

"A Symphony of Praise
and Service to God"



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

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

**September
2017
Newsletter**



From the desk of Pastor Jonathan

"Presence – Love – Promise"

*Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians
in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: grace to you and peace.*

We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father

your work of faith

and labor of love

and steadfastness of hope

in our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thess. 1:1-3

To the Friends of Jesus,

After a period of prayer and holy conversation, we have discerned that September is the right time to think carefully about the financial life of our church and the ways we each understand our participation in it. When I was growing up, we had a pastor who tried to guilt the congregation into tithing with biblical one-liners and a lot of heavy breathing and raised voices. We were Baptist, so I guess it worked. But I always hated it and thought our pastor was going insane and needed to take not a half but a whole chill pill (I was a teenager, to be fair). After many years of sitting through pledge drives, fundraising initiatives, and budget campaigns, I've concluded that all that marketing stuff we get from the business world is a mistake. There's always a veiled but implied focus on some kind of exchange, as if giving our money somehow made us "good" "Christian" people; as if God needed the church to bring about the Kingdom of Christ's justice and mercy. But the Cross is not an exchange, and the *only* reason to participate financially in the economy of a local church remains who God is for us in and through his Son. Let me put it simply: giving our time, talents, and material wealth to the church can only be a response to God's presence, love, and promise.

Over the coming four weeks, we will look at what this means through a sermon series based on Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. The opening of his letter is quoted above and gives a theology for giving that transcends anxiety about the church and focuses, instead, on the narrative of what God is doing. We will think about giving as an act of trust in the God who is always present. We will explore the idea of giving as an act of love for the God whose Cross and Resurrection express an inestimable love for us. We will experience the reality of giving as an act of hope in the God who promises that death will be no more... that *all* the wounds of creation will be healed. Finally, in a celebration of God's abundance we will dedicated our gifts to the glory of God and the coming of his kingdom.

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Who needs a consultant when you have Jesus? Who needs a special program when you have the Good News concerning God's Son? For my part, I know in my heart that at some point the mystery of God's salvation will be made clear, and I will see Christ coming in clouds of glory surrounded by the holy angels. For my part, I know my sins and sorrow have been swallowed up in the tide of eternal grace that poured forth from the Cross. For my part, I'm in love with Jesus. So I say, let's be about the Lord's business: let's sing when the Spirit says sing, pray when the Spirit says pray, give when the Spirit says give, speak when the Spirit says speak, and love when the Spirit says love. Thanks be to God, who has given us the victory!

In the Name of the Great I AM,
so be it.

Missions News

Another year is upon us for the C.R.O.P. Walk which is the Mission giving for September. Our giving will not only help out the hunger situation in the world, but also, our local Commission on Aging. The Mission Committee will distribute Endowment Funds in the following way:

\$500.00 will go toward the Christmas Baskets, and the remainder will go to UMCOR, earmarked for fire, tornado and flood victims in the USA.

Jan Powell

Trustees

The Trustees have been busy working on projects at the parsonage. There are new ramps (made mostly from the ramp Pastor Larry and Bev made for Stuart Church at his former home) at both the front and back doors. Jim Wagner and his friend from work, Randy spent all of one very warm day putting those up. Thank you to Jan Powell for providing lunch for them. A big thank you to them from Stuart and Marie. Our custodian Brian Lyons cleaned all of the gutters. Thank you to him. He saved the church some money by volunteering to do that job. Windy Badder worked tirelessly for three days cleaning up the water in the basement family room that came in from the window wells after the big rains we had a while ago. Marie was very glad to have her help. Thank you Windy.

Windy has also been in charge of finding someone to do repairs in the bathroom. Lonnie from Ionia Handyman has been hired to do this job, and possibly more work that needs to be done on the house in the future.

Looking to the winter months, we will be contracting with the county to plow our parking lot during the week, and Randy Main who mows the lawn, and plowed our sidewalks last winter, has expressed interest in continuing with that work.

recognitions and for the late summer trash and treasure sale. The pay is to feel the sense the satisfaction experienced when y
reached out and improved someone else's life, knowing that you perhaps have been that "one little candle." The bonus is that
have bonded more closely with members of you own church family and enjoyed a priceless fellowship, that you have received a
support to those with which you have worked.

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.

BRUNCH POTLUCKS

On April 23rd we started what we hope will be a new tradition. There will be a potluck brunch at 10:30 following our church service. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. This will be a once a month meal, and beginning in May, it will take place on the 3rd Sunday.

