

*"A Symphony of Praise  
and Service to God"*



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

**Traditional  
Service 9:30am  
Contemporary  
Service 11am  
www.ioniafirst.  
com**

**January  
February  
2015  
Newsletter**

“Blessed are the  
peacemakers, for  
they will be called  
the children of  
God.” Matthew 5:9



## From the desk of Pastor Jon

The new year is underway and at Ionia First UMC, we're reminded of our mission: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of Ionia. As we remember this, let's take a moment to take it to heart.

Making disciples of Jesus Christ first means being a disciple of Jesus Christ. In other words, we are the first disciple we should concentrate on making. None of us can give away that which we do not first possess. Therefore, I must ask you in this new season to redouble your devotion to prayer, scripture and loving others. No one will care about what we know until they know that we care.

The danger in this moment is that many people get stuck in that first step. Whole churches have gotten stalled in their desire to make sure that they are a good enough Christian before they encourage someone else in their a walk of faith. Yet, at some point, often a point sooner than we might expect, we need to stop looking inward and recognize the opportunities that God is giving us. Please prayerfully consider how God is calling you to walk with someone else in your faith journey.

Another danger about faith sharing is that some people get caught up in the mouth vs. hands debate. If you've never heard of this it goes something like: I like to live out my faith and don't need to say anything about it or I will talk to people about what I believe and leave serving to others. It's natural to want to swerve toward either acting or speaking for many people, but we all are called to be ready to do both when the chance presents itself.

Lastly, the second half of our mission statement is about transforming Ionia. If our lives of faith are not making change, then we need to re-evaluate our how we are living that life out. This year I have opportunities to be part of a grief group (just started!), a parenting group (look for it this summer) and maybe a financial group (this fall? We'll see). My hope is that lives can be changed. But, I can't do it alone.

How can our walk of faith impact our community? What is it that our community needs? What can faith say to people who live without faith? What comfort can we bring? What wisdom can we offer?

Please prayerfully consider these questions about how we can reach out and lets start a conversation.

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*A publication of*  
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Recently a church friend sent me a “Thought for the Day” in which there were many humorous suggestions as to possible “thoughts for the day” but then became serious and ended with this: “Always believe that something wonderful is going to happen. Even with all the ups and downs, never take a day for granted. Smile, cherish the little things, and remember to hug the ones you really love.” I think that perhaps this would be a good “New Year’s Resolution.” Usually, many resolutions are not realistic and will not nor cannot be kept. But this thought, is very feasible. It is not just a “Thought for the Day” but a “Thought for Everyday!” It could easily be kept. Just begin your resolution with these words,” Please, dear Lord, help us to.....”

As we open up our new calendars and begin to note the events and responsibilities already projected, birthdays and traditional celebrations, remember to reserve time for meditation and devotions and time for yourself. Sometimes we get so busy serving others that we forget about “us.”

Our bird’s eye view of January and February seems a little “slowed-down.” Our UMW Women are hosting the Church Women United meeting on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. This is a time when we connect with the women of other area churches and particularly with those who serve the Service Center. It is scheduled as a noon potluck. If you have a desire to also serve with this group, please feel welcome to attend this meeting.

February will once more offer us an opportunity to fellowship with the women of the other Methodist churches in our Heartland’s District. Sponsored by the district, a Valentine’s Celebration is scheduled to be hosted by the women of the St. John’s First United Methodist Church, Saturday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. The program will be presented by Marie Papciak as she portrays two Women in History, Mary Todd Lincoln and Juliette Gordon Lowe, founder of the Girl Scouts. More details will be posted when received.

And then comes Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>. Ash Wednesday! The first day of Lent! And the first of our Lenten potlucks. Plans have not been set in stone as yet but we do know that six o’clock is the time we will meet in Fellowship Hall each Wednesday during Lent. Just bring a dish to pass and your own service. Pastor Jon is going to introduce us to a new inspirational time of reflection which we may follow throughout our 2015 Lenten journey. You surely will want to participate. We plan to be adjourned by seven o’clock so that those who have other events scheduled for that time may not have a conflict. So, mark your calendars now reserving each Wednesday night during Lent for our potlucks, fellowship ad sharing.

In our next newsletter we will have all the details on our Lenten Breakfast scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup> and other Holy Week events.

#### CASSIE STEWART CIRCLE NEWS:

Good News! We are growing in numbers! And we are continuing to devoting our time together not only to mission projects but to short devotionals and fellowship. In November, the focus was on assisting with preparations for the Christmas Basket mission. All those little color-coded Chrismon-shapes used to request gifts were cut. Little party hats with a New Year’s wish were assembled as January tray favors for the hospital in December.

Our January project will focus on our Legacy Room. We will assist Marilyn Nash by exploring, organizing, and sorting some of our church memorabilia. We may find some real treasures when we meet Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm. Anyone wishing to join our little “work force” will be more than welcome.

Plans for February are more international and we will be working on a project to benefit SMILE.



TO SAVE POSTAGE  
EXPENSES, 2015  
GIVING ENVELOPES  
AND 2014 STATE-  
MENTS WILL BE  
AVAILABLE IN THE  
SANCTUARY.

