

"Connection"

Please see the article in
this newsletter
regarding worship!!!



September 6

14th Sunday after

Pentecost

"Praying for...

My Church"

Isaiah 1:10-20



September 13

15th Sunday after

Pentecost

"Praying for...

My Neighbor"

Luke 10:25-37



September 20

16th Sunday after

Pentecost

"Praying for...

My Enemy"

Matthew 5:38-48



September 27

17th Sunday after

Pentecost

"Praying for...

Goodness' Sake"

Matthew 6:7-14

Friends in

On my first day, just a couple of months ago, I walked into the church building through the front door (with the alarm already deactivated, thankfully) to find the words to Grand Blanc UMC's Mission & Vision Statement spread out across a banner, placed over the sanctuary entrance: ***"Friends in Christ Exercising love, hope and grace to enrich all lives."***

I was immediately struck by the power of these words, recognizing the possibility that lies underneath them. But, one thing I know – as I'm sure you do, as well – is that, regardless of the intention behind carefully chosen words, unless the *meaning* behind them is explored and then acted upon, they will forever remain just words. That being said, what I have discovered in the last month and a half or so, is that this congregation has no desire to let this statement remain just words. You all have shared with me a desire to grow into them, and to see how God will move through you and through this church as, together we do so. And so, throughout the remainder of 2020, using my article space in the Connection newsletter, I'm going to provide some additional food for thought as we reflect on our common mission and vision for GBUMC. And so, during the month of September, we'll explore the first few words: **"Friends in Christ."**

Some people arrived, and four of them were bringing to him a man who was paralyzed. They couldn't carry him through the crowd, so they tore off part of the roof above where Jesus was. When they had made an opening, they lowered the mat on which the paralyzed man was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven!"

(Mark 2:3-5 CEB)

Are We Really Friends?

Did you ever notice how little we know about our four helpers here in Mark's familiar Gospel story? We know almost nothing about them other than the assumption that, at some point, they decided to, as a group of four, do something to get the paralyzed man to Jesus.

Sometimes, we assume the four of them were the best friends to have ever lived. In actuality, we really don't know that! All we know is that they were among the crowd of people who (1) knew that Jesus was in town, and (2) knew what Jesus could do. Did they play Euchre together or cheer on the Wolverines, together? Did they support the same politician for office? Did they all prefer 11am service over the 9am service? We don't know any of this, and it might be for a very good reason that we don't. Maybe it just doesn't matter. Treating others among us and in our community with kindness, humility and grace does not require us to share best-friend bracelets or to be "blood-brothers." It doesn't even demand that we be like-minded in our political or social beliefs. What it does require is that we come to see each other as friends in Christ. Period. **(Continued on page 2)**

(Continued from page 1)

I have a learned habit of referring to my congregation as “friends” or as “brothers and sisters in Christ.” A few years ago, someone commented to me that every time they hear me say that, they’re reminded that they are to see everyone in the church as their friend and brother or sister. I smiled and replied: “That’s the point!” They figured me out! If we are to truly be friends in Christ, and if we are to truly be the light of Christ in this community and in this world, it would behoove us to see one another as *friends*, more and more.

Friends in Christ build up, hold accountable, and forgive one another?

The four friends in Christ we find in Mark’s Gospel story find out very quickly that their actions result in nothing for them, except for maybe a roof-repair bill. It’s the paralyzed man that is healed. Their mission had a single purpose, and it had nothing to do with them: get the paralyzed man to Jesus any way necessary in order that he could be healed. You see, being “friends in Christ” with a common and singular goal of bringing others to Christ (we call that “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,”) doesn’t involve us receiving much for the effort. We may, as friends in Christ – the congregation of Grand Blanc UMC – spend our whole lives making disciples of Jesus Christ and never receive public recognition for this faithful work. But there is something that we must begin to internalize and say over and over again: “It’s not about us.” In other words, this church isn’t for us. It’s for the person who is being lowered through the hole in the ceiling.

