



March 2018

Pastoral Reflection

Dear Central Families:

God is Able, and Continues to Renew our Strengths

Prophet Isaiah writes, "He (God) gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might, He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." ( Isaiah 40:29-31)

However, as we went through the season of winter, we've been beaten up nationwide with cold, cough and many setbacks in health. Public appearances for many of us seem impossible; frequent doctor office visits and a search for over-the-counter medications to help alleviate pain and lighten our suffering. Many of us have missed the house of worship and special events through the season.

I say, like prophet Isaiah, (though in a different tune) "hang in there." The winter shall soon be past, and we'll gain back our strength. We shall run again and not be weary!

Please understand the Bible verses above touch every core of Christian experience. If we are honest before God and with ourselves, we must admit that we are failing daily in our health, and in every step of recovering, we encounter many struggles. Healings and victories seems far away. We often faint and are weak (verse 29); we are weary and we fall (verse 30). We groan and longed that this "tabernacle" should be cloth with stealth proof that should protect us from being broken and torn.

Notice how Isaiah used the "Children" metaphor to describe our weaknesses. We are weak in body and sometimes in spiritual realms, hence we need help—always from our heavenly Father, just as children depend on parents. Another notation is some failures in our organs. Our eyes are weak—double vision, less sight tell us that there is much weakness. Our hearts are weak as we faint and weary. We are so slow to learn the way of victory and power. Indeed, we must wait upon the Lord to supply strength and courage.

Wait on the Lord always:

Proverbs 8:34 echoes this "Blessed is the man or woman who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors (constant fellowship and worship in God's presence). Someone puts it:

"Waiting upon God means to be cast upon Him in utter dependence, ready to hear His voice and to do His will, having our whole expectation from Him. It implies complete confidence and trust in the Lord, and absolutely no confidence in self or in human help.

What is the result of such waiting upon the Lord? It produces God's strength in place of our weakness, you enjoy your walk with God and live victoriously even in the period of sadness—looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Yes, we shall run and not weary:

Thank you for your support to our ministries here at Central, especially during winter months when many cannot attend services. Your offerings and gifts in the mail make a difference. God bless you, and keep you.

~~Pastor Dominic Tommy

Looking Forward to Lent and Easter

These activities are offered to you and your family for your Lenten walk here at Central Church:

- Six-week Lenten Bible Study – Underway, see article below.
Palm Sunday Service – March 25, 10:30 am Celebration Worship. Parents and grandparents: Please bring your children for the Palm Sunday Parade.
Holy Thursday Service – March 29 at 6 pm
Community Good Friday Service – March 30 at 1 pm
Community Easter Egg Hunt—March 31, 10:00 am to Noon, Lake Odessa Park Family-friendly activities for children
Easter Sunday Service – April 1 at 10:30 am

It's Not Too Late to Join!

Lenten Bible Study by Pastor Dominic Tommy is underway

Tuesdays at 10:30 AM through March 27

In the Bible, God reveals Himself to us through various names. In this 13-lesson study of the names of God, the names will be studied in order, as God progressively reveals Himself through dispensations. From studying these 13 names of God, you will have a wonderful "Lenten journey into knowing God."

Lesson titles include: The God Who Created You, When You Are Afraid, A Name You Need To Remember, When You Really Know God, When You Feel God Doesn't Care, Experiencing God's Power, When Life Seems Unfair, Don't Worry—Trust God, Receiving God's Healing, Enlisting God in Life's Battles, Finding Inner Peace, When You Feel Guilty, and When You Feel All Alone.

Contact Pastor Dominic if you have any questions.

Central United Methodist Church is located in downtown Lake Odessa at 912 4th Avenue. Contact us at 616-374-8861; info@centralchurch-lakeo.org or pastor@centralchurch-lakeo.org. Check out our Facebook page for current activities, weekly dinner menu, and youth activities.

**Celebrations**

|                        |                                     |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Birthdays</b>       | 03/19 Lily Kostanko                 |
| 03/02 Terri Catt       | 03/25 Harold Dennie                 |
| 03/03 Bev Corston      | 03/25 Jeanna Gibbs                  |
| 03/04 Ray Dykhouse     | 03/27 Eunice Goodemoot              |
| 03/10 Claire Freidhoff | <b>Anniversaries</b>                |
| 03/12 Julie Nelson     | Bill & Jewel Eckstrom 03/06/1955    |
| 03/14 Tony Barcroft    | Von & Sharlene Goodemoot 03/30/1991 |
| 03/16 Charlie Reiser   |                                     |

