The Missive September 2016

First Presbyterian Church

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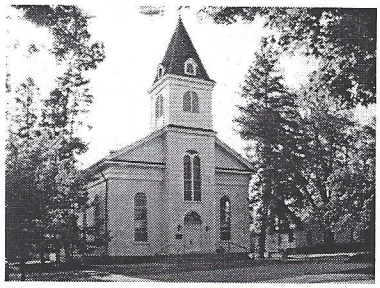


"What the Heck is an Ebenezer?"

It has nothing to do with Scrooge! Some of you know that one of my favorite old hymns is "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing." The second verse of that most wonderful hymn says:

Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

So what does that mean to "raise my Ebenezer?" It actually comes from the book of Samuel in the Old Testament. When God helps the Israelites defeat the Philistines, the prophet Samuel calls on the people to renew their covenant with God. He gathers the people together in a re-commitment ceremony and as a sign of the covenant, Samuel raises a large stone monument and calls it "Ebenezer," which means Stone of Help.

On September 11th, on Sunday morning during Church Fest, we are going to be raising our own Ebenezer. When you leave church, either out through the Narthex or when you go into the Gull Prairie Room, you will be given a stone. On this stone, we want you to write a word or a phrase that tells of how you have been helped, or blessed by God. You don't have to explain it to anyone, just write a word on the stone. Maybe you will say "health" or "happiness" or "prayer answered." It could be "children" or "grandchildren" or "parent." It might even be "challenge" or "work to do" or "ability to give." How has God helped you in the last year?

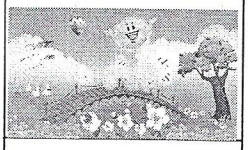
We will then ask you to take your stones and place them with others, creating a pile, a mound, our own little monument, that testifies to how God has helped and blessed us. We will have raised our own Ebenezer! As is usual at Church Fest, we then ask everyone to take a moment and consider how you might be involved in the life of the church this year. Since this is a time of recommitment and recognizing that we have been helped and blessed, we hope that we know that we have been blessed so that we may be a blessing to others. Helping out in some area of the church: taking a turn teaching Sunday School, helping Meredith with the youth, joining the Finance team, coming to work night with the Property Committee, each of these are not just our part of the covenant we have with God and one another, but they are part of our response of gratefulness. We are grateful for what God has done for us, for how he has helped us, and so in response we . . . (fill in the blank).

Of course we will have a great picnic in the park and have a lot of fun as part of Church Fest, but I hope our Ebenezer will be there in the Gull Prairie Room all year as a reminder to all of us that our God is a God of Help and Blessing.

Grace and Peace,

Mark

September Volunteer Assignments

	Greeters	Ushers	Coffee	Nursery Help	Teacher/Crafter
4	Tower	Alexander Stafford	Carrington Nash Dishon	Deater	
11	Meitz	Meitz Lindenberg	Zick Wynsma	Steele	
18	Pollock	Pollock Dishon	Hart Cramer	Gauthier	
25	Huskin	Huskin L Carisalez J & G Gibson	Deater Young	Slezak	

Serving Communion

Please remember that only ordained elders and deacons should serve communion.

September 4
Andy Alspach
Sandy Carahaly
Laura Carisalez
Sue Carlson
Jane Carpenter
Terry Carpenter
Beth Carrington
Mary Lou Cazers

October 2
Judy Croasdale
Ed Davis
Dave Deater
Shannan Deater
Joyce Dishon
Wendy Field
Ruth Mason
Christie Sutherland
Steve Sutherland

November 6
Faith Fiordalis
Zip Fiordalis
Gary Gibson
Joyce Gibson
Sandra Gobble
Anna Gross
Rod Gross
Byron Hodgson
BJ Hooks

We rely on many members and friends to help Sundays run smoothly and be a good worship experience for those attending our church. If for some reason you are not able to help on the day originally selected, please find a replacement or someone to trade with, and let the church office know. The yearly list of volunteers can be found at www.fpcrich.com, under "Living the Faith", then "volunteer schedule". Or call Julie for a list of names. Thank you!

