

Countryside Trinity Church Newsletter

April 2020 Edition



From Pastor Brant...

Give us this day our daily bread...

Before this virus rudely interrupted our Lenten Journey, I was in the middle of a sermon series on the Lord's Prayer. Jesus offered this prayer in response to an invitation from the disciples to "*teach us to pray.*" It is my thinking that this prayer is offered to us as a thematic guide for us to follow that our prayer lives might lead us further into the heart of God.

The next theme in the series is presented in the fourth petition, "Give us this day our daily bread.... This is the first time in the Lord's Prayer, and by now we are half way in, that we are invited to turn toward our own needs. The first three petitions have been directed toward the person and the purposes of God. It is now, after we have gained the proper perspective about our place in God's world, that we are invited to bring to God our needs and our understandings of the needs of our world.

In this time the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," may grab your attention more than usual. Usually if we are anxious about our daily bread it is because we are wondering what we are going to eat next and not *if* we are going to eat. With the physical distancing that is mandated these days, this isn't so. Grocery stores are still open, but we are aware that things are different. There is a scarcity of some items that might be a little unsettling to us. In the checkout lines there is tape on the floor to remind you to stay 6 feet apart. You can take advantage of the pick-up services, but they take some days to fill.

This petition serves as a reminder, that we have a dependency on the goodness and generosity of God that we tend to lose sight of from time to time. This has been brought back into focus. What we eat and consume depends completely on materials that are part of God's good creation.

Jesus reminds us as well that we do not live by bread alone, that we have all sorts of regular needs for which we depend on God; to join together for worship and encouragement, to read a good book or pursue some hobby or activity. Maybe you are more aware than ever of your need for human contact, for a friendly look, for a handshake, or a hug, or a kiss.

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The petition reminds us as well that we are not just praying for ourselves only, *Give us...* It invites us to remember in prayer the many people of whom we are aware whose daily needs might not be met. Who are the children and families who are hungry because the backpack program isn't up and running like we are used to? How are the healthcare professionals doing as they face shortages of materials that are usually available to them in abundance that are essential to protecting them from illness and disease? How are the unemployed people dealing with the anxiety and uncertainty around finances? In this time when we are so aware of the needs of those around us, when we might experience some helplessness in responding to these needs because of the changes that have come so quickly to our community, God invites each one of us to share our concerns and fears with God. We are entrusting the care of others to God, believing that God can and will respond to those needs that are beyond us.

The power in this petition lies in its ability to make us aware of how God knows our needs, God's willingness to meet those needs, and how, when we recognize that our own needs are being met in abundant ways, how it frees us to be generous stewards of all that God has placed within our care.

I invite you this week to focus on this petition, to discern what needs you have and what needs others might have, and then to bring before God. Then wait and see what God will do.

Session Suspends Worship Until Sunday, May 10th.

In light of the continued spread of the Corona Virus and an Advisory Statement from Presbytery Council, the session has made the decision to suspend worship until May 10th. We will, of course, keep you advised of any changes we might make on this policy. The church is also pursuing financial support that is being offered through the presbytery.

Combined Sunday Morning Worship on YouTube Continues

Our combined worship service with First and Second Presbyterian Churches continues this Sunday at 10:30 am. **Go to YouTube and search for First Presbyterian Church Saginaw.** This week Brant will be leading some of the liturgy, while Rev. Ted McCullough will be offering the sermon. Our organist, Andrew Glynn will again be contributing music to the service.

As part of this service, I would invite you to participate in the offering time by making your regular offering to the church. Presently Mari is working to add an online donation opportunity to our website, but until it happens, please take this time to either write your check to the church or mail it in, or use the Bill Pay option at your bank. Mari, Kathy and Lori will insure that the mail is picked up and that your checks are processed. Please keep in mind any ministries to which you provide regular financial support that they might be sustained in this time where their might be reduced giving.

Census 2020 Letters Have Arrived

By now most homes should have received their census letter giving the password for logging on to the Census site. If you need some guidance with this, please give the church a call, and we will help you work through it.

Easter Food Baskets

Unfortunately we will not be able to provide our Easter Food Baskets for Weiss School. We are in touch with the school and working to discern alternative ways we can support the families while the school is closed.

Prayer Concerns

We lift up Lynne Groom and her family upon the death of her mother on March 25th. We lift up prayers for Lila Neumeyer, who was recently admitted to Covenant Harrison.

YOUR SESSION/COUNCIL AT WORK

Submitted for your information, Mary Ann Parker, Clerk of Session

Tidbits of information from Session/Council meeting of March 17, 2020 that you may find helpful:

Opening: Reflection on Psalm 23.

Clerk's Report: Church membership is now 129 with addition of new member Ron Platt on 3-1-20. Welcome, Ron. Communion was served on February 26, 2020 to 31 parishioners and on March 1, 2020 to 62 parishioners.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Brant gave his report on his service to the congregation, the community, and the denomination. He included the multiple hospital and home visits and his meetings with various study groups and committees, both at Countryside Trinity and community that he serves on. He has met with the social worker and the principal at Weiss School. He led worship for the Women's Ministry Association and participated in the Ezekiel project. He included various discussions that he had had over the last 1-2 weeks regarding the COVID-19 virus and its impact on churches and the community.

Denominational Report: M. Lacker served as commissioner to Presbytery meeting on March 7th at Saginaw, Korean Church. Topic was "Spirituality of Stewardship."

