

Countryside Trinity Church Connections

July 7, 2020 Edition

From Pastor Brant...

The session, at a called meeting last week, continued its efforts to strengthen our online ministry and create an ever more welcoming environment for our worship service. Last month the session authorized the purchase of a camera that will allow us to continue to live stream our own worship service starting on August 2nd. Last week the session also authorized the purchase and installation of new technology to support the livestream and allow for the enhancement of our audio and video within our worship service. The main expense is the addition of two TV monitors which will be installed in the sanctuary, and the equipment needed to support their use. We have already experienced the benefits of a TV monitor through the one that is installed in the fellowship hall. It has enhanced our ministry through its communication of the events taking place in the life of the church, through the videos informing us of the different ministries offered by our denominations, through the inspirational music and music videos. It has enhanced our educational efforts through the use of graphics and Power Point presentations in our congregational gatherings. Within the last several months, as we chose to not meet in face to face worship out of our concerns for safety for our members and our community, we have discovered new opportunities for reaching out through the combined live stream services at First Presbyterian Church. We have worked to stay connected through our online Bible Studies.

These experiences have invited us to acknowledge the power of this technology to reach out to our community, and even outside of our community. They have invited us to acknowledge how incorporating this technology into our service sends a positive message to those outside of our church that we want to engage them wherever they might be with the Good News of Jesus Christ in ways that are meaningful to them. It echoes the thinking of Paul, as found in First Corinthians 9:19-23: ***“For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.*”**

When you return to the sanctuary, whenever it might be, you will find things different from when you were last there. Part of it will be the colorful noodles that will assist us in keeping our family groups at least six feet apart for safety sake. Part of it will be the presence of face masks and the prohibition to sing. Part of it will be the lack of bulletins and hymnals. Part of it as well will be the use of screens to lead us in our prayers and liturgies, the viewing of mission videos and musical presentations with both audio and visual expressions, and the following of the sermon through graphics, Power Point outlines, and video illustrations.

The session has seen how God has used our time at home and away from one another to open the eyes to its members of the effectiveness of technology to touch people with the Gospel. In prayer and humility, it has taken these bold steps, trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit to make us more faithful in our efforts to minister to a hurting world.

Hoping to see you soon,

Brant

Combined Worship Continues

Continue to join us on Sunday mornings at 10:30 am on YouTube for our Combined Worship Services with First and Second Presbyterian Churches. This Sunday, July 12, 2020, Rev. Philomena Ofori-Nipaah Pastor at Second Presbyterian Church, will be preaching on the Gospel of Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23. Go to www.YouTube.com, and in the search for First Presbyterian Church Saginaw.

Please note, it is the session's intent that we will be able to live stream our services from our church building on August 2nd, even if we are not able to meet together in our building.

Combined Services Available on your Phone

If you do not have internet you can still listen in on the livestream of the service on your phone. To listen in on the service here are the steps to follow:

- Call **1 312 626 6799**
- When you are asked for your Meeting ID enter: **868 9628 9319**
- You don't need to respond to the request for a participant ID.
- When you are asked for your Password: enter: **1838**

Outdoor Worship Series, "Creation Celebrations," to start July 12th at 6:30 pm

The Spiritual Life Team is planning a series of outdoor services starting on July 12th. As we will be outside we will focus on the gifts of beauty and life offered to us by our Loving God. *Please bring with you any "percussion instrument" with which you can make a "joyful noise" that you might be able to express your thanks and joy to God.*

All participants are requested to do the following:

- Enter the building through the doors at the western end (far left) of the church and walk through the hallway to the back yard of the church

- A mask is required. One will be provided if you don't have one.
- Please bring your own lawn chair if you have one. Chairs will be provided for those who don't.
- You are invited to make your offering either before or after the service in a basket in the backyard as you enter or leave. You are invited to seal your offering in a plastic bag a few days before this service. This will help to insure the safety of those counting the money.
- You are welcome to come early or stay afterward to fellowship with one another. Please practice appropriate socially distancing protocols if you do.
- Please check the weather as these services will be postponed by severe weather.

These worship services are tentatively scheduled through July. They might continue if the session decides to change our current plans to restart worship in the sanctuary on August 2nd.

