

COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH CONNECTIONS

November, 2020



From Pastor Brant...

Hallelujah

You are righteous, O Lord, and your judgments are right.

You have appointed your decrees in righteousness and in all faithfulness.

My zeal consumes me because my foes forget your words.

Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it.

I am small and despised, yet I do not forget your precepts.

Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is the truth.

Trouble and anguish have come upon me, but your commandments are my delight.

Your decrees are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live.

--Psalm 119:137-144, NRSV

These verses of scripture are from a song of celebration that comes to us in the book of Psalms. We get the word psalms from the same word from which we get hallelujah. It is a book of celebrations about God, about how people throughout the history of the people of God have experienced and known God as faithful and compassionate. These songs of praise and thanksgiving arise out of so many different human situations, good, bad, happy and sad. They have such great appeal and we can quickly find ourselves identifying with one psalm or another, depending where we are in life. They strike me as a collection of the Hebrews' Greatest Hit collection, put together over the centuries by people who have been inspired by their experiences to celebrate what God has done or in some cases, not done for them over the years. I like to think someone was sitting through a service at the temple and was suddenly struck by an idea, pulled out his bulletin, and started writing down some of his ideas on the back. Tired of counting the number of candles or staring at the bald heads of the elders, yearning to express himself in the most heartfelt manner he could, he was inspired by God's Spirit to pen some poetry about how his faith in God had touched his life and supported him through difficult times. Or that she, while sitting in the silence outside of the place where the men would gather, began to formulate in her head her questions about where God was in the midst of suffering and despair.

This psalm is unusual in its structure, a structure that demonstrates for us the playfulness that can be a part of our prayers and expressions of thanksgiving to God. Psalm 119 is known as the mega psalm because of its 176 verses. The reason for this is that the psalmist wrote an alphabet psalm. We can't see it of course because this psalm was originally written in Hebrew. But if we could, we would see that each of the 22 collections of eight verses starts with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Now that is a pretty worthless tidbit of information, except what it says to us about how we can express our praise and thanks to God as we go about our everyday lives. This psalm sets before us the freedom we have in expressing our praise and thanks to God about who God is and what God has done for us. And it invites us to experience the joy that comes in being creative in our offerings of thanks. Its playfulness invites us to use our own playful creativity in expressing our gratitude and thankfulness to God. It chides us should our prayers of thanksgiving become too formal and stiff. On October 18th, the first Sunday on which we were able to return to in person worship, a banner was displayed in the sanctuary. The words, "We Gather Together" expressed our joy at being able to finally gather after being a part for months. To further accentuate the joy, around the words were gathered colorful silhouettes of people and the front of the church. Our efforts to express our thanks and praise to God knows no bounds. We have been given the gifts to be creative in our thanksgiving, and this psalm reinforces for us the invitation to be bold and playful in our many expressions.

This Thanksgiving, as with everyday of our existence, we are invited to seek out those new and creative ways to show our thanks and praise to our loving God. We can admit to ourselves that this is a more difficult Thanksgiving in which to do so. Our more traditional ways will not be as available. We will not be able to gather as family to that same degree, our anxiety concerning the virus has risen as the number of those contracting the virus has risen, our healthcare system is being taxed, and there is tension in our nation over an election that is not yet completely resolved. Finding new ways is more important than ever. Pursue them and find the joy that awaits.

Take care,

Brant



CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

Congregational Meeting in the Parking Lot, Sunday, November 29th,

1:30 pm. - The Session has called a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing officers for the next year and to give approval for the selling of the manse. This meeting will take place in the parking lot as we need to have people both present and safely distanced from one another. You will be sent a Zoom Link to this meeting, which will allow you to participate either through a regular cell phone, a smart phone, an

Ipad, or a laptop. Wireless internet connections will be made available. This will allow those who are present to speak and listen to one another as we discern together the work of the church. Nominations, as required, will be taken from those who are physically present, and the person nominated must have been asked and agreed to serve prior to the meeting. Further information about the set up will be offered in subsequent newsletters.

SUSPENSION OF IN-PERSON WORSHIP UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE: At its meeting on Tuesday, November 17th, in light of the increased number of people contracting the virus, and the recommendations of both the state's health department and the presbytery council, the session acted to suspend in-person worship 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 will also be available on our FaceBook page later on Sunday afternoon.

This is a difficult time to make this decision as we move into the celebrations of Thanksgiving, the Season of Advent, and of course, Christmas. We are working to include as many elements of the season into our services as we can. Please let us know what additional items you would like to include through either emails or letters.

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.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper, First Sunday of Advent, November 29th:

During our worship on the first Sunday of Advent, November 29th, 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, as well as your own worship space that you might be able to participate in this celebration.

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. This month's Mission of the Month is Hidden Harvest and Thanksgiving Food Baskets.



Crop Hunger Walk: The results are in! A big thank you to all who contributed to the 2020 Crop Hunger Walk. The total donated by CTC for this year's event was \$501.50. Thanks again to those who participated.

Offering Envelopes - FYI and for clarification purposes. The colored envelopes (Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas etc.) that come in the box with our offering envelopes, are credited to the General Fund as a gift to the Church. Any money for special projects (Food Baskets, Angel Tree, CROP, Blankets etc.) must be identified and placed in a plain envelope or special envelope provided by the cause or a designated individual. If you have any questions, contact the office for clarification.



Thanksgiving Food Baskets

2020 has certainly been a different kind of year – and because of the restrictions and protocols made necessary by the Covid-19 Pandemic, we are doing our Thanksgiving Food Baskets a little differently too. Here is what we have decided to do:

- The Mission Committee is collecting money
- \$\$\$ not Food;
- We will purchase *Food Only* Gift Cards;
- Our goal is \$500.00;
- Progress chart in the Showcase Window;
- Weiss School families to be given gift cards to go and purchase their own food;
- Additional Families Considered on Request.



If you would like to participate, please send your donations to the church or drop them off. Make checks payable to Countryside Trinity Church and please mark your envelopes – Thanksgiving Food. Thank you for your generosity.



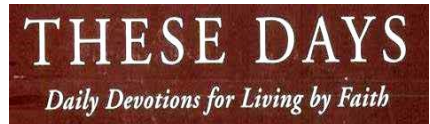
Greeting Cards: Due to the new restrictions regarding Covid-19, Shirlee Scovill will **NOT** be selling cards for the next three weeks or until further notice based on Covid Guidelines. However, she wanted me to relay that if you need to get something please call her or email her and maybe she can arrange something with you. 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: 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 or leave a message at 989 793-0125.

These Days: We have received the October-November-December edition of the *These Days* magazine and they will be in the box outside the east entrance door if you would like to pick one up.



Community Rewards Program: We received the latest quarterly statement from Krogers advising us there was \$42.30 in donations made to Countryside Trinity Church. If you shop at Krogers & have not designated CTC as your Charity of Choice, please consider adding us so a % of your purchases will be donated to the church. There is no cost to you and no loss of any kind. But, as you can see, CTC can benefit financially by such a designation. Currently 25 households are enrolled in the program. Spread the word to your family and friends and ask them to consider Countryside as their charity of choice. If you would like help in setting this up, just call Kathy at the office (989) 793-0125 on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday mornings.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDERS: If you did not receive a form and would still like to order a plant, please contact Nancy Easlick at (989) 401-6735 before Sunday, November 22nd and let her know what you want. Thanks.



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
- 19 Bethany Scovill
- 20 Judith Lorenz
- 21 Ronald Miller
- 22 Jacob Groom
- 22 Lucas Gonzales
- 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

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 (1952)