September 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 12:00 Older Bunch for Lunch at RACC	2	3
4 9:45 Worship - Communion	5 	6 10:00 Connected Threads 10:30 Office Staff	7 8:00 Prayer Breakfast at Y Center 1:00 PW Meeting	8	9	10
11 8:30 Chancel Choir 9:45 Worship - 2 cents-a-meal 11:00 CHURCH FEST KICK OFF!!	12 10:30 Office Staff 7:00 Boy Scouts	13 10:00 Connected Threads	14 ??? Worship & Music 6:00 Session	15 9:00 Bible Study Begins 6:00 Deacons	16 Davidson Rehearsal	17 6:00 Stacy & Brandon Davidson Wedding
18 8:30 Chancel Choir 9:45 Worship 11:05 Sunday School Begins!! 5:00 Youth Group	19 9:00 Care Team 10:30 Office Staff 7:00 Boy Scouts	20 10:00 Connected Threads	21 7:00 Committee's Meet *International Day of Peace*	22 9:00 Bible Study	23	24
25 8:30 Chancel Choir 9:45 Worship 11:05 Sunday School 5:00 Youth Group	26 10:30 Office Staff 7:00 Boy Scouts	27 10:00 Connected Threads	28 9:30 Flower Group in White Room	29 9:00 Bible Study	30	

Presbyterian Women

PW meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. in the church,
*The next meeting is **September 7th.** EVERY WOMAN is welcome.*

FALL RUMMAGE SALE

The Fall sale is scheduled for October 14 and 15. We'll begin collecting your donated treasures on Tuesday, October 11th. I'm sorry we cannot accept televisions and old computer monitors.

Please set aside some time that week to help with sorting and working the days of the sale. Having many hands makes the load lighter for all - Plus, we have a lot of FUN!

Paper grocery bags with handles are needed and appreciated.

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

The next book club will be held at Diane Meitz home, 155 S. Lake Doster, Plainwell on OCTOBER 12 at 1:00. The book of discussion is,

"The Chaperone"
by Laura Moriarty

The ladies welcome anyone who might have an interest and would like to join them!

PW PURPOSE: Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible Study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to the promise of God's Kingdom.

A HUGE, heartfelt thank you to the youth group, and Meredith and all the adult helpers, during Kids-N-Boxes. The collection of food for our Food Pantry—WOW!! What a difference they made in decreasing hunger in the Richland area!

From January 1st to July 31st, the First Presbyterian Church of Richland Food Pantry was able to provide 271 households (596 adults and 376 children) a total of 972 people with nutritious food for their tables. Each family gets to shop at the Pantry once a month, for four days worth of food (the food our guests are entitled to receive, usually lasts much longer than 4 days!).

The 2 cents-a-meal collection that we take every 2nd Sunday of each month, has also helped decrease hunger in Richland by donating 3,888 meals so far this year!!

Whether you're cleaning out your cupboards at home, bringing in fresh produce from your gardens, or leaving a cash donation, every single bit of it helps someone who needs a hand. Thank you ALL!

Jim Collier

Dear Friends,
We are humbled by your outpouring of love and care since Paul's injury. Your generosity has sustained and strengthened us throughout this family crisis.

From the beginning, Mark was there with us. The beautiful prayer blanket gave Paul great comfort and energy.

Your calls, e-mails, cards, gift cards, money, hugs, prayers, delicious food, and offers to "do anything": awesome, assuring us we were never alone.

We are so grateful. We are blessed to be a part of this loving, caring church.

Paul's recovery has been a miracle. Prayers have been heard and answered. Please keep him in your prayers as he continues to heal.

Thank you,
Paul, Chris, Zoe, Emma,
Harold and Sandra Gobble

To all our good friends and good neighbors,

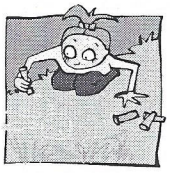
I want to thank everyone so much, for the caring thoughts, the cards of encouragement, the uplifting visits, and the ongoing prayers.

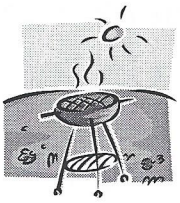
Earl and I appreciated everyone and every thing that was done for us over the past couple of years. It meant so much, and still does.

In loving friendship and appreciation,
Evelyn Cramer and family

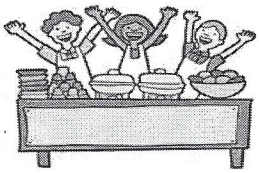
CHURCH FEST 2016

Sunday, September 11th.
9:45 Worship
11:00 Committee Fair and Kids Activities
11:30 Potluck





What a great way to start the new season!! Please join us for worship, then be in the Gull Prairie Room as we learn about all the committees in the church, and how YOU can be part of any of them! The kids will have tons of things to do before lunch. Bring a side, salad, or dessert, and get ready to be full. We love you, and we want you with us!!



