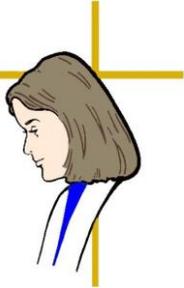


THE PARISH POST

Volume 45 - Issue 12

11:00 a.m. Worship Service
Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

December 2017



Pastor Susan's Corner

Join us for a very special Advent worship series, "Together in Advent," as we celebrate together as the family of God the coming of his Son for our salvation. Each week the series focuses on a different activity for our "to-do list" that is centered on giving and sharing instead of on materialism.

The theme for Week 1 is: "Be Present." Instead of spending all our time in Advent buying presents, we in God's family set aside space to be present for one another, as Christ is coming to be present with us.

The theme for Week 2 is: "Send Peace." Beyond sending cards to loved ones this Advent season, we do all we can as the family of God to send peace to one another because the Prince of Peace is on his way.

The theme for Week 3 is: "Share Joy." In this time when we share cookies and other treats with one another, we share joy with those around us that they might taste and see that the Lord is good to us through the birth of his Son.

The theme for Week 4 is: "Wrap in Love." In this season of hustle and bustle, we move from wrapping presents to wrapping people in love, as Mary wrapped the Christ Child so lovingly in swaddling clothes.

I hope you will be blessed through each worship service as we focus on "Being Present," "Sending Peace," "Sharing Joy" and "Wrapping in Love" in our waiting for the Advent the coming of Jesus our Savior to the world.

Then join me on Christmas Eve as we share in a 11:00 am service and a 6:00 pm candlelight service celebrating "God's Gift to Wrapped in Love: Jesus"

I encourage you to invite your family and friends to join us for this special time of year!!

Have a blessed and joyfilled Christmas.

Pastor Susan



Christmas Flowers

The Worship Committee is once again making poinsettias available for purchase. The colors available are: red, white, pink, burgundy, marble (leans to white with pink marbling), and jingle bells (red with pink and white specks). The cost is \$7.50 per plant.

Order forms will be in the bulletin each Sunday until all orders are due on December 10. Please include your payment with your order. You may take your plants home following our worship service on Christmas Eve.



Christmas Eve

Our traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 24. Invite your friends and family to join us as we worship the newborn King! Pick up some free door hangers in the narthex to distribute in your neighborhood.





Condolences

We extend our sympathy to **Gary Martin** at the death of his mother, **Betty Martin**, on November 4, 2017. Betty was 94 years old and is survived by ten children and their families.

"When one member suffers, we all suffer and when one member is honored, we all rejoice."
I Corinthians 12:26

Those who serve as missionaries, especially:

Kate & Peter Walugembe in Jinja, Uganda;
Del & Sandy Groves in Zambia;
Dr. Elma Jocson in the Philippines.

Those who are in the military, including:

Christopher Blackwell, Gabrielle (Gabby) Crumley,
Ricky Zeiger, and Ethan Zeiger.

Those who are in care facilities:

Buchanan Meadows – Sabra Lambert;
Pine Ridge – Esther Thomas;
Woodland Terrace – Shirley Hoadley

Those who are homebound:

Dorothy Brayboy, Helen Heward, Doris Krossovitch,
and Ken Williams.

Those with health problems:

David Baker, Dick Best, Dorothy Brayboy,
Bob Flick, Andrew Hamilton, Bryce Hamilton,
Dawn Hayes, Priscilla Hellenga, Jim Ireland,
Steve Kiburis, Karen King, Maria Povlock Lewis,
Linda Methany, Eileen Osmond, Steven Patzer,
Alexis Renbarger, Jerry Schaffer, Gert Schlieter,
Dorothy Schoff, Rick Schroeter, Ken Seifert,
Bob & Charlene Sprick, Frances Stanage,
Kevin Strauss, Bill Swanson, Crystal Thompson,
Kat Turner, Elsie Zabel.

Those who grieve:

Family and friends of Jim LaLone, Betty Martin, and
Sue Rubeck.

Other:

Ben Bartelmay as he serves in the Peace Corps.
Peace throughout our world.

Please note: Names will be deleted from the above list after one month unless an updated request is received.

Sue Rubeck, a long-time member of our church, died on November 14. Our sympathy to her family: daughter, Lisa Verlinden; grandchildren, Lauren Verlinden and Carson Verlinden; siblings: **Marcia Hess**, Stephen Fox, and Charles Fox.

A Memorial Service was held at our church on November 25.

May the Lord comfort these families in their time of grief.

