



# CTC Connections Newsletter

From Pastor Brant Piper

*What specifically is it about our wondrous experience with Christ that we urgently need to share with other people in our neighborhood and city?*

This is the question put before us by Thomas Bandy in his book *Worship Ways*. To guide people through their answer to this question, Bandy puts before us seven different understandings of how churches present their experiences of Christ, noting how churches tend to emphasize one or two of them in worship and outreach over and over again:

- Christ as Promise Keeper, blessing people with inspiration and hope for tomorrow
- Christ as Higher Power, blessing people with transformation and a fresh start
- Christ as Spiritual Guide, blessing people to cope with daily struggles and navigate life's ambiguities
- Christ as Teacher, blessing people with insight into eternal truths and authentic relationships
- Christ as Healer, blessing people with physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual wholeness and health
- Christ as Vindicator, blessing people with justice and raising their self-esteem
- Christ as Shepherd, blessing people with acceptance, belonging, and companionship

Which of the experiences listed above is most essential to you? What of your experience with Christ would you want others to know?

**On Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>**, we will gather as a congregation for the first of several gatherings to start our work in preparing for our time of transition towards new pastoral staff.

This gathering will begin in the sanctuary at our regular time of 10:30 for a shortened worship service of prayer and music and a short sermon to prepare ourselves for the work ahead of us. Following the service, we will form smaller groups of 5-6 people in separate spaces throughout the church to begin an activity to focus on our core values as a church. These groups will invite discussions about those values that are of greatest importance to us as a community of faith and be our first step in coming to a consensus around these values.

It is hoped that it might be feasible to provide a lunch for this time, though that is uncertain at this time. If not, we will end our gathering at noon.

Your participation in this effort will bring enthusiasm and clarity to our church's effort to secure pastoral leadership to lead us into the future God has in store for us.

Beginning this Sunday there will be sign-up sheets in the fellowship hall for those who will participate. This will help us ensure that there is/are enough settings in which small groups can meet. Please make your plans now to attend and sign up.

### **In-Person Worship Continues**

Though the infection rates in Michigan, and locally in Saginaw County are relatively high when compared with many other in the nation, the session believes that due to the high rate of vaccination among our members, that we will continue offering in-person worship on Sundays. Please continue to follow these protocols to insure that safety our members and community.

1. The sanctuary will be filled on a first come, first served basis, as household groups.
2. Please come in and exit through the center doors. The doors on the East side of the building will be locked.
3. Masks are required. They are an essential element in keeping one another safe, especially in indoor spaces with limited air movement.
4. Participants will be screened prior to admittance. Questions will be asked concerning his or her present state of health and possible exposure to the virus through others in the last 14 days.
5. You will be asked to use the hand sanitizer on both your way in and your way out.
6. Participation will be recorded that we might, if needed, provide contact tracing.
7. Sit in designated seating in your household groups. There is flexible seating and you are asked to use the noodles found in the pews to maintain a safe distance.
8. The pastor will not be wearing a mask while speaking. He will be behind a Plexiglas shield to protect worshippers.
9. There will be no Children's Time during the service or Sunday School after the Children's Time.
10. Those who would prefer to sit in the fellowship hall are welcomed to do so, and chairs will be provided that are socially distant. Family groups are welcomed to move them so that they can sit together.
11. There is a basket at the back of the church for your offering.
12. On the first Sunday of the month a bucket for our 2 cents a meal offering will be available. Please place your coins in either an envelope or a plastic bag.
13. You are to remain seated until after the completion of the Postlude. Please honor this so as not to create an issue with the livestreaming of our service.
14. Upon dismissal please do not stop to socialize, but move directly and quietly outside.
15. You are welcomed to socialize for as long as you would like outside. Bring a lawn chair if you would like to stay for a longer visit.
16. The service starts at 10:30. Please come early to give yourself time to go through the screening and seating processes.

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

We will continue to place on our CTC Saginaw YouTube page our livestream of our Sunday morning services. If you have feedback about any of our digital outreach content, we'd love to hear your gently phrased guidance.

We will continue to put on our FB pages our order of worship for the day, and will make available a link to our YouTube channel for the service. 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.

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.

### **Joint Meeting of Session and Deacons, Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm.**

The session is inviting the deacons to join its stated meeting on Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30. The purpose of this gathering will be to explore and clarify our leadership directions and energies for this time of transition, and to share information and build encouragement for the visioning efforts that will take place during this time.

