



# The First Connection

a publication of Mason First United Methodist Church

Today is one of those days where I think I can make the claim that from my office I have the prettiest and most inspirational parking lot view that there could possibly be. The colors of changing leaves are stunning and a constant reminder that God is an artist of the first order. And the cars parked in the lot remind me that even though it's not Sunday, God's work is still being done - every single day.

By the time you read this article, our sermon series on John Wesley's Three Simple Rules will be done, but right now, I'm dwelling on Rule #3 which is *Stay in Love With God*. Seriously! In the midst of a pandemic and a contentious political season - keep your eyes on the ball and your heart on what's most important. All the things that we are going through right now are temporal - this too shall pass. But God's love for us will endure and God's blessings will continue in abundance. All God wants from us is our love and faithfulness. What are you doing today that helps you stay in love with God?

Our church is doing well. We lost a little momentum for a while, but we've since figured some things out. We've resumed some classes and meetings, and are developing new ways to do things using technology. And in the case of Study Buddies, we're simply finding a new way to connect people for the sake of fellowship and



faith growth. The net result is that I'm really excited about what God is doing here and where we're headed.

Make no mistake, as we head into 2021, we've got some challenges to meet. We are committed to focusing our congregational growth on families. We're all going to need to be invitational, and we're going to need to be faithful in our generosity as we fund missions, ministries, and programs that

particularly extend God's love and our hospitality to families. I believe that is what God is calling us to do, and we're ready!

In the days to come, enjoy the flavors and colors of autumn and remember how much God loves you! Remember to give thanks for all that God is doing in our lives and in our church. And remember to stay in love with God!



Blessings,

*Pastor Suzanne*

## Chancel Choir Practice Resumes Nov. 4!

*On the 4th of November in the Social Hall we will raise our voices, one and all!*

The bell choir has been practicing for several weeks now with COVID precautions in place. We have determined that by utilizing the social-distanced spacing in the Social Hall and special masks for singers (the church will provide one for you), we can start having choral practice again! We invite anyone interested to participate. Practice resumes Wednesday, November 5 at 8:00pm.



## Empty Milk Jugs Needed

We still need about 100 gallon size milk jugs to serve as luminaries for the Living Nativity. Please rinse them out thoroughly, leaving the caps off, but leave the labels on. Jeff and his helpers have a special way to remove them and all the sticky residue.



## Holiday Decorating

Come be a part of the decorating team to make the church festive for Christmas! Jeff will lead a group of volunteers on Monday, November 23 beginning at 9AM. Please let Jeff or the church office know if you will be able to help.

## Charge Conference

The Charge Conference is a gathering of the church to review the annual business of church and to celebrate the work of the church. In the past, we have gathered in hubs where several churches gather at one site, have a combined time of worship and celebration, and then break off into separate units to conduct their business.

With the necessity of COVID regulations and protocols in place, this year's Charge Conference will be held via Zoom on November 19 and limited to include members of the Church Council. We will make a report available later on what happened.

## Can You Lend a Hand?

Mike Buckner, Chair of Missions, is looking for help with the church's activities to aid the homeless; he addressed the congregation during the October 18 service. He spoke about the needs of students locally – please see page 3 for more information on how you can help with "White Christmas."

He talked about the need for warm weather gear for the homeless. Many folks have been bringing in donations – Thank You for your generosity! The bride's room here at church is quickly filling up. Mike expressed that he needs a couple people who would be willing to sort this clothing and organize it by gender and size, so that it can be easily displayed and given to those in need during the Dinner in the Park, held the second Sunday of the month.

For the Dinner in the Park, Mike is also seeking at least five volunteers to come out and help unload tables and the donations, and to share their faith and be a listening ear (if you are comfortable doing so) with the neighbors we are serving.



Finally, Mike is also looking for a larger donation of an 8'x12' lockable trailer that he could hook up to his truck. This would be used to store items for the homeless ministry so that they would not have to be loaded and unloaded from the church to his truck every month. When the time is right, the youth could also utilize it for a mission trip.



REGISTER TO  
**RING™**

For many years, members of our church family have helped to ring the bells at the red kettle in the Meridian Mall. With the current COVID situation, we simply cannot commit as a church to do this. However, if you as an individual would like to, you can still volunteer to help. The Salvation Army is still looking for volunteers every day, November 20

through December 24 (excluding Thanksgiving and Sundays) to take on 2-hour shifts at various locations. If you are interested, visit [www.RegistertoRing.com](http://www.RegistertoRing.com) to sign up. You can also contact Jeff Prisner at the Salvation Army 517-484-4424.



