



The Front Pew

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March 2017

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The Stone Column

"We were trying to poke God" This is the explanation I was given when I asked my campers why all of their tent poles were put together into one very tall pole and now stuck high up in a tree. It must have seemed like a good idea at the start.

I happen to believe that God can handle a lot of poking and not poke back. Creation on the other hand - not so much. When we make choices in our short-sighted desire for profit, cut corners to create jobs for today, eliminate regulations that protect the environment from what we put into our air, water, and soil; the harm we do may not have a significant impact on us. It's our children and their children who will suffer.

We might think it strange, but celebrating the Day of the Lord was once frowned upon. That's because for Amos and prophets after him, "The Day of the Lord" didn't mean the Sabbath - it meant an eschatological time. It meant God was coming with a very big tent pole to poke the whole earth. It meant darkness, death, and destruction. And yet, there were some who were rejoicing - gathering in festival and worship, with sacrifice and song - poking and prodding for the Day of the Lord.

This is why Amos speaking for God declares, "I hate, I despise your festivals..." The prayers and songs and offerings were not congruent with the way in which the people lived their lives. The Torah teaches God's commandments for worship and festival, for celebration and commemoration, gratitude and humility, hospitality and justice. God is on the side of life, abundance, compassion. Those who long for death and destruction, who do not show mercy toward the poor and the marginalized, are poking a different God when they pray.

Worship and justice are intertwined. When our songs match our living and loving, when we pray humbly for life in its fullest, when we work for sustaining the earth and for lasting peace between all people, we are poking the God of Amos, the God made known to us - who set up a tent with us - in Jesus. Intense...like camping (please resist the urge to poke the punny pastor).

peace & blessings,

Eric



March Birthdays

March Anniversaries

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 3 Janice Oswald | 26 Robert Pierce, Jr. |
| 6 Misty Hatton | Arlene Stone |
| Bill Sanders | 27 Nicholas Ellerman |
| 7 Colleen Roby | 28 Tyler Francke |
| 8 Katelynn Ellerman | Kyle Green |
| Avri Lancaster | 31 Kenneth Jezierski |
| 10 Ruth Felch | Joy Sansburn |
| Ray Meeks | Shelbeah Shank-Baker |
| Julie Nelson | |
| 11 Kara Jean Ellerman | |
| Ruth Matherne | |
| 13 Eric Bridenbaugh | |
| 14 Jim Russell | |
| 21 Brenda Kemp | |
| 25 Betty Martinek | |
| Sally Roby | |



March 16
Mark & Jodi Shaw

March 20
Jeff & Janice Oswald

Golden Friends

Golden Friends meet at noon Monday, March 6th at Linwood Corners, on M13/Huron Rd. Please sign up on the bulletin board across from the fellowship hall.

St. Luke's United Methodist Church

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Contact Information

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christianed@stlukesumcmi.org

Music Director: Melissa Rookus
music@stlukesumcmi.org

Office Staff: Cora McKeon
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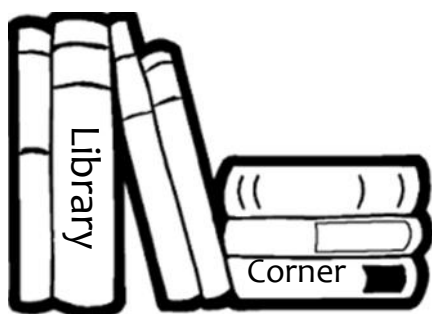
Organist: Vicki Ahlberg-Ives
organist@stlukesumcmi.org

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Library Corner

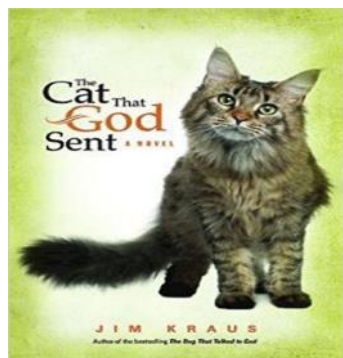
This March, the Church Library highlights the writings by and about John Wesley. Born June 28th 1703, Wesley was the principal founder of the Methodist movement. At a small religious meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, May 24, 1738, John Wesley had an experience in which



his “heart was strangely warmed.” After this spiritual conversion, which centered on the realization of salvation by faith in Christ alone, he devoted his life to evangelism. Beginning in 1739 he established Methodist societies throughout England. He later expanded his ministry to the ordered living which still inspires today. *Check out some of the many titles available exploring the life and disciplines of our faith’s founder.*



Breakfast Book Club



Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 8th at 10:00 a.m. Join us for “The Cat that God Sent”, by Jim Kraus. This is a fun read with some serious overtones. All are welcome to join the conversation. Books are available to borrow from the library, which is located in the north/south hallway. Once you complete the book, please return it to the library or pass it on to another book club reader.



