

CTC CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

March, 2021

From Pastor Brant...



"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Mt. 6:1

This is the warning Jesus offers to us, in the midst of his Sermon on the Mount, concerning how to practice our piety before others. After speaking about the new lifestyle that comes to those who trust in the reality of the presence of the Kingdom of God, he offers insights into the disciplines through which that new lifestyle will take hold. If those who mourn are to be comforted, if those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are to be filled, if we are not to be caught up in our anxiety over our daily needs, something powerfully transformative will have to take hold.

In the three examples which follow, Jesus will remind us that our efforts to draw closer to God can be easily derailed by our human longings. Our acts of piety, instead of bringing us closer to God, can provide us with opportunities to try and circumvent the ways of God. Thus actions which start off with the best intentions of leading us into the heart of God end up creating more distance.

In each example he tells his listeners to not be like the hypocrites who crave the public notice when they give, pray, and fast. When they give, and pray, and fast, they find that their attention is split between God and others. The word for hypocrite has as its origins in words which were applied to actors in a play. These actors would put on different masks in order to show to the audience which character he was playing. These were people who were putting on an act. Jesus' condemnation of the hypocrites seems to be stressing the need for complete and total honesty in one's relationship with God. To make a show for public consumption does little to honor the gift of relationship that is being offered through them.

Jesus begins by dealing with the discipline of giving. The secret to making this a discipline through which one builds equity with God, is to try and not keep too close an account on just how much we are giving away. God is far more generous than we can even imagine, and to share in the abundance we have helps us to experience this more fully.

Jesus then turns his attention to prayer. People had already recognized in Jesus' life the power of his prayer life. I can imagine that they could see it in his face how his time away with his Father had brought him insight and courage, and so were anxious to hear from him about prayer. He offers direction about a daily discipline of solitude with God, for it is when our direction is more fully directed towards God, that God's Spirit opens our eyes to who we really are. In the presence of the One we call our Shepherd and our Savior are we truly safe enough to do the hard work of self-

examination, confession, and repentance. What becomes clear in solitude is that the ultimate struggle for the Kingdom of God takes place in the private recesses of our hearts. This is the true battleground. This is where God's purposes for the world are either won or lost; within us. And only in our times of solitude with God can our struggle with our selfish selves be victorious.

The last of Jesus' teaching turns to fasting. Fasting has fallen on hard times; it has a bad rep; it has been connected to false piety, to bad theology. Jesus himself pokes fun at those who fast when they are obviously doing it for all the wrong reasons, when the dour expression on their faces make it clear that they want everybody to know what a wonderful sacrifice they are making for God. Fasting is not an endurance test in which we try and prove just how much we are willing to give ourselves up for God. It is an opportunity for us to remember that we do not live by "bread alone".

Richard J. Foster, in his landmark book, "A Celebration of Discipline," has this to say concerning fasting. ***"In a culture where the landscape is dotted with shrines to the Golden Arches and an assortment of Pizza Temples, fasting seems out of place, out of step with the times."*** In our society we are constantly bombarded with messages that we need three meals a day along with some snacks on the side if we are to avoid starvation, and encouraged to immediately satiate any hunger we might feel, be it food or drink or otherwise. Fasting is about humility, reminding us that we are dependent upon the grace of God for life. Foster says, ***"More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us."*** It will reveal our addictions and expose to us our unwillingness to rely solely on God. It will reveal the real hungers that lie within our hearts and our inability to meet them through the things of this world.

In this season of Lent, we are invited to start regular routines for disciplines of piety, the giving of alms, prayer, and fasting, that we might be able to sustain them throughout the year. It is a time when we are invited to approach God with our brokenness and self-centeredness. The Lent Devotionals for 2021 offer us an opportunity to focus our attention to God. Jesus invites us go off into place of solitude, and unfortunately this is easier to do than at many other times before. It is also true that this can be a time of blessing as practicing your piety before others right now is so much harder to do. So take advantage of this opportunity to start your disciplines and discover God waiting to deepen the relationship that brings resurrection power into your life.

Take Care,

Brant

YOUR SESSION/COUNCIL AT WORK
February 17, 2021
Mary Ann Parker, Your Clerk of Session

Following a period of reflection, thanksgiving, and prayer, reports were received.