### **Stewardship**

The session expresses its gratitude to the congregation for its continued faithful stewardship to the mission of the church.

Our Monthly Goal for May was \$11,000, and we collected \$7877. With a partial return to worship the session expresses its hope that it will bring greater opportunities for giving. Please check your commitment to the church's ministries when you receive your half year statement so that adjustments can be made, if needed.

Our June goal is \$5200.

### **Warren Ave Presbyterian Property**

On Tuesday, May 25th, the Presbytery of Lake Huron called a special meeting to accept a proposal for the Warren Ave. property.

As part of that agreement, the presbytery would gift that property to the Holy Communion Gospel Center (HCGC), along with a total of \$100,000 in two payments.

The motion was tabled until the next presbytery meeting, June 8th, as the HCGC requested more money as the property will require of \$300,000 of repairs and improvements to remain a functioning building.

As the building's demolition would cost approximately \$150,000, and that it is the presbytery's desire that this building would continue to be a resource of support and compassion to its community, the presbytery may consider increasing the amount of money gifted and present a new proposal at the meeting on June 8th.

## YOUR SESSION/COUNCIL AT WORK

MAY 18, 2021

Mary Ann Parker, Clerk of Session

**Reflection & Thanksgiving Time:** In preparing for the commencement of study for the church's mission, Pastor Brant led us in a discussion of Acts 1: 2-5, 14, 23-26 which centers around:

- Learning about God's reign
- Waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit
- Praying
- Selecting new leadership

Linda Kennan, Presbytery Committee on Ministry liaison for Countryside Trinity Church, presented "Partnership, Polity, and Process" which described steps that needed to be taken in the process of a search for a new pastor.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mari presented the April finance report. Motion sustained to recommend to Stewardship & Finance Committee to research the investment of the money market funds.

**Clerk's Report:** Membership is 120.

Correspondence: Letter sent to the Nanum Presbyterian Church requesting the transfer of membership of Chong & Tom Ladner. Motion sustained to accept them into church membership by letter of transfer when the way be clear.

Letter received from Roger Scovill that he had reviewed the financial records of 2020 and found that "the accounting and administrative procedures result in accurate, timely and informative monthly financial statements."

For the Record: Members who were elected on 11-29-2020 were installed on 5-16-2021 for the following offices:

Session class of 2023 – Roger Scovill, Mary Longstreth, Mary Ann Parker

Deacons class of 2023 – Nancy Easlick, Barbara Groom, Nancy Scott

**Pastor's Report:** Participated in the National Day of Prayer 5/6/21  
Met with Presbytery COM Transitional Team, of which he is a member  
Met with Spiritual Life Committee  
Motion sustained to approve Brant's vacation request from June 20 through June 26<sup>th</sup>. Timm High will be preaching for us that day.

**Called Presbytery Meeting:** Roger will be attending called meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup> during which the Presbytery trustees will recommend the sale of the Warren Avenue Church property to the Holy Communion Gospel Center. Presbytery is the owner of the church property.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Finance & Stewardship:** R. Scovill reported that the deficit for April was about \$2500 for contributions.

**Christian Outreach:** K. Blehm related that May mission is Habitat for Humanity and June mission will be East Side Soup Kitchen. Baby shower donations were clothes and necessities plus \$325.00. Contributions for One Great Hour of Sharing were \$370.00.

**Spiritual Life:** D. Woodke made motion to authorize a gathering on church grounds on May 23 as part of the celebration of Pentecost and to celebrate graduation Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup> in the same manner with the serving of cookies and beverages following safety protocols. Motion sustained. Chairs will be provided.

**Return to Worship:** Parker provided most recent updates from CDC and COVID infection sites for Michigan and Saginaw County. Decision to maintain our safety protocols that we are following at this time was made to provide for the safety and welfare of our members/friends. The precautions in place are as follows:

- ❖ We will continue to track, (for exposure purposes), all, people entering our building, whether it is for worship, meetings, or visitation.
- ❖ We will not take temperatures UNLESS the people coming into the building have not been here since the church reopened in March, ONLY THEN, will temperatures be taken and recorded, the symptom questions asked, and questions regarding exposure and vaccination status be asked and recorded.
- ❖ We will check on exposure to COVID whether they have been vaccinated or not.
- ❖ We will still ask that masks be worn unless it is an outdoor gathering.
- ❖ We would prefer that social distancing be practiced indoors.
- ❖ We will ask also that people continue to use hand sanitizer before and after leaving the building.
- ❖ Those coming into the building on a regular basis during the week, as staff, only need to sign in.