## ***Congratulations to:***

- Jeanna (Droscha) and Ron Hall on their marriage. They exchanged vows in the Prayer Garden September 19.
- Troy and Katie Sutberry on the birth of their daughter, Jade Margaret Rose, on October 4.

## ***Christian sympathy is expressed to the family of:***

- David Aldrich, who passed away on October 4 in Florida. A memorial was held here at the church October 24.
- Bob and Connie Bartlett – his brother Richard passed away October 12.
- Jim and Anne Hudgins – his father passed away on October 16.

## ***Prayers and Get Well Wishes to:***

- Ken Guettler who is facing serious health challenges.
- Diane David who at Mary Free Bed for rehab therapy after back surgery.
- Troy Bartlett who broke his leg, needing surgery.
- Ina Lyon who was hospitalized recently.

*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!*

## ***Thinking of members or friends in assisted living, nursing homes, or hospice care:***

- Green Acres, Mason:  
Bev Eccleston  
Beth Grosshans  
Kenneth LoVette
- Holt Senior Care, Holt:  
George Dunivon
- Ingham Co. Medical Care Facility, Okemos:  
Char Bush  
John Dodge
- The Willows of Okemos:  
Lew Tibbits
- Vista Springs Edgewood, Lansing:  
Garrett and Barbara Wheaton  
Vic Whipple

## **“WHITE CHRISTMAS” MISSION HOW YOU CAN HELP!**



Normally in November, we would have boards filled with gift tags in the social hall that you would choose to fulfill the decades-old tradition of “White Christmas” gift giving here at the church.

As it has impacted so many other traditions, COVID is changing how our church family can help other families (specifically kids) in need this year.

Instead of helping individual families, we have contacted local schools to find out what items they need most to fill their emergent need supply closets. Here are the lists of new items you may purchase and drop off in bins at the church during the week or on Sundays. *Please do not gift wrap the items.* In fact, you may bring them in the bags from the store where you purchased them. The teachers responsible for stocking the closet at each school will disperse them to those in need.

As we have done in the past, if you do not wish to shop but would like to take part in this particular holiday mission, you can make a monetary donation. Please make sure you specify that it is for WHITE CHRISTMAS by writing on your envelope and/or the memo line of your check, made payable to FUMC.

### **HIGH SCHOOL NEEDS:**

- Women’s underwear (brief style) size 6-9
- Men’s underwear (briefs/boxers) – any size
- Men’s and Women’s socks (any style/color)
- Shampoo/Conditioner & Body Wash (men/women)
- Shaving cream and disposable razors (men/women)
- Snack items (granola bars/cookie or cracker packs)
- Canned pasta/hearty soups (Progresso/Campbell’s Chunky)

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL NEEDS:**

- Personal hygiene items: deodorant, disposable razors, shaving cream, body wash, soap bars, hair ties
- Snack items (granola bars/cookie or cracker packs)
- Non-perishable foods: dried fruit, pasta, Ramen noodles, canned meat, rice, mac-n-cheese, cereal, snack bars – items require cooking should be easy enough for a kid to make, please.
- Household cleaning items: laundry soap, dish soap, and paper products (TP, paper towel, Kleenex)

### **ELEMENTARY (James Harvey Center) NEEDS:**

- Sweat pants / stretch pants for boys/girls size 5, 6, 7
- Socks for preschool/kindergarten kids (boys/girls)
- Slip-on shoes (for little kids) sizes 11, 12, 13, and 1



Many thanks to all who participated in the Bakeless Bake Sale during October. We'll let you know the total raised next month.

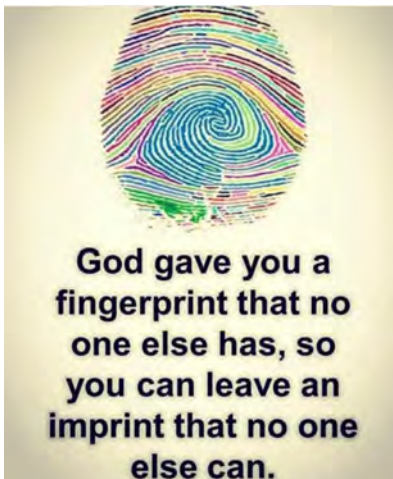
There will be a Leadership Team meeting on at 9:00 a.m. November 4, 2020. Depending on the number of attendees we will meet either in the Wesley Chapel or Fellowship Hall; please wear your mask! We will be reviewing the work of the Nominations Committee and asking circle chairs to have their members vote on the 2021 Proposed Slate of Officers during November.