THE IONIA COUNTY LITERACY COUNCIL

is looking for volunteer tutors to help adults improve their reading, math or English speaking skills. Are you looking for a meaningful volunteer project? if this sounds like you, please visit our website: www.ioniacountyliteracycouncil.org and call us at 616-389-8529 or email: ionialiteracy@gmail.com We are also reaching out to those who need our services!

St. Joseph, MO Mission

I have found a mission for prescription bottles in St. Joseph, MO. There is a large public clinic that is accepting used prescription bottles. Stripping the labels before washing the bottles makes the labels come off much easier without leaving the bottles sticky.

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)

CHURCH GARDENS

If anyone would like to bring flowers and plant them around the church AND take care of them, you are welcome to do so. We will not be ordering geraniums this year.

DO YOU LIKE GARDENING?

Judy Rozeboom has been taking care of our church gardens and picking up around the property for a long time. She would like to have someone who could help with these projects. If you would be interested, please call the church office at 527-1860.

Sunday School starts September 10th!!

We will be using the same program we used last year called "Faith Weavers". We have chosen this curriculum because it provides a way for the parents, and even the congregation with a way to communicate with the children about what they are learning so that this is an ongoing lesson through the entire week. There is an on line link for anyone in the congregation to go to and see what the children are learning to help you talk with them about these lessons.

The United Methodist Church is beginning a program of safety and accountability that everyone working with children and youth will be expected to abide by. It involves having two adults at all times when working with our young people. This means we will need more adults involved with our Sunday School program (even when we only have one or two children). Sunday School will be during the church service, so to give teachers an opportunity to be in the worship service, we will need more people to be involved. Please search your hearts and decide if you can help with this important time in the lives of our children.

If you are willing to be a part of teaching our children about the love of God, please contact Jana Fedon or Amber Campbell.



The Library is hosting an event at our church on September 19th at 7:00 p.m. called Actors del Arte'. A Western Michigan troupe that provides serious actors with opportunities to perform throughout the region. The Library has invited the ensemble back to Ionia for you to enjoy their inspiring interpretation of "The Night of the Hunter". This thrilling book by Davis Grubb was based on actual events in Depression-era Appalachia and was made into an award winning movie starring Robert Mitchum and Shelley Winters.

These Library Events are always very interesting and they are free.

The Lakewood Area Choral Society will be putting on a concert At Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church at 4:00 p.m. Sunday October 1st. There will be a free will offering.

Fall

By Mark Workman

Behind the clouds are gray days of muted color and sound

The crunch of leaves underfoot seem distant

Half naked trees reach for the sun only to catch the wind which strips them bare of the last of their dignity

Children laugh and play

While their father catches flies on a rod

And feeds the fish

Somewhere someone is grilling hot dogs and hamburgers, while a child plays on a swing and a dog salivates in anticipation

Chirping birds fight over a worm that turns into a string that no one really wants, and yet they fight on

Squirrels bury nuts that sometimes become trees, renewing the forest from within, a forest filled with color and the sounds of nature

and man

A red bouncy ball makes it's escape

Floating down the river just out of reach

While the children run and watch forlornly from the shore

Kayakers give chase, playing their own little game

A kite dangles precariously over the river, hoping for a breeze

**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

Bryant Adams

Hunter Wagner

Joy Hood

Mark Workman

Elisha & Crystal Stock

Barb Helmer

James Zimmerman

Carol Adkinson

Jerry Lawrence

Nancy & David Carle

Mary Vernon

Elizabeth Smith-

Steve Lampman-

Julie Englehart

Don Fell

Gary Hanson

Robert Zander

Katherine Asher

Nicole Rhodes

Amanda Bishop

David May

Scott Burkman

UMW Board & Cassie Stewart News



"Start another day just right, with new hope," And we remember Jerimiah's prayer: **"Lord, you made The earth and the sky by your great power and might, nothing is too difficult for you."**

Each year as September approaches, I think that this is the beginning of a new year. This is the time that we should be celebrating "New Year's." This is the time that most organizations begin again to look forward and to plan for the coming months, September to June or July. Yes, we are beginning a new year.

As I gaze into my crystal ball, I see that there are going to be many changes, hopefully for the best. I see that we are going to face many challenges and have many new opportunities to serve and share God's love.

The UMW Board, the Cassie Stewart Circle members, and others met and began to reorganize and prepare for the coming year. We were elated to welcome Becky Brown back, after an extended absence, to the UMW Board. She has graciously accepted the position of secretary, so you may be seeing a few notes from her. We reviewed and evaluated activities and projects of the last year and proceeded to plan.