Clerk's report: Church membership is 121 with the passing of Mary Young and Don Lyons.
Annual statistical report to be submitted to Presbytery approved.

Pastor's report: Meetings with PNC of First Presbyterian of Alma.
Meeting with COM Transitional Team.
Working with Boy Scout Troop 304.
Officiated at both Mary Young's and Don Lyons's funerals.
Calls to members plus preparing for Sundays' worship services and Lenten programs.

Christian Outreach: Preparing for the Easter baskets for those in need with \$50.00 gift food cards.
Check for \$270 sent to Weiss Elementary School for student needs (collected for backpack program and leftover money that was donated for Thanksgiving baskets).

Spiritual Life: Church Transformation Grant for \$2500.00 approved for submission to Presbytery to help with facilitating the growth and outreach for the congregation.
Lenten Devotional on YouTube every Wednesday night at 6:30 PM.
Lenten Bible study, "Case for Easter" every Tuesday at 3 PM on ZOOM for 4 weeks during Lent, starting March 2.

Congregational Life: Nineteen Valentine packages delivered to members/friends of church.
Card shower for Helen Reynolds who will be 103 years young on February 26.

On February 5, 2021 the sale of the manse was completed. The church received a total of \$110,400.07 for the property and the house. The sum of the net proceeds is not known at this time.

The following was action taken by session on August 18, 2020 pending the future sale of the manse.

Net proceeds are defined as cash received at closing less reimbursement from the general fund for repairs/upgrades to sell the manse, survey and other land division expenses and utility, property tax and repair expenses since the manse was vacated. The net proceeds from the sale will be invested and maintained in a separate fund. Investment earnings and principal from the fund will be transferred annually to the general fund and used to support the housing allowance expense item in our budget. In the event there is no housing allowance item, the transfer will go the pastor's salary line.



Obituary for Mary M. Young

Young, Mary M.
Saginaw, Michigan

Our beloved mother, grandmother, sister, aunt and dear friend passed away peacefully on Saturday, January 30, 2021 at Saginaw Senior Care. She was 90 years old. Mary M. Reid was born on January 15, 1931 in Saginaw, Michigan to the late Alfred C. and Mary (McCloy) Reid. She married Roy E. Young on September 21, 1963. He preceded her in death on October 21, 2003. Mary was a faithful member of

Countryside Trinity Church. Her generous spirit and contagious smile touch many lives throughout her 90 years. Mary loved to prepare meals, bake and host many family dinners. Her family and grandchildren brought her much joy and she would never miss an opportunity to have an adventure. In her younger years, she loved to participate in Road Rallies, with her Volkswagen Bug. Mary loved camping, bowling, and was always up for a good time. She was the go to for communication and directions within her family.

Mary will be greatly missed by her children: Becky J. Pequignot of Saginaw and William R. (Karen) Young of Brighton, Mich.; Roxane (Jack) Lannen of Aurora, Colo.; nine grandchildren: Cindy, Cheryl, Kenneth, Kindra, Donald, Steven, Melissa, Joshua, Drew and Paige; many great grandchildren; brother, Samuel Reid; sister, Barbara Wilber; sister-in-law, Mary Lou Reid; many nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Roy; daughter, Sandra (Don) Handlovits; and daughter, Carol Ann Young.

VISITATION: Family and friends will gather at Deisler Funeral Home, 2233 Hemmeter Rd. (off State) on Tuesday, February 2, 2021 from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. In keeping with mandated ordinances and for the safety of the community, face masks are required, social distancing, and gathering guidelines will be observed.

FUNERAL: A private funeral service will take place on Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at Deisler Funeral Home. Pastor Brant Piper will officiate.

MEMORIALS: Those planning and expression of sympathy may wish to consider a memorial contribution to Countryside Trinity Church. Please share your thoughts and memories with the family at the funeral home or through www.DeislerFuneralHome.com



Obituary for Donald "Don" A. Lyons

Lyons, Donald "Don" A.
Saginaw, Michigan

Beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather arrived at the heavenly gates of his eternal home on Monday, February 8, 2021, he was 88 years old. Donald Arthur Lyons was born April 29, 1932 in Saginaw, Michigan to the late Francis and Margaret (Wagner) Lyons. He graduated from Arthur Hill Trade School. Don then joined the United States Army, proudly serving in the Korean War, where he was the recipient of the Purple Heart. He was employed by Consumers Energy, retiring in 1994. Don married the love of his life, Virginia "Toots" Kellett on June 2, 1956 at Warren Avenue Presbyterian Church in Saginaw. She survives him.