Bible Trivia

In Isaiah 9:6 we find the proclamation of Jesus birth. What will He be called? Fill in the blanks.

For unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called _____,

_____, _____,

Answers on page three



Missions Committee News

Thank you for filling shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. The boxes we collected were delivered to a church collection center last month.

We are still collecting Box Tops for Education for our local schools and aluminum pop tabs used for various projects through the Community House in Grand Rapids. The containers are above the mailboxes in the narthex.



From the Bookshelf

by Rhonda Hinman

Christmas is upon us. It's always fun and relaxing to sit down with a good story about Christmas. December's featured book is "God Bless Us Everyone" by Eve Marie Everson.

Charlene Dixon—called Charlie by family and friends—is devastated at the recent loss of her job. For the last five years, the twenty-seven-year-old has blossomed as the activities director of an exclusive all-girls school. But when a misunderstanding with the headmistress leads to a pink slip right before the holidays, Charlie packs up her dreams and returns to her grandmother, Sis, who raised Charlie as her own in the mountains of North Carolina.

When Charlie arrives—broken and confused—Sis immediately puts her granddaughter to work behind the scenes of the local school's Christmas play, A Christmas Carol. Charlie doesn't always like working with Dustin Kennedy, the drama teacher, but Sis encourages her to take a deeper look at why the book by Charles Dickens had been written in the first place and what it could teach Charlie about the needs of people in their own community.

So, grab a cup of hot chocolate and a few cookies, sit down and enjoy this book.



Village Tree Lighting

The annual lighting of the Village Christmas Tree will be held after the Peppermint Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 2. The parade will step off from Dewey Cannon Park at 6:00 and proceed to Carver Park (across from Speedway). The tree lighting will be immediately after the parade and followed by Santa and Mrs. Claus in the pavilion. Cookies and hot cocoa will be provided.



Advent Service

The River Valley Ministerial Association will sponsor a community Advent Service on Sunday, December 3, at 6:00 p.m. at the Real Life Community Church. An offering will be received for the RVMA to assist people in need. Plan now to attend this service marking the beginning of the Advent Season with your friends and neighbors.



Choir News

The choir will practice on Sunday, December 3, December 10 and December 17 at 10:00 a.m. New voices are always welcome!

Answers from page two:

Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace



Annette Donner
Katharine Kersey
Emma Springer

Best wishes to these athletes as their winter sports season gets underway:

RV Varsity Basketball
RV Varsity Basketball
RV Varsity Basketball



Sisters in Faith

The annual Christmas party for Sisters in Faith will be on Wednesday, December 13, at 6:30 p.m. It will be held at the home of Faye Sittig (16819 Sittig Rd).

Please sign up in the narthex so we know how many to expect. Bring a dish to pass, a Christmas ornament (\$10 limit) for a gift exchange, and your gift for our adopted family.

Church Conference



Our annual Church Conference with Kalamazoo District Superintendent, Rev. Dwayne Bagley, will be held on Sunday, December 3. The Staff-Parish Relations Committee will meet at 10:15 a.m., worship will be at 11:00 a.m. and the full Conference will convene at 12:00 p.m. All church members have a vote and are encouraged to attend.



Who's Who at TOUMC?

Did you know that Julie Sittig once shook JFK's hand?

Chuck and Julie Sittig have known each other pretty much their whole lives. They both grew up on South Elm Street in Three Oaks. They first dated after graduating from high

school. They went their own way for a while. They dated again in the 80's. They got married on October 7, 1995. They built their house from wood cut from their property. Chuck cut the trees, dried and sawed the wood. There are different types of wood throughout the house. It took two years to build. They moved into it in 2006.

Chuck and Julie have two daughters and four grandsons. Kristy, her husband Yuri and their two sons, Jack and Parker live in Katy, Texas. Kandace, her husband Tim, and their two sons, Jonah and Jude live in Crown Point, Indiana.

Chuck is the youngest of four children. His parents were Paul and Patricia. Chuck is the fifth generation of Sittigs to live in Three Oaks. His great-great grandpa came from Germany and settled in the Spring Creek community. They had a log home on 80 acres on south Three Oaks Road. They paid \$450 for it. Chuck graduated from Three Oaks High School in 1968. He played basketball in both junior high and high school. He was on the golf team in high school. He caddied at Chikaming Country Club starting at 13 or 14 years old. He liked to bike. As a young boy, he played Little League. After graduating from high school, he went to Western Michigan University where he graduated in 1972. He majored in biology and minored in chemistry. He has had many different jobs through the years. He worked at Bendix for seven years. He worked in construction. He was a milkman. He was a motorcycle broker for ten years, selling bikes overseas. He was Three Oaks Township Supervisor for 16 years. He has been an assessor for New Buffalo since 1999. He cuts wood for sale. His hobbies are collecting coins and restoring motorcycles. Over the years, he has been involved with Three Oaks Spokes and The Region of Three Oaks Museum.

