

May 2023

The First Connection

a publication of

Mason First United Methodist Church

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



Flowers and Showers

The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it! Psalm 24: 1

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. Corinthians 5:17

So I'm thinking that if the old adage about April showers bringing May flowers is true, then May certainly ought to be a garden to behold! We've truly have had our share of rain and snow that doesn't seem to know when to give up! And yet, there has not been one day with an absence of hope. In fact, today I look around and the flowering trees have blossomed and green shoots are coming up out of the earth ready to delight us with the flowers we've been waiting for.

I don't always understand God's ways and God's time. I surely don't understand God's plans. But I have learned to trust that there is a God rhyme and reason to the rhythms of life and creation. As surely as spring follows winter, and Easter follows Good Friday, we know that seasons of dreariness are followed by new growth bathed in soft light and painted in beautiful color.

Easter was a welcome reminder of the hope yet to come. It has been made official that the national emergency of COVID is over—thanks be to God. Of course there will still be ebbs and flows... showers and flowers. And we will, from time to time, face new and different challenges. But scripture reminds us that if we remain in Christ, we are a new creation in the making. Winters may come, but they do, in time, yield to spring. *The old has passed away; behold the new has come.*

As we face the seasons of change yet to come, let us remember who and whose we are: We are a family of faith with the living Christ at our center. We are God's Easter people. Enjoy the beauty of this spring.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Suzanne



One in the Spirit
A Celebration of Pentecost Sunday

Sunday, May 28

Dress in Festive Red!

WHAT'S NEW...

Pentecost Sunday Worship

How's your faith?

UWF News

Teacher Appreciation

Graduation Sunday

Wesley Woods Clean-Up

A New Joyful Noise

Missions Collections

Welcoming New Friends

Planning Ahead

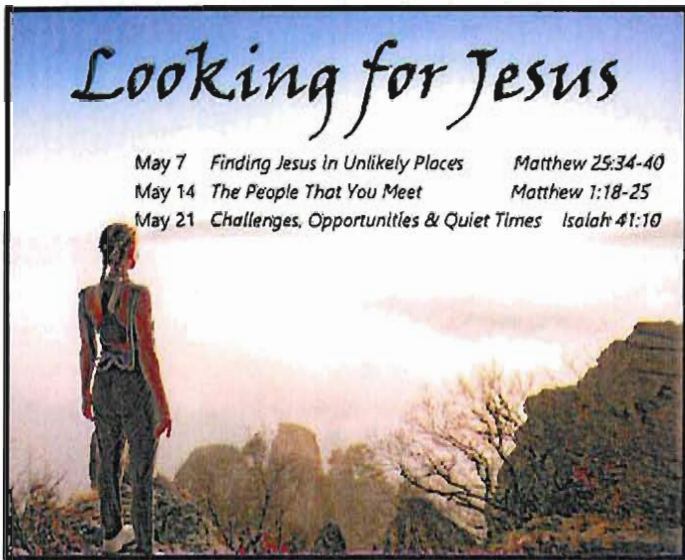
Euchre Continues

VBS is coming!

Church Family News

Planning to be Safe

Noisy Bucket Offerings
For Annual Conference



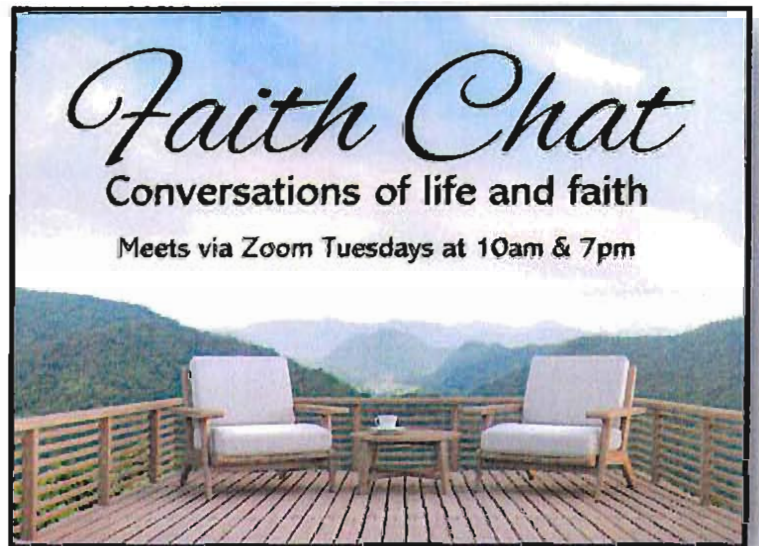
The Search Continues...

