



SEPTEMBER  
2022

# The First Connection

a publication of

## Mason First United Methodist Church

*Growing in Faith, Serving Others, Sharing the Love of Christ*

*In the bulb, there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree...  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

(from Hymn of Promise by Natalie Sleeth)

I drove by the orchards near our home in Bear Lake just yesterday and the apple trees are weighted down with clusters of ripening apples turning red with the help of the cool nights we've been having lately. They look so tasty and my mouth waters at the thought of fresh cider and hot apple donuts.

Looking at all those apples got me thinking about the old adage that reminds us you can count the seeds in an apple, but you can't count the apples in a seed. So true! No one can know how many apples will come from the potential of those seeds! Those apple trees have been there for as long as I can remember – season after season – bearing fruit that brings flavor and nutrition and the potential for more apples to grow.

As we kick off our fall season of programming, we remember that we have committed ourselves to being an orchard where faith grows. And the really cool thing about growing in faith together is that we'll never know how many other lives are touched by the sharing of that faith over the years to come. So, I invite you to look for the opportunities to grow in faith, serve others, and share the love of Christ. As we do these things together, we trust that God will be at work in us and in the people whose lives we may bless over the years to come!

Also, please join us for our upcoming series,

*Lessons from the Apple Tree*

beginning Sunday, September 18.

And don't forget to invite a friend!

Grace and Peace,

*Pastor Suzanne*



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Join us for

## *Lessons from the Apple Tree*

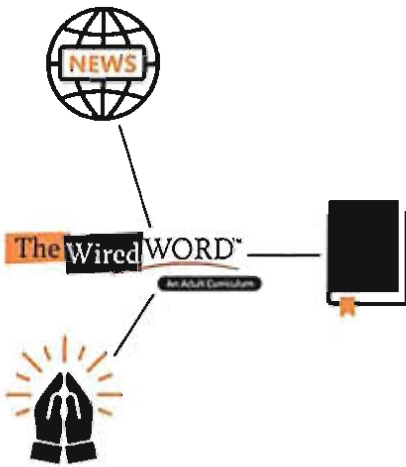
*A new sermon series beginning  
September 18*



# GROWING IN FAITH...

## Wired Word

One of the most meaningful practices of our faith is to gather with others and wrestle with the current events of our time as we view them through the lens of faith. Wired Word is a current events issues-based Sunday School class that meets each Sunday morning to do just that. Class leader, Jon Droscha, brings topics from the news and leads meaningful discussion that challenges us to grow in faith and in our world perspective. Class meets in the Chapel at 11:00 a.m. following worship, and will resume its fall schedule on Sunday, September 25<sup>th</sup>.



## What We Believe

Where do our beliefs come from? How do they grow and change as we learn and discern? What are some of the beliefs of the church that are most important to us? And what beliefs do we have that are still being shaped?

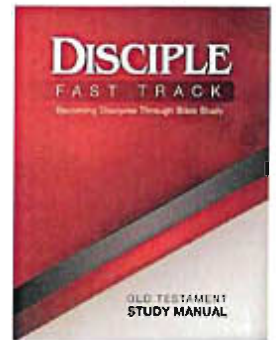


Join Pastor Suzanne for a three week exploration of the shaping of our beliefs. This class will include discussion, and some prompts for you to spend time on your own in thought and prayer. The class will meet Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm on September 13, 20, and 27<sup>th</sup>. Please sign up at the Connection Point.

## Disciple Bible Study: Old Testament

Disciple Bible Study is an interactive journey through the Bible that helps participants to find the major themes of the Bible as they discern their own call to live as disciples. This fall, we're offering the Old Testament portion of the class under the leadership of Dennis Howe. Participants will want to make a commitment to complete the assigned Bible readings each week so as to be able to interactively engage the subject matter. This 12-week class will meet Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm beginning October 4<sup>th</sup> and running through November 15<sup>th</sup> — then taking a break for Advent and resuming for five sessions, January 10<sup>th</sup> to February 7<sup>th</sup>.