Don was a very active volunteer with Boy Scout Troop 304 for over 50 years. He enjoyed teaching scouts skills needed to achieve their merit badges, especially knot tying. Don loved camping, including the winter polar bear camps. He attended many outings at Camp Rotary and Bear Lake. Don received some of the highest scouting accolades including the Silver Beaver and the God and Country award for his dedication to the troop.

He was also very active with the American Legion Post 439. Don served as the post historian, served on the honor guard, and as a chaplain. He also participated for many years in Veteran's Day parades and memorial services.

Don was also very active with the Korean War Veterans Organization. He was a member of the Purple Heart Society and VFW Post 1859. You could always find him selling poppy flowers for fund raising and he would help run Monday bingos at the VA Hospital.

He was a former member of Warren Avenue Presbyterian Church for over 50 years. Don served on many session committees, visited sick members in the hospital, and ushered for many years. After the closure of Warren Avenue Presbyterian Church, he began attending Countryside Trinity Church.

Don will be deeply missed by one daughter and two sons, Sue (Doug) Kohl, Rick (Terri Stark) Lyons, and Chuck Lyons; five grandchildren, Nick Bernard, Jill Bank, Brett (Niki) Lyons, Blake Lyons, and Brooke Lyons; five great-grandchildren, Mia, Evelyn, Junior, Emmitt, and Maguire; one sister, Sandra Bean of Rose City; brother in-law, Dave (Marti) Kellett of Saginaw; sisters in-law, Bonnie (Lou) Blank, Sandy Devito, Ivaleen Kellett, and Marcia Bennett; Don is also survived by many nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

Don was preceded in death by his brother, Herb Lyons; brothers in-law, Jack Kellett, Robert Bennett, and Wesley Bean; son in-law, Jay Bernard.

FUNERAL SERVICE: A Funeral Service will take place at 12:00 p.m. Friday, February 12, 2021 at Deisler Funeral Home, 2233 Hemmeter Rd. (off State). Rev. Brant Piper will officiate. Committal service to follow

at Roselawn Memorial Gardens. Military Honors will be conducted under the auspices of the United States Army and American Legion Post # 439.

VISITATION: Family and friends will gather at the Deisler Funeral Home, 2233 Hemmeter Rd. (off State) on Thursday, February 11, 2021 from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Visitation will continue at the funeral home on Friday from 11:00 a.m. until the time of service. In keeping with mandated ordinances and for the safety of the community, face masks are required, social distancing, and gathering guidelines will be observed.

MEMORIALS: In lieu of flowers, those planning an expression of sympathy may wish to consider memorials to Boy Scout Troop 304 of Countryside Trinity Church.

Deisler Funeral Home is honored to serve the Lyons family. Please share your thoughts and memories with the family at the funeral home or through www.deislerfuneralhome.com.

In Person Worship Suspended Until Further Notice: In person worship continues to be suspended until the way be clear for us to resume safely. The Sunday Worship service will continue to be broadcasted on our YouTube Channel, CTC Saginaw, premiering at 10:30 am, and a link to the service will also be available on our FaceBook page later on Sunday afternoon.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper March 7th: During our worship on March 7th, we will be celebrating the Lord's Supper. You are invited once again to gather before you the elements of the bread and the cup so that you might fully participate in this sacred celebration.

Offering Envelopes are available to be picked up: Lori Halase has made the boxes of offering envelopes available during the week for pickup. To pick yours up, **please first call the church office to make an appointment** to ensure both that someone will be here to unlock the door for you, and to pick up your offering envelope if you want to drop it off, and also to help us keep the number of people coming into the church building manageable. The boxes will be on the table on the left side as you come in the East door, each one in its own plastic bag. Please wear a mask as you enter, and exit as quickly as you can.