Since Easter, we've been working out our thoughts and ideas of what it means to recognize the real presence of Jesus in our lives today. Although we may accept the teachings of Jesus and the grace and hope offered to us in his resurrection, it's another level of faithfulness altogether to be able to identify Jesus at work in our lives today. Finding Jesus means we have to look for him, *and* be able to recognize him when we find him. Join us for the final three messages in our worship series, *Looking for Jesus*, and may you be blessed with renewed vision for seeing Christ in your life!

Faith Chat Conversations

Faith Chat is a place where we speak as friends about all kinds of different thoughts and issues. It's encouragement and support for our efforts to grow in faith. Last week we spoke of what it actually means to have faith. Here are some of the things we wrestled with:

- * How do you define faith?
- * Where does your faith come from?
- * How do you nurture and grow your faith?
- * What most challenges your faith?
- * In what ways do you rely on your faith to get through the challenges of life?
- * How is your faith made evident to those with whom you interact?



United
Women
in Faith

Be content with such things as you have.

Hebrews 13:5

I found this verse in *Walking in Grace*, formerly known as the *Daily Guidepost*. After reading the rest of the verse, I thought "WOW, I have to share it." Take a minute and read all of the verses (Hebrews 13:1-6).

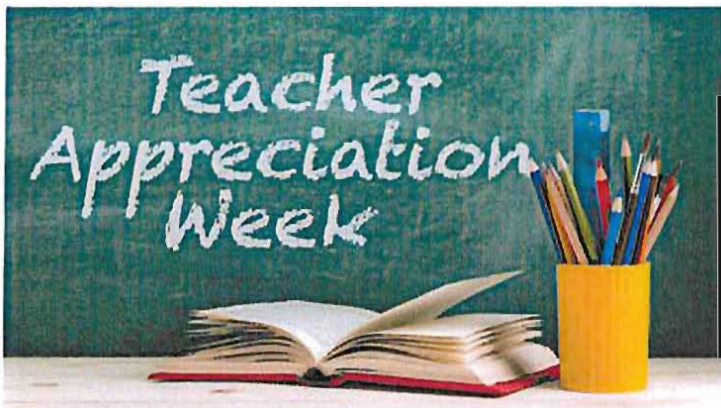
Thanks to all who helped with the Rummage Sale and/or brought items and clothing. All the proceeds go to our mission projects. It is our biggest semi-annual money making project. Even though it is a lot of work, we have fun being together. It is our chance to help others by selling things at a low cost while making money to donate.

This month we will be delivering Spring Baskets to our shut-ins, and our Lavender and Lace Luncheon will be held on Thursday, May 18. Hope to see everyone there. Even if you are not a member of the UWF, you are welcome to sign up and attend. We would love to have you. The program will be great!

Claudia Ireland, UWF President

MOPS MINISTRY CONTINUES TO GROW!

MOPS is an international organization for Mothers of Preschoolers, and most local MOPS chapters are supported by churches like ours. Mason First opened its MOPS program last year and since then, several area moms with young children have joined our group to meet twice a month for connection and encouragement. These young women truly appreciate this church and its generous members for sponsoring this important ministry. They are especially grateful for the wonderful "grandmas" who volunteer their time to lovingly care for their children during the meetings. We couldn't do it without them! A big thank you to Nancy Nay, Sylvia Rogers, Deb Shoemaker, Mary Lou Keenon, and Cindy Howe for your dedication to MOPS. Also, thank you to Deb Fosburg for helping us in the past.