*Please sign up at the Connection Point and be sure to indicate if you need to purchase the study guide so we can order enough copies for everyone.*



**Let all that you do  
be done in Love.**

1 Corinthians 16:14



United  
Women  
in Faith

Summer is almost over and our fall programs are beginning. Hope your summer days went well. We start off with the Rummage Sale — taking in donations and set up will begin on September 6, with the sale on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. I'm sure you know that we need lots of help. You all know the saying "Many hands make for light work." It also makes for lots of fun, talking and just being together. Please join us.

The next special event program is "Helping Haiti Heal" on Saturday, September 24, 2022 at 10:00am. Rev. Dr. Laura Elliott will be speaking about Haiti, some of the challenges there, and how things are going with the Soaring Unlimited program. I know you'll find it most interesting. We will have guests from other churches coming so we will need helpful hosts to welcome everyone.

Circle meetings are also starting up on September 27<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you.

Claudia Ireland, UWIF President

**WELCOME**  
*New Members*

Interested in becoming a member of the Mason First family?

**JOIN US FOR A  
NEW MEMBER CLASS**

Thursday, September 22  
6:30-8:00PM in the Chapel

## Called to Serve?

Have you ever thought that you might like to serve on one of our many leadership committees? Now is the time of year that the Nominations Committee gathers to nominate members to serve on the various committees of leadership in the church. Here are just a few of the committees you might be interested in serving on:

- The Trustees – are the body responsible for the assets of the church – primarily the building and properties including the parsonage, but also the investment assets of the church as well. The Trustees meet once a month to discuss the status of ongoing and upcoming projects..
- The Finance Committee – is the body responsible for making sure that the church has the financial resources it needs to conduct the mission and ministry that is our essential purpose.
- The Staff Parish Relations Committee – is the Human Resources body of the church caring for the staff and making sure that we have correct policies and procedures in place. They interact with the Pastor and with the Conference to make sure that the pastoral appointment is appropriate for the needs of the church.
- The Missions Committee is responsible for coordinating all the various missional activities of the church.
- Church Council – is the governing body of the church. Leaders from all the committees sit on the church council as well as representatives at large, and together they help to steer the direction of the church.
- The Nominations Committee – is responsible for staffing and training members of the above committees.
- The Christian Education Committee – is responsible for making sure that we have good classes and programs to help people grow in faith.
- The Outreach Committee is responsible for making sure that we are reaching out to extend invitation to people outside the walls of the church.
- The Hospitality Committee – is responsible for extending warm welcome to newcomers to our church. They help our new folks to get connected.
- The Daycare Board – serves as an advisory committee for our Daycare.

These are some of the significant ways you can serve and help make a difference in the life of our church! If you are interested in serving on any of these committees, please reach out to Deb Fennell, our Lay Leader, so that the Nominations Committee may consider you for service!

# Ways you can SERVE

## “Change for Change” Mission Noi\$y Bucket Offering

September’s collection will benefit **Bishop Judith Craig Children’s Village**. Established in 2000, this Liberian orphanage provides for the basic needs, education, counseling, and healthcare to the hundreds of children who call it home.



During the summer months, your generosity helped two other organizations. While July’s offering originally was going to be for Children’s Village (above), we changed direction and instead collected for the **Step by Step Program** at the **Big Ugly Community Center (BUCC)**.

This is where the IGNITE Youth on the Mission Trip served, and they came back wanting to see if our church could help the music portion of their after school and summer programs for at-risk kids. You answered the call, and donated \$640 to help purchase more instruments and music necessities.

August brought torrential rains and flash-flooding across Appalachia and specifically in Kentucky — and the call to collect for **UMCOR Advance #901670 for US Disaster Response and Recovery**. During the first two weeks of the month we received cash/check/coin donations in the Noisy Bucket for this cause totaling \$298. We’ll have an updated month-end figure in the October newsletter. THANK YOU!