* GAMES * CHALK THE WALK * POTLUCK *
* COMMITTEE FAIR * FELLOWSHIP * FUN! *

Youth Group

2016-2017

The Middle and High School Youth Group is kicking off for the year on September 18! All 6th-12th grade students are invited to join us for fun & fellowship each Sunday evening.

ALL are welcome and guests are encouraged to attend!

Please contact Meredith Alspach with questions: mlt0002@yahoo.com

Please consider helping with Youth Group meals on our hosting days!

Youth Group Schedule

September 18 – ***KICK-OFF!*** Westminster Pres hosts 5-7pm
September 23-24 – ***LOCK-IN*** at First Pres Kalamazoo
5:30pm arrival on Saturday and pick-up at noon on Sunday!
October 2– Picnic, s'mores and activities at the Pine Island property from 5-7pm
October 9 – WE host 5-7pm
October 16 – First Pres Kalamazoo hosts 5-7pm
October 23 – WE host *(time TBD)*
October 30 – Halloween Party at Westminster Pres 5-7pm
November 6 – First Pres Kalamazoo hosts 5-7pm
November 11-13 – URBAN PLUNGE
November 20 – Westminster hosts 5-7pm
November 27 – NO YOUTH GROUP *(Thanksgiving weekend)*
December 4 – Christmas Party! WE host 5-7pm

Youth Group

Youth Mission
Can and Bottle Drive

The youth can & bottle drive mission fundraiser continues! Simply drop your cans (any and *all* !)
in the collection bin outside the church office!
Thank you for your support of our youth!

Save the Date!

Event: **West Virginia Youth Mission Trip 2017**

Date: **June 17-24**

Purpose:

- To expose our students to people of all walks of life
- To help and serve
- To help bring God's love to all people

Who Is Served:

- Mostly elderly and less fortunate individuals living in the Colcord, WV area as chosen by the PC(USA) Disaster Relief.

September 2016 Missive
Missionary Report

Dear Church Family,

I am sure everybody is anxious to hear what came out of the PCC (Partners in Compassionate Care) board meeting on Wednesday. First you need to know what happened at the last board meeting. It was different from previous board meetings because contributions to PCC have been reduced drastically for the last two months. As a result, the board decided to cut salaries by 20%, effective at end of August for employees at Memorial Christian Hospital (MCH) in Werkok, South Sudan. If funds coming in from PCC donors continues to decline, then there will be an additional 10% pay cut for each employee at MCH, for a total of 30% pay cut from September to December of this year.

The pay cut news was not well received by our employees in Werkok and now they are talking bitterly about PCC. The employees think PCC has enough money and the board is refusing to pay them with full salary. But what they don't understand is that the current conflict in South Sudan has discouraged PCC donors and other donors who are supporting aid organizations in South Sudan. The donors don't trust the current government and as a result they scaled down their donations. They feel they are wasting their resources in South Sudan, especially with recent conflicts in the country.

On Wednesday, the board discussed PCC and MCH business as usual. Then, my contract situation was on the board meeting agenda. Before the board members talked about my contract, the board gave me an opportunity to say goodbye to them. With that chance, I took a few minutes and shared with the board the status of my contract and what it should look like if the board decided to renew my contract that is going to end on October 20th 2016. With the way finances are now with PCC, I did not expect the board to say yes to renew my contract. So, I told the board, I am aware of their insufficient funds but I will share what I have in my heart.

I went ahead and shared with the board that I am now married and I have a baby coming in two months. The current salary will not be enough for my wife, a baby, and me. With the current inflation in South Sudan, the payment that I am getting will not be satisfactory for my family and me. I sincerely told the board that I am an American citizen working in South Sudan and the money I am making is very low wages. I mentioned to the board that I am very much aware of their current financial situation and I want to make it easy for them if they do not renew my contract for another year. I told the board I would like to renew my contract for 6 months because I want to help the new Site Administrator during a transitional period. This will also give me an opportunity to be near my family at least for 6 months. I also assured the board that I understand if they decide not to renew my contract due to insufficient funds. To my surprise, after they listened to my report, the board wants to keep me and they are going to renew my contract for 6 months. Not only that, but also, that they are going to maintain my salary the way it is now. The board told me they really appreciate what I am doing in South Sudan and they will do their best to make me happy. The 6-month contract will start on October 20th 2016 and go to April 20th 2017. I will be thinking of other opportunities between now until the end of my 6-month contract.