UMW members: Remember we are collecting donations for mission giving in December. Please make checks out to United Methodist Women with a "Missions" note on the check and take it to the office during November.

*Lynda Crandall, UMW President for FUMC*

## Evangelism at FUMC: *"Do Good" and Build Bridges!*

I hope you enjoyed last month's article on the subject of getting outdoors to enjoy nature and reduce stress. In these times, we remember that Jesus's first priority was to tend to people's most immediate human needs. Together, our church is working to bring the love of Jesus to people through our missional efforts of providing food through the Tiny Pantry and Dinners in the Park; clothing through the coat drive, the clothing bank, and our association with Cardboard Prophets; support for students in need through donations to the schools' resource closets; connection and faith support through online and in-person classes; and helping people to deal with stress and grief by hosting grief support groups. Further, we're planning to extend a beacon of light and hospitality to the community by hosting a Living Nativity so that people can get out of their homes for a safe evening of experiencing the Christmas Story.



Thank you for your support of these many outreach activities! If you would like to get involved with any of the efforts to bring the light and love of Christ, contact our church office to see how you can get involved.

*Submitted by  
Roger Nelson*

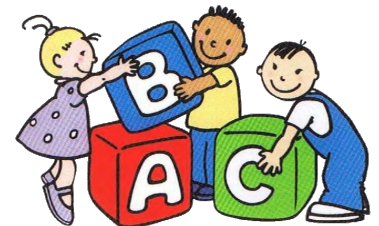
## A Message from Tami Boyic, MCCCC Director

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me."  
~ Matthew 19:14*

In these difficult times when so many childcare centers around the state are unable to remain open, we are pleased that FUMC is committed to providing quality childcare as a non-profit mission of the church. We are licensed and inspected by the state of Michigan every year to make sure we are providing safe and quality childcare. But most importantly, we are providing a loving and Christian environment for children of working families.

In addition to coming to God's house for school, the children who attend the center have many opportunities to be introduced to God's presence each day. Our children pray before snacks and meals using favorite nursery rhymes and tunes to convey their blessings. Each room features a Bible story as well. Bible stories are revisited throughout the week in a variety of ways to help children become familiar with the lessons that create the foundation of a relationship with Jesus.

Currently, we are looking for a lead teacher to teach with the toddlers. If you know of someone who is licensing qualified and interested, please have them call the center at (517) 676-6588.





# A taste of history

Add a yummy, authentic touch to your Thanksgiving meal with this recipe.



### What you need:

- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- pint jar with lid
- strainer
- bowl
- container
- salt



### What you do:

1. Pour cream into the jar and close the lid tightly.
2. Shake vigorously about 8 minutes, until a solid lump of butter forms. (Take turns with a friend!)
3. Strain the contents, catching the buttermilk in a bowl to save for another recipe.
4. Put the butter in a container. Add salt to taste.
5. After chilling the butter, enjoy on fresh bread.

Have you noticed how busy the squirrels are, gathering food to eat and leaves to build their nests for a cold winter?



## Glad gatherings

The first Christians met together over a meal. Today church families still gather to break bread and thank God.

Follow the instructions below. Then write the remaining words in order from left to right and top to bottom to complete the verses.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	They	found	broke	bread	acts	in
2	houses	their	homes	beautiful	and	round
3	ate	world	beginning	together	follow	thought
4	with	numbers	glad	happiness	lesson	and
5	thanks	sincere	disciples	gathering	hearts	tradition
6	celebrate	good	praising	Christian	God	river

Cross out all words in column E with double letters.

Cross out all words that are books of the Bible.

Cross out all words in column B that end in d.

Cross out all words in column A that have more than 4 letters.

Cross out all words in row 5 with 3 syllables.

Cross out all words in the table with 9 letters.

Cross out all words in column F with 2 or more vowels.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ . ACTS 2:46-47, NIV

Answer: They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God. Acts 2:46-47, NIV

During these strange pandemic times, we might tend to feel like Job: picked on and punished for something that we really had no control over. After all, for months we couldn't even get together with our loved ones, and it is still difficult. Our favorite restaurants all shut down. Some closed and most are still struggling. We were told to stay home and when we do go out, to wear a mask. I know there are a lot of times when I feel a lot like Job who said: *"I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer."*

But then we have to remember the end of the story of Job and try and learn from that example. By the end of the book of Job, he had been fully restored: *"The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part."*

As we approach this Thanksgiving season, let's try to learn our lesson from the book of Job. No matter how bad life can seem to be, our God is steadfast and will bless the faithful.