## Clothing Bank on September Hiatus with Changes in October

With the UWIF Fall Rummage Sale and other major events happening in the month of September, the Clothing Bank will not be open. The volunteer crew could use a break from weekly sorting and bi-monthly open hours for the public. They kindly ask that you keep your clothing donations until October, so the area downstairs is not overtaken with bags and boxes of clothes to sort. *If you are planning to donate clothing to the Fall Rummage Sale (Sept. 9-10), you may bring those items during donation hours Sept. 6-8<sup>th</sup>.*

The volunteer crew tracked attendance for several months on their previous Tuesday hours, and have come together with a plan to completely change the bank’s days and hours. **Beginning in October, the Clothing Bank will be open the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month, from 3pm-7pm.**

The Clothing Bank has been an important mission ministry of our church for over 40 years, and will continue to help those who seek assistance. More volunteers for this important ministry are needed; call the church office for details!

# BULLETIN BOARD

## 20-MINUTE TOWN HALL MEETING



First Sundays in Fellowship Hall  
Immediately following worship  
*Be a part of the conversation!*

**JOIN US  
SEPT. 11<sup>th</sup>  
AFTER WORSHIP IN  
FELLOWSHIP HALL  
FOR UPDATES!**

## RUMMAGE SALE

### JUST WEEKS AWAY...

United Women in Faith (UMW) will have their fall sale September 9-10<sup>th</sup>. Hours are Friday 9-5 & Saturday 9-Noon.

They are seeking donations of clothing/shoes, household items, books, games, toys, etc. at this time. Please bring donations to church during designated DROP-OFF DAYS & HOURS (after Labor Day) — Sept. 6-8 (T-W-Th) from 9am until 3pm. The sale set-up crew will be here those three days to get donations directly from you and take them to the sale tables, as we do not have storage available here at the church for items brought before that week.

All sale proceeds benefit the many mission projects and charitable organizations supported by UWIF.



Thursday  
September

# 22

12:00 - 4:00 PM

The CADL Mason Library is providing a play space and Storytime for kids while you donate! Free books for donors while supplies last.

VERSITI DONOR CONTACT  
866.642.5663

### MASON COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE

Drive held at MASON FIRST UNITED METHODIST  
201 E Ash Street

Appointments recommended. Walk ins welcome!

Reserve your time to give blood:  
<https://bit.ly/givebloodSept22>

or Scan QR Code:



Helpful tip: Make sure to eat a healthy meal and drink plenty of water before donating.



If you have a small odd job, minor plumbing repair or need a ride to an appointment, call Brian Hankey at 676-2463, and the Helping Hands Crew will do their best to serve!



## CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

**Congratulations** to Mark Page on his recent retirement from Mason Public Schools after decades of service!

**Our Deepest Sympathies and Prayers are extended to:** Brad and Mary Kay Erickson and their family on the passing of his father, Ronald Erlickson, on August 16th.

**Our Prayers and Get Well Wishes are with:**

- Ella LoVette as she recovers from breast cancer surgery.
- Dennis Whipple who was in rehab to gain strength for successful heart surgery.
- Jennifer Rice facing heart surgery.
- Ken Guettler in his cancer battle.
- Our shut-ins and friends in assisted living/rehab.
- Those who have been battling COVID.

*Please note: Hospitals do not notify us when someone from our church family is admitted. Please let us know!*

**Thinking of members/friends in assisted living, rehab/nursing facilities, and hospice care:**

- Green Acres, Mason: Beth Grosshans, Dick Magsig and Jeanette Strickland
- Ingham Co. Medical Care Facility, Okemos: Char Bush and John Dodge
- The Willows of Okemos: Lew Tibbits

## HEY SINGERS and RINGERS!

Chancel Choir practices resume on Wednesday evenings starting September 7<sup>th</sup>. Both meet in the Choir Room on the church's lower level (enter via barrier-free door). Bell practice is at 7:00pm and voice choir follows at 8:00pm. Everyone is welcome; the ability to read music is helpful, especially for those participating in bell choir.