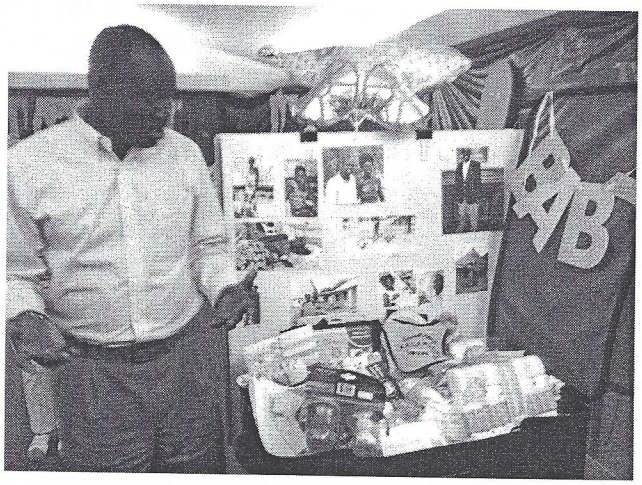
As you all know, I am leaving on Sunday, August 28th at 5:40 pm and this will give me an opportunity to attend Sunday service at the Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church in Grand Rapids. I am asking you to pray for my journey, not only to Kenya, but also to South Sudan. I will spend 10 days with my mom and the siblings in Kenya before I travel to South Sudan. I did not have a chance to spent time with my family in Kenya on my way to US in July and I am looking forward to be with them this time. Also, pray for Mary and for her to have a smooth labor and uncomplicated delivery. The baby will be born between October 1st and October 10th. I will send you an update when I reach in Kenya and South Sudan.

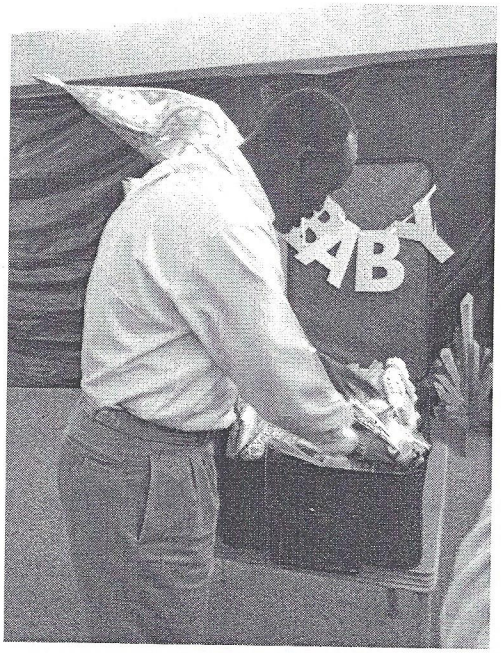
Thank you for the suitcase full of gifts for my baby! You have set a platform for my baby and I can't wait to see my baby wearing his or her outfits. With those who gave cash, I will use that cash to buy something for Mary in South Sudan.

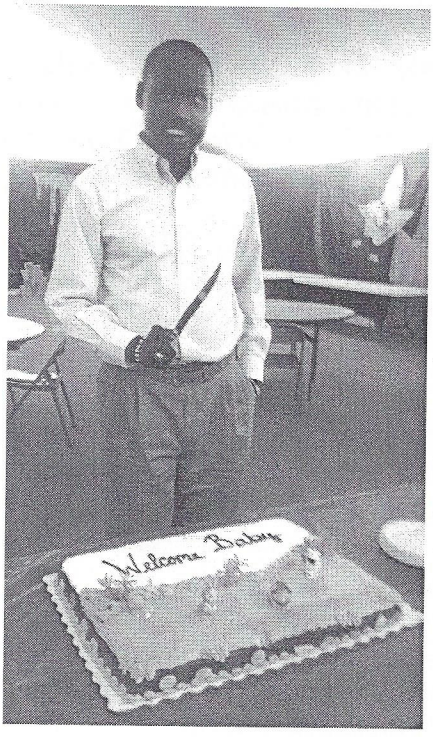
Thank you, Thank you, and may God bless your pockets, possessions, and your families.

Blessings,

Deng Alier







Church Adult Education Program 2016-17

Dear Friends,

Mark and I have been working on an exciting education program for this year. While some of what we are doing will seem familiar, we are also going to try some new ideas. Our focus for this year is covenant life and discipleship. The backbone for our program year will be two six week studies from the *Being Reformed* series produced by the PC(USA).