Return To Worship Taskforce

As of this moment, the session is planning for the church to resume indoor worship on August 2nd, depending upon the state's guidelines for groups of 50 or less. The Return to Worship Taskforce continues its work to refine the protocols the church will use when we return to worship. Presently these include the following:

- Waiting until permission is given by the state to meet in groups of 50 or less
- Screening all who wish to participate in worship before they enter the sanctuary, including questions about symptoms and having a temperature taken through the use of an infrared thermometer
- All participants will enter through the Eastern doors in an orderly fashion that maintains proper social distancing of family groups
- Masks are required and provided for those in need of one
- Participants will be seated only in designated seating, keeping at least 6 feet between them and any other family group throughout the service
- There will be no choir, nor singing. The hymnals are stored away for now to eliminate the need to sanitize them; you are of course welcome to bring your own Bible.
- Baskets will be available before and after the service for your tithes and offerings. You are invited to seal your offering in a plastic bag a few days before the service. This will help to insure the safety of those counting the money.
- There will be no bulletins. Information will be provided through technology.
- The bathrooms immediately adjacent to the sanctuary will be designated as Unisex and participants are asked to use them only in times of great urgency
- Participants will be dismissed in an orderly fashion so that social distancing can be maintained at the end of the service.

The taskforce trusts that those who do not feel safe will not return to the service until they do feel safe. It believes that those who do so are serving Christ by honoring their safety and the safety of others.

Thursday Night Bible Study will be on hiatus through the summer

Financial Report

Our monthly goal for May was \$9,000, of which we collected almost \$8,400. Your faithful giving empowers us to continue our witness to the work of Christ in the world.

Our goal for July is \$9,000. Please remember you can make an online donation through the Give Plus app. If you want to run your donation by the church, please call first to insure that someone is at the office to receive it.

Christian Outreach

Please remember our local ministries during this time. Because we are not able to collect our Least Coin Offering, our support of the three ministries supported by this offering, the Presbytery of Lake Huron Hunger Fund, the Michigan Conference Hunger Fund, and the East Side Soup Kitchen, is down. These and many other local ministries are providing additional resources to our community in this time of pandemic and need your support.

- Our Mission of the Month for July is Emmaus House
- If you have not completed your Census 2020 materials, and would like some assistance, please let the church office know.
- Michigan's Secretary of State has sent out, in response to the pandemic, applications for absentee ballots for either or both the August 4th and November 3rd elections. *By mailing applications, we have ensured that no Michigander has to choose between their health and their right to vote," said Benson. "Voting by mail is easy, convenient, safe, and secure, and every voter in Michigan has the right to do it." According to Benson's office, Michigan voters have embraced this option by a landslide: Officials say they have received about 1.3 million requests for absentee ballots ahead of the upcoming state primary in August -- a 350 percent increase from requests made ahead of the 2016 primary election.*
- If you have not received a request for these from the Secretary of State's office, you can either fill one out online at <https://www.michigan.gov/sos/> or request the church to mail you one. Requests to have an absent voter ballot mailed to you must be received by your clerk no later than 5 p.m. the Friday before the election, July 31st. If you're already registered at your current address, you can pick up an absent voter ballot in person at your clerk's office anytime up to 4 p.m. on the day prior to the election, August 3rd.



JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Dawn Curtis
- 11 Graham Parker
- 12 Robert Lemmer
- 13 Jean Bortner
- 18 Sidney Diggs IV
- 23 Bobby Diggs
- 24 Zayden Evans (M= Alexa Mahan)
- 24 Dick Mallette
- 27 Susan Anderson
- 29 Holly Furlo
- 30 Lynne Groom
- 31 Rachael Plater

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Taylor Hansen (M = Dana Woodke)
- 4 Marianne Bird
- 4 Kathryn Barnum
- 5 Dan Groom
- 8 Chad Parker
- 10 Randy Jacob
- 12 Fran Prueter
- 13 Kyle Redfield
- 15 Ainslee Mahan
- 15 Aubree Mahan
- 17 Joan Comstock
- 21 Karla Parker
- 21 Casey Redfield
- 22 Brooke Vernon
- 31 Jim Lorenz

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Becky Pequignot
- 3 Rob Halase
- 3 Dora Fitzgerald
- 5 Charles Davis
- 6 Jerry Brachear
- 13 Louis Diechman
- 14 Michael Patrick Groom
- 17 Lois Krzak
- 22 Amanda Dean Groom
- 30 Vincent Martinez



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JULY ANNIVERSARIES

- 28 Charles & Irene Ohmer

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

- 8 Louis & Jean Diechman
- 11 Dan & Barb Groom
- 17 Dallas & Jackie Williams
- 29 Darren & Joann Woodke
- 29 Duncan & Sandy Redfield

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 9 Roy and Nancy Erndt (1967)
- 9 Shirlee & Roger Scovill (1978)
- 16 Peter & Isabella Dominguez (1951)
- 20 Sidney & Kermit Diggs