While we are not finished with the pandemic by any means, perhaps the worst has passed. We are learning how to better treat those afflicted, and death rates are way down. We need to remember to be thankful for all that God has blessed us with and focus on those blessings rather than our woes.

So let's take the time during this Thanksgiving season to be grateful for what we have and as a sign of our gratitude, share our blessings with family, friends, and particularly those in need.

### A few numbers:

Our mortgage balance is now down to \$177,494. Our Ministry shares paid to date are 81.3%. Income as of the end of September 2020 is \$339,898. Last year it was \$351,540 at this time.

*Glenn Darling, Mason First United Methodist Church Financial Administrator*



Our church has the great opportunity to give a meaningful Christmas gift to Mason and surrounding communities. We are so grateful to everyone who has signed up to play a part on the night of the event, to those who have donated funds for expenses related to it, and to so many folks who are helping behind the scenes to prepare for it!

## THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Claudia Ireland and a great team of talented seamstresses have been very busy sewing costumes. They met at the church to choose fabrics/patterns and to cut out the costumes on large tables in the social hall. They have been busily sewing at home.



Jeff and several of his crew have been building the stable and other props for the various scenes that will be set up in the parking lot. He has also been busy (with help from a few folks), removing labels from the 200 milk jugs turned in so far – they will be used as luminaries that night. We are so grateful for those donations and for the many folks who have gifted or loaned us heavy duty extension cords so we can illuminate the various scenes outside.

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## TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS EVENT, WE STILL NEED THE FOLLOWING:

- MORE MILK JUGS – Keep bringing them to church! We are 100 away from our goal for luminaries.
- More heavy-duty extension cords – if you drop them off at the church, we will make sure your name is on them so we can return them to you.
- Actors to play shepherds, wisemen, and a few folks who can sing in our heavenly host of angels.

Together we can bring hope and light and a little Christmas magic! To sign up, to go: <https://www.signupgenius.com/findasignup>

## A Message from Glenn Darling

As we resume in person worship inside the church, we are still working on all the logistics and protocols in an attempt to keep everyone as safe as possible, worshipping with friends and neighbors in our sanctuary.

First - if you have a fever, cough, or any other cold like symptoms at all, we ask that you stay away and rest. You can still enjoy our recorded service later in the day from the comfort of your home.

We are trying to leave windows open to assure that fresh air is flowing to the fullest extent possible. You might want to dress for a refreshing and invigorating service! Here are a few important tips to keep in mind as you enter the sanctuary:

If you want to sit in the front part of the church, go in the front doors near the pulpit. Likewise, if you'd like to sit further back, go in through the back. Our ushers have been trained to seat people in a fashion so that others do not walk next to you after you are seated. Note that the ushers are only seating people from the side aisles; again to keep people a safe distance apart as they are seated. This is also important as the congregation is dismissed following the organ postlude. People are dismissed so that you are not walking past anyone as you exit.

We have found everyone to be quite cooperative in wearing a mask. You can even bring your coffee and enjoy it during the service. You can easily slip the mask down to enjoy your drink, as long as you pull it right back up afterwards. We need everyone to keep their mask covering both their mouth and nose during the entire service. Pay particular attention when standing to sing and remember to be "mask aware" as sometimes the masks tend to slip down during the course of the service.

We're all looking forward to a time when none of this will be necessary. Until then, we want everyone to feel comfortable knowing that we are doing everything possible to keep you safe as we worship together.



## This Pandemic of Grief

**What is Grief?** As human beings, whenever our attachments are threatened, harmed, or severed, we naturally grieve. Grief is everything we think and feel inside of us when this happens. We experience shock and disbelief. We worry, which is a form of fear. We become sad and possibly lonely. We get angry. We feel guilty or regretful. The sum total of all these and any other thoughts and feelings we are experiencing as a result of the coronavirus pandemic is grief.

Our pandemic grief will change from day to day and week to week. This virus is fast. As it sweeps across continents and we collectively take action to "flatten the curve," new rules and limitations are popping up and changing every day. As circumstances change, so too will our grief.

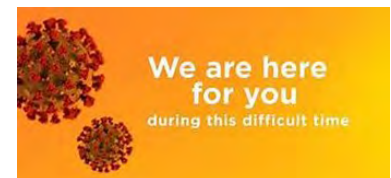
In this pandemic we have big losses and little losses. We have everything from people dying, sometimes alone, all the way to proms being canceled, students being unable to attend in person school to the loss of contact from our loved ones because of social distancing measures. Nothing can change the reality that this was not how this year was supposed to go for any of us, and that we're all not sure how much more we'll have to cancel and lose and miss or shelve, or when we'll get to make new plans or pick up our dreams where we left off, if we're able to at all. Now everybody has got some level of grief. And any kind of grief can feel like the worst pain in the world.

