

Year End Report from Fellowship & Care Committee

In January, we sent a \$50.00 gift card to Christy Jackson on the birth of her baby boy. On February 2nd, we hosted a baby shower for Jackie Spagnuolo and gave her a gift card, also. On February 23rd, we hosted a coffee hour after worship to celebrate "Fat Sunday", the last Sunday before Lent. We were scheduled to sponsor the "spin the wheel" game at the community-wide Easter Egg hunt, but it was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

In May, we purchased tote bags for women of the congregation for Mother's Day. We have not passed them out. We are waiting for a safer time to do this.

We have paid for an ad in the Reminder to support the Circle of Excellence at Lakewood High School. We, also, made a donation to the Lakewood Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Kid's Fishing Tournament.

We had one graduate from LHS this year and gave Mackenzie Thelen an inspirational book. We have also provided flowers and/or memorial donations according to the family's wishes for those that have passed away during this past year.

Submitted by Christine Cunningham

Important Reminders:

- ⇒ **Church Office Hours** remain Monday through Thursday, 8am to noon. If there is a pastoral emergency, please call Rev. Vaughn on his cell phone (231-250-3924). After-hour prayer requests should be placed with Marian Durkee (616-890-1197).
- ⇒ **In-person Worship Services and Sunday School classes** have resumed. Worship services are also posted on-line using facebook: Central United Methodist Church—Lake Odessa.
- ⇒ If you or someone you know should be receiving our **weekly mailings** for updates/events, please call the church office to be added to the list.

Central United Methodist Church is located in downtown Lake Odessa at 912 4th Avenue.
Contact us at 616-374-8861 or kim@centralchurch-lakeo.org.

Check out our Facebook page for weekly sermons, current activities, and other events.
Central United Methodist Church—Lake Odessa

central
united methodist church

February 2021



PASTORAL REFLECTION

Dear Friends:

Passing through January, we pass over the threshold from one year into another. Already the days are growing longer. Medical staff, EMT's, seniors, and others can now be vaccinated. Newly elected representatives, senators, and a president have taken office. And, yes, we are all preparing for tax season. While January may be just one month among twelve, it represents a liminal space where the year before passes into the year to come, and so invites reflection.

What will we allow to pass from our lives? And I'm not just talking about those extra holiday pounds. Is there anger or bitterness born out of 2020 that needs to pass from your life? Neither of those lead to life. They only ever lead to death. Maybe there is disappointment or hurt. I invite you to allow the grace of God to heal those broken places of your life. You are not abandoned. You are loved. Maybe there is fear. I'd remind you that you do not need to be afraid. We remain in God's hands. Twenty twenty will be remembered by most for its unprecedented grief, division, and heart ache. It has fundamentally changed us as a nation, but we can choose that change shapes us in Jesus Christ by allowing some of these things to pass from our life.

A threshold also means we enter into something new. What new things is the Spirit calling you into? Is there a broken relationship in need of healing? Maybe you feel a call to something new in your spiritual life, better habits around the study of Scripture or prayer or service. God is giving us this year to live. Let's live it!

This new year has brought a few new things to our Fellowship and Care Committee. We are working towards trying to think about what outreach looks like each month of this year. In January, we are offering everyone postcards that say, "I Love My Church," and give people an easy way to share all the things they love about being a part of this community with friends and neighbors. In February we each of our widows and widowers will receive a card from us, reminding them that they are loved. In March we are planning to send care packages to our college students. We have tentative plans to help with the community Easter egg hunt and blessings in a backpack in April and May, understanding that both of those events are subject to pandemic. In June I am taking TWO Sundays to preach on questions from the congregation or community. If you have a question you would like asked about the Bible or life with God, you can submit it to me at dr.thurstoncox@gmail.com. At the same time we recognize that there has been a lot of grieving. As the Care Committee, we are sending out resources for those who have lost loved ones. Thank you Fellowship & Care Committee. It is a time for new beginnings.

The Worship Committee is looking toward Lent and Easter. This Ash Wednesday we are working towards an interactive prayer walk through the building. We will stagger participants, so that each person has an opportunity to pray and worship as they prepare themselves for the season of Lent. That season of Lent I will be preaching on the Way of Love: turning, learning, praying, blessing, resting, and worshipping. The way of the Christian is the Way of Christ, and the Way of Christ is the way of love. I know a lot of us will be looking forward to that week on resting.

A reminder that our Sunday School is back up and running with small groups for all ages. No previous experiences required.

