

# Pastoral Transition

As was announced recently, effective July 1, 2020, Rev. Dr. Vaughn Thurston-Cox will begin his appointment at Central UM Church. Rev. Dominic Tommy is retiring after 23 years of service in the United Methodist Conference.

Rev. Vaughn's most recent appointment was at Mulliken UMC. His wife, Rev. Hillary, is currently the pastor at Wacousta Community Church in Eagle, Michigan. They both have been living in the parsonage in Eagle and will continue to do so. Therefore, we will not be using the parsonage in Lake Odessa at this time.

Rev. Dominic Tommy will preach his last sermon on Sunday, June 14, and then take his accumulated two-week vacation. He and Comfort have purchased a home near Holland and are very excited to get settled into their new surroundings with family nearby. We have great hope that we will be able to gather as a congregation and church family at a June 14 special coffee hour to say our good-byes to Pastor Dominic and Comfort.

We have scheduled guest preachers for the last two Sundays in June. These names will be familiar to you as they have graciously filled in for us before:

June 21—Rev. Paul Carmichael

June 28—Rev. Duane Walter.

Next month we will provide more information about how we will be saying 'hello' and 'goodbye' during this transition. Stay tuned.....



Rev. Hillary Thurston-Cox, Rev. Dr. Vaughn Thurston-Cox, and their daughter, Grace

## FROM YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The trustees have accomplished getting some much needed repair work started at the church. The week of 4/20/20 saw bricklayers from RAM Construction of Grand Rapids complete the necessary replacement of crumbling brick within the bell tower. The work was very labor intensive, as bricks, mortar and debris had to be lifted and lowered by hand through the interior bell tower access panel. The new bricks will help maintain the structural integrity of the bell tower for decades to come.

The new brick will also allow new flashing to be inserted within the tower. The flashing will be installed by local roofer, Scott Miller, who will also be permanently fixing the roofing area within the bell tower. This should fix our bell tower roof leaks. Miller Roofing will also be replacing the roof over the Maintenance Room near the kitchen of Fellowship Hall. Years of decay have caused the roof to slant away from the drain. This repair will permanently fix the numerous roof leaks.

Thank you all for your continued support of the Trustees as they work to maintain our beautiful church!

~~Del Kostanko, Trustee Chairperson

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.

central  
united methodist church

May 2020



## PASTORAL REFLECTION

Dear Central Members and Friends:

### THE CASE OF THE "RESURRECTION TREE"

Max Lucado, a terrific Christian author, wrote this story of "Resurrection Tree," a symbol of new life in hopeless nations of the world. Read this story carefully; see if you can identify with the event. Were you here when it happened in 1995? I was! It was one of the melancholiest days in U.S. history. On the parallel of the Resurrection Tree, Lucado writes:

*"A sprawling, shade-bearing, eighty-year-old American elm in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is a huge tourist attraction. People pose for pictures beneath her. Arborists carefully protect her. She adorns posters and letterhead. The city treasures the tree, not because of her appearance but her endurance. She made it through the Oklahoma City bombing. Timothy McVeigh parked his death-laden truck only yards from her. His malice killed 168 people, wounded 850, destroyed the Alfred P. Murray Federal Building, and buried the tree in rubble. No one expected it to survive. No one gave any thought to the dusty, branch-stripped tree. But then she began to bud. Sprouts pressed through damaged bark; green leaves pushed away gray soot. Life rose from an acre of death. People noticed. The tree modeled the resilience the victims desired. So, they named her the Survivor Tree."*  
--Max Lucado (*Facing Your Giants*)

The "Resurrection Tree" could be likened to "the Church, the Bride of Christ" that had been persecuted, tortured, battered, and forced into seclusion over centuries past, and in recent months world-wide. Resurrection Tree speaks to us in many ways:

1) Perpetual Covenant Jesus made with His Bride, the Church. It confirms the promise of Christ to protect the Church from wicked political culprits. Listen to Jesus **"I also say to you that you .... on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades (Hell) shall not prevail against it."** (Matthew 16:18-19)

2) Resurrection Tree speaks of **determination, resilience and endurance of the faithful "Bride of Christ—the Church."** No matter what the world may do, the mission of the Church is unchanged. The Church is Mount Zion on a hill, shining the light of Hope, Healing and Strength. Like one of the African America freedom songs, "We (the Church) shall overcome someday; and our victory parade shall ever be led by the Lamb, who gave Himself for the Bride (the Church—you and me). For He loves us, and with patience, we wait for His glorious appearing. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus! Amen and Amen!!"

And think of this then, at Christ's Second Coming **"The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away"** (Isaiah 35:9-10)). Oh, the jubilation of the saints of God. Alleluia! If I may ask you, "Do you see yourself in this parade of the Saints? If not, why not?" You can be sure of your salvation today, by simply inviting Christ into your heart. Don't wait for another day!

