

# Countryside Trinity Church Connections

September 11, 2020

## From Pastor Brant...

*Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. --Exodus 14:21-22*

This is the pivotal story of the Hebrew Scriptures. God's power is in full display as God acts to bring the Israelites out of bondage to the Pharaoh of Egypt into freedom and the Promised Land. It is the act of liberation around which the people of Israel will come to understand themselves and their God. It is the act they will celebrate each year at the Passover feast, when they will use the elements of their meal to retell their story; the salty water to remind them of the tears of oppression; the lamb to remind them of the sacrifice, the blood of which they used to mark their doors; the unleavened bread to remind them of the immediacy of leaving.

We know the story well. Perhaps you watched "The Ten Commandments" every year, anticipating this event as it was portrayed in the movie; the multitudes of people on their escape from Yul Brynner; their terror as they find themselves seemingly trapped between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's advancing army, Heston raising his walking stick and seeing the waters retreat. And of course, the drama of the waters rushing back to keep the forces of oppression from overtaking the Hebrews.

What I was struck by in my latest reading of this passage is the presence of the pillar of cloud and flame that serves to both guide the people and to protect them during the night to keep Pharaoh's army at bay. I wondered about what it was like to experience its presence as one made his or her way over the difficult terrain, uncertain of what was going to happen next. The signs of God's presence and power weren't new to these people. They had witnessed the plagues and the stunned response of the Egyptians. They had survived the devastation of the loss of a first born son to anyone who didn't spread the blood of the sacrificial lamb upon their doorposts. I don't imagine they had any idea of what lay before them. I imagine they were hopeful in leaving the oppression and the slavery behind. I also imagine that they were anxious about what was next. How were they going to find food and water in the desert? They knew that the land where they hoped to live was now populated by those who did not know them. I imagine the biggest question, by far, was how were they ever going to be safe from the violence which was pursuing them and working to re-enslave them?

*The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night. Exodus 14:19-20*

With all this on their minds I would imagine that the pillar of cloud and flame, symbols of God's mysterious presence and power was of great comfort to them.

I am thankful for this image because I could use that pillar right about now. Perhaps you could as well. I am searching for sources of comfort and consolation from God. Like the people of Israel I am hopeful that we are being led to a new place, a place where we find ourselves freed from ways of thinking and being that were not helpful to our ministries and service. I am hopeful that God is ever with me, celebrating the words of the Psalmist, "you hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. I am not looking for a pillar of cloud and flame, though that would be helpful. Instead I look for those signs of God's power at work which remind me of God's steadfast love. I see the immense watermelons in the field and am reminded of God's generosity. I think of the people who give of themselves in our worship time, for their willingness to share their gifts and the comradery we experience. There are many signs when I choose to look.

We await the time when God will lead us in an another exodus from this time of fear and uncertainty. We believe it will come. It is central to our faith. But for now we are huddled along the shore, struggling to see beyond the barriers that are before us, searching for the signs that empower us to remain steadfast and faithful in the midst of the threats we experience.

Hang on to these signs. Continue to scan the horizon for their presence. Celebrate their sustaining power. Prepare to celebrate God's liberating work in the future.

Take care,

*Brant*

## **Online Worship on Sunday Mornings at 10:30 on YouTube CTC Saginaw**

We continue to place on our FB public and group pages our order of worship for the day, and we are hopeful that it will enhance your worship experience by offering the words to the hymns and other parts of the service so that you may participate more fully.

It is not the same as being here. We recognize it and continue to pray for the end of our forced isolation due to the virus. We believe God can and use this time to strengthen our ministry, if we seek God's guidance and consolation in this time.

We ask that you are patient with us as we work out the kinks in the technology and learn the finer details of creating audio visual presentations. If you have feedback about any of our digital outreach content, we'd love to hear your gently phrased criticisms.

We ask that you continue to be in prayer for the volunteers who provide assistance for our services, as well as for new volunteers to step up for these positions. If you have an interest in serving in the ministry of the gospel as a camera person, a computer assistant, or a worship planner working with media, please contact the pastor so that you can review the job description and the responsibilities of these positions.

## **Suspension of Inside Worship Continues**

At its meeting on July 28th, the session, following the recommendation of the presbytery and the guidelines set out by the Governor, authorized the continued suspension of indoor worship for an indefinite period.

## **Improvements of the Manse**

At its last meeting, the session authorized the Buildings and Grounds Team to make any improvements on the manse it thought would be helpful in improving the sale prospects for the Manse. Electrical work has been completed and it is in the process of being painted. Thanks to Chuck Davis and Roger Scovill for their work. Also to Ed Halase for his tireless efforts in keeping the grounds looking great.

## **Financial Report**

Your faithful giving empowers us to continue our witness to the work of Christ in the world as it allows you to strengthen your relationship with God. As you can see below, we met our goals for August! Our goal for September is \$8,500. Please remember you can make an online donation through our app, and if you need help with this, or if you want to run your donation by the church, please call the church office. Our online service includes its usual time of thanksgiving and dedication for our gifts, so you may want to have your money and envelopes or perhaps even your phone ready so that you can more fully participate in this time.