1. We will continue to meet the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in the Legacy Room.
2. In September, Cassie Stewart Circle members will meet with us. Other interested persons are invited to join us.
3. Because we are experiencing a limited budget, we voted to decrease our annual pledge to the district from \$1,000.00 to \$500.00.
4. We planned for Women's Sunday. (The date scheduled, after Peg conferred with Pastor Jonathan, is October 17th.) Becky volunteered to be the presenter of the awards. The treasurer has submitted district fees. We thank all of those who assisted in selecting our Dove Award recipient. Great choice!
5. We are again planning to host the All Church Bazaar November 15. Former church participants will be invited. Upon approval of the board, other groups may join us. Application forms will be available in the office. Further details will be announced later. If we do not have at least 8 booths by October 1, the event will be cancelled.
6. It was voted to schedule the Festival of Tables every other year. There will be no Festival of Tables this year. Plan to participate in 2018.
7. We are already working on the Christmas Tree Basket Mission. The Gift Tree will be up the Saturday following Thanksgiving. The culmination of the project will be the week of December 18th through the 23rd. Delivery of the baskets will be Saturday morning of the 23rd.
8. Our next UMW & Cassie Stewart Meeting will be Tuesday, September 5th at 1:30 p.m. in the Legacy Room.

"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." Proverbs 19:21

	Attendance	Giving	Needed
Aug. 6	69	\$930.00	\$3,000
Aug. 13	43	\$983.00	\$3,000
Aug. 20	43	\$852.00	\$3,000
Aug. 27			\$3,000

Response to Hurricane Harvey
A message from Bishop David Alan Bard
Michigan Area of the United Methodist Church

Greetings in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
And the peace and power of the Holy Spirit.

Like many of you, I have been watching the news of the devastating impact of Hurricane Harvey on the Texas coast. Our hearts go out to every person whose home, livelihood, and life have been affected by this powerful storm. I have been praying for the safety and well-being of all people in the affected areas, including friends I've made through the years in The Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, The Louisiana Conference of The United Methodist Church, The Rio Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church and The Central Texas Conference. I also pray for those offering assistance like the first responders and UMCOR - The United Methodist Committee O Relief. I know you join me in prayer, and I also know that Michigan United Methodists want to offer help. Here are a few ways you can do so:

- Assemble relief kits (the link for this is on our facebook page)
 Donate only those items requested by UMCOR
- Give to UMCOR's relief and recovery efforts with gifts to U.S. Disaster Response Advance #901670.

Please prepare, but wait for an invitation to volunteer from UMCOR in the regions affected. We need to let first responders complete their mission before we arrive. Please follow our web page, news.michiganumc.org, for the latest information on our efforts to help those affected by Hurricane Harvey. Thank you for your prayers and concern.

Grace and Peace,

David Alan Bard

Bishop, Michigan Episcopal Area
The United Methodist Church

BIRTHDAYS

September

- 5 Millie Bartholomew
12 Virginia Carter
14 Janet Winter
19 Allen MacDonald
22 Peg Fell
26 Jerry Gregory
30 Michaela Castle



September Anniversaries

22 Don and Peg Fell

So Happy You're Here!

Welcome back to those of you who have returned to our church family, and welcome to those who have recently come to us. We are so glad to have all of you as a part of this church.

September

Greeters

- Sept. 3 Avis White
Sept. 10 Mark Workman
Sept. 17 Jack & Sue Manciu
Sept. 24 June Faulkner

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. 3
Sept. 10
Sept. 17
Sept. 24

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).

September 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Mission: C.R.O.P. Walk & UMCOR-US disaster relief					1	2
3 Communion	4 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen	5 9:30 am Friendship Committee 1:30 pm UMW/ Cassie Stewart	6	7	8	9
10 Noisy Offering First day of Sunday School	11 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen 6:00 pm Finance Committee 7:00 pm Trustees	12	13	14	15	16
17 Mission Sunday 10:30 am Potluck Brunch	18 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen 7:00 Ad Board	19 7:00 Library Event: Actors del Arte' in the SunRise Café	20	21	22	23
24	25 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen 6:00 pm Lay Leadership Com. 7:00 pm SPRC Newsletter Deadline	26	27	28	29	30



**105 E. Main Street
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Service 9:30am

Check it out!

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SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS

SEPTEMBER 10TH