**"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.** (2 Corinthians 13:14)

~~Pastor Dominic Tommy

**CELEBRATIONS**

<b>Birthdays</b>		5/24	Monte Logan
5/04	Brandon Spagnuolo	5/25	Sharlene Goodemoot
	Jackie Spagnuolo		Leona Rayner
	Joanne McDaniels	5/27	Jean Faulkner
5/06	Brenda Steele	5/31	Dale Brock
5/08	Cadance Jackson	<b>Anniversaries</b>	
5/10	Barb Klein	5/3	Tim & Kim Girvin—17 years
5/12	Rayna Hutchison	5/6	Randy & Judy Freidhoff—20 years
5/13	Helen Good	5/7	Bob & Marian Durkee—52 years
5/13	Mark Corston	5/16	Karl & Julie Klynstra—28 years

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**FRESH FOOD DISTRIBUTION—DRIVE THRU ONLY** **FRIENDSHIP GROUP —Will resume in the fall.**  
 Tuesday, May 5—2:00 pm **RESPITE SCHEDULE—TBD**

**UMW MOTHER/DAUGHTER BRUNCH** **MEETINGS: All meetings this month are being held via telephone or email.**  
 May 9—Postponed until a later date this summer.

**CHOIR: Will resume in the fall.**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL: Will resume in the fall.**

**THE OPERATING FUND**

**Central Church Stimulus Program**

Can you help stimulate Central’s “economy”?

As you are aware, Central continues to struggle financially. The Coronavirus has not helped our situation as the monthly expenses continue, even though our doors are not open and people are not filling the pews. With the recently-approved stimulus program, a majority of us will soon be receiving a check (deposit) from the government. If your income was not adversely affected during this pandemic, the Finance Committee would like to ask you to prayerfully consider tithing a portion of your stimulus check in an effort to give the Operating Fund a badly-needed boost.

Thank you for your consideration and faithful support through this difficult time.

~Penny Thelen, Finance Chair

**IT’S A CARD SHOWER!!**

Tom Noffke, Marilyn’s husband, will be celebrating his 71st birthday on May 7. He is, and has been, at Hastings Rehabilitation Center for several months. We would like to surprise him with cards and well wishes during this difficult time. They can be addressed to:

Hastings Rehab  
 240 North St., Room A16  
 Hastings, MI 49058

**PRAYERS OF CONDOLENCE**

Family of Judy Burruel	Family of Ron Stevens
Family of Earl Decker	Family of Rich Smith
Family of Nadine Speas	Family of Wayne Brown
Family of Leon Sutherland	



*Our sincerest condolences to Pat Wilson and her family following the death of her daughter, Judy Burruel.*

**WHEN WILL THE CHURCH “RE-OPEN?”**

All of us have been asking this question! Pastor Dominic, the Administrative Council members, and the staff of Central Church have had many discussions about ‘re-opening’ and how it may look and feel different from what is familiar to us. Several things were decided early on, such as canceling choir, Sunday school, and the nursery until fall.

Subject to further developments on Covid19 in the coming weeks, we have decided to plan for our first Worship Service on **Sunday, May 24th.** This is Memorial Day weekend and puts us into a positive “summer” mode. This also means the starting time will be **9:30 AM.**

We are looking at a ‘phased-in’ approach, with certain precautions in place. Instructions for distancing and other measures will be provided upon your arrival to church. There will be no coffee hour at this point in time.

We are well aware that things could change a little or a lot in the next few weeks before that day gets here. We will continue to look at the situation and make adjustments if necessary. We will let everyone know if the date needs to change, again. God Bless. Stay safe!

**Upper Room devotionals for May-June have arrived and can be picked up or mailed to you. Please call or email the Church Office. Prayer Calendars are also available.**

**Thank You**  
*I would like to thank everyone for the prayers, cards, and calls during Judy’s illness. It was heart warming to hear from my church family and friends with the caring, compassion and loving words. ~Pat Wilson*

**State of the Church Report**

**Stats for March 2020**

Average Attendance: 45  
 Operating Fund:  
 Receipts \$10,852.42  
 Expenses \$12,516.54

**Other Designated Giving:**

Building Fund \$ 637  
 General Missions \$ 128  
 Helping Hands \$ 155  
 Aviations Ministries \$ 50  
 UMCOR \$ 55  
 Missionary Delbert Groves \$ 10  
 General Ed Fund \$ 151

**Summer Worship Time**

**Memorial Day Weekend thru Labor Day Weekend**

Worship will begin at 9:30 am.



**Fresh Food Distribution Tuesday, May 5, at 2 p.m.**

**DRIVE-THRU ONLY**  
**At this time only Cargill volunteers are allowed to hand out food.**