Committee Reports:

Building & Grounds: Manse lot surveyed. Home inspector to come in soon. Custodian performance review done.

Finance & Stewardship: Researching "online giving."

Christian Outreach: K. Blehm, moderator, gave brief report.

Personnel: Parker reported that Pastor Brant's accountability review has been done.

Congregational Care Team: This is a new team developed in the last month that is in the process of getting organized. Its focus is to enhance the quality of care team members provide to the members and friends of the congregation they visit. Thus far, it organized a birthday party for Helen Reynold's 102nd birthday and the 100th birthday celebration for Bessie Daughterty. Approximately 10-15 members plus family members came to help us celebrate with these delightful, blessed women. Ice cream and cake was served. A good time was had by all!

At the session meeting we discussed how the church will respond to this present pandemic. Some plans were made pertaining to reaching out to our vulnerable members/friends. Spiritual Life Committee will review options for the various events. In these trying times, we will find different ways to continue our ministry.

Blessings for Healing: We adjourned our meeting with Pastor Brant anointing our hands with oil and a prayer for guidance, innovation, strength, support, and healing for all people.

Submitted for your information,
Mary Ann Parker, Clerk of Session



Women's & Mission Update

Meeting: The women of the church were planning a Birthday/Baby Shower on Thursday April 16. As a result of Covid-19, this event has been postponed. Watch for updated information.

Camp: Provided our "Stay at Home Order" has been lifted, the UCC Women of Michigan will hold their annual Gathering June 12-14 at the Kettunen Center in Tustin, MI. 2020 Vision is the theme. The Gathering is a weekend of retreat, renewal, relaxation and recharging. There will be Friday evening entertainment and vespers. Saturday's activities give you many opportunities to either stay busy in workshops or simply enjoy the beautiful surroundings of Kettunen Center. Sunday offers a Sunday school class and a very meaningful worship service. There also will be a business meeting. The Kettunen Center is located in the woods on a beautiful lake. The accommodations are "luxury in the woods." The food is delicious. See the bulletin board or Marcia Lacker for details.

Christian Outreach: The Missions of the Month are the Underground Railroad and The baby Pantry.

The Underground Railroad serves victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human slavery in Saginaw County. Right now there are over 100 people, many are children, housed at their facilities.

A list of what a donation can fund highlights the scope of the programs offered.

\$75 – Fund the Crisis Helpline for 24 hours

\$100 – Fund a night emergency center for a family of four fleeing abuse

\$150 – Fund vaccines, treatments, food and supplies needed to house a pet with a family for 30 days.

\$185 – Fund one Girl on the Run for a program of 10 weeks to build joy, health and confidence.

\$200 – Fund teaching a Healthy Relation curriculum to 100 area students.

\$250 – To feed the entire shelter for a week.

\$300 – To fund 200 loads of laundry of residents for 2 weeks.

\$350 – To fund 2 children for 1 week in the free on sight day care.

\$440 – To pay utilities for 9 off site transitional and permanent supportive housing units.

Please give generously.

The Baby Pantry is one of the Old Town missions. Baby layettes and furniture are available to new moms. Each mom also receives a book to read to her baby.

One Great Hour of Sharing offerings may be mailed to the church as it is now clear that we will miss the Easter Service.



<u>Bavarian Comfort Care</u> Bessie Daugherty	<u>Swanhaven Manor</u> Fern Evon Little
<u>Horizon Senior Living (Gladwin)</u> Mary Ellen Sierocki	<u>New Hope Valley Independent</u> Dorothy Gray, Virginia "Ginny" Jarvi
<u>St. Francis Home</u> Judith Lorenz	<u>Wellspring Assisted Living</u> Shirley Roof, Carol Williamson, Bob & Marie Lemmer, Lila Neumeyer, Helen Reynolds
<u>In Hospital or Private Homes</u> Dawn Curtis, Eleanor Farnum, Betty Hauk, Floyd & Lois Krzak, Ruth Marsh, Elaine Miner, Fran Preuter, Kathy Williamson, Betty Burr and Joan Comstock	<u>Saginaw Senior Care & Rehab</u> Mary Young



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Virginia Lyons
- 2 William Nolan
- 2 Lysithea Evans M=Alexa Mahan
- 4 Jeanne Krugielki
- 5 Nancy Erndt
- 5 Dorothy Gray
- 5 Evon Little
- 12 Kathy Loviska
- 12 Matthew VanArsdale
- 13 Dallas Williams
- 19 Debra Davis
- 20 Carol Williamson
- 29 Donald Lyons

DID WE MISS IT



APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

No Anniversaries this month. If we missed yours, be sure to let the office know.



HELP! We like to recognize everyone's birthdays and anniversaries in our newsletters and for our "Cake Days" during coffee hour. So, please, be sure to let Kathy know your birthday and anniversary so that we will be sure to recognize you and your family members' special days. You can email Kathy the information at countryside@ctcsaginaw.com or call the office and leave a message @ 793-0125.

COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

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Phone: (989) 793-0125



BLESSINGS FROM COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH



Gladness and Grace

Lord God, You loved this world so much that you gave your one and only Son, that we might be called your children too. Lord, help us to live in the gladness and grace of Easter Sunday, every day. Let us have hearts of thankfulness for your sacrifice. Let us have eyes that look upon Your grace and rejoice in our salvation. Help us to walk in that mighty grace and tell Your good news to the world. All for your glory do we pray, Lord, Amen.

— Rachel Marie Stone