	August				
	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	Transfers	Ending Balance
General	(1,627.62)	10,071.43	9,975.27	5,879.70	4,348.24
Memorial	6,745.00	85.00			6,830.00
Memorial - Norma Patterson	-				-
Manse	(1,000.00)			(5,262.70)	(6,262.70)
Special gift	37,371.60		2,982.33		34,389.27
Special projects	1,768.79				1,768.79
Mission					
Per capita	232.50				232.50
Two-coins-a-meal	204.00		153.00		51.00
Food baskets	469.52				469.52
Heifer proj (Church School)	(0.00)				(0.00)
UCC/PCU	325.00		611.00		(286.00)
Good Samaritan	2,627.28				2,627.28
Muriel Lakey Scholarship	6,271.99				6,271.99
Womens Association	-				-
Local	185.00	166.00	170.00		181.00
Bricks	1,335.85				1,335.85
	54,908.91	10,322.43	13,891.60	617.00	51,956.74
Endowment	133,876.40	1,256.87		(617.00)	134,516.27
	188,785.31	11,579.30	13,891.60	-	186,473.01

### **Christian Outreach**

Please remember our local ministries during this time, as they work to provide additional resources to our community in this time of pandemic and need your support. We have received "Thank You Notes" from the following organizations for our contributions: Habitat for Humanity and Emmaus House. Our Mission of the Month for September is the City Rescue Mission.

### **Crop Walk**

Marcia Lacker reports there will be a "Virtual Crop Walk" this year on Sunday, October 11, 2020. It will be a little different this year as those participating will not be walking in a group - but rather in their own neighborhoods. If you are interested in participating - please contact Marcia @ 989 799-0895 to get an envelope. Those wishing to donate can drop off or mail their envelope to the church marked "Crop Walk".



**Greeting Cards:** Shirlee Scovill continues selling cards each Wednesday in the church parking lot from 1:00-2:00 p.m. Proceeds from the sale of these cards will support the mission work of the Women's Association. In addition, when available, Shirlee is bringing fruits and vegetables from Roger's garden. There may be sweet corn, melon, tomatoes and more! They are giving these items free of charge for those who would like to come pick it up when they have an over-abundance ripe and ready for your enjoyment.

Please wear a mask and remember to practice social distancing. The cards will be arranged differently than in the past and will be on tables next to her van. The cards will be self-service with a container for the money at the tables. Shirlee will be there to answer questions. Shirlee has kept busy during the time we have been home and, therefore, has many cards to choose from – Birthday, Get Well, Sympathy, Thinking of You, Wedding, Anniversary, Retirement, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Hope to see you on Wednesdays in the near future.

**Facebook Prayer Group:** We have created a FB Prayer Group on our newly created FB Page. It is a private group where only those who are invited can see the messages posted for those in need of prayer. If you are on Facebook and would like to be invited, please call Kathy in the office so she can invite you to join.



This week we are praying for Leore Bethune as she prepares for and starts treatment for basal cell carcinoma/skin cancer on her face. Hope you are feeling better soon Leore. We are also praying for Betty Burr who fell and broke her hip. She is having surgery at Covenant Cooper Hospital and we hope she is up and around and feeling better soon.

Don't forget to let Kathy in the office know about any change of yours or a family member's address, phone numbers or email addresses so she can update the church records and mailing lists. Please email changes to [countryside@ctcsaginaw.com](mailto:countryside@ctcsaginaw.com) or leave a message at 989 793-0125. Thank you.





# Birthdays & Anniversaries

## **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
- 25 Thomas Kennedy
- 28 Brant Piper
- 29 Tom Ladner
- 30 Vincent Martinez

## **OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS**

- 1 Zachary Plater
- 2 Drew Pequignot
- 2 Dan Groom
- 3 Joseph Ruth
- 5 Mary Longstreth
- 6 Amanda J. Groom
- 11 Dick Easlick
- 13 Ethan Parker
- 13 Ruth Marsh
- 13 Charlotte Armstrong
- 13 Jerry Paquette
- 14 Mike Yusaf
- 14 Tania Yusaf
- 16 Randy Groom
- 17 Elizabeth Jacob
- 19 Christopher Davis
- 22 Jean Anne Miller
- 22 Pat Denno
- 25 Ezra Yusaf
- 25 Aaron Plater
- 27 Marie Lemmer
- 29 Scott Jacob
- 29 Lori Halase

## **NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

- 1 Paige Pequignot
- 3 Sam Nolan
- 7 Judi Westendorf
- 7 Christine (Dowling) Greenwood
- 8 Duncan Redfield
- 9 Stephanie Plater
- 10 Anjel Vernon
- 11 Dave Fitzgerald

- 12 Jacob Plater
- 15 Dick Woodke
- 16 Pervez Yusaf
- 19 Martin Bethune
- 20 Judith Lorenz
- 21 Ronald Miller
- 22 Jacob Groom
- 22 Lucas Gonzales
- 23 Bethany Scovill
- 23 Virginia Jarvi
- 28 Jennifer Nolan-Heyn
- 28 Avis Leach

## **DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

- 3 Rhashell Hunter
- 8 Garth Westendorf
- 12 Melissa Paterson (Shalhoup)
- 16 Alexa Mahan
- 17 Nancy Easlick
- 18 Paula Plater
- 22 Ed Halase
- 24 Nancy Scott
- 25 Brecque Woodke
- 26 Craig Gates

## **SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

- 9 Roy and Nancy Erndt (1967)
- 9 Shirlee & Roger Scovill (1978)
- 16 Peter & Isabella Dominguez (1961)
- 20 Sidney & Kermit Diggs

## **OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES**

- 2 Aaron & Paula Plater
- 8 Robert & Marie Lemmer
- 10 Eric & Sue Smith

## **NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

- 17 Jerry & Virginia Brachear (1962)
- 22 Dave & Dora Fitzgerald (2014)

## **DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

- 15 Joseph & Doris Ruth (1956)
- 24 Bruce & Patricia Denno (1984)
- 27 Dick & Nancy Easlick