The first of these classes which will be during the Fall will be *Covenant*. This is a study of life in a covenant community and relationship with God. Throughout history, God has called people to live in a covenant community with Him. But what does this mean; what does it look like? This class will look at how scripture describes covenant in the Old and New Testament. Using the biblical message, the class will engage in discussion of what it means to live as a member of a covenant community today.

The second of these classes which will be during the Winter will be *Discipleship: The Way of Jesus*. This is a study of what it means to be a follower of Christ. Starting with scriptural descriptions of discipleship, particularly the words of our Lord Jesus, participants will be invited to discern what it means to be a disciple in their own lives.

Throughout the year, we will also be offering weekly sessions from the *Feasting on the Word Curriculum*. Mark and I use the *Revised Common Lectionary* to pick the scriptural readings for Sunday service and the basis for our weekly sermons. Each week in Sunday School participants will have the opportunity to delve deeply into the scriptures read and proclaimed in the Sunday service.

The *Being Reformed* classes and the *Feasting on the Word Curriculum* may either be taught in parallel or with the *Being Reformed* classes replacing temporarily the *Feasting* classes for six weeks. How this will be done depends on participant interest and staff availability. These classes will be offered as part of our regular Sunday School for the year.

We are also going to try something new this year. The PC(USA), RCA, and Church of Christ have partnered to develop a computer learning based curriculum called *Opening Doors to Discipleship* (ODTD). The purpose of this curriculum is to develop discipleship and learn to be faithful teachers and leaders in the church. The curriculum consists of four 12 week classes:

Teaching Skills
Bible Background
Presbyterian/Reformed Faith
Discipleship

These classes may be taken in any order and are independent, although they do reinforce each other. The classes are online based training. The participant can study at any time, for as long as they are comfortable. The training includes self-test evaluations. Anyone can take these classes on their own, however it is recommended for best results that a cohort of people taking the same class meet weekly to discuss the week's lesson.
If there is sufficient interest in a weekly meeting, these classes will be held on a weekday night. Right now, we are considering a Monday night meeting time. The class could start either at 6:00 pm or 7:00 pm and last about 90 minutes. Day and time will be worked out to meet attendee's needs.

Adult Education Continued .....

In addition to the above classes, we also hope to offer the occasional class on topics of special interest. These classes will generally be a single Sunday interspersed with the regular Sunday School curricula. We are considering presentations on preplanning for funerals and hospice care. Other special interest classes may be offered depending on congregational interest and availability of guest speakers.

We will also be continuing our Thursday morning Bible study, which runs from 9:00 – 11:00 am. We will be continuing our study of the book of Exodus. When we finish the book of Exodus, the study group will decide which book to continue with. If you have never attended our Bible study or have not attended in a while, we encourage you to join us.

The Sunday School year will begin September 18. However, the schedule of classes has not yet been determined. More information will be forthcoming in the next two Sundays. If you would like us to consider other classes in the future, please feel free to give us your ideas.

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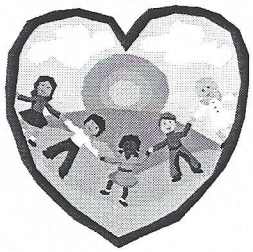
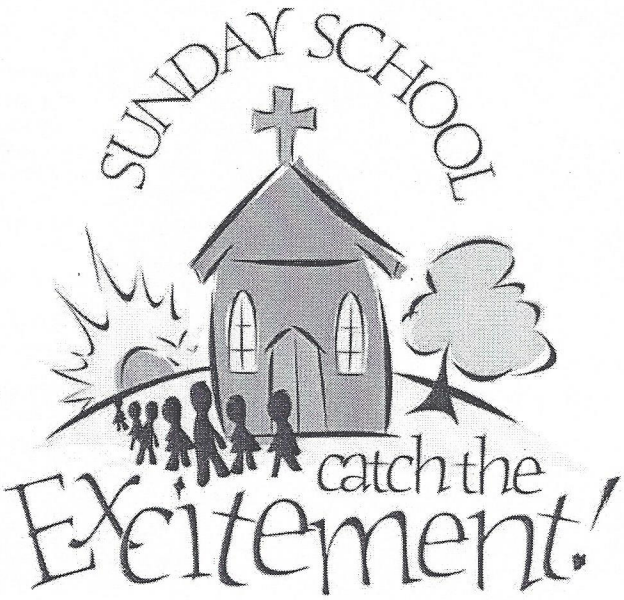
SUNDAY SCHOOL