We exist as a church, not for our own gain, but for the kingdom of God (you know, “on earth as it is in heaven.”) To this end, we seek to build one another up, rather than tear one another down. This means we support one another in our common ministry, hoping for success and fruitfulness, even when it’s not necessarily the way we’d do it (or the “way it’s always been done.”) It means we desire to see the fruits of the Spirit in one another (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control,) and that when such fruit is absent, we lovingly remind our friend in Christ. And finally, it means that, when we hurt our friends in Christ, we seek to be forgiven, and that we’d offer forgiveness to our brother or sister in Christ when we are hurt, all so that we might continue the fruitful ministry of disciple making as “friends in Christ.”

Is Christ among us?

Ultimately, we ask, is Christ among us? As we read the entirety of this Gospel story, we see that Jesus does provide healing for the once-paralyzed man. Jesus commands him, “Get up, take your mat, and go home.” He does. And then Mark includes this little detail: “They were all amazed and praised God, saying, “We’ve never seen anything like this!” (v.12). Typically, when we read this, we simply read that they were impressed by Jesus’ ability to heal. You can almost see their jaws dropped open at the sight of the healing. The only thing is, Jesus had followers already, and they’d probably seen Jesus heal in some way shape or form, already. Part of me wonders if they were maybe responding, not in awe at what Jesus did, but rather in awe of what the four “friends in Christ” did for the paralyzed man. These four “friends in Christ” didn’t do the bare minimum! They didn’t just get him to the house and assume that another foursome would take over. They showed tenacity and maybe even a bit of recklessness in their endeavor to bring the man to Jesus.

Can you imagine when, one day, people will look at the “friends in Christ” here at GBUMC and see not just another church full of committees, politics, and finances, but a church that takes seriously Christ at its core, and is tenacious in its singular effort to make disciples of Jesus Christ out of an authentic and increasingly rare love? I wonder if the first words from their mouths will be “We’ve never seen anything like this!” May it be so!

You Got a Friend in Me

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I am forever humbled to have the opportunity and task to serve you as your pastor. As your pastor, I hope that you will never tire of hearing me call you “friends,” if, for no other reason, than because we are, in a very real sense, “friends in Christ.”

Forever your friend in Christ and a partner in the rug-carrying business,
Pastor Brian



FOR THE HOMEBOUND:

Marion
Marge
James
Woody

OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

Donna
Cheryl
Shirley
Val
Eleanor
Dick
Phil
Doyle
Jan
Ruth Ann
Mary
Paul
Amanda
Dianne
Robert
Richard
Norma
Mary

FOR OTHERS:

Chris
Michael
Brad
Randy
Robin
Patty
Bev
Dennis
Bill
Ginger
Jim
Robert
Brad
Barb
Doug
James
Ed
Jim
Sunny
Ed
Sharon

Beginning Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 11:00a.m.

Outdoor worship services in the church parking lot!

**Outdoor
Worship
Service**

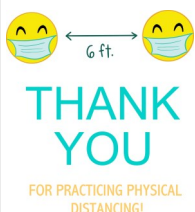


You are invited to bring your own chair and safely space yourself at least 6 feet from others.

Remember, if you live together, you may sit together. Being outdoors, you're also encouraged to come prepared to stay safe and comfortable in the sun. Should inclement weather prohibit us from gathering outside any of the Sundays, the in-person format will be canceled, and the entire worship service will be presented on-line from inside the sanctuary.

During this first worship service, we'll also have the exciting opportunity to share in the sacrament of Holy Communion in a safe way, using pre-prepared, individual communion elements of bread and grape juice. If you are not able to be with us in-person, you are invited to gather similar elements at home in order to join us in the celebration of Communion

While this meaningful worship service will be offered in-person, please know that it will also be available online through Facebook and YouTube, if you are not yet comfortable in public settings. We want you to feel safe and still part of this church family!



We look forward to worshipping in-person with you as you're able and comfortable, however different it may be. Keep an eye and ear out for more details as September 6th draws closer. And until we meet again, may we rejoice that we remain the church - Christ's hands and feet in this community.

