The First Connection

a publication of Mason First United Methodist Church

August 2019

From the Pastor…

July has been a whirlwind of activity with boxes and unpacking and learning a new house, a new office, a new church, a new community, new faces, and – God, help me – a new grocery store! Change isn't always an easy thing, but Jim and I have been so touched by the generosity and hospitality you've shown that we feel like we're already at home. Thank you for all the ways you've made our transition easier and made us feel welcome.

Meanwhile, at this very moment, I am blown away by the "God things" that are going on around me, dazzling and exciting like fireworks on the fourth of July, lighting up a bright and hopeful future for our church. Each new person who comes in to introduce themselves brings ideas and vision of what we can be in the days to come. In the midst of all that is going on, these words from scripture popped into my head, "Behold, I am doing a new thing…"

Now what's really interesting is that this comes from the very same chapter of Isaiah from which I got the text for my opening sermon, "God's Got This." So maybe it's true! Because here's what Isaiah 43:18-19 has to say:

Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.

See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.

I have no doubt that God is at work in us and in our church getting ready to do a new thing! Now, just a word of reminder...new things often require an open mind, an open heart, and a willingness to trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit. Remember, God's plans for us are for good!

During the month of August, I'll be continuing my preaching series on Refrigerator Theology, as I share four more of my favorite passages of scripture. On Sunday, August 25, as children and teachers get ready to go back to school, we'll do a blessing of the backpacks. Invite a student or teacher to church with you, so that we can pray for them as they head back to school.

As the hot and hazy days of summer head into September, I invite you to dream and imagine the future of our church, and as we kick off a new season of programming, I'll introduce a new preaching series called, "Imagine Us." Our future is bright, and God's (still) Got This!

Pastor Suzanne

August 4	*Be Salty*	Matthew 5:13-16
August 11	*Heaven Is a Place on Earth*	Luke 17:20-21, Revelation 21:1-7
August 18	*Take a Day Off*	Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11
August 25	*Have Faith*	Hebrews 11, Job 38:4-7

Sundaes With the Pastor

Join Pastor Suzanne Sunday evening, August 11 at 6:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall for ice cream sundaes and a time of discussion about what's going on in the greater United Methodist Church.

Please sign up so that we have enough ice cream for everyone, and feel free to bring a topping to share!

Book Discussion Group

The Book Discussion Group begins on Thursday, September 12 from 11:00-12:00 in the church conference room. Our book this month is *"We Bought a Zoo"* by Benjamin Mee. *The author describes how he uprooted his family to the English countryside and purchased a dilapidated zoo which he planned to refurbish and reopen as a family business; a scheme complicated by a lack of money and his wife's devastating illness.* Please sign up at the Caring Table. See Kim Wolfgang for details.

Fall Grief Support Groups Forming Now

Join in a group which provides essential physical, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual support in a caring healing environment.

Toward Healing: Coping with the death of your child

For parents or other significant loved ones coping with the loss of a child of any age.

- Monday, September 9
  Rose Robertson, Facilitator (517) 676-5513

Widowed Companions

For those who have lost a spouse or significant other.

- Monday, September 16
  Pat Mentzer, Facilitator (517) 676-4232

Classes will be held in the chapel at First United Methodist Church. Contact a facilitator or the church (676-9449) for more information and to pre-register. No new members after the second session.

Children's Ministry!

On Sunday, August 25, we will have a Blessing of the Backpacks for all students and teachers! Please join us and you'll receive a little gift during the Children's Sermon to start off the school year. We encourage students to bring their backpacks with them to worship!

Also, please save the date for our Deep Blue Splash event right after worship on Sunday, September 8. Watch for more information!

Brittany Beaune, Brittany@masonfirst.org

"Free Market"

As many of you are aware, we have been collecting items for those children heading back to school at the end of August. We are still in need of backpacks, notebooks, pens and pencils, and loose leaf paper.