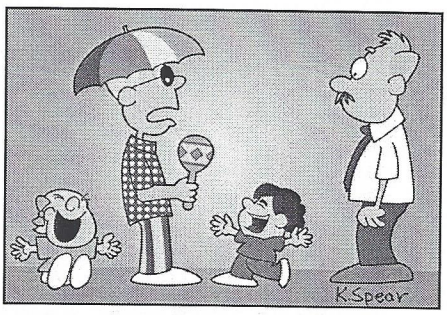
We can't wait to get started with all our Sunday School classes on September 18th!

We have something for everyone! 11:05, downstairs.

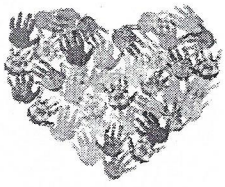
PLEASE JOIN US ~ YOU ARE SPECIAL ~ LEARN A LITTLE ~FEEL THE LOVE!!







"Apparently, my spiritual gift is being silly with the toddlers."



Bronson Children's Hospital Run & Walk 2016

Join us on Sunday, **September 25,** for the Bronson Children's Hospital Run & Walk 5K benefiting Bronson Children's Hospital, the only children's hospital in southwest Michigan. The event is held at the parking lot on the corner of John and Lovell streets on Bronson Methodist Hospital's North Campus in downtown Kalamazoo.

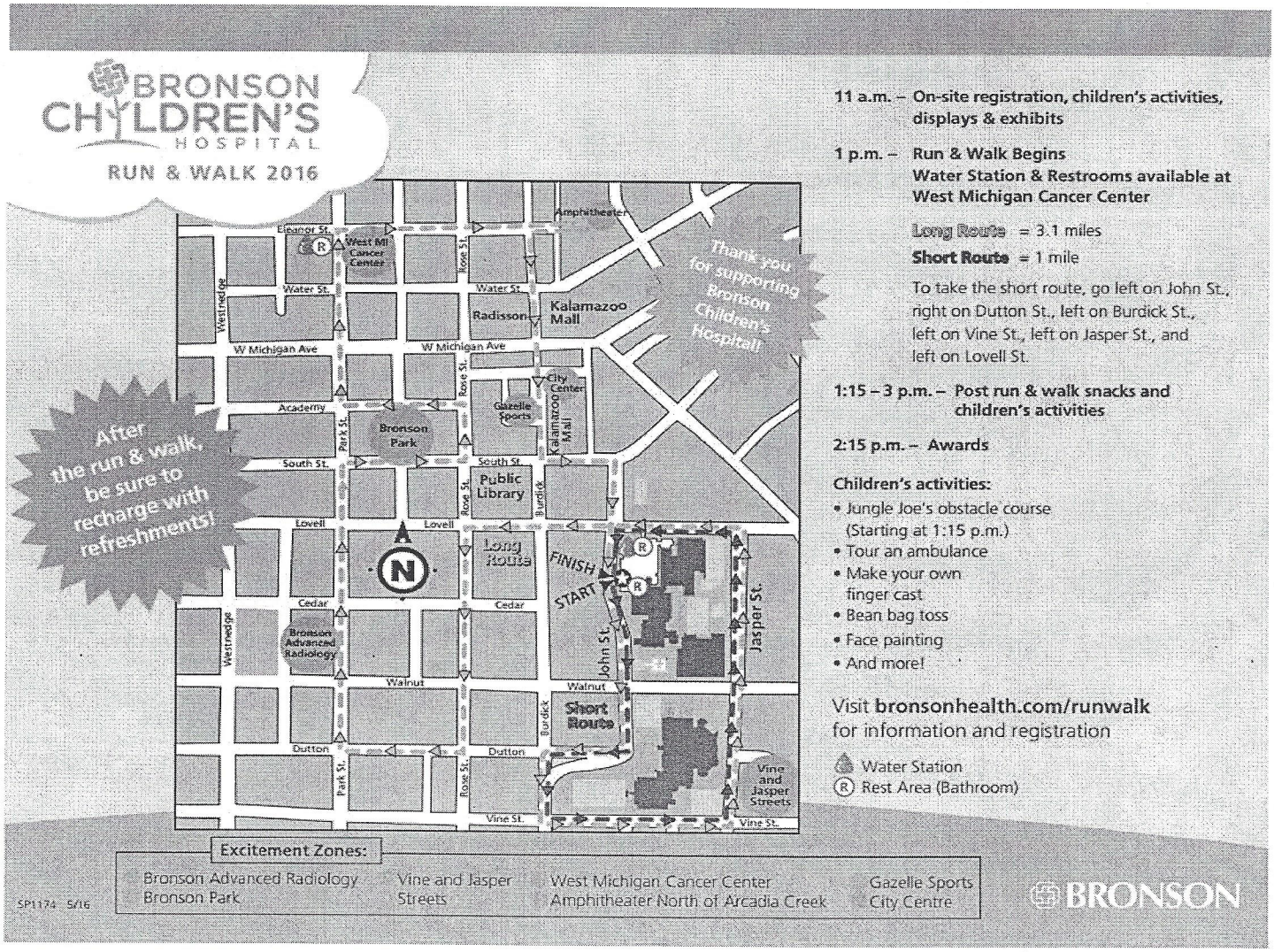
**Signing up for the Run & Walk will be even easier than in past years because we have new and improved registration software. However, please note that your login and password from previous years will no longer work.*