~ We extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Billy Robertson, who passed away on August 2, 2020. Billy was Angela Campbell's uncle

WE MOURN
WITH YOU



~ We extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Lois Bennetts, who passed away on August 10, 2020. Lois was Beth Bennetts mother.

We send out prayers to the people of Iowa who's homes and lives have been disrupted by the recent storms.

Autumn Ridge of Clarkston
Great Lakes Christian Home

Shirley
Helen

It's a girl!!!
Congratulations to Pastor Brian,
Stephanie and big brothers,
Matthew and Micah!!
Jane Esther West
Born: Thursday, August 20, 2020
8 pounds, 3 ounces
20 inches long

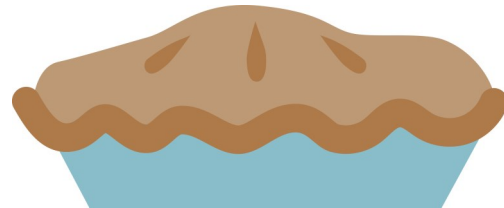
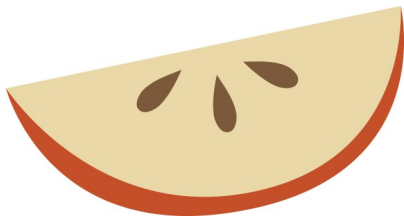


A Message from SPRC regarding Pastor's Paternity Grace Period

As Pastor Brian, Stephanie and their family welcome their daughter, we, the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), want to inform the GBUMC family that we have discussed and developed a period of "parental grace" with Pastor Brian. This was an arrangement that he has requested instead of a formal parental leave. This time of "parental grace" will take effect on August 20th through October 16, 2020. The details of this time are as follows:

- For the first week following the birth of their daughter, Pastor Brian will be focused on his family and new little one with minimal, if any, communication with Church leadership (this was a recommendation of SPRC's)
 - ◊ Should you have a need for pastoral care, please contact our office staff.
- Except for the first Sunday following the birth (Sunday, August 23rd), Pastor Brian will preach on a regular basis. Special thank you to Eric Carlson for sharing a message during that online worship service.
- As we are developing plans to create an outdoor, in-person worship service beginning Sunday, September 6th, please know that Pastor Brian will be present on those Sunday mornings, leading worship along with the worship and arts team, etc.
- Pastor Brian will be in the office as needed on Mondays and Wednesdays during office hours in order to accomplish any necessary tasks, meet with anyone requiring a meeting, etc.
- Pastor Brian will meet with leadership and ministry teams in-person or virtually when his participation is necessary.
- Pastor Brian will work with the C.A.R.E. Team in order to continue to provide meaningful pastoral care as necessary.
- Pastor Brian will also officiate all Funeral/memorial services that may arise during this time.

To maintain healthy and effective lines of communication, our pastor will be in regular contact with the office staff, as well as with the SPRC chairperson. During these communications, we will assess the current health and status of the congregation and how its pastoral needs can be met.



As the new leaders of the senior high youth group, we are excited to get started with fun and meaningful experiences for the youth! We want to keep safety in mind with all that we do, especially during these unusual times. Because of that, our events will be different than in years past. We are excited to be planning our usual Cedar Point trip and especially the ASP trip for next summer. We will have many activities between now and then, so stay tuned. We also are interested in knowing what you would like to do, so think about that, and bring your ideas when we meet next .

Do you remember the pasta we put together last spring? Our first event will be hosting a free, drive-through pasta dinner on Sunday, September 20th. We'll be putting the dinners together at 3:30 and serving them from 4:30 to 5:30.

There's more to come and we'll be sending out more information soon.

Jennifer

Brian



Free Drive-Thru Pasta Dinner
Sunday, September 20
4:30pm to 5:30pm (or until we run out!)
Everyone is welcome!
Invite your friends and neighbors!
Sponsored by the Senior High Youth

BUILDING RE-ENTRY GUIDELINES

On June 16 letters were either emailed or mailed to all parishioners from Ad Council detailing plans for building reentry. Safety of all who enter our building is our highest priority and the focus of the GBUMC and COVID-19 Guidelines document.