Per Capita Contributions continue to be collected: We are continuing to collect the Per Capita contributions. Again this year we are inviting all members to contribute \$30 to cover the costs of providing support to "Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) of the United Church of Christ and the "Per Capita Offering" of the PC(USA). This donation empowers the Presbytery of Lake Huron, the Michigan Conference, and our denominations to provide us with guidance and support as we seek to carry out the work of Jesus Christ in our community and in our world. Below are two online links to give you more information on each.

https://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/per_capita_overview_2019_color.pdf

<https://www.ucc.org/giving/ways-to-give/our-churches-wider-mission/ourchurches-wider-mission-basic-support/>



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. The Missions of the Month for March will be the Easter Food Gift Cards. Please mark your donations for the

Easter Gift Cards and send to the church. We will also be collecting for One Great Hour of Sharing on Palm Sunday, March 28, 2021. Please mark your envelope accordingly. Thank you.

Muriel Lakey Scholarship: If anyone is interested in applying for the Muriel Lakey Scholarship you can pick up an application at the church office or one can be mailed or emailed to you. Please contact the church office or Sandy Redfield if you would like an application. Applications are due Monday, March 1, 2021.



Kroger Community Rewards: We have received our quarterly payment from Krogers which was in the amount of \$43.43. This represents purchases from November, 2020 thru January, 2021. If you haven't signed up yet to name Countryside as your charity of choice, please do so. It doesn't cost anything and you still get your gas points, etc. If you need assistance on getting it set up, please let Kathy know in the office and she will be glad to help.



Greeting Cards: Shirlee Scovill has greeting cards on display and for sale inside the east door to the church on the table. There is a variety of cards available, but she wanted me to let you all know that if you need something special give her a call or email her to let her know what you want. Her phone numbers are: 989 892-1903 (Home) 989 327-2219 (Cell) and her email is scovillshirlee@yahoo.com.

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.



Telephone Directory: The new directories are ready to be picked up. If you aren't able to get to the church to get one, call Kathy in the office 989 793-0125 and she will mail it to you. If you do not get an answer, leave a message. Thanks

These Days: We have received the first quarter of 2021 *These Days* magazine and they will be in the box outside the east entrance door if you would like to pick one up.





Throughout the season of Lent, you will be invited daily to pray with a passage from Scripture and prompted to reflect on what it discloses to you about movement toward God and movement away from God in your life. As part of this you will be invited to keep a journal in which you briefly note what surfaces in your prayer time, so that you can track the movements of God's Spirit in your midst. In addition, each week, a hymn will be suggested in order for you to reflect on the truths the text reveals to you. We will begin on Ash Wednesday and continue on that day and time throughout Lent. This devotional series has been emailed to those we have an email address for and is also on our Facebook page and group. You can make an appointment to come by the church and pick up a packet on the table inside the church door or in the "Clear Plastic Container" outside the door. A short video will be available on our YouTube channel, CTC Saginaw on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm on which the pastor will be sharing some of his insights from the week's scripture readings.

Also during Lent, we will be doing a Lenten Book Study on Zoom starting at 3:00 p.m. on March 2nd and continuing for four weeks, concluding on March 23rd.

Join us for a four-week study on ZOOM with a study book and a small book to help understand what really occurred as we delve into these issues in "A Case for Easter". This study is written by Lee Stroebel, a journalist who was an atheist turned Christian, as he probes into these questions regarding the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Join us for discussion and to further understand what Christ went through for your sake. Questions?

The cost of the two books is \$9.00. Some homework may be required with discussion time during class. Call the church office to sign up for the 4-week session so that you can receive your Zoom invitation and to make an appointment to purchase your books before the class starts.



We have a very special birthday coming up which we want to be sure to celebrate. Helen Reynolds turns 103 years young on February 26th. If you are able to, please shower her with a birthday card. Her address is: Helen Reynolds, 5935 Shattuck Road, Room 126, Saginaw, MI 48603.



Thank You! We have received several cards and phone calls thanking us for the Valentine packages which were delivered to members/friends of CTC. You are all very welcome and hope you enjoyed them. Many thanks to Mary Ann Parker and Lori Halase, members of our Congregational Care Team, for their efforts in putting together these packets and delivering them.