Mason First UMC is pleased to add our prayers and thanksgiving for all who serve as dedicated teachers in our community and where children gather to learn. Teaching is as much a calling as it is a profession and those who answer that call to nurture and teach children deserve a special measure of God's blessing.

Your donations are appreciated!

We will be recognizing the hardworking teachers and staff of Mason Public Schools during Teacher Appreciation Week with gift baskets for each of the six schools. Any donations of individually wrapped candy bars or snacks would be appreciated. Please place your items in the marked bin at the Connection Point before May 10th.



COUNTDOWN to MISSION TRIP 2023

Destination: Niagara Falls, NY

Please be in prayer for our youth and leaders as they begin making their final preparations to travel to Niagara Falls where they will serve others through YouthWorks, a youth mission host organization. The team will be departing on June 25.



Join us Sunday, June 4 as we introduce and recognize our graduates, and present the scholarships awarded to this year's applicants. Following worship we will have celebratory cake in Fellowship Hall.

Beginning with Pentecost Sunday (Memorial Day Weekend)

Worship Quest

becomes



Kids can expect stories, games, snacks, and fun in the sun... when there's sun!

Bring a friend and worship in the
Summer Fun!

SERVING OTHERS



Thanks to our Wesley Woods Work Crew!

United Methodists from all over gathered at Wesley Woods Camp and Retreat Center to do the annual spring cleaning needed in order to be ready for the many campers who will enjoy the life-changing experience of church camp.

Ryan Berridge, Aaron Dickinson, and Brian Whipple spent a cold dreary Saturday clearing roofs, washing windows, blowing leaves, and cleaning out cabins so that they would be ready for the kids and teens who are getting ready to come this summer.

Brian said, "It was very satisfying to see the camp so clean and orderly. Good luck to all the future campers!"



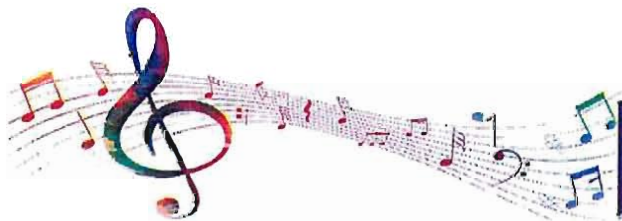
MISSIONS COLLECTIONS

Our Missions Team has put together a list of items that are regularly needed to support our main missions: Homeless ministries in downtown Lansing, support of students in the Mason Schools, and our clothing bank. The team is also looking ahead to our major event this summer which is our Back to School Jubilee which helps supply kids with the things they need to go back to school.

Each month the Missions Team will feature specific items that they particularly need for these missions. Please place your donations in the Collection Bins at the Connection Point.

MAY DONATIONS:

- * Plastic coat hangers
- * Ziplock bags—any size
- * Large trash bags—kitchen or lawn & leaf
- * Underwear for children and teens



Music is an essential element of the way we worship. It is the expression of our praise and the message of our growing and developing faith. It sets a tone for worship and enlivens our participation. Can you imagine worship without music?

Pastor Suzanne is considering a summer music ensemble called Joyful Noise. Anyone with a



You don't have to do it alone! The spring-summer session of our grief support group here at Mason First UMC will begin on Wednesday, May 10 and run through July 12, 2023. Preregistration is requested by May 3. This group is for anyone suffering from the loss of a significant other, recently or in the past. The group will be closed after the second session (May 17). For more information or to pre-register, contact Pat Mentzer at (517) 896-6980, or call the church office at (517) 676-9449.

Joyful Noise

song in their heart would be welcome to participate as we joyfully explore contemporary choral music and various instrumentation with the goal of sharing our music in worship.

The plan is to meet in the sanctuary at 6:30 on Tuesday evenings (following potluck). If you're interested, please indicate your interest at the Connection Point or by email to Pastor Suzanne.