In conjunction with our friends at Mason Community Church, we will be distributing these items on August 3, right here in the parking lot of Mason First.

This will be considered a "free market" event where those in need can come by and pick up clothing, hygiene products, and bottled water, as well as many of the necessities of life that we tend to take for granted. During this time, we will also be distributing the "Back to School" supplies.

If you are uncertain about what items to donate you can find a list of needs posted in the fellowship hall under the heading "Stone Soup."

Romans 12:3 reminds us that *"If we are generous, then we are to give generously."* We worship a God that is so great that he is able to multiply our gifts to an extent that we are unable to know or understand. As always, thank you in advance for all that you have done. If you should happen to feel moved to help with this program, please contact me.

Thanks again! - Mike Buckner

News of Our Church Family

Bill Husband, Jan Magsig, and Lynn Whipple are recovering at home following recent hospitalizations. Vic Whipple is at the Ingham County Medical Care Facility in rehabilitation.

Christian sympathy is expressed to the family of Eric Kleven who passed away July 9, and to the Ireland family on the loss of Lori Ireland on July 18, and to Bryce and Judy Forester on the loss of their son, Dylan, on July 20.

Please note: The hospitals do not notify the church when someone from our church family is admitted. Please ask a family member or a friend to let us know!

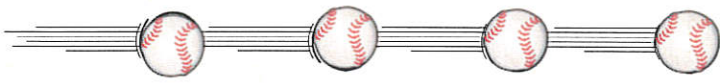
Our members or friends who are in assisted living, nursing homes, or hospice care:

Eaton Community Hospice
- Doug Strait

Grand Haven Living Center, Lansing:
- Gayle Gunns

Green Acres
- Bev Eccleston
- Beth Grosshans

Ingham County Medical Care Facility, Okemos:
- Char Bush
- Vi Ramey
- Vic Whipple



It's Time to "Go Nuts"!

The Faith and Family Lugnuts game is Friday, August 16—the game begins at 7:05 p.m. If you did not already sign up, please see Kim Wolfgang. For those who have already signed up and paid for their tickets, we will leave from the church parking lot at 6:00 p.m. If you are planning to meet us there, please be sure to pick up your ticket from Kim Wolfgang prior to the event.

Things Are Looking Up

We have good news related to our church mortgage. Our mortgage balance went below $300,000 as of July, 2019. The remaining principal is $285,710. This is remarkable progress, since we began with an initial balance of $530,000 back in August of 2016. We have paid off nearly half this loan in just three years! We have dramatically reduced our interest expenses on this loan by paying down the principal early. At this time last year, we were paying $1,353 a month in interest with our mortgage payment. With the July 2019 monthly payment, we will only be paying $1,095 in interest. That means in just one years' time, we are paying $258 less in interest a month; and the difference goes to pay down the principal balance faster.

So things are looking up on the mortgage front. There is reason for great optimism. You can see it in the congregation – you can feel it in worship. You just know that "God's got this."

Glenn Darling, Financial Administrator

Mark Your Calendar

The United Methodist Women's Fall Rummage Sale will be held on Friday, September 6 and Saturday, September 7. Set aside donations of unwanted but usable items and bring them to the church beginning September 3. The money raised goes to support missions locally, nationally, and world wide.

Tuesday Night Potluck

The Tuesday Night Potluck continues Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. Come and join us in the fellowship hall for food, fellowship, and fun. Let's make this a community outreach by inviting friends and neighbors—the more, the merrier! Bring a dish to pass. The Hospitality Team provides tableware and beverages.

Christmas in August

We will help those in need get ready for school again this year by providing necessary school supplies and clothing.

Tags for Christmas in August will be pinned up in the fellowship hall July 28 and August 4. Pick a tag, then sign your name and phone number on the appropriate sheet. Purchase the gift (which may be wrapped or not) and attach the tag securely to the package. Please leave the white label on the crayon tag. Cash tags will be available for those who don't wish to shop.