### CAROLIER CHOIR

for kids age 4 and up (teens and adults are also welcome) meets Thursday afternoons from 4-4:45pm under the direction of Chris Bement. She would love to have your children and/or grandchildren join!





**IGNITE Upcoming Events**  
9/11 Tailgate Party Kickoff  
9/25 Games at Green Acres  
10/9 Corn Maze

**CALLING ALL 6th-12th GRADERS!!**

Please join us for an epic tailgate party to kickoff another year!  
When: Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup> 4pm-6pm  
Where: The church parking lot  
(We'll move to the Youth Room if it rains.)

Invite a friend, grab some chairs, and be ready for some fun!  
Walking Tacos, Root Beer Floats, Snacks Galore, Cornhole, Games, Prizes & More

Please RSVP to Laurie by September 7<sup>th</sup>

MISSION POSSIBLE



Any high schoolers interested in exploring the 2023 Mission Trip are encouraged to attend Mission Possible! We will meet on designated nights following IGNITE to discuss all things Mission Trip. This will be a follow up on this year's awesome adventure, as well as preparation for the next epic excursion. The first meeting will be Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup> from 6pm-7pm following IGNITE. Contact Laurie Reed if you have questions.

After breaking for the summer, the momentum is picking up for this important ministry aimed at encouraging and mentoring moms with young children. MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) meets the first and third Friday of the month from 9:30-11:00am downstairs in the Youth Room. September 16<sup>th</sup> is our next gathering. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. See Laurie Reed to find out how you can help!

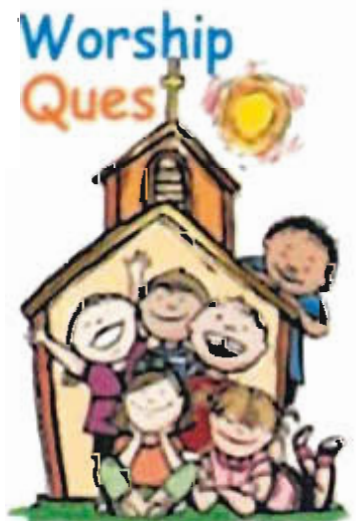


September 18<sup>th</sup> is the Kickoff for fall programming!

**GROW, PROCLAIM, SERVE!**

is an exciting new curriculum where kids will explore families in the Bible, learn how today's faith families care for children as they grow, build loving relationships, and find out what it means to be part of God's family!

This class is for children preschool through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and meets downstairs in the One-Room Sunday School classroom with Miss Laurie and Miss Sierra during Sunday morning worship.



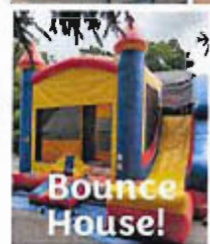
continues through September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Children preschool age through 5<sup>th</sup> grade meet downstairs in the One Room Sunday School classroom for fun and games during Sunday morning worship.

## SHARING THE LOVE OF CHRIST...



**WOW!!!** What more can be said for the incredible amount of work that went into this mission event. Thank You to Lynn Goedert for spearheading it, starting with getting names of kids we could potentially help, organizing the school supply collection, recruiting **AMAZING VOLUNTEERS**, and coming up with a system to sort, pack, and disperse everything collected. We had 90 children pre-registered for the event, and we served 26 more with our "WALK-INS WELCOME" policy. We even had leftover supplies and backpacks to distribute to other area schools.



The smiles on the kids' faces were contagious, and the parents and grandparents who brought them thanked us for blessing them with new backpacks, school supplies, clothing, shoes, the opportunity for a new haircut if they wanted one, and even lunch! Thank you to all of our volunteers, and to our congregants, as well as several companies, neighboring church congregations, and organizations who donated supplies or made cash donations to help us purchase items on school lists.

