraged to participate in coffee fellowship in a new location, following the 9:30am Worship service.

"Church Vision – To be a church that embraces the differences of generations and LOVES the other by demonstrating to each generation that they are: need, appreciated, listened to, part of the team, enjoyed and worthy of putting our own preferences aside."





As the school year kicks off this year . . . the Kids Hope mentoring initiative at Ionia First UMC, enters the 5th Year of providing mentors for children at risk a Boyce Elementary School. This program and ministry is a wonderful example of how within our church family one individual was inspired to see this program implemented in the Ionia Public Schools. Supported and encouraged by the leadership of our church, another church member took on the challenge in coordinating the implementation, training a team of mentors, and working with the school's principle and teachers to achieve a successful initiative.

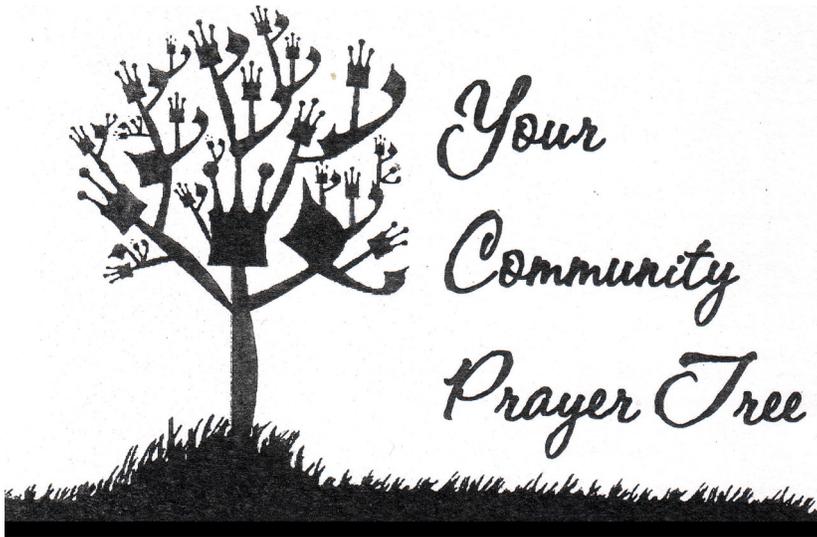
For those who have served as mentors, have enjoyed rewards beyond what we could have imagined. Our call to the congregation at the close of the school year in June -- was heard. We have the volunteers we had prayed for, to expand the program and respond to the needs shared by the teachers.

One of the special blessings I have had in serving as a mentor is a prayer partner – is someone who faithfully prays for me and my student. So, as we expand the mentor team, we would like to be able to provide a prayer partner for each of the new mentors. **Please contact Janet Winter (989-855-2331) - If you are willing to serve as a prayer partner for one of the Kids Hope Mentors.**

"Thank You, Kim Paton, Jodi Hagen & Roxie Stiles for the vision, organizational leadership, and prayer support you provide this Kids Hope Mentor" – Marilyn Nash



The Creative in Christ team took a summer break, following the implementation of the "Celebration of Creativity" event and worship opportunities held in May. We would like to resume our monthly gatherings, beginning Monday, October 3rd. We will plan to meet at 1:00pm in the SonRise Café.



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

Thank you! Thank you!

A big thank you for the memorial money in memory and honor to Ross Horwood for the Soup Kitchen. It is greatly appreciated and will be used to feed the less fortunate. The Soup Kitchen Staff

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 Bookie	Carol Newkirk
Rick Borup	Arlene Rowland
Kay Gardner	Marion Wray
Stuart Weisgerber	Phyllis Whitelock
Colleen Thompson	Lucy Dickenson
Ron Beach	Jimmy Griffith
Steve Lampman	Jack Unger
Julie Englehart	James Ruehs
Ken Key	Waneta Bell
Lauri Zimmerman	Jean Clark
Don Wickerham	Don Fell
Amanda & Darren Stewart	
Jane Ransom	

Attendance	Giving	Needed
July 3	\$11,005.00	\$3,000
July 10	\$ 2,176. 00	\$3,000
July 17	\$ 1,517.10	\$3,000
July 24	\$ 621.00	\$3,000
July 31	\$ 2,147.00	\$3,000
<hr/>		
August 7		\$3,000
August 14		\$3,000
August 21		\$3,000
August 28		\$3,000

Missions Report

Thank you congregation, for supporting the challenge to provide two P.E.T.s in recognition of our church. Because of an amazing memorial donation, we will be able to secure SEVEN total P.E.T.s!!! In early October there will be a chance to go to Holland to witness the building of P.E.T.s. Listen to announcements at the church services for time and place to meet to car pool. The workshop is open Tuesday-Thursday in the afternoons.