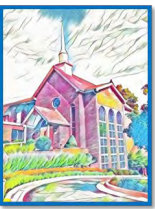
**Reaching out.** In these uncertain times, we often need someone to just listen to our stories. You and I can have the privilege of reaching out as grief companions

to those in our church family and the community at large. As God's people, we are called to comfort others and help bear one another's burdens. Loss is one of those burdens, and the church has a great opportunity to lead the way. You don't have to be a professional counselor to be a grief companion. What it does take is a willingness to be present, to learn about another's journey, and offer encouragement and hope along the way.

**Some action suggestions:** Make a list of people who you're going to call periodically or decide among your friends and family to share "check in duties" for someone who you know may feel isolated right now. When people feel lonely, it keeps them from honestly being able to name or process their grief and work through it. For some a Zoom video conferencing may be a help. For many others talking on the phone is a better idea. In good weather a socially distanced meeting on a porch or in your back yard works.

*At the present time, Loss and Life Transitions has no formal support groups meeting. But we at the church can be a clearing house for names of those who would be more than willing to connect with you or someone you know. It's sometimes hard to reach out for help. But in this moment, we need more social connection than ever, even if we can't physically be in the same room with one another. If you would like to connect with a grief companion or like your name added to the list of available grief companions, contact Jean in the church office (676-9449) during office hours or Pat (896-6980) on evenings or weekends.*





*Mason First United Methodist Church*

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**Return Service Requested**

Worship has returned to our regular time and place – 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. We are practicing COVID safety measures – please wear your mask and refrain from handshakes and other close physical contact.

You might want to arrive a little early, as specially trained ushers will escort you to your seats, which are marked off to promote social distancing within the sanctuary.

While we are not serving refreshments after the service, please feel welcome to bring a travel mug of your favorite morning beverage with you.

Please see page 7 for more information on COVID precautions.





## November 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Faithlink Class	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 10:00am Faith Chat - Zoom 6:30pm Disciple Class 7:00pm Faith Chat - Zoom	<b>4</b> 9:00am UMW Leadership Team Meeting 7:00pm Handbell Choir 8:00pm Chancel Choir	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Faithlink Class	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 10:00am Faith Chat - Zoom 6:30pm Disciple Class 7:00pm Faith Chat - Zoom	<b>11</b> 7:00pm Handbell Choir 8:00pm Chancel Choir	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 1:00pm CACS Commodities	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Faithlink Class	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 10:00am Faith Chat - Zoom 6:30pm Disciple Class 7:00pm Faith Chat - Zoom	<b>18</b> 7:00pm Handbell Choir 8:00pm Chancel Choir	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Faithlink Class	<b>23</b> 9:00am Decorating Church for Christmas	<b>24</b> 10:00am Faith Chat - Zoom 7:00pm Faith Chat - Zoom	<b>25</b> 7:00pm Handbell Choir 8:00pm Chancel Choir	<b>26</b> Thanksgiving Day -- Church office is closed.	<b>27</b> Thanksgiving Holiday -- Church office is closed.	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> CHANGE FOR CHANGE OFFERING COLLECTION AT CHURCH 9:30am Worship 10:30am Faithlink Class	<b>30</b>					



# NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Aaron Fogg	1
Ryan Beebe	2
Jean Karlake	2
Heather Giguere	3
Chuck Stark	5
Emilie Hudgins	5
Kyle Strickland	5
Ashley Gardner	6
Eliza Boynton	9
Paul Lange	11
Lara Adolphson	11
Bill Campbell	12
Gabriella Howe	12
Bailey Akers	13
Ted Stroud	13
Hope Treiber	13
Cherry Zanger	14
Brett Beaune	14
Heidi Berridge	14
Jean Bement	15
Joyce Plumhoff	16
Anne Hudgins	17
Diane David	17
Heather VerHage	20
Lukas Harnick	20
Brian Howe	22
Judy Whipple	22
Ilene Ream	23
Jane Hepfer	26
Emily Bartlett	28
Brenda Schmidt	28
Jon Droscha	28
Jennifer Richard	28
Jakob Adolphson	29
Susan Gardner	30

~ and ~



Craig and Sherry Barnes..... 2

Thank You notes are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. Notes have been received recently from Joanne and Ken Guettler and Marilyn and Jeff Lautzenheiser.

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed here and you would like it to be, please contact the church office so we can add it to our records and publish it.