Julie is the oldest of seven children. Her parents were Leslie and Lucy Lee. As with Chuck's family, Julie is also the fifth generation to live in Three Oaks. Both sides of her family, the Lee's and the Payne's are fifth generation residents. As a child, Julie liked playing with the many neighborhood kids. A special event in her life was when her grandma, Mabel Payne, took her

to Grand Rapids to see John Kennedy. It was there that she got to shake his hand. When she was 12 years old she started working at the Lee Theater in Three Oaks. It was owned by her great-grandpa and later by her Uncle Fred and Aunt Bea. She worked there until she graduated. She enjoyed her job there. She played the clarinet as first chair in the band as a Three Oaks Oaker and a River Valley Mustang. She graduated in 1969. She went to Purdue School of Nursing, graduating in 1979. She has been a nurse for 38 years. She has enjoyed nursing. She likes to hear her patients' stories. She has been involved in the Region of Three Oaks Museum for 20 years. She currently schedules the volunteers that work at the museum. She likes being involved with it. She likes preserving the history of Three Oaks. She enjoys reading. She also enjoys gardening, both at home and the Community Garden. She, like Chuck has been involved in Three Oaks Spokes. She was on the board of Harbor Country Radio. She also had a program on the radio station, Ask a Nurse. She has served on the Three Oaks Library board for 13 years.

Chuck and Julie have done some traveling, taking yearly vacations. They like to go to Traverse City and they winter on Florida for a couple of months. They have a cabin in Interlochen, Michigan. They recently bought a motor home. They want to see more of the United States, including Alaska. They would also like to go to Italy and New Zealand.

Julie as born and raised in TOUMC. She was baptized here and confirmed at 12 years old at which time she became member. She is the fifth generation as a member of TOUMC. Her great-great grandpa Joseph Lee, mortgaged his home to build the church building. There was a stained glass window in his honor. That window had to be removed when the addition was built in 1978. Chuck and Julie have that window. Chuck was raised in the Catholic Church. He received his first communion as St. Mary's in Three Oaks. After he and Julie were married, he became a member at TOUMC. Both Chuck and Julie have served on various committees through the years. We are happy to have them as part of our Church family.

Christmas Concert



The Harbor Country Singers, a newly formed community choir, will be performing a Christmas concert at our church on Tuesday, December 12, at 7:00 p.m. Director Cindy Dryden and accompanist Maggie Martin will lead this 35-40 voice choir as they share many wonderful songs of the season. Mark your calendar now and plan to invite your family and friends to join us for this special event.



We are looking for volunteers to provide refreshments after our worship services. Sign up in the narthex.



Weather Closings

As winter is upon us, we are making preparations for the possibility of bad weather. Usually, we will have Sunday services if Pastor Susan can manage the drive. However, if we should decide to close, this information will be posted on www.WSBT.com, TV channel 22; and www.WNDU.com, TV channel 16. You can go to these websites and have closing information automatically sent to your cell phone or via email. On weekdays, the church office will be closed if River Valley Schools are closed. Please use caution when venturing out over these next several months. We want everyone to stay safe!



Harvest Dinner

Our annual Harvest Dinner in November was a great success. The Fellowship Committee provided meat, bread, and beverages. The congregation brought wonderful side dishes and desserts to complete the menu. It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon to "break bread" together. Thanks to our Fellowship Committee for planning this dinner.



Holiday Bazaar

There will be a Holiday Bazaar at River Valley Middle High School on Saturday, December 2, 9:00 – 3:00. There will be a Bake Sale and many vendors, including: Scentsy, Origami Owl, Jamberry, and Tracy Donner's Goat Milk Soaps.

Christmas Eve Offering

The 2017 Bishop's Advent Offering has been designated to support disaster relief - 40% United States Disaster Relief, 40% International Disaster Relief, and 20% toward a disaster relief fund here in Michigan which can be used to help Michigan United Methodists respond to disasters in other parts of the country.



Sunday School News

Children's Christmas Program

Our Sunday School Christmas Program will be held on December 17 during the morning worship service. We always look forward to seeing the precious faces of our children as they share the Christmas message with us. Please plan to attend this special service. There will be no Sunday School on December 24 and December 31.