"Easter Flowers 2021" Order Form

| <u>Flower</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | | <u>Price Each</u> | | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Easter Lily | _____ | x | \$ 11.00 | = | _____ |
| Mums 8" | _____ | x | \$ 11.00 | = | _____ |
| Daffodil 8" | _____ | x | \$ 9.00 | = | _____ |
| Hyacinth 8" | _____ | x | \$ 9.00 | = | _____ |
| Tulip 8" | _____ | x | \$ 9.00 | = | _____ |
| Azalea 7" | _____ | x | \$ 16.00 | = | _____ |
| Hydrangea | _____ | x | \$ 16.00 | = | _____ |

Total due for all flowers ordered: = \$_____

NAME: _____

IN Memory Of: _____

In Honor Of: _____

Please check one:

_____ Will take plant with me (or)

_____ Will leave plant at church for outdoor planting

Payment: Cash Payment: \$ _____ **Attached (or)**

Check Payment: \$ _____ **Make checks**

payable to "The Deacons."

**The deadline to place your order for Easter flowers is Sunday,
March 14, 2021.**

**Please drop off or mail your completed form
and payment to:**

**Countryside Trinity Church
4690 Weiss St.
Saginaw, MI 48603**

Thank you & Happy Easter!

PROTOCOLS FOR COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

In an abundance of caution and until it is safe to relax these procedures, the following protocols will be required before entering the building:

1. Appointments are required. Please call the office (989) 793-0125 to set up a convenient time Monday-Thursday in the mornings.
2. Enter the building only through the east door near the office
3. **YOU MUST WEAR A MASK WHILE INSIDE THE BUILDING.** Free masks are available in the entrance hall.
4. Fill out the Registration Sheet on the table immediately inside the door to the left, recording your answers to the Screening Questionnaire and your temperature as shown on example below. To take your temperature, place the thermometer near your forehead and squeeze the button. Your temperature will show up on the screen (please note that if it is cold outside, you may need to place the thermometer close to a location which was covered by your coat in order to get an accurate reading (forearm, neck, etc). **If you are not feeling well, or your temperature is above 100.4° F please do not come into the church.**

| | | | | |
|---------------|----------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| EVENT: | | | | |
| Date: | | Time: | Location: | |
| Attendee/Name | | Screening Questions (which one if answered "yes") | Temperature (Below 100.4 F/38C) | Admitted (Yes) (No) |
| 1 | Jane Doe | None | 98.4 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Please use the hand sanitizer on your way in and on your way out.
6. Please do not venture into the church.
 - a. If dropping something off, leave it on the table.
 - b. If picking something up, please arrange this in advance so it will be readily available for you.

We want to make sure that we are all as safe as possible under these extreme conditions and urge everyone to please be careful, always wear your mask and wash your hands often. Use hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes regularly. If you do not have a mask or need more, please let Kathy know and you will be provided as many as you need.



And Happy Anniversary

BIRTHDAYS MARCH

- 1 Ron Platt
- 2 Elaine Miner
- 3 Carol VanArsdale
- 8 Virginia Brachear
- 9 Sandy Redfield
- 12 Richard Foote
- 14 Andy Smith
- 16 Shirley Roof
- 22 Chong Ladner
- 29 Floyd Krzak
- 30 Glenna VanHautte
- 30 Robert Furlo

BIRTHDAYS APRIL

- 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

BIRTHDAYS MAY

- 1 Gwen Henderson
- 4 Joshua Gonzales
- 5 Sue Smith
- 6 Betty Burr
- 6 Marcia Lacker
- 8 Dorothy Hughes

BIRTHDAYS MAY CONTINUED

- 12 Barbara Groom
- 18 Doris Ruth
- 21 Seth Diggs
- 24 Katlyn Scovill
- 26 Charles Ohmer
- 26 Lore Woodke
- 28 Sue Paterson

ANNIVERSARIES MARCH

- 6 Chad & Karla Parker
- 21 Vincent & Michelle Martinez

NO APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

If you have an anniversary in April, please let the church know. Thank you.

ANNIVERSARIES MAY

- 4 Tom & Chong Ladner
- 7 Floyd & Lois Krzak
- 15 Christine & Paul Greenwood
- 16 Kathryn & Kevin Barnum
- 18 Randy & Lynne Groom
- 28 Christian & Bradley Saxton