THIS SUMMER Vacation Bible School

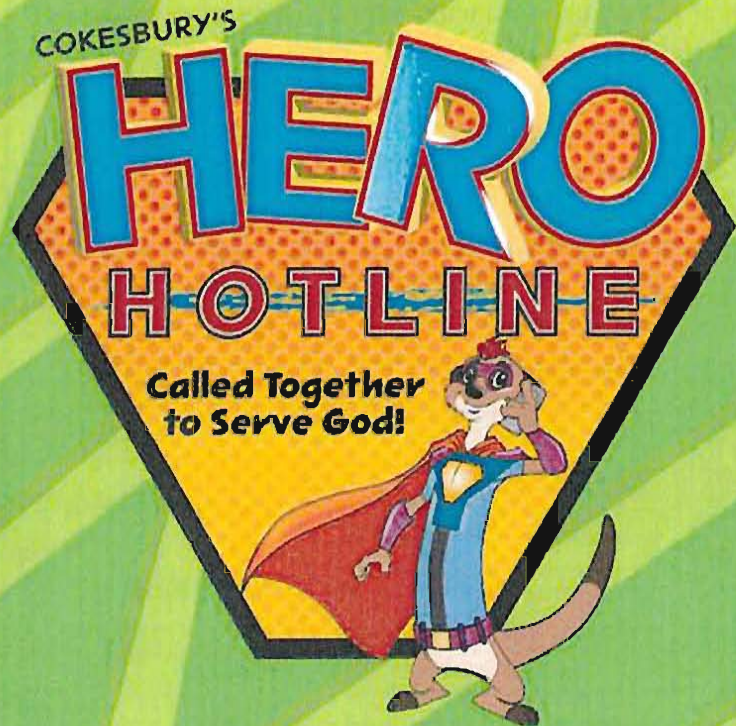
July 11-13

We are pleased to join with three other churches to provide a great Vacation Bible School experience!

Thanks to

First Presbyterian Church

for hosting this summer!



Welcome

Nothing brings more joy than to welcome new friends into our community of faith! We were so blessed to receive the Merchant family this month, welcoming Jaclyn (mom) into membership and baptizing 3-year old Jack. Big brother Mark who has already been baptized and Mark (the dad) were standing up for this awesome moment. Be sure to welcome the Merchant family when you see them!

We are also looking forward to receiving Steve and Kim Karlzen, and Jane Karlzen by transfer of membership, and we will be baptizing Cooper Powless on Mother's Day! Welcome to our family!

MAKING PLANS FOR FALL

We are a busy church making plans for another exciting year of mission and ministry! Believe it or not, it's time to start making plans for fall and beyond! What classes will we offer? What events would we like to host? How will we be of service to our neighbors in the year to come?

May is the month when we start making those plans, and putting them on the calendar so that we can work out the details and then promote them to our church and the community we serve.

Your thoughts and opinions matter! If you have an idea or a request for a particular mission or ministry, please talk to Pastor Suzanne or Laurie Reed, our Director of Family Ministries. We really want to hear your thoughts! And if you serve on a committee or lead a current ministry and have events scheduled that you would like put on the church calendar, we need to hear from you ASAP.

Euchre Night every 3rd Friday!

Join us every third Friday (May 19) at 6:30 p.m. for an evening of Euchre fun. No partner is required – just be sure to sign up at the Connection Point so that we can arrange to have full tables. Bring a snack to share and your own beverage. (If you need to cancel, please be sure to let Pastor Suzanne know so that we can arrange to fill your spot.)



IN THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH...

Planning to be Safe!

Last month at our Church Council meeting, a concern was raised about whether we have safety plans for medical, weather, and active shooter emergencies. The council identified a leadership team who would put together broad plans of response and then serve as leaders in those circumstances. Over the next few months, we'll be sharing those plans with you at our monthly Town Hall Meetings. We pray these plans will never need to be used, but we prefer to be ready to keep everyone safe! Join us for our Town Hall Meetings!

Church Family News

Our sympathies are extended to:

- Brian and Tara Ball and their family on the loss of Tara's mother
- Mark and Linda Carmer on the passing of Mark's mother
- Judy Silsby, on the death of her husband Larry
- Pat Wheaton on the death of her mother Barbara Wheaton
- Kevin and Sheri Gunns and their family on the loss of Sheri's mother Bette-Jo Rogers
- The family of Lynn Castle—we received word that Lynn passed away December 14, 2022

Prayers & Healing Wishes to:

- Ralph McKimmy who has been hospitalized
- Ina Lyon recovering from surgery
- 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. We appreciate you keeping us informed.