Also be aware that the CROP Walk is also coming October 2nd. Look for Al McDonald to make your pledge, or get an envelope from him and collect pledges yourself.

GOD IS GOOD!

BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER

2 Roxanne Stiles
2 David Stiles
5 Millie Bartholomew
12 Virginia Carter
14 Janet Winter
19 Allen MacDonald
22 Peg Fell
24 Zachariah Paton
26 Jerry Gregory
28 Mattelyn Castle
30 Michaela Castle



Anniversaries *September*

22 Don and Peg Fell

September

Greeters

Sept. 4 Jackie Christiansen
Sept. 11 Judy and Ron Roseboom
Sept. 18 June Faulkner
Sept. 25 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).

September

Nursery

Sept. 4
Sept. 11
Sept. 18
Sept. 25 Darcie Van Dop

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).



A 5-week Women's Bible Study will kick off on Thursday evening, September 8th. The Breathe Bible Study involves a small group gathering for discussion and reflection of the five sessions of teaching by Priscilla Shirer. *(For those who participated in the War Room women's bible study in the spring, Priscilla was the lead actress in the film.)*

One of the greatest challenges among women in our culture is taking time to stop and cease from all the activities and busyness and just breathe. We are in bondage to busyness. We constantly strive to complete the limitless to-do lists that hinder us from experiencing all that God has for us. We miss the serenity, and repose, we limit our Christlikeness and miss out on some of God's greatest gifts. It is time for us to breathe and build margin into our lives for God. In the Old Testament, God instituted principles and laws that would transform the Israelites' mindset. He didn't just want them legally free; He wanted them to be able to walk in the freedom and enjoy it. So God gave them many gifts, including boundaries in which to enjoy those gifts. Sabbath was intended as a gift, and it is still a gift to us today. If you are weary, worn out, and exhausted the concept of Sabbath will change your life. The weekly topics are 1) The freedom of Sabbath, 2) Stops Along the Sabbath Journey, 3) Double Portion Friday, 4) Coming into Focus, 5) Sabbath Margin.

If interested in participating, please contact Marilyn Nash (527-7456) ASAP, for further details (where, when, etc.) Join me in the "Journey".



Change the World

One Community Garden at a Time

\$20 will provide a year supply of micronutrient packets
\$60 will provide jerry cans for a small village
\$100 will provide training for 25 farmers
\$500 will provide seeds and gardening supplies for a community garden

Music Moment: Thoughts on **Worship** through music

Dear Fellow Congregation members,

If there is one thing that does seem to unite us, we all love "our" music. We enjoy hearing (and singing) songs we know and love. Those songs that take us so quickly back to our childhood or those moments when we felt close to God and felt loved and valued. Music really does have that God given extra something for so many of us that can put us quickly in the presence of the One True Living God. Being in God's presence gives us assurance that He is real. We love that feeling! We know that when we **WORSHIP** God with song, He is in that space with us and we want that feeling for each Sunday morning. It is often why we keep going to church.

Some of us love music that makes us move, snap, tap and possibly even clap or raise our hands. Some of us love music that makes us contemplate, be still, and FEEL emotions of awe and wonder that we don't often feel. Some of us love music that moves us into reverence. Some of us love music that inspires us to change. Music is near and dear to our hearts and is important to us. It is precisely because music is so important to us that it becomes personal, and therefore becomes "our" kind: different from "my neighbor's" kind. We love music that helps us transcend our daily life and circumstances and reminds us that God is significantly bigger than we are and is actually in control. However, all that being said, it is still "our" kind of music that can take us most quickly into **WORSHIP**.