Thank you for being a part of our church. This year more than any other we have been reminded that church is not a place; it is its people. And it is a verb. It is how our lives bear witness to ministry of Jesus Christ out in the world. Thank you. ~~~Pastor Vaughn

CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays			
02/03	Nanette Biang	02/16	Jacob Spagnuolo
02/05	Thelma Curtis	02/20	Sally Strater
02/06	Sam McNeill	02/24	Barbara Wareing
02/09	Lori McNeill	02/26	Blake Zona
02/12	Margot Bailey	02/27	Jonathan Freidhoff
02/12	Frank Klein		
Anniversaries			
02/14	Chuck & Leona Rayner—13 years		

UPCOMING EVENTS

FRESH FOOD DISTRIBUTION
Tuesday, Feb. 2—2:00 pm (Drive-thru process)

BLOOD DRIVE (Conditions permitting)
Monday, Feb. 8—12 to 5:45 pm

COMMITTEE/OTHER MEETINGS:
Missions Committee - Mon., Feb. 8 (TBD)
UMW Unit Meeting—Mon. Feb. 8 *Cancelled*
Board of Trustees—Tues., Feb. 9 (TBD)
Finance Committee - Tues., Feb. 16 (TBD)

NEWS OF THE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Greetings from president Terri Catt in Arizona! Blessings and prayers for all of you. This has been a real hard year for most of us with the quarantine, but I do believe we have been blessed. We were able to have a successful rummage sale, thanks to chairs Andrea Gentner and Dawn Deardorff and all of you who helped make it a great success.

We also received a \$500 anonymous donation.

We have met our pledge to Mid-Michigan District Missions of \$1,055, plus have donated to these charities:

World: P.E.T. \$200 and Solar Ovens \$150

Michigan: Community House \$300 & Alpha Family Center \$100

Local: Lakewood Ministerial Association \$300 and Christmas Baskets \$300

Central Church: \$500.

Thanks be to God!

The February Unit meeting has been cancelled.

A reminder that we still have fudge left in the freezer so pick some up when you have a chance. Prices are \$5 for large; \$1 for small. And I would like to challenge you to pick a member of the UMW that you have not talked to lately and give them a call: Be the light in their day!

~~Terri



In November, we were able to hold a pantry drive for Manna's Market, even considering Covid-19. Thank you to those who donated!

Year-End Memorial Gifts

Your gifts to Central Church become a living tribute to honor a loved one or friend. We praise the Lord for the lasting legacy provided by our recent donors:

- In Memory of Julie Nelson: \$100**
- In Memory of Dale Brock: \$200**

PRAYERS OF CONDOLENCE

Family of George Covington Family of Della Meade
 Family of Aundrea Mazurek Family of Robert Kole



Ash Wednesday Service—February 17th

The Worship Committee and Rev. Vaughn have decided to offer an Ash Wednesday experience with self-guided readings, meditations and activities at four different stations. These stations will be spread out in the sanctuary, and there will be morning, afternoon and evening opportunities for you to participate. No sign up will be required. We just ask that you wear masks and social distance.

Doors will be open from 8 to noon, 1 to 4 pm, and 6 to 8 pm on Wednesday, February 17.

The sermon series for Lent will be the "The Way of Love".

LOOKING TO THE SEASON OF LENT

Do you remember? In 2006, the Rev. Dr. Don Ferris asked Barb Wareing if she would be willing to share some of her stories in a publication for our church families during Lent. Barb has agreed to allow us to republish those stories once again. Copies will be made available in February.

We have also ordered some special Advent devotionals which will be available to anyone interested.

THANK YOU'S

- ◆ What a Blessing of love and encouragement from my church family during my sorrow in the loss of my brother. It was a great comfort to me. Thank you. ~~Betty Shetterly
- ◆ Thank you for the generous Christmas gift during this difficult time. Our church family is certainly a blessing! Thank you! ~~Jackie Spagnuolo
- ◆ I would like to thank all of you for your generous Christmas gift. I appreciate it very much. ~~Kim Stoepker
- ◆ Thank you to the church family members who remembered me with greeting cards and phone calls this holiday season. Sincerely, ~~Virginia Decker

State of the Finance Report

Stats for December 2020

Operating Fund:	
Receipts	\$10,085.52
Expenses	\$ 9,837.56

Other Designated Giving:

Building Fund	\$ 385
General Missions	\$ 50
Helping Hand Fund	\$ 300
Christmas Baskets	\$ 450
U.M. Student Sunday	\$ 100
World Communion Sunday	\$ 10
UM Women Fund	\$ 500
Staff-Pastor Gifts	\$1,140
Memorial Fund	\$ 300

Altar Flowers

The Altar Flower sign-up sheet has been posted in Fellowship Hall for anyone interested in providing flowers on Sunday mornings. **SIGN UP**

UMW FUDGE FOR SALE!!!

There are still a few packages left in the freezer in the custodian room.

Large—\$5
 Small—\$1

Upcoming Blood Drive

The next Red Cross blood drive is scheduled for **Monday, February 8** 12 to 5:45 pm Safety protocols will be in place.

Fresh Food Distribution
Tuesday, Feb. 2, at 2 p.m.
DRIVE-THRU ONLY