Registration Cost:

Adult Runners and Walkers (age 18 and over): $25
Youth Runners and Walkers (ages 6-17): $15
Child Runners and Walkers (age 5 and under): $10 (Includes t-shirt)
Child Runners and Walkers (age 5 and under): Free (Does not include t-shirt)
Registration includes a Bronson Children's Hospital t-shirt.

IF YOU REGISTER FOR THE 5K, YOU WILL RECEIVE A TIMING CHIP.
IF YOU REGISTER FOR THE 1 MILE SHORT ROUTE, YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE A CHIP.

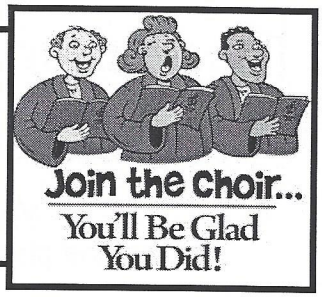
Event Timeline:
Pre and Onsite Registration: 11:00am – 12:45pm
Children's Activities, Displays, & Exhibits: 11:00am - 12:45pm
Run and Walk: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
Post Run & Walk Snacks and Children's Activities: 1:15pm – 3:00pm
Awards: 2:15 pm



WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU JOIN THE CHOIR!

Do you like to sing? We heartily welcome you, no matter what your singing experience might be!

The first day is September 11th at 8:30 SHARP!!!



Sherman Lake YMCA CommUNITY Prayer Breakfast Wednesday, September 7, 8:00 - 9:30

Keynote Speaker: Luke Austenfeld, Executive Director of Sherman Lake YMCA

The annual Sherman Lake YMCA CommUNITY Prayer Breakfast will be held at Sherman Lake YMCA's Kellogg Hall on Wednesday, September 7, 2016, from 8:00 am – 9:30 am. The shared mission of this annual community gathering has been "to bring people of faith together for prayer, meditation, and inspiration … as we seek God's guidance to deepen the spiritual life and moral fiber of our community."

Luke Austenfeld is the founding director of Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center. Built in 1994, it was the first YMCA Camp built from the ground up in over 50 years. During Luke's YMCA career, he has served more than 300,000 children. Luke is an international YMCA presenter and consultant and has served on many national YMCA taskforces and committees. One of those taskforces brought forth the core values of Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility into the national movement of YMCA of the USA in 1994. Luke and his wife, Diahnn, have 3 grown children.

Tickets for the event are $10 and may be purchased online, at the Sherman Lake YMCA Administration Building or by contacting Carrie Hybels at 269-731-3000 or at gro.lsacmy@heirrac. Tickets may also be purchased via mail; please click here for the order form.

Please join us to pray, sing and be inspired!

Peace and Global Witness Offering

On World Communion Sunday, October 2nd .....

When we come together in the peace of Christ,
we find plenty of reconciliation and grace to share at God's table.