## MONEY MATTERS\$ – An Update from Financial Administrator Glenn Darling

I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer and enjoying time outside with friends and family. As we approach the end of the summer months, our church operating fund is also at the lowest level of the year. Salaries and benefits make up well over half of the operating fund expenses. Operating fund expenses also include energy, insurance, paper, and supplies, as well as utilities. Inflation has taken a really big toll on our expenses in all these categories.

I might suggest prayerfully considering raising your tithes and offerings this fall during our annual stewardship campaign to take into account the effects of inflation on the daily operation of the church.

Our mission related funds are doing well. We have donated \$9,626 to missions already in 2022.

The Trustees funds which play a vital role in upkeep of our church facilities are also doing well. We will make the final payment on the chapel/kitchen/office area re-roofing project this month. The Bright Future Fund now stands at \$25,542. Those funds are closely managed by the Trustees, who have established a formal process for approving all Bright Future projects and expenditures.

The Mason Christian Childcare facility has plenty of funding thanks to recent grants from the State of Michigan. Staffing is the primary concern for the center here in 2022.

Overall, finances for the church are pretty solid. All the employees try their best to be frugal and keep expenses at a minimum.

As we move into the fall season, I would invite you to pray for both the church and the staff as we pursue our mission to grow in faith, serve others and share the love of Christ.



**BACK to SCHOOL PRAYER**

Loving God, as we look forward to a new school year, grant us the courage, the patience, the perseverance, the wisdom, and the kindness that we will need each day. For those who are studying, may they continue to learn new things, to find joy in your creation, and to grow more into the people you created them to be. For those of us sending kids off to school, grant us the



**Bushels of FUN**

wisdom to lead them well; grant us peace in knowing that they are in your care; and grant us the strength that we need to encourage and strengthen them when they stumble. May we all take delight in new beginnings and new challenges. And may we shine your light and your love



**The Apple Seed's Wish**

Secret star all apples hide,  
Lucky star locked up inside,  
Wishing star, hear what I say,  
And grant the wish I wish today.  
  
I wish I may, I wish I might,  
Find a growing place just right,  
With good soft soil, nice fresh air,  
Warm sun, cool rain, and room to spare.

Secret star, of which I'm part,  
I wish this wish with all my heart:  
To sprout and grow, and one day be  
A proud and fruitful apple tree.



**MAKE YOUR OWN HEALTHY AFTER SCHOOL SNACK!**

**WHAT YOU NEED:**

- 4 apples, cored & sliced into 1/8" rings
- Large bowl and a spoon
- 2 tsps. cinnamon + 2 tsps. sugar
- Baking sheets (sprayed)

**WHAT YOU DO:**

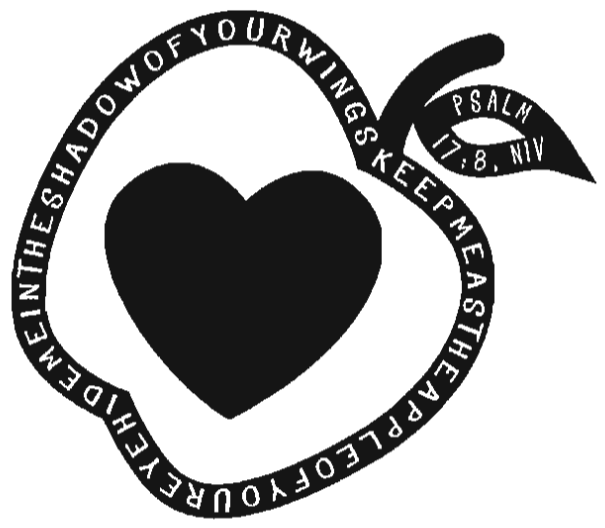
- Place apple slices in your bowl.
- Mix cinnamon and sugar together and pour over the apples, stirring carefully with your spoon to coat them evenly with the mixture.
- Place apple slices on the sprayed baking sheets in a single layer.
- Bake at 200 degrees for 2-3 hours, until chips are dry but still slightly soft.
- Allow them to cool — then enjoy munching!