## Thank You!

**I wish to thank the Cassie Stewart Circle for the bright and beautiful Christmas plant. It has certainly helped to bring a glow of Christ's love to our home during this Advent and Christmas season. Thank you very much.**

**Jack Bartholomew**

- **February 18: Ash Wednesday** service and potluck, 6:00 p.m.
- Wednesday potlucks throughout Lent, 6:00 p.m.

These potlucks will include the Holden Evening Prayer. Don't know what that is? Join us a find out!



**Suzanne Grieves  
Katie Lincoln  
Ken Keyt  
James Jarosch  
Mark Workman  
Tracey Lhamon  
Clyde Stout  
Colleen Thompson  
Lucy Dickinson  
Randy McCoy  
Gary Brownell  
Don Fell**

**Darlene Prestbo  
Trevor  
Julie Englehart  
Carol Hoort  
Carol Bookie  
James Ruehs  
Carol Newkirk  
Arlene Rowland  
Dominic Essich  
Kay Gardner**

**PLEASE PRAY IN THE NAME OF THE  
LORD FOR:**

(E-mail prayer requests to  
[sharron67@charter.net](mailto:sharron67@charter.net))

**Prayers for those in the military:**

**Adam Cook-Green Beret, Afghanistan  
Nick Murray-Helicopter pilot, Key West  
Andy Hoort-Nurse, Walter Reed  
Daniel Zander-Major U.S. Army Ft. Lewis-  
McChord  
Duane Baliff**

## BIRTHDAYS

### January

2 Marge Irby  
 8 Miller Hotchkin  
 10 Michelle Castle  
 14 Jack Manciu  
 16 Frances Carr  
 24 Forest Schumacher  
 27 Al Irby  
 27 Katie Lincoln

### February

1 Andy Badder  
 7 Hunter Roundtree  
 8 Jan Powell  
 10 Marie Church  
 13 Joan MacDonald  
 15 John Ransom  
 16 Lois Johnson  
 16 Lucille Leslie  
 17 Jan Fate  
 18 Jerry Winter  
 21 Roberta Sterner  
 24 Sharon Hartman  
 27 Larry Ransom



## *ANNIVERSARIES*

January

4 Al & Joan MacDonald  
 28 Bill and Frances Carr

## January/February Volunteer Schedules at Ionia First

### January

#### Ushers (entire month)

Larry Ransom, Ron Rozeboom

#### Greeters

4 Phil Kahl  
 11 Al and Marge Irby  
 18 Ron and Judy Rozeboom  
 25 Jerry and Janet Winter

#### Communion Stewards

4 Marge Irby

#### Nursery

4	1st	<b>VOLUNTEERS NEEDED</b>
	2nd	
11	1st	
	2nd	
18	1st	
	2nd	
25	1st	
	2nd	

#### Offering Counters

5 Avis White, Ruth French  
 12 Avis White, Ruth French  
 19 Avis White, Ruth French  
 26 Avis White, Ruth French

### February

#### Ushers (entire month)

Dick Christiansen, Phil Kahl

#### Greeters

1 Lucille Leslie  
 8 Nancy Haight  
 15 Doris Simpson  
 22 Ruth French

#### Communion Stewards

1 Sharron Chapman

#### Nursery

4	1st	<b>VOLUNTEERS NEEDED</b>
	2nd	
11	1st	
	2nd	
18	1st	
	2nd	
25	1st	
	2nd	

#### Offering Counters

2 Avis White, Ruth French  
 9 Avis White, Ruth French  
 16 Avis White, Ruth French  
 23 Avis White, Ruth French

# January 2015

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>Missions Clark Home Groves</b>				1 Happy New Year	2 Noon-CWU Potluck	3
4 <b>Communion No CYV</b>	5  7-Trustees	6 9:30 Friend- ship 10-Grief Share 1:30 UMW 6:30-Grief Sh	7  3-5 CYV	8	9	10
11 <b>Noisy Offer- ing</b>	12  1:30 Cassie Stewart 7- Ad Board	13 10-Grief Share	14  3-5 CYV	15	16	17
18 <b>Missions</b>	19	20  10-Grief Share	21  3-5 CYV	22	23	24
25	26	27  10-Grief Share	28  3-5 CYV 7 Adult Prgm. Series-Ionia Library (Café)	29	30	31

# February 2015

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Communion 1-3 CYV	2	3 9:30 Friendship 10-Grief Share 1:30 UMW	4 3-5 CYV 7-Library Program	5	6	7
8 Noisy 1-3 CYV	9 12:30 Invest-ment 1:30 Cassie Stewart	10 10 Grief Share	11 3-5 CYV	12	13	14
15 Missions 1-3 CYV	16	17 10 Grief Share	18 Ash Wednesday 3-5 CYV 6-Potluck	19	20	21
22 1-3 CYV	23	24 10 Grief Share	25 3-5 CYV 6-Potluck	26	27	28
	<b>Missions Community House ASP</b>					



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**Grief Share**

2 optional times:  
10:00 a.m. or  
6:30 p.m.

There's still time to join us for this grief recovery support group,  
where you can find help and healing.