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

- The Bickford, Okemos: Larry Howe
- Dansville Country Care Assisted Living: Dick Magsig
- Divine Nest, Leslie: Joyce Darling
- Grand Haven Living Center, Lansing: Marilyn Murthum
- Green Acres, Mason: Beth Grosshans and Jeanette Strickland
- Ingham Co. Medical Care Facility, Okemos: Char Bush and John Dodge
- Island City Assisted Living, Eaton Rapids: Don Dickinson
- The Willows of Okemos: Lew Tibbits

TOWN HALL MEETING SUNDAY, MAY 21



Sunday in Fellowship Hall
Immediately following worship

Be a part of the conversation!



Together, through our Noisy Bucket Offerings, we have made some tremendous donations in support of incredible missions. This month our Noisy Bucket Offering will become our offering to the Michigan Annual Conference gathering in the first week of June. This year the Conference offering will be split as follows:

- Haiti Assets for Peace International will receive 45% of the total offering. This Haiti Covenant Partnership supports the work of Mizak in South Central Haiti, empowering women and girls by providing health services, and vocational training.
- Another 45% will go to the Bishop Judith Craig Children's Village in Liberia. This fund provides basic needs, education, counseling and healthcare to orphaned and financially vulnerable children.
- The remaining 10% will go to "After the Storm" providing disaster relief for communities right here in Michigan.

Together, our generosity can make a significant difference in the lives of our neighbors near and far. Thank you for your continued faithfulness and generosity!



Wind, fire & spirit

Acts 2 describes the amazing events of Pentecost, when the apostles received the Holy Spirit.

Directions: The last letter(s) of each word is the beginning letter of the next. Fill in the missing words to complete Acts 2:1-4, NIV.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 1. HEAV | 6. OGETHE |
| 2. ABLE | 7. ES |
| 3. AY OF PENTECOS | 8. ONGUE |
| 4. ONGUE | 9. A |
| 5. PIRI | 10. IND |



"When the _____³ came, they were all _____⁶ in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent _____¹⁰ came from _____¹ and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They _____⁹ what seemed to be _____⁴ of fire that separated and came to _____⁷ on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy _____⁵ and began to speak in other _____⁸ as the Spirit _____² them."

ACTS 2:1-4, NIV

What is Pentecost?

Pentecost is a special holiday in the life of the church. It reminds us of the time, long ago, when Jesus returned to be with God in heaven, and he sent his Holy Spirit to be with the disciples and with all of us.

The disciples weren't exactly sure what they would do now that Jesus was no longer with them, but as they were gathered on a special day, a mighty rush of wind blew through the place where they were sitting, and tongues of flame appeared over their heads as a reminder of the light of God's Spirit shining in them. And they began to speak in different languages. This was God's way of preparing them to go out into different parts of the world and share the exciting news of Jesus's love for everyone.

And they did just that! They traveled to places far and near, telling the stories and starting small churches in the towns that they visited. And that's why Pentecost is also celebrated as the birthday of the church!



The official color of Pentecost is **RED**, and some of the symbols of Pentecost include flames, or a dove which represents the Holy Spirit, or even birthday symbols to represent the birth of the church!

Answer: 1. heaven, 2. enabled, 3. day of Pentecost, 4. tongues, 5. Spirit, 6. together, 7. rest, 8. tongues, 9. saw, 10. wind



**Happy Birthday
to
The Church!**






**Mason First United
Methodist Church**

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

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Let us join our hearts in prayer

National Day of Prayer

May 4 at 6:00 p.m.

on the
Courthouse Lawn

Pastor Suzanne will be offering the prayer on family.