**APPLE OF HIS EYE**

Start each school day by remembering God's loving care for you.

*Directions: Starting at the K by the stem and going clockwise, circle each word. Then place the words in the blanks to complete Psalm 17:8.*



" \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_;  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_."

PSALM 17:8, NIV

Answers: "Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings." Psalm 17:8, NIV



## Mason First United Methodist Church

*Growing in Faith, Serving Others, Sharing the Love of Christ*

201 E. Ash Street \* Mason MI 48854

Phone: (517) 676 9449

[www.masonfirst.org](http://www.masonfirst.org)

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Return Service Requested



Many thanks to Deb Fennell and all of her helpers who heard the cry of the caffeine deprived and have devoted themselves to providing pre-worship coffee and tasty treats. We look forward to the expansion of the Coffee Connection as we move forward in our Bright Future plans to remodel Fellowship Hall and give the Coffee Connection a distinctive look.

Please stop by and enjoy a hot cup of quality coffee, and don't forget to express your appreciation to the baristas! And if you'd like to serve or make treats from time to time, please be sure to let Deb know.

## Good Apple Brunch

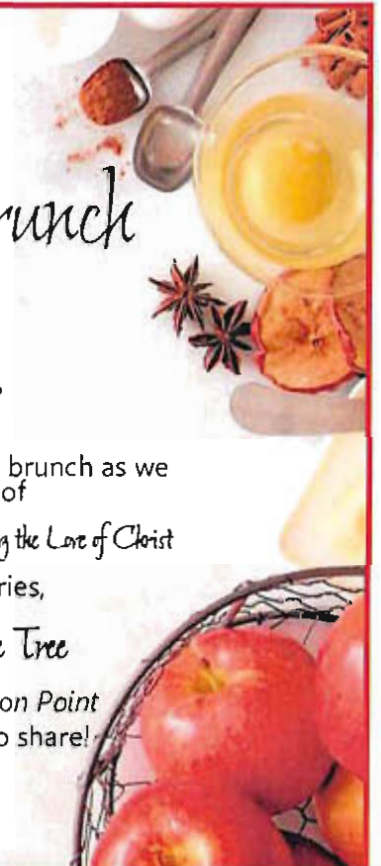
Sunday, September 18  
immediately following worship

Join us for a tasty celebrational brunch as we begin a new season of  
*Growing in Faith, Serving Others & Sharing the Love of Christ*  
and a new worship series,

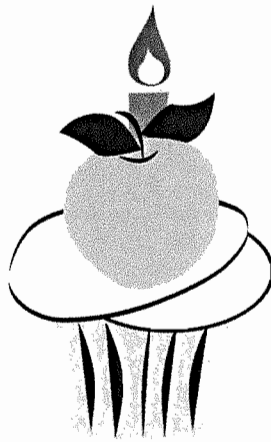
*Lessons From the Apple Tree*

Make your reservations at the *Connection Point*  
And sign up to bring a *Good Apple* treat to share!

*Don't forget to invite a friend!*







# SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Dennis Howe .....	1
Sharon Whipple .....	1
Joann Waterstradt .....	2
David Leonard .....	2
Vicky Hanson .....	2
Michael Page .....	3
Marlene Akers.....	4
Mike Buckner.....	4
Linda Akers.....	5
John Dodge.....	5
Anita Cornish.....	5
David Aldrich.....	5
Megan Goss.....	6
Erica Waltz.....	6
Steve Ireland.....	7
Lauren Waltz.....	9
Lynn Smith .....	9
Ainsley Richard .....	11
Reese Ball .....	15
Janean Belman .....	16
Bart Crider .....	16
Brian Whipple .....	17
Lori Colby.....	17
Ryan Berridge .....	17
Jo Reece .....	20
Ellen Lord.....	22
Mark Page .....	23
Bonnie Olson .....	26
Brandon Armstrong.....	27