We will receive this special offering on Christmas Eve. There will be an insert in your bulletin with more information.

As we remember the miraculous gift of the birth of our Savior, let us share a message of support, hope and love for the people of Haiti through our gifts. Let us bring God's light to those living in darkness.

Dear Three Oaks UMC,

New offering envelopes for 2018 have been placed in the narthex mailboxes. If you would like a set, please speak to Rhonda Hinman or leave a note in the office. To fund the offering system, we suggest an initial contribution of \$5 in the envelope provided.

thank you!

Thank you so much for all the hours you put in getting ready for Mom's funeral luncheon. Thanks to Rhonda Petro for coordinating everything and for providing a comforting place for us and easing our sorrow.



Linda Martin Mangold and the Martin family

If you have any questions about your contributions from 2016, please contact *Rhonda Hinman* at 756-7560.



A Message from Bishop David Alan Bard

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation, everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.”

II Corinthians 5:17-18

“God’s self-revelation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ summons the Church to ministry in the world through witness by word and deed in light of the Church’s mission....The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by proclaiming the good news of God’s grace and by exemplifying Jesus’ command to love God and neighbor, thus seeking the fulfillment of God’s reign and realm in the world.”

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church

At the 2017 Annual Conferences, members voted to create nine districts as we come together to form the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church. Following The Discipline, it is the responsibility of the bishop to draw the lines establishing these boundaries. Over the summer, I brought together an advisory group to help me with this task. We were guided first and foremost by the mission of the church - to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. For the Michigan Conference, we have said that we envision a conference that is Christ-centered and connected: to engage in shared mission and ministry, to support bold and effective leaders, and to nurture vibrant congregations. With nine districts instead of twelve, we are re-directing ministry share monies to help provide staff that will work with district superintendents and other lay and clergy leaders to fulfill our mission and vision.

With mission foremost in mind, we also identified other important values in forming nine districts: honoring current shared ministry arrangements; creative possibilities for missional alignments;

creativity in providing district leadership; regional identity/affinity; transportation patterns; considering resources and capacity for new districts; diversity; and connectedness.

We view the districts as serving as a primary locus for connecting and equipping local churches in the fulfillment of the Conference’s mission and vision. The District will be the primary community, for both clergy and local churches, focusing on accountability to the Conference vision, continuing education, development and growth, and spiritual discernment and support.

There is still more work to be done. By the end of 2017, district superintendents will be selected, and they will begin their ministry July 1, 2018. A number of the current districts have or will be celebrating their significant accomplishments. In the spring, district conferences will be convened to name these new communities and select new leadership. In the coming months, district superintendents, district leadership, and conference trustees will select district office locations.

It is my hope and prayer that our new nine districts will be as helpful and as spirited as the districts have been in the past. I have been delighted by the work I have witnessed in our current districts and trust we will find ways to use these new districts to work out our mission and toward our vision.

Lastly, I would remind us that no structure is perfect. In the same letter where Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that their ministry of reconciliation comes from God, he also notes that *“we have this treasure in clay jars” (4:7)*. The new district boundaries represent our best prayerful thinking. If in the future, we need to make changes and adjustments to further our mission and vision, we can and will do that. In the meantime may we, by the grace and power of God, continue to move into the future. Confident that God’s Spirit is at work within and among us so that lives and the world are transformed in the name of Jesus Christ. May we work with the courage that comes from knowing that we are loved deeply, profoundly and wildly by God, by a God who wants all to see that love.

Grace and Peace,

David Alan Bard

Three Oaks United Methodist Church



Michigan Area

The United Methodist Church

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December 2017



Please Note

Please turn in all submissions for next month's Parish Post newsletter by December 17.



- December 3 First Sunday of Advent
Communion
"Be Present"
- December 10 Second Sunday of Advent
"Send Peace"
- December 17 Third Sunday of Advent
"Share Joy"
- December 24 Fourth Sunday of Advent, 11:00 a.m.
"Wrap in Love"
- December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight 6:00 p.m.
- December 31 First Sunday of Christmas

If we could deliver your next Parish Post by e-mail, please inform the church office. It would be faster, easier, and cheaper.

Thanks for your help!

Three Oaks
United Methodist Church Staff:
Pastor: *Rev. Susan Martin*
Cell phone: *574-370-5121*

Secretary: *Cheryl Kersey*
Pianist/Organist: *Martha Spychalski*
Custodian: *Mary Weers*