**New Business:** Mission Study Team will host congregational gatherings to examine and to develop core values and a vision statement for Countryside Trinity. This statement is a requirement of our mission study which is needed before we can look for a new pastor.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

### **COVID 19 SAFETY PROTOCOL FOR CTC A note from your Session/Council**

Safety protocols have changed markedly fast in the last week or so. Session met Tuesday, May 18, 2021 and reviewed recent data from CDC, the state of Michigan and Saginaw County. Saginaw County is still considered in the red zone with 29 COVID cases per 100,000 people and in a high vulnerability state. Michigan is also still at high rate for infection although infection rates are dropping. The rates are changing daily as more people become vaccinated. With these statistics in mind and with the need to provide for the safety and welfare for those entering our building, session members have agreed on the following safety precautions:

- ❖ We will continue to track, (for exposure purposes), all, people entering our building, whether it is for worship, meetings, or visitation.

- ❖ We will not take temperatures UNLESS the people coming into the building have not been here since the church reopened in March, ONLY THEN, will temperatures be taken and recorded, the symptom questions asked, and questions regarding exposure and vaccination status be asked and recorded.
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- ❖ Those coming into the building on a regular basis during the week, as staff, only need to sign in.

We want you to remember that it is better to be proactive currently in this crazy, but wonderful world. We are all anxious to be able to touch and to hug, but we still need to be cautious until we are sure that this life-changing virus no longer poses a threat to our lives and the lives of our loved ones. Let's practice patience and perseverance a little longer!! We can talk and smile at each other outdoors and bask in God's goodness and steadfast love in the sunshine and warmer weather!

### **TWO REQUESTS FROM OUR FINANCIAL SECRETARY:**

1. When contributing to missions of any kind (except when otherwise indicated) please make checks payable to Countryside Trinity Church. Designate the preferred mission on the outer envelope and/or in the "memo" area of your check.
2. All contributions are sincerely appreciated but please refrain from sending in loose coin collections unless it is for the two-cents-a-meal donation which will occur on the first Sunday of each month. If you are donating coins for this mission, please try to put your coins in a plastic bag or envelope and make sure to place it in the pail marked Two-Cents-A-Meal on the table at the back of the sanctuary. Your cooperation demonstrates respect for our excellent stewardship volunteers.

Thank you so much for your efforts to make my task a little easier!

### **A VISIT FROM REV. JEFF KANE**

Long time members of the original Countryside Church and the former Washington Avenue Presbyterian Church might remember Jeff Kane. He grew up in the Washington Avenue church and served as Youth Minister at Countryside during the 1970's. I have recently reconnected with Jeff (thanks to Dorothy Gray's son, Ted). Jeff currently serves as pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Tennessee. He and his son, Ben, will be touring Michigan and would like to attend worship at Countryside on June 13<sup>th</sup>. I thought many of you would appreciate having the opportunity to catch up with Pastor Jeff. Let's give he and his son a warm welcome! ~Lori Halase

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

	April				
	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	Transfers	Ending Balance
General	7,353.27	7,877.14	10,823.22	1,095.00	5,502.19
Memorial	9,145.00	250.00			9,395.00
Memorial - Lyons Troop 304	140.00	100.00	75.00		165.00
Manse	-				-
Special gift	15,300.02				15,300.02
Special projects	4,695.36				4,695.36
Mission					
Per capita	360.60				360.60
Two-coins-a-meal	-				-
Food baskets	1,212.52	25.00	100.00		1,137.52
Heifer proj (Church School)	(0.00)				(0.00)
UCC/PCU/Blankets	430.00	470.00			900.00
Good Samaritan	2,497.28				2,497.28
Muriel Lakey Scholarship	6,896.97	309.55			7,206.52
Womens Association	-				-
Local	325.00	395.00			720.00
Bricks	1,335.85				1,335.85
	49,691.87	9,426.69	10,998.22	1,095.00	49,215.34
Minister Compensation	95,787.95			(535.00)	95,252.95
Endowment	251,962.66	55.54		(560.00)	251,458.20
	397,442.48	9,482.23	10,998.22	-	395,926.49