Roxie Stark .....	28
Sara Stid .....	28
Barbara Wheaton .....	28
Judy Montague .....	28



# SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Mike & Debra Buckner.....	1
Andrew & Alexis Bayer .....	6
Scott & Amy Etzel.....	7
<b><i>Celebrating 20 years!</i></b>	
Ryan & Heidi Berridge.....	8
Bob & Connie Bartlett.....	18
Jack & Jennifer Calhoun .....	18
<b><i>Celebrating 30 years!</i></b>	

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.

## September 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
<b>4</b> 9:30am Worship	<b>5</b> Labor Day -- Church is closed.	<b>6</b> * Note: Clothing Bank NOT open due to rummage sale set up 9:00am Rummage Sale Donation Drop-Off & Sale Set Up until 3pm	<b>7</b> 9:00am Rummage Sale Donation Drop-Off & Sale Set Up until 3pm 10:30am Bible Study Group in Library 7:00pm Chancel Bells 8:00pm Chancel Choir Practice in LL Choir Room	<b>8</b> 9:00am Rummage Sale Donation Drop-Off & Sale Set Up until 3pm 4:00pm Carolier Choir in LL Choir Room	<b>9</b> 9:00am UWIF Fall Rummage Sale until 5pm	<b>10</b> 9:00am UWIF Fall Rummage Sale until 12pm
<b>11</b> 9:30am Worship 10:30am Town Hall Meeting after Worship in Fellowship Hall 4:00pm Kick-Off for IGNITE Youth Group until 6pm	<b>12</b> 6:00pm MCCCC Board Meeting in Chapel 7:00pm SPRC Meeting in Chapel	<b>13</b> 6:30pm What We Believe Class	<b>14</b> 10:30am Bible Study Group in Library 6:30pm Toward Healing Group meets in Chapel 7:00pm Chancel Bells 8:00pm Chancel Choir Practice in LL Choir Room	<b>15</b> 4:00pm Carolier Choir in LL Choir Room	<b>16</b> Deadline to register for UWIF Haiti Mission Program on 9/24 9:30am MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) meets downstairs in Youth Room (until 11am)	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 9:30am Worship 11:00am Fall KICK-OFF Brunch after Worship -- RSVP!	<b>19</b> 5:30pm Caregivers Support Group meets in LL Classroom 101 7:00pm Finance Committee Meeting	<b>20</b> * Note: Clothing Bank NOT open this month. 6:30pm What We Believe Class	<b>21</b> 10:30am Bible Study Group in Library 6:30pm Toward Healing Group meets in Chapel 7:00pm Chancel Bells 8:00pm Chancel Choir Practice in LL Choir Room	<b>22</b> 12:00pm Community Blood Drive in Fellowship Hall until 4:00pm 4:00pm Carolier Choir in LL Choir Room 6:30pm New Member Class in Chapel	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 10:00am UWIF Special Mission Program until 2:30pm "Helping Haiti Heal" Lunch provided -- Registration required by 9/16
<b>25</b> 9:30am Worship 11:00am Wired Word Class in Chapel 2:00pm Mid-Michigan District Conference Meetings until 5pm 4:00pm IGNITE -- Games at Green Acres	<b>26</b> 7:00pm Trustees Meeting in Chapel	<b>27</b> UMW Circles Meet (Chapel) Mary Martha 10:00AM Rebekah 1:00PM Miriam 6:30PM 6:30pm What We Believe Class	<b>28</b> 10:30am Bible Study Group in Library 6:30pm Toward Healing Group meets in Chapel 7:00pm Chancel Bells 8:00pm Chancel Choir Practice in LL Choir Room	<b>29</b> 4:00pm Carolier Choir in LL Choir Room	<b>30</b>	