**Upcoming Events**

- ADULT RESPITE**  
Thursdays, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29—1:30 to 4:30 pm
- SOUPER THURSDAY COMMUNITY DINNER**  
Thursdays, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 — 4:30 to 6 pm
- FRESH FOOD DISTRIBUTION**  
Tuesday, March 6—2:00 pm (Volunteers are asked to arrive at 1:30.)
- HOLY THURSDAY SERVICE**  
March 29 —6:00 pm
- COMMUNITY GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE**  
March 30 —1:00 pm
- COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT**— Lake Odessa Park  
Saturday, March 31—10:00 am
- EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE**  
April 1 —10:30 am

- COMMITTEE/OTHER MEETINGS SCHEDULED:**
- Staff-Parish Relations**—Monday, March 5, 6 pm
  - Worship Committee**—Tues., March 6, 7 pm
  - Fellowship & Care Committee**—Tue., March 13, 6pm
  - Friendship Group**—Wed., March 14, 9 am
  - Finance**—Mon., March 19, 6 pm
  - Board of Trustees**—Tues., March 20, 6 pm
  - Education Committee**—Tues., March 27, 7 pm
  - Friendship Group**—Wed., March 28, 9 am



**Let's Go Camping!**

Even though the snow is just beginning to lose its grip on us, the 2018 camping season is about to begin. Plans are already being made to make this summer a special place for kids of all ages (there are even camping opportunities for adults!) There are nine camps connecting faith and fun across Michigan: *Albright Park Camp & Retreat Center in Reed City; Camp Kinawind, Boyne Falls; Crystal Springs Camp & Retreat Center, Dowagiac; Judson Collins Center, Onsted; Lake Huron Retreat Center, Burtchville; Lake Michigan Camp & Retreat Center, Pentwater; Lakeview Family Camp, Lakeview; Myers Lake Campground, Byron; and Wesley Woods Camp & Retreat Center, Dowling.* Brochures are available in Fellowship Hall, or you can contact Jane Kostanko for more information. Scholarships are also available! See Jane for details.



**UNITED METHODIST WOMEN NEWS!!**  
**This Month: Ruth Circle Meeting**  
**Monday, March 12, 1:30 pm**  
**Hostess: Bonnie Leak**

**Next Event: Circle Meeting**  
**Monday, April 9, 1:30 pm**  
Church Lounge  
Hostess: Betty Shetterly

We will be meeting in the Church Lounge (*note change in location*).  
Program will be: 'Pastor Dominic on his Journey to the Lord's Service'

If you are not a member but have questions or would like to become a member, please see one of the officers for more information.

**Recent Prayer Concerns**

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Family of Ron Walkington   | Thelma Curtis   |
| Family of Wilma Townsend   | Virginia Decker |
| Family of Harold McDaniels | Betty Shetterly |
| Ron Haskins Family         | Dodie Denman    |
| Florida shooting victims   | Peg Cusack      |
| Janie Schelter             | Shannon Bennett |
| Gary McDiarmid             | Stacey Cole     |
| Grayson                    | Kay             |
| Dale Brock                 | Dawn Deardorff  |
| Rev. Keith Laidler         | Peg Faulkner    |



**Thank You from our Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the annual stewardship campaign. The campaign resulted in 49 pledges totaling \$143,233.00. The Administrative Council recently approved an operating budget of \$198,928.00 for 2018. As we did last year, we are moving forward in faith that God will provide us with what we need to continue the work of his church in 2018.

Thank you for continuing to support Central Church with your financial gifts and prayers. ~Penny Thelen, Finance Chair

**UMCOR Sunday is March 11, 2018**

Formerly One Great Hour of Sharing, your generous gifts support UMCOR's administrative costs so that all designated gifts will go directly to the program of your choice. Your contributions ensure UMCOR's response in times of crisis. Please give on March 11.

**It's a Photo Shoot!**

**July 26, 27, 28**

Fellowship & Care has made arrangements for our church family to have pictures taken this summer for a new Church Directory. Please mark the dates on your calendar now! More details will follow.

**State of the Church Report**

**Stats for January 2018**

Average Attendance:  
Operating Fund:  
*Receipts*           **\$12,731.25**  
*Expenses*           **(\$16,306.38)**  
*Monthly receipts needed to maintain budgeted needs: \$16,580.*

**Other Giving Received:**

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| Building Fund       | \$ 605  |
| General Missions    | \$ 140  |
| Souper Thursday     | \$1,179 |
| UMCOR Hunger        | \$ 96   |
| Barry Comm Hospice  | \$ 74   |
| Human Relations Day | \$ 5    |
| Education Fund      | \$2,028 |

**Easter Egg Hunt**

Once again, Central Church will be participating in the Lakewood Chamber's Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 31, from 10 am to noon. Volunteers are needed to hand out goody bags (donated by our Souper Thursday program) and to help children with games. Please contact Leona if you can help.



**Upcoming Blood Drive**

**Our next Red Cross blood drive is scheduled for Monday, April 9, 12 to 5:45 pm.**



If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Marian Durkee at 616-374-7489.