"Phases will be advanced when changes in circumstances are noted through time. Presently we are in early Phase II. Some outside groups are using the building for meetings (AA and Al Anon). Some church groups (Friday Men's Coffee and Prayer Shawl) have met in the parking lot. All are asked to follow CDC guidelines of masks, physical distancing, and good hygiene. Office staffing is not back to a regular routine.

This is a very different time for churches everywhere. We at GBUMC will follow guidelines from the CDC and advice from our Bishop. Worship services will remain online as we continue into the future. Meanwhile, we need to remain faithful and move on knowing GOD is always with us."

The following is an outline of the Phases:

- PHASE ZERO –SHELTER IN PLACE
- PHASE ONE—RECORDING IN SANCTUARY
- PHASE TWO—SMALL GROUPS + STAFF IN OFFICE (our current Phase) - The shift from Phase One to Phase Two is based on a re-evaluation of the situation using applicable criteria, which may be similar to that used in Phase One. You might expect several weeks of improving conditions to pass before this shift. This will require careful observance of physical distancing recommendations on an ongoing basis.
 - ◇ Church to be sanitized and cleaned thoroughly by custodial company before staff is to resume regular hours and use of church building.
 - ◇ High risk individuals (defined as those over age 60 as well as those with underlying conditions) whether staff or volunteers should continue to shelter in place, unless deemed essential
 - ◇ Worship remains online only
 - ◇ Life rituals (weddings, funerals, confirmations) resume in a more traditional way
 - ◇ Small groups / bible studies / committees of <10 people may choose to meet in person
 - ◇ Vacation Bible School will not be held in person
 - ◇ Mission trips will not be offered
 - ◇ Church office functions can resume in person
 - ◇ Use of the building by outside organizations may resume for small group activities (less than ten people)
 - ◇ Everyone who enters the building will be required to take their temperature; employees will log their temperature at the entrance with name and date. Anyone with a temperature above 100.4 will not be allowed to enter the building.
- PHASE THREE - IN-PERSON WORSHIP

Seasoned Citizens!

Thursday, September 10

1:00pm to 2:00pm

In the church parking lot!



Bring your own lawn chair.

Bring your own beverage, if you would like.

We will be practicing our physical distancing and socialize while staying 6 feet apart.

Please remember to wear a face covering.

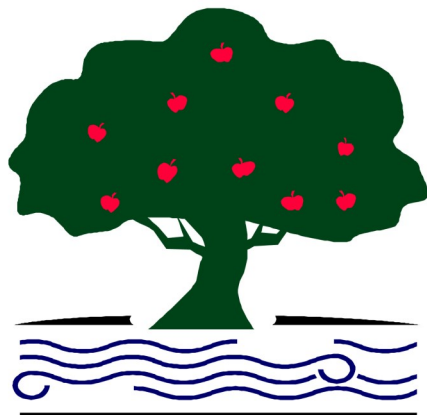
There will be no food served...no potluck

****Rather than have a program, we are asking everyone to bring their favorite bible verse along with a comment about it.**

If the weather doesn't cooperate, we will postpone until the next day, Friday, September 11.

Please feel free to contact the church office if you do not have internet and would like to receive weekly devotional materials in the mail.

If you would like to receive prayer concern emails from the church, please contact the church office at office@grandblancumc.org. You can also receive church updates through email and this newsletter too! Just let us know!



They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season . . .

PSALM 1:3, NRSV



God makes a special promise to people who study Scripture.

Directions: Arrange the word list in alphabetical order. Then write the circled letters in order below to complete Joshua 1:8, NIV.



school	— ○ — — —
paper	— ○ —
wisdom	— — ○ —
read	— — — ○
play	— — — — —
learn	○ — — — —
grow	— ○ — — — —
pencils	— — — —
pray	— ○ — —
art	— — — —
student	— — — ○ — —
kids	— — ○ — — —
apple	— — ○ — — —

"... meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be — — — — — and successful."