Our witness has been profound in our own communities and in places we ourselves have never been, around the corner and around the world. Each of us who follows Christ is called to be a peacemaker. But what can we do to bring peace? We can prayerfully seek God's guidance and live out our call to be peacemakers at all times and in all places —in our homes, our congregations, our communities, and our world. We can encourage nonviolent solutions and provide opportunities to give witness to God's gift of peace. It culminates in the receipt of the Presbyterian

Peace and Global Witness Offering, traditionally taken on World Communion Sunday. The Offering gives us a concrete way to contribute locally and nationally to the work of peace. It is the Offering that funds the Peace and Global Witness Program for our denomination, enabling us to inspire new approaches to active peacemaking, equip God's people to be compassionate and prophetic peacemakers, and connect communities of peace in accompaniment, mutual learning, and shared action.
Thank you for your energy and support in this vital offering which shares the peace of

- ◊ 25 % is retained by congregations
- ◊ 15 % is used by presbyteries and synods
- ◊ 60 % is allocated to Presbyterian Mission Agency's peacemaking ministries.

Psalm 78:19
"Can God spread a table in the wilderness?"

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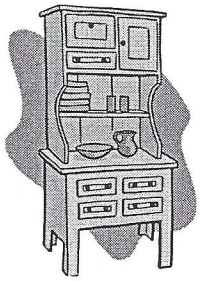
FOOD PANTRY CORNER

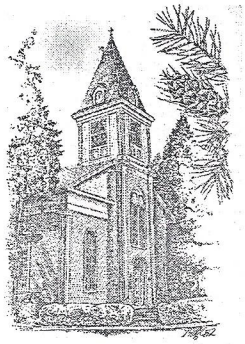


FOOD PANTRY

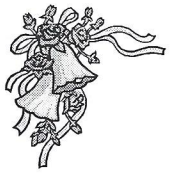
CANNED ~
PEACHES,
FRUIT COCKTAIL
PINNAPPLE

Carillon Hymns and Honoree's for September

Date	*Selection*	*Honoree*
9/8	*In The Garden*	*Irene Verploegh*
9/11	*God Bless America*	*Brad Hoorn*
9/14	*Eternal Father, Strong to Save*	*Jay Ralph Wells, Jr.*



September Anniversaries



4 Lisa and Andy Ambrosio ~ 23
4 Ed and Cheri Calkins ~ 17
6 Lois and Verne Nafziger ~ 68
6 Alexis and Jason Rairigh ~ 8
7 Carolyn and Richard Chormann ~ 59
8 Brian and Teresa Young ~ 43
11 Mary Ellen and Jerry Bryer ~ 34
13 Dick and Ginny Gross ~ 64
14 Barbara and Robert Monk ~ 42
16 Sheryl and Brent Slezak ~ 38
18 John and Cindi Lebiecki ~ 34
19 Janet and Hoyt Fonger ~ 36
22 Tom and Sharin Noall ~ 54
24 Karen and Scott Bell ~ 33
25 Craig and Kathi Muss ~ 34
29 Larry and Becky Reinhart ~ 42

and Birthdays

1 Ruth Dwoinen Mason
1 Dan Fiordalis
1 Doug Gates
1 Linnea Saffell
2 Pam Mattes
3 Esperanza Carisalez
3 Suzie Carpenter
3 Stephanie Kleis
3 Heidi Bryant
4 David Greve
5 Sue Carlson
5 Sarah Bryer
5 Traver Gay
5 Tom Perigo
6 Janet Saddler
7 Christine Gates
7 Joseph Keusch
8 Barbara Monk
8 Stuart Verseman
9 Samantha Duke
9 Katie Monk
10 Cindy Hoorn
11 Murray Cooper
11 Kinzy Turpin
13 Alec Ambrosio
13 Gary Mittelbach
13 Nicole Romyak
13 Gale Slentz
14 Erin Fenner
14 Madeleine Gauthier
14 Steve Sorrell
16 Jake Myland
16 Ted Ruser
17 Louise Hanavan
17 Sandy Hart
17 Ron Teall
18 Marme Courtney
19 Reid Williams
20 Spencer Mack
22 Val Osborne
23 John Mittelbach
25 Bob Hendrick
25 Rebecca Jones
25 Don Meitz
25 Andee Trautman
29 Pat Morrissey

First Presbyterian Church
8047 Church Street
Richland, MI 49083

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Mark W. Jennings, *Pastor*
Murray Cooper, *Seminary Intern*
Faith Fiordalis, *Financial Secretary*
Gretchen Ferris, *Treasurer*
Larry Myland, *Director of Music*
Sadarra Fields, *Director of Choirs*
Meredith Alspach, *Program Coordinator*
Julie Pixley, *Children's Worship Leader*
Heather Putt, *Nursery Supervisor*
Connie Slater, *Sexton*
Julie Pixley, *Administrative Secretary*