Each Sunday we come to church wanting to have that experience of **WORSHIP**, and we hope (sometimes we have only a small candle of hope here at FUMC) that the music that day will have "our" kind of music and we can have that beloved feeling of being close to God, being loved and feeling valued by Him. But here is the Million Dollar Question: What happens when "your" kind of music is exactly the opposite of "your neighbor's" kind of music? How does God want us to deal with that question? He must have a solution. The solution simply cannot be that we abandon Unity and go our separate ways to other churches that have "our" music. I refuse to believe that. But I assure you I do not have the answer.

I beseech you to begin to pray with me about this.

Our congregation spans from 3 year olds to people in their 90s. What an honor! What a beautiful thing! This is something to celebrate. This Unity has kept 90 years worth of a collective congregation and THAT is worth praying about. Please join me in intentional prayer as our congregation wrestles with this very real and important question. It may seem weird, but I honestly believe this struggle is a JOY that our congregation has the honor of wrestling with. If we didn't have 90 years of age difference, we wouldn't have this struggle! But this struggle really is great to have and WE get to have front row seats to see what the One True Living God we serve will do in answer to our prayers. Trust me when I say I am standing on my tippy toes eagerly awaiting God's movement in this area of **WORSHIP** with our music.

Lovingly,

Kimberly Paton

September 2016

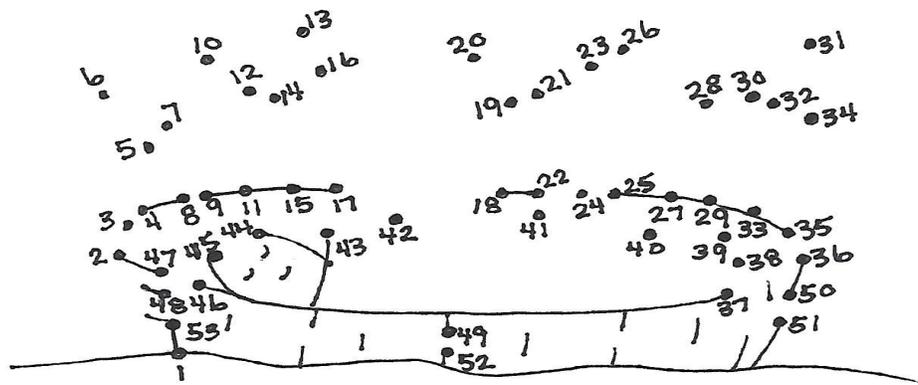
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Mission RAVE				1	2	3
4	5 6:00pm Soup Kitchen	6 9:30am Friendship Committee 1:30 pm UMW 7:00 pm Trustees	7 7:00 pm Coffee Fellowship Meeting	8 7:00pm Chrysalis Meeting	9	10
11	12 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen 1:00 pm Investment Committee 1:30 Cassie Stewart 7:00pm Ad Board	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 6:00pm Soup Kitchen	20	21	22	23	24
25 3:00pm Charge Conference @ Lyons/Muir	26 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen	27	28	29	30	

Fun Page

R L A B O S H E R O M N L D I T
 S P M L B S O M A R L T A O N R
 O M A B E R T L E S N E T A U J
 L U S I T L O N B N A D A B L E
 M J O S H U A E A S O B L E D T
 Z T G E O E G Z R U A T I S E H
 I M E H D L H A E L G R I H U R
 P J R L B I R S T B A E A C U O
 P G S M O S N L S A H U L A B R
 O S H I P H R A H I P E H M L S
 R L O B S E P G T L M L N A O R
 A S M L A B M H P O G I H S L T
 H E N O R A A L R H S E G I N A
 L S E T P M G S N O R Z E H R O
 G O S M A R T L B E D E L A S T
 R M I R I A M A I S T R O G D P

This puzzle has 20 names of people in the book of Exodus. Use your Bible (RSV) and find them.

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____
9. _____ 10. _____
11. _____ 12. _____
13. _____ 14. _____
15. _____ 16. _____
17. _____ 18. _____
19. _____ 20. _____





105 E. Main Street
Ionia, MI 48846

Service 9:30am

Check it out!

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