Scrip Tip

Treat your Leprechaun to something special with a gift card from Scrip! There are hundreds to choose from, sure to put a smile on your sweetheart’s face! We still have cards for Meijer, Grampa Tony’s (Columbus only), and Bath & Body Works available on a cash (or check) and carry basis. Bay Animal Hospital also offers a 5% donation to St. Luke’s for your four-legged loves! See Julie Nelson or Joye Kramer for details.



Please Note

The Front Pew is a monthly newsletter for St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, created by the combined efforts of many members of the congregation. Although we strive for a consistent level of accuracy, there is always a possibility of error. If you ever know that any information is missing or incorrect, please contact the church office at (989) 893-8031 so actions may be taken to rectify the mistake.



United Methodist Women

The next UMW meeting will be on Wednesday, March 8 at 6:30 p.m. Chairperson for this meeting will be Judy Maillette. Hostesses for the meeting will be Marty Gross and Edyth Juve. Program will be *Disabilities and Our Response* presented by Gloria Gonzales. Everyone is welcome, even if you are not a member of UMW.

This study is recommended by the District and uses a puzzle as a base for exploring disabilities. We are all children of God - each of us created in God's image but unique. In God's kingdom everyone has a place, including persons with disabilities. In God's kingdom we are called to "fit together" much like the pieces of a puzzle. Come join with us to find a new perspective and better understanding of what it means to be the body of Christ and live into the kingdom of God.

Upcoming events:

Roll Bake will be baking rolls in April. For more information about dates and times, please see Edythe Juve.

April 1 - Keep Making Peace in East Lansing

April 28-29 Spiritual Life Retreat at "The Springs" in Gladwin. Cost is \$85 for overnight stay which includes Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and Saturday lunch.

Anyone interested in attending these events contact Gloria Gonzales.



Open Prayer

Do you believe in ESP? In other words, that Everything Starts with Prayer?!

We invite you to come to a quiet space for meditation and prayer to:

- spend time with, and build on, your relationship with God.
- invite the Holy Spirit to work through your life.
- heal fractures within our world, our church and our families.
- give thanks. - ask for forgiveness.
- ask for help and guidance and healing for others and ourselves.

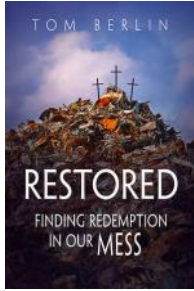
We invite you to come as you are, come alone, come with friends, come with family - but please just come.

All who seek a time and space for God's grace, desiring a time of diligent purposeful prayer; come to the sanctuary on **Tuesday** evenings for as long as you like **between 5:00 – 7:00p.m.**



Christian Education

Lenten Study



We will be exploring the book, Restored: Finding Redemption In Our Mess. Sometimes our lives are in such disarray we can't envision a way through to redemption. But when we look at the mess through the eyes of Christ, we not only find redemption, we can clearly see spiritual restoration. In *Restored*, author Tom Berlin encourages us to reflect and meditate through our own brokenness, showing us that it is only when we focus on the cross as a place to surrender control that we can leave our mess and find true redemption. This 6-week study uses Scripture, devotional tools, and the writings of Ignatius of Loyola, John of the Cross, St. Augustine, John Wesley, Evelyn Underhill, and others. This study will be covered during Sunday School in Esther's Parlor and Monday evenings at 6:00pm. Watch the Sunday bulletin for more information about getting your materials or contact Gloria Gonzales with any questions.

Lenten Coin Folders

Lenten coin folders were distributed in church school February 26. These folders are designed with spaces for a quarter for each day of Lent. If you do not attend church school and would like to participate, please see Gloria Gonzales at the welcome desk and receive your coin folder. The proceeds in the coin folders will go to Good Samaritan Rescue Mission.

Church-wide Movie Field Trip

The award-winning book, *The Shack*, has been made into a feature film and will be showing at Bay City 10! After the abduction and assumed death of Mackenzie Allen Phillip's youngest daughter, Missy, Mack receives a letter and has the suspicion it's from God asking him to return to The Shack where Missy may have been murdered. After contemplating it, he leaves his home to go to The Shack for the first time since Missy's abduction and encounters what will change his life forever.



The youth group will be taking a field trip this month to see it and would love to have you join us! Kelli Stojic will pre-order tickets for the showing once show times are announced. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board and more information in the bulletin.



(The Youth Group had a great time at the District Event, Rogue Jesus! We went tubing at Snow Snake Mountain and enjoyed pizza, worship, and a lesson at The Gathering in Harrison.)



Important Dates

MARCH

- 1- Ash Wednesday
- 5- Youth Group Food of Faith
- 12- Youth Group Meeting
- 17- St. Patrick's Day
- 26- Youth Group Meeting

APRIL

- 9- Palm Sunday
Youth Group Meeting
- 13- Maundy Thursday
- 14- Good Friday
- 15- Holy Saturday
- 16- Easter Sunday
- 23- Youth Group Meeting





Getting to Know Our Members

You may already know two of St. Luke's newest members. Indeed, Joan and Jerry Pergande are longtime Essexville residents and have been active in the community. Or, perhaps Jerry – an attorney – handled your will or other legal matter (don't worry, we won't pry). The latter wouldn't be surprising. Jerry, after all, was taking a break from lawn mowing one summer day when a car pulled up near where he was standing.

“I hear you do wills,” said a man from the car.

“I do,” Jerry answered.

An hour or so later, Jerry had put together a will for the man and sent him on his way.

The Pergandes were longtime members of First United Methodist Church of Bay City, which closed its doors on June 9, 2013. Joan, in fact, attended her first FUMC service when she was 3-years-old. She was involved in a variety of church activities, including as a member of the First United choir.

Joan is also a cancer survivor. “It will be 12 years on May 5th when I was first diagnosed,” she said. After enduring rigorous chemotherapy treatments, and while applying her lifelong Christian faith, Joan has now been cancer-free for several years. “At that time the survival rate for that type of cancer was 30 percent,” Jerry said, “but she doesn't have any problems at all today. “If you asked her what got her through it, she'd say three words: Faith. In. God.”

Joan and Jerry were married 42 years ago in First United Methodist. They have two daughters – Juliet and Jean, both of whom are teachers. The Pergandes said that St. Luke's is not only in their “neighborhood,” but also has a friendly vibe that they both appreciate. “It has a good atmosphere,” Jerry said. “Everyone is friendly and I like that it has a laid-back feel to it. We've enjoyed it there.” Needless to say, all of us at St. Luke's enjoy having them with us.





March 2016

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

<p>F.A. = Families Anonymous F.H. = Fellowship Hall & Kitchen NA = Narcotics Anonymous UMM = United Methodist Men UMW = United Methodist Women</p>													
5	<p>9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Church School 2:00 p.m. Youth Group - Food of Faith</p>	6	<p>Do-All Cleaning Day 12:00 p.m. Golden Friends -Linwood Corners 7:30 p.m. Handbells</p>	7	<p>10:00 a.m. Stampers and Scrappers 5:00 p.m. Open Prayer 7:00 p.m. Taizé; F.A.</p>	8	<p>6:30 p.m. U.M.W. Meeting 7:00 p.m. SPRC Meeting</p>	9	<p>6:45 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m. N.A.</p>	10		11	<p>7:00 p.m. N.A.</p>
12	<p>9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Church School 12:00 p.m. Youth Group - Lunch/Study</p>	13	<p>Do-All Cleaning Day 7:30 p.m. Handbells</p>	14	<p>10:00 a.m. Stampers and Scrappers 11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting 5:00 p.m. Open Prayer 7:00 p.m. F.A.</p>	15		16	<p>6:45 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m. N.A.</p>	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	<p>Newsletter Deadline 9:00 a.m. U.M.M. Breakfast @ Krzysiak's 7:00 N.A.</p>	
19 Invitation Sunday	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
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Return Service Requested



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STLUKESUMCMI.ORG

Our Vision – Nurturing the world with God's love.
Our Mission – Called by God to reach out and welcome all.



Easter Flowers

Easter flowers will be on sale through March 12th and 19th . In addition to our live flowers, we will also be offering the 'Virtual Easter Flower,' with all donations going to Pastor's Discretionary Fund. By placing an order, your loved one's name will be listed in the Easter bulletin. Please contact Paula Bruck at (989) 895-1384 with any questions. An insert for ordering will in Sunday bulletins.



Please Print Legibly

Your Name: _____

(as you would like it to appear in the bulletin)

Type of flower(s) desired:

Virtual Daffodil (\$11.50) Lily (\$11.00) Tulip (\$11.50)

These flowers are... In honor of or In memory of

(When donating for multiple people, please indicate separately.)

Amount Received: \$ _____