Gifts should be brought to the church on August 11. A table will be set up in the fellowship hall where gifts may be placed. If you are unable to be in church on August 11, please leave your gift in the church office before that date. If you have any questions, please see Cherry Zanger.

Thank you notes are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. Thank you notes have been received from Mary Kay and Brad Erickson, UMCOR — Water for Life, and Bryce and Judy Forester.

Mason Christian Child Care Center

So far this summer we are fighting the heat! The center does not take the children outside if the temperature is over 85 degrees with the heat index included. Children are especially vulnerable to heat issues and can become physically distressed more quickly than adults. To be able to be outside, we take walks in the mornings and enjoy the playground during the cooler morning hours.

This year, the preschooler's summer theme is camping. They have talked about Smokey the Bear and the importance of being careful with fire. They have also been learning about the smaller creatures in nature including bees, worms, and butterflies. In the summer, they review Bible verses and get to choose their favorite Bible stories.

The toddlers have been working on shapes which have included circles, squares, and triangles. They have also been reviewing Bible stories like the Good Samaritan and Jesus and the fisherman. One of their favorite prayers this month has been: *Hands up high, hands down low, hide those hands now where'd they go? Up comes one, the other one too, clap them, fold them now we're through. Our hands we fold, our heads we bow for food and drink we thank God now. Amen.*

The Good Samaritan

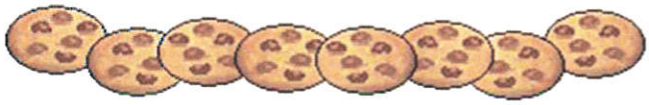
Our infant room is full, what a blessing! Over a six-month period we will be adding six siblings—a record for us.

We are currently looking for an afternoon assistant. The shift we are trying to fill is from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. If you know of someone who loves working with children, please have them call the center at 676-6588.

Tami Boyic, Director

Cookie Reminder

Thanks to all who provided cookies last month. Just a reminder that if your last name begins with *A* or *B*, we would appreciate it if you would provide cookies in August.



Kid's Puzzle & Craft

PUZZLE

GOD'S MORNING ROUTINE

Every new day, we wake up to blessings from God.

Directions: *Use the clues to fill in the words. Then write the boxed letters in order below to complete Lamentations 3:22-23, NIV.*

Brush these daily	_ _ _ _ ☐
Do this to your shoes	_ ☐ _
This rises in the east	☐ _ _
Cold breakfast food	☐ _ _ _ _ _
Hot breakfast food	☐ _ _ ☐ _ _ _
Talk to God	☐ _ _ _
Morning meal	_ _ _ ☐ _ _ _ ☐ _
Extend your limbs	☐ _ _ _ _ _ _
Fruit drink	_ _ ☐ _ _
Waffle machine	_ _ ☐ ☐
Eat these scrambled or fried	_ _ _ ☐

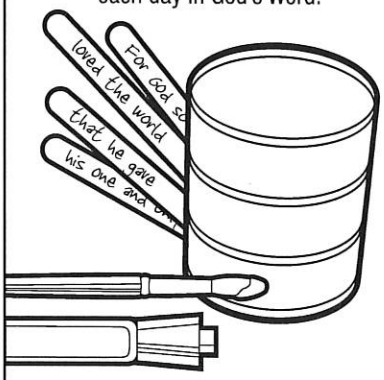
Because of the LORD's great love... ☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23, NIV

Answer: teeth, tie, sun, cereal, oatmeal, pray, breakfast, stretch, juice, iron, eggs; his compassions

WAKE-UP WORDS

Play this memory game to start each day in God's Word.