Birthdays

Grant Giguere	1	Mark Wolfgang	23
Pat Fackler	2	Bob Bartlett.....	24
Henry Day	2	Alex Darling.....	24
Aaron Dickinson	4	Mackenzie Gunns	24
Margaret Talboys	5	Marti Abbott	25
Jenny Armstrong	5	Jim Page	25
Allison Langschwager	6	Colin Whipple	25
Ashley Baker	6	Brooke Hedglen	26
Joanne Guettler	6	David Gunns.....	27
Julie Spyke	8	Ted Rogers	28
Teddy McCully	8	Tara Ball	29
John Richard	9	Dawn Cole.....	29
Joan Mills.....	9	Nancy Nay.....	30
Liam Bagley.....	9	Connie Ireland.....	31
Diane McDonald	10		
Colleen Leonard.....	10		
Elaine Ferris	11		
April Kirk	11		
Andrew Bayer.....	12		
Sam Calhoun.....	12		
Eve Guthrie.....	14		
Evelyn Darling.....	16		
Bob Beaune	17		
Ann Tucker.....	18		
Ralph Beebe.....	19		
Nick Rogers	19		
Grace Ann Whipple	19		
Adrienne Moulton	20		
Corey Reed	21		
Carol Peek.....	22		
Payton Ball.....	22		
Mark Carmer	23		
Betsy Colburn	23		
Jeff Lautzenheiser.....	23		


Anniversaries

Brian and Kristin Howe	15
Roger and Kathy Nelson	18
Gary and Connie Ireland	25
Steve and Kim Karlzen	25
Marty and Betsy Colburn.....	26
Matt and Susan Gardner.....	29
Charles and Judy Calderone.....	29



Thank you notes have been received from Lynda Crandall, Chris Bement, Mike and Debra Buckner, and Mark and Linda Carmer.

May 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:30pm SPRC meeting in the chapel	2 10:00am Faith Chat--Zoom 5:30pm Potluck in fellowship hall 7:00pm Faith Chat--Zoom	3 9:00am UWF Leadership Team meeting in the chapel 10:30am Assembling spring baskets 10:30am Bible Study in library 7:00pm Chancel Bells 8:00pm Chancel Choir	4 6:30pm National Day of Prayer on the Courthouse Lawn	5 Scholarship applications due in the church office by 3:00 p.m. 9:30am MOPS meets in the youth room	6
7 9:30am WORSHIP 11:00am Wired Word Class in Chapel	8 6:30pm MCCCC Board meets in the chapel	9 10:00am Faith Chat--Zoom 5:30pm Potluck in fellowship hall 7:00pm Faith Chat--Zoom	10 10:30am Bible Study in library 5:00pm Grief Group meets in the conference room 7:00pm Chancel Bells 8:00pm Chancel Choir	11 12:00pm Mason Community Leaders meet in the chapel	12	13
14 9:30am WORSHIP 11:00am Wired Word Class in Chapel	15 7:00pm Finance meeting	16 10:00am Faith Chat--Zoom 5:30pm Potluck in fellowship hall 7:00pm Faith Chat--Zoom	17 10:30am Bible Study in library 5:00pm Grief Group meets in the conference room 7:00pm Chancel Bells 8:00pm Chancel Choir	18 12:00pm Lavender and Lace Luncheon 6:30pm Missions Committee	19 9:30am MOPS meets in the youth room 6:30pm Euchre Night	20
21 9:30am WORSHIP 11:00am Wired Word Class in Chapel	22 7:00pm Piano Recital in the sanctuary 7:00pm Trustees meeting in the chapel	23 10:00am Faith Chat--Zoom 10:00am Mary Martha Circle--Chapel 1:00pm Rebekah Circle 5:30pm Potluck in fellowship hall 6:30pm Miriam Circle 7:00pm Faith Chat--Zoom	24 10:30am Bible Study in library 5:00pm Grief Group meets in the conference room 7:00pm Chancel Bells 8:00pm Chancel Choir	25	26	27
28 9:30am WORSHIP 11:00am Wired Word Class in Chapel	29 	30 Summer office hours begin-- 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. 5:30pm Potluck in fellowship hall	31 Annual Conference in Traverse City 9:00am Stephen Ministry meets in the conference room 10:30am Bible Study in library 5:00pm Grief Group meets in the conference room 7:00pm Chancel Bells 8:00pm Chancel Choir			