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<b>Betty Burr</b> Samaritas Senior Living	<b>Joan Comstock</b> @ Home	<b>Dawn Curtis</b> @ Home
<b>Betty Hauk</b> @ Home	<b>Floyd &amp; Lois Krzak</b> @ Home	<b>Bob &amp; Marie Lemmer</b> Wellspring Assisted Living
<b>Fern Evon Little</b> Swan Haven Manor	<b>Judy Lorenz</b> St. Francis Home	<b>Virginia Lyon</b> @ Home
<b>Ruth Marsh</b> @ Home	<b>Norma Meacham</b> New Hope Valley	<b>Elaine Miner</b> @ Home
<b>Fran Prueter</b> @ Home	<b>Helen Reynolds</b> Wellspring Independent Living	<b>Shirley Roof</b> Wellspring Assisted Living



This year's Graduation Sunday will be celebrated during our worship service on Sunday, June 13th. Please let Sandy Redfield know asap if you have a child, grandchild, etc. graduating from High School and/or College this year. Sandy can be reached at (989)482-9731. We will be celebrating Drew Pequignot's graduation from Heritage High School. A basket for cards will be on the table as you enter the church and a reception outside on the lawn will follow the worship service.

**Condolences to the family of Bruce Robert George.** We recently learned that the former Pastor from Grace Presbyterian Church, Saginaw, Bruce Robert George, passed away on January 30, 2021. May he rest in peace.



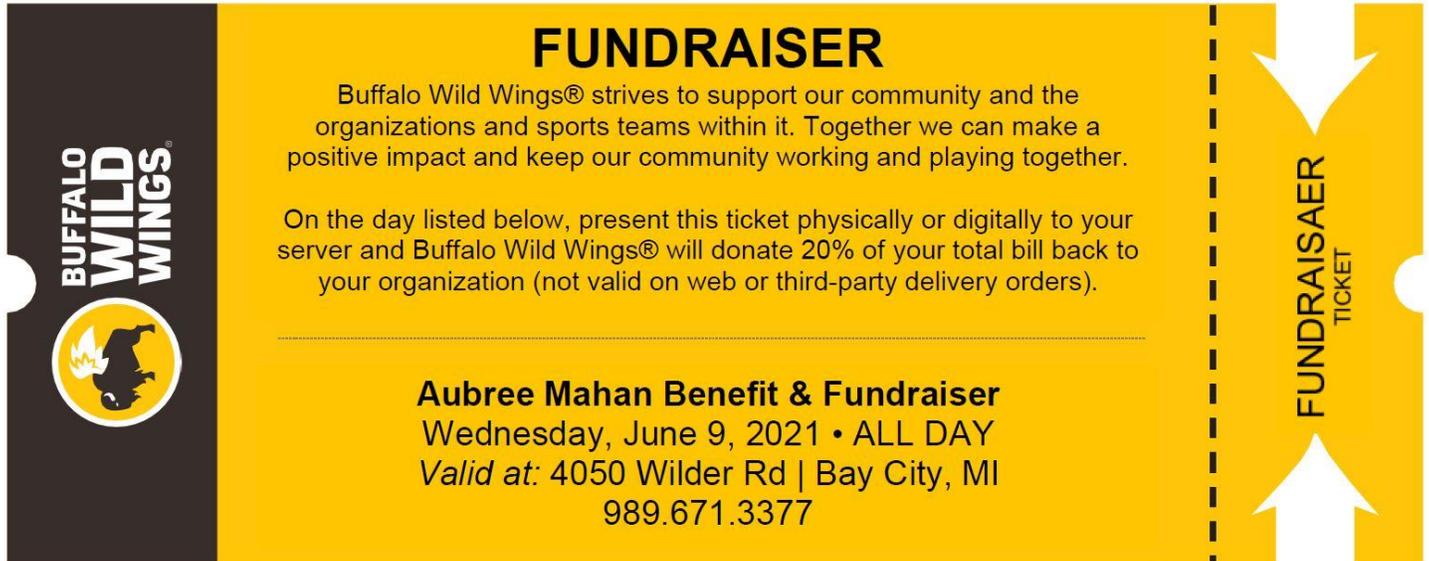
**Dorothy Sievert** wishes to thank everyone for their calls and concerns. She reports her cancer is still gone and she hopes to be able to see everyone soon.