JOSHUA 1:8, NIV

Answer: apple, art, grow, kids, learn, paper, pencils, play, pray, read, school, student, wisdom, prosperous

A BLESSING OF THE DEVICES

Digital devices have replaced books and cameras and have become a familiar tool of daily life. The Coronavirus has moved our church services, school days and family gatherings online. Elizabeth Drescher shares this blessing for our tablets, phones and computers.

Prayer:

God, you call us to share your Good News of love, justice and peace with a world in need... You have gifted us with rich resources from scripture, tradition, reason and experience... Which have allowed people to develop new ways of listening to the voices of many others, attending to their interests and concerns, connecting with diverse peoples and groups, and engaging them as a people of faith... We ask your blessing on our digitally-integrated ministries and on the many devices we use to love and serve our neighbors in a changing world. May they never become distractions from relationships or idols in our hands. May we always remember that your Son, Jesus Christ, is the one true mediator of your love and grace in the wired world. Amen.



*In response to the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" executive order, the GBUMC Finance Committee is prayerfully requesting that each member make every attempt to honor their Stewardship pledge by mailing your offering to the church office or utilizing the on-line giving system (Vanco) at the following link on the Church website: www.grandblancumc.org/tithe/. Carol Capell and I will be meeting on a limited basis to count and deposit offerings so that funds are available to meet routine operating and salary obligations.
Kevin Cook, Finance Committee Chair*

SEPTEMBER

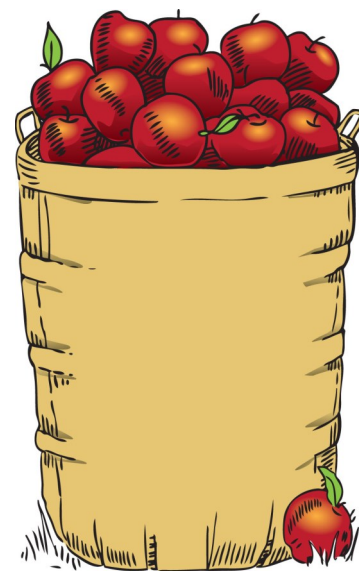
Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthday Wishes

1st Bryant, Bev,
Jim, Deb,
Jackson,
RaeDeane
3rd Conner
4th Susan,
Bob
5th Gary
8th Helen
10th Allen
14th Alyssa
16th Eileen, Ken
17th Doyle
18th Nancy,
Dorrie
20th Deb
21st Nathan, Bob,
Adrienne
22nd Marian, Sue
23rd Joni
25th Rowan, Benjamin
26th Glen
27th Eli
28th Bernie

Anniversary Blessings

7th Cheryl & John
9th Mary & Bob
10th Marilyn & Nick
12th Val & Dave,
Nicole & David
13th Renee & Bob
20th Luann & Dave
25th Anne & Dave



By all these lovely tokens, September days are here. With summer's best of weather and autumn's best of cheer. – Helen Hunt Jackson



If you would like to receive a copy of your financial statement, so that you can double-check your pledge commitment, please contact Sallie Farrell at finance.secretary@grandblancumc.org or call the church office.



Grand Blanc United Methodist Church
Building and Roof Mortgage Summary

MORTGAGE BALANCE (as of 07-31-20)

Mortgage Balance with UMF = \$184,885.04

Mortgage Reserve Fund Balance (as of 07-31-20) = \$16,318.02

Roof Reserve Fund Balance (as of 07-31-20) = \$16,974.90

If you have any questions, please contact
Kevin Cook, Finance Chairperson, finance@grandblancumc.org

Grand Blanc United Methodist Church
515 Bush Avenue
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

Church Office 810-694-9040 fax 810-694-1916
www.grandblancumc.org

Rev. Brian West, Pastor
Cathy Mitchinson, Office Administrator
Angela Campbell, Office Assistant
Dr. Lee Pelