

"A Symphony of Praise  
and Service to God"



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

**July  
August  
2016  
Newsletter**



# From the desk of Pastor Jon

## **Sin: The Little Word with Big Meaning**

There are just over one thousand three letter words that are legal for play in the game of Scrabble (1,015 to be precise). Even though my word processor's spell check doesn't recognize them, qat, qis and qua are the ones that start with Q and you'll notice that only one of those has a U. If you play the game, you'll want to remember this little tip. You're welcome.

But, that's a lot to remember just for a game you probably only play once or twice a year. Then, again, little words are around us all the time. We probably know most of the list already. Who needs to really take the time to learn the extras?

One of the words that might be difficult for many people in a few years is "sin". There's less and less that our society qualifies as being sinful. As our moral and legal standards for behavior in society change, it's likely that there will be a declining understanding about this little word. So, we'll be taking some time to explore it.

Our sermon series for July and much of August will have a focus on the so-called seven deadly sins: pride, wrath, lust, greed, envy, gluttony, and sloth. Of course, we're not all about the negative side so we'll be talking about the seven corresponding virtues as well: humility, patience, chastity, liberality, kindness, abstinence and diligence.

You'll notice that there's very little on this list that, in and of itself, could qualify as a crime. No one goes to jail just for being wrathful (otherwise half the internet would be behind bars). Gluttony is practically celebrated. Envy is encouraged with almost every commercial we watch. Don't get me started on lust (don't worry, when we get to that week, we'll keep it PG). Our culture embraces sin on many levels and, mostly, the church is quiet and acquiesces to the shifting moral sands around us.

Yet, if we read the Bible, the gospels specifically, we notice that Jesus raises the bar regarding sin rather than lowering it. Jesus (Mt. 5) challenges us in several areas including: murder (don't even call someone a fool), adultery (don't even look with lustful eyes), oaths (it's not about not breaking them, don't make them in the first place), justice (turn the other cheek) and enemies (pray for them and love them). Jesus' ethic of love challenges many of us to examine our attitudes, words and behaviors. Sin isn't just a little thing for Jesus.

As we examine sin, I want to encourage you to pray regarding your own spiritual life. This might be a good time to schedule an appointment with me for "an annual checkup." (Hey, if you do it for your body, eyes and teeth, isn't it worth doing for your soul?) Pray for the ministry of the church as well, that we might lovingly think, speak and act in ways that promote virtue.

Peace,  
Pastor Jon

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At Bill Weisgerber's funeral, he was described as being a "pillar" of his church and community. That word "pillar" motivated several thoughts. One, when I was an elementary sixth grader, we had an in depth study of Greek mythology, art, and history. At that time, it was classified as social studies. I clearly remember all the picture of the Acropolis and the Parthenon. We used Ivory soap and carved the three types of columns or pillars, Doric (the plain one), Ionic (the one with scrolls), and the Corinthian ( the fancy one). The columns were constructed in such a way that they appeared straight, but were not. These faithful supporters of the roofs were built so strong that they have survived all sorts of trauma throughout the last 2,500 years. Bill, described as being a "pillar of his church," was a strong supporter of his church. He not only was a member, but he believed in and promoted the missions of the church in every possible way. People not only admired him, but relied on his leadership and knowledge. He truly was a "pillar" upholding the church in all its' endeavors. However, he was only one person. There were and are many others. One pillar alone cannot do the job.

In the Bible pillars are mentioned many times, pillars made of various materials and for various purposes. But to be lasting, They had to be built on a firm foundation.

My questions today are: Do we here at First have pillars? Who are they? What are they doing? How are they supporting our church? Are you a pillar? Do you want to be a pillar?

My answer is "Yes" we have pillars. But other pillars are needed to support and strengthen our structure. Remember, the words of that hymn. "I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together!..... The church is not a building. The church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is people!" And the people have to be the "pillars!" We have need of several strong pillars! Won't you consider being one of those pillars?

#### UMW ALERTS

##### DOVE AWARD

Each year on women's Sunday, we honor one of our women who has been a strong pillar of our church during the past year. Previous recipient's names are listed on the downstairs bulletin board. It is time to nominate this year's honoree.

Please check your recent bulletins and/or the bulletin board for a nomination form and help us choose our 2016 DOVE Awardee.

##### TRASH & TREASURE SALE

Every even-numbered year we conduct a Trash & Treasure Sale the proceeds of which are used for various mission projects such as our Christmas Baskets, our campership(s), UNICEF, RAVE, or our own church and community needs.

We will be needing many helping hands during the week of August 1st through August 6th.

##### BOOK BAG MISSION

One of the UNICEF missions promoted by our Heartlands District this year is the Book Bag Mission. The Cassie Stewart Circle has cut and sewed approximately two dozen book bags. During the next few weeks we will be soliciting school supplies to fill those bags. They will be taken to the District Annual meeting in September and then forwarded to UNICEF to deliver to needy children. Watch for current notices.

#### SUPPLIES THAT WILL BE NEEDED TO FILL UMCOR SCHOOL BAGS.

(We suggest that you wait to purchase when the school sales start in mid-July)

School Kit Materials.

1. 1 pair blunt scissors - Rounded tip only - No plastic scissors please.
2. 3 pads paper - Spiral or top-bound pads are accepted. 150 sheets of loose leaf paper can be substituted for 1 pad. Combination of spiral, top-bound, side bound, or loose leaf paper is acceptable. No composition books please.
3. 1 hand-held pencil sharpener - Must be at least 1 inch long and removed from packaging.
4. 6 unsharpened pencils - no advertisements, religious, patriotic, military or camouflage symbols. Cartoon characters are acceptable.
5. 1 2-inch or larger size eraser - No advertisements, religious, patriotic, military or camouflage symbols. Cartoon characters are acceptable.

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6. 1 24-count box of crayons - Only 24 count boxes please.

These items will be collected in late July and assembled into kits and placed in the school bags which the Cassie Stewart Circle has made. Please note that all articles must be new. The kits are planned to make them useful in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items, nothing more.

Our school bags will be blessed at a special service here in August. Watch for our collection site.

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### NOMINATION FORM FOR THE DOVE AWARD

I nominate \_\_\_\_\_ for the Dove Award. I think that she is a good candidate because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please leave in the UMW mail box

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### TRASH & TREASURE SALE SIGN-UP SHEET

Donations will be received at the church garage during the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday, August 1 thru Friday, August 5. The TRASH AND TREASURE SALE WILL BE HELD SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 9 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Volunteer help will be needed each day. I, (name) \_\_\_\_\_ can help on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

(day) (time)

## CASSIE STEWART CIRCLE

Our June meeting was very productive. Traditionally, the purpose of our June meeting is always to assist the Vacation Bible School Committee in preparing for the up-coming event. This year, we created 150 name tags. Of course, as we cut yarn, punched holes, tied knots, and decorated, there was a great deal of "catching up on all the news" and great fellowship. We will not meet during July and August. The Circle voted to continue to meet monthly beginning in September and to continue the "hands-on-mission" theme. We usually reconvene inviting our spouses and friends to a pot-luck and enjoy a special program. At this point, plans have not been finalized.

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Early in June the Kid's Hope mentors said goodbye to our respective children for the summer break. Our prayers continue with them during this season. The summer break will go by quickly, as we all know. The mentor team began this journey four years ago and have found the experience beyond what we could have imagined. One School, One Church, One Child, One Hour a Week. It is our prayer that this Kid's Hope program will flourish at Boyce Elementary School. Your participation is encouraged!

**(Please contact Janet Winter @ 989-855-2331 or the Church Office)**

Or, feel free to connect with anyone on the mentor team: Amber Campbell, Ruth French, Sharon Hartman, Marilyn Nash, Avis White, Janet Winter, Jerry Winter. We will be glad to share our stories.



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.

*Thank you for all the prayers and cards during my recent illness.*

*Joyce Slomski*

### Note

Beginning in September we will be publishing the newsletter every month so that information stays more current.

### 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-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**  
**Rick Borup**  
**Kay Gardner**  
**Stuart Weisgerber**  
**Colleen Thompson**  
**Ron Beach**  
**Steve Lampman**  
**Julie Englehart**  
**Randy McCoy**  
**Josh Hans**  
**Waneta Bell**  
**Lucille Leslie**  
**Mary Cusack**

**Carol Newkirk**  
**Arlene Rowland**  
**Marion Wray**  
**Phyllis Whitelock**  
**Lucy Dickenson**  
**Jimmy Griffith**  
**Jack Unger**  
**James Ruehs**  
**Becky Brown**  
**Ken Keyt**  
**Mitch Bell**  
**Lauri Zimmerman**

Attendance		Giving	Needed
May 1	57	Information is forthcoming	\$3,000
May 8	63		\$3,000
May 15	65		\$3,000
May 22	76		\$3,000
May 29	?		\$3,000
<hr/>			
June 5	54		\$3,000
June 12	56		\$3,000
June 19	47		\$3,000
June 26	52		\$3,000

### Administrative Council News

Plans for a membership class are pending.

Four College Scholarships were given with funding coming from the Endowment Fund. The Scholarships went to Matthew Felice, Riley Mercer, Lauren Curtis and Bailey Fedon. Congratulations to these great young people.

Two campers were also sponsored this year with the help of the UMW and the Quilters group. Hunter Wagner and Lillianna Matusiak were able to go to Wesley Woods for the high school camp.

### Trustees News

The Trustees have contracted to have the parking lot sealcoated. Look for this to happen soon.

## BIRTHDAYS

### July

4 Sheila Ransom  
5 Nic Van Dop  
8 Judy Gregory  
10 Sarah Hamilton  
18 Joel Kilgore  
19 Don Fell  
23 Andrew Badder  
26 June Faulkner  
27 Glenn Joy  
28 Darcie Van Dop  
28 Mackenzie Mercer  
28 Will Paton  
29 Sue Manciu  
30 Ron Roseboom

### August

3 Patricia Zander  
18 Lewis Slater  
22 Jean Clark  
25 Mariel Joy  
25 Mark Workman



## Anniversaries

### July

10 Jon & Darcie Van Dop  
15 Ted & Kim Paton  
25 Mitch & Sari Mercer

### August

2 Larry & Sheila Ransom  
9 Dick & Jackie Christiansen  
16 Andy & Kendra Badder

## July

### Greeters

July 3 Miller & Deanna Hotchkin  
July 10 Sharron Chapman  
July 17 Ken & Ann Felice  
July 24 Sharon Hartman  
July 31 Jan Powell

### Nursery

July 3  
July 10 Noelle Byrne  
July 17  
July 24 Noelle Byrne

July 31

If you would like to volunteer to work in the nursery, we would welcome the help. Just contact Marie in the church office at 527-1860.

## August

### Greeters

August 7 Phil Kahl  
August 14 Mark Workman  
August 21 Al & Joan MacDonald  
August 28 Avis White

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)

### Nursery

August 7  
August 14  
August 21  
August 28

## **VOLUNTEERS**

# REACH

equipping churches to reach more people

During the Calendar year of 2015 -- Pastor Jon participated in the REACH initiative sponsored by the Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church. These monthly seminars provide for pastor development in the implementation of a series of *Ministry Systems* that are facilitating positive growth results in churches throughout our country.

One of those *Ministry System* components is Small Groups. In support of that initiative and participation in the small group training, lead to an invitation to participate in the REACH, Small Group Seminar with Pastor Jon, held at the Swartz Creek UMC in Lansing. This experience provided the encouragement that there is HOPE for our church to achieve the growth results that many other churches are experiencing.

Last fall there was a launch of a unique **Worship** series, coupled with a series of **Small Group** offerings. These are just a couple of the *Ministry Systems* that make up the big picture. In November a worship planning focus group was very helpful in identifying topics of need and interest for our congregation(s), which has been implemented thus far this year via several sermon series.

This spring a couple of focus groups were held to help guide the process and the implementation of these systems. Pastor Jon provided these groups with an overview of these Ministry Systems. (Worship Planning, Evangelism, Assimilation, Small Group, Ministry Mobilization, Stewardship, Leadership, and Strategy Systems -- anchored by the Relationship component.) These focus group sessions have been very fruitful and are expected to continue through this implementation phase.

As this process has evolved over this past year, we have found ourselves in various roles. Although we have supported the implementation of the two systems noted, the function of evaluation has been primary. So, we have been referring to ourselves as "the evaluation team". As we work through this process, we welcome your input. We encourage participation . . . it is an exciting journey. Please let us know if you would like to participate in any way. We as a congregation have the potential within our REACH!

Respectfully,

Kim Paton & Marilyn Nash

**Reach Summit will be Friday & Saturday Oct. 14 & 15 at Somerset Inn in Troy, MI. Cost is \$49.00 if registered by August 1st.**





***Calling all children pre-school through 5th grade.***

***Vacation Bible School***

***Sunday August 7th - Thursday August 11th***

***6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.***

***Register on line at [www.ioniafirst@gmail.com](mailto:www.ioniafirst@gmail.com)***

# July 2016

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4 Independence Day	5 9:30 Friendship Committee	6	7 6:00pm-7:00pm Parenting Better Children  7:00pm Chrysalis Meeting	8	9
10	11 6:00pm Soup Kitchen 7:00pm Ad Board	12	13	14 6:00pm-7:00pm Parenting Better Children	15	16
17	18 6:00pm Soup Kitchen 7:00pm VBS Meeting	19	20	21 6:00pm-7:00pm Parenting Better Children	22	23
24	25 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen	26	27	28 6:00pm-7:00pm Parenting Better Children	29	30
31						

# August 2016

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen	2 9:30 am Friend- ship Committee	3	4 6:00 pm-7:00pm Parenting Better Children	5	6 9:00am-3:00pm Trash & Treas- ure Sale
7 Vacation Bible School	8 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen Vacation Bible School	9 Vacation Bible School	10 Vacation Bible School	11 6:00pm- 7:00pm Parenting Better Children Vacation Bible School 7:00pm Chrysalis	12	13
14	15 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen	16	17	18 6:00pm-7:00pm Parenting Better Children	19	20
21	22 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen	23	24	25 6:00pm-7:00pm Parenting Better Children	26	27
28	29 6:00 pm Soup Kitchen 7:00 Mission Meeting	30	31			



105 E. Main Street  
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Service 9:30am

Check it out!

[www.ioniafirst.com](http://www.ioniafirst.com)