**Marcia Lacker** wishes to thank everyone for their cards, calls and concerns regarding her surgery. She is doing great and received good reports from the doctor.

**Gwen Henderson** says thank you to everyone for all the wonderful birthday cards she received. A huge THANK YOU to everyone who has showered my granddaughters, Aubree and Ainslee Mahan, with cards, gifts, donations and concern during this past ten days or so. If you are not aware, both girls were involved in a house/grease fire in the early morning hours of Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. Aubree received severe burns to her right arm and hand and down both legs from her thighs to her toes. She has been hospitalized at Hurley Medical Center in Flint since approximately 3:30 a.m. on the 17<sup>th</sup>. During this time she has undergone several debridement surgeries where they literally scrape the skin off her legs in an effort to get down to healthy skin. As you can imagine this has been extremely painful for her. We did receive good news on the 25<sup>th</sup> that while they took her down to surgery to begin skin grafting - when they got her bandages off (only a day and a half after they looked previously) there were miraculous signs of healing beginning in those areas. We believe this is a sign of God's answer to all of yours and our many prayers over the last week. So, as of right now, they are hoping that skin grafts will not be required. Allelulia!!! We still do not have a release date from the hospital, but even when that happens, she will need to make weekly trips back to Flint for treatment for months to come. Right now they are predicting it will be 3-4 months before she will be able to return to work. While Ainslee didn't receive any burns - she too has been suffering from anxiety, depression and concern for her twin. Please keep my girls in your prayers during this next few months.

We all need as many prayers as we can get. Thanks again for all the wonderful support we have received. Love you all - **Kathy Loviska**.

Aubree's workplace is having a fundraiser for her on June 9<sup>th</sup> for anyone that may be interested. Below is a ticket for that event. It can be duplicated and given to anyone you think might be interested. Buffalo Wild Wings is donating 20% of all total bills that day for her benefit. They have indicated you can show the ticket, or just mention her fundraiser to the waitress.



**FUNDRAISER**

Buffalo Wild Wings® strives to support our community and the organizations and sports teams within it. Together we can make a positive impact and keep our community working and playing together.

On the day listed below, present this ticket physically or digitally to your server and Buffalo Wild Wings® will donate 20% of your total bill back to your organization (not valid on web or third-party delivery orders).

**Aubree Mahan Benefit & Fundraiser**  
Wednesday, June 9, 2021 • ALL DAY  
Valid at: 4050 Wilder Rd | Bay City, MI  
989.671.3377

FUNDRAISER  
TICKET

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We have received our Kroger Community Rewards for this quarter in the amount of \$43.89 which represents 26 households that have named Countryside as their charity of choice. If you shop at Krogers - either for groceries, medications or gas, and

have not yet named us as your charity - please consider doing that. Every little bit helps. If you have questions on how to do this, contact Kathy Loviska either at the church Tues-Thurs mornings or on her cell phone (989) 270-7725. Remember you do not have to be a member of the church to do this - anyone who shops there can name our church as their charity of choice.

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Two Cents a Meal will continue to be collected on the first Sunday of each month during Worship Service. There will be a pail at the back of the Sanctuary marked as such. Please bring your coins in a plastic baggie or envelope if you are able to do so and place in the pail either on your way in or out of Church. Thank you.





### **BIRTHDAYS JUNE**

- 2 Michael Wayne Groom
- 3 Eric Smith
- 8 Christian (Volker) Saxton
- 11 Robert Bortner
- 11 Dana Hansen Cooper
- 19 Kitty Blehm
- 20 Marilyn Leffler
- 20 Dan Saperstein
- 21 Jasmyrn Volker
- 30 Darren Woodke
- 30 John Furlo

### **JULY BIRTHDAYS**

- 2 Elaine O'Keefe
- 5 Dawn Curtis
- 11 Graham Parker
- 12 Robert Lemmer
- 13 Jean Bortner
- 18 Sidney Diggs IV
- 23 Bobby Diggs
- 24 Zayden Evans (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

### **ANNIVERSARIES JUNE**

- 21 Edward & Lori Halase
- 28 Dan & Liz Saperstein
- 29 Ronald & Jean Anne Miller

### **ANNIVERSARIES JULY**

- 28 Charles & Irene Ohmer

### **AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES**

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