What you need:

- Paint and paint brushes
- Stickers
- An empty, clean tin can
- Permanent marker
- Bible
- Wooden craft sticks

What you do:

1. Paint and decorate the outside of the can.
2. With marker, write a Bible verse on several sticks (only two or three words per stick).
3. Put the sticks in the can, and set it in a spot you'll see daily. As you eat or brush your teeth, practice unscrambling the verse and placing sticks in the correct order.
4. When you've memorized the verse, repeat with a new one.

August BIRTHDAYS

Jennifer Cornell....1
Christine Harrison....1
Jennifer Schmidt....1
Nicholas Englander....1
Jim Hudgins....1
Deborah Fogg....1
Analiese Guettler....1
Timothy Forche....2
Cheryl Howe....2
David Fogg....2
Miranda Sperry....2
Sylvia Rogers....3
Shelly Heaviland....4
Sophia Lange....4
Rhonda Crackel....4
Scott Etzel....6
Garrett Wheaton....6
David Aldrich....6
Cheryl Gandhi....6
Gary Strickland....7
John Akers....9
Steve Armstrong....9
Mary Hudgins....9
Chelsea Schanz....10
Lucas Nay....12
Tyler Baker....13
Luke Thorburn....13
Kaylyn Gunns....14
Sharon Morgan....14
Cali Pulver....14
Suzanne Goodwin....16
Lynn Castle....16
Rita Roost....16
Neal Johnson....17
Nolan Whipple....17
James Goodwin....18
Patrick Ireland....18
Jeane Kring....19
Don McMillan....19
B.J. Spyke....20
Robin Sabbadin....20
Dennis Quinn....22
Morgan Kirk....23
Roger Nelson....24
Lydia Whipple....25
Dan Kribs....26
Carol Whipple....27
Lew Tibbits....28
Olive Berridge....28
Phyllis Baisch....29
Sherry Barnes....30
George Dunivon....31

August ANNIVERSARIES

Dennis and Cindy Howe....2
Tom and Jeane Kring....3
Dan and Judi DeMartin....4
Russ and Judy Whipple....5
Jim and Anne Hudgins....8
Duane and Judie Marlan....16
Kevin and Sheri Gunns....16
George and Jen Harnick....16
David and Katherine Peters....17
Thad and Jennifer Baker....17
Colin and Allison Whipple....18
Pete and Sara Stid....21
Bryce and Judy Forester....22
Joe and Linda Pulver....23
Joe and Chris Bement....24
Dan and Rhonda Crackel....24
Bud and Rece Arehart....25
Bill and Judy Campbell....26
Garrett and Barbara Wheaton....30

August 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 5:30pm Weight Watchers	**2**	**3** 12:00pm "Free Market" in the church's parking lot
4 9:30am Worship 10:45am Faithlink	**5**	**6** 9:00am Ministry Team 1:30pm Clothing Bank 5:30pm Potluck Dinner 6:00pm Clothing Bank	**7**	**8** 5:30pm Weight Watchers	**9** 1:00pm CACS Commodities 5:45pm Wedding Rehearsal	**10** 3:30pm Hudgins/O'Connor Wedding
11 Christmas in August 9:30am Worship 10:45am Faithlink 6:00pm Ice Cream Social with the Pastor	**12**	**13** 5:30pm Potluck Dinner	**14**	**15** 5:30pm Weight Watchers	**16** 6:00pm Lugnuts Faith and Family Night	**17**
18 9:30am Worship 10:45am Faithlink	**19** 5:30pm Alzheimer's Support Group 7:00pm Finance Meeting	**20** 1:30pm Clothing Bank 5:30pm Potluck Dinner 6:00pm Clothing Bank	**21**	**22** 5:30pm Weight Watchers	**23**	**24**
25 Blessing of the Backpacks 9:30am Worship 10:45am Faithlink	**26** 7:00pm Trustees Meeting	**27** 4:00pm Carol Choir 5:30pm Potluck Dinner	**28** 9:00am UMW Mission Team	**29** 4:00pm Carolier Choir 5:30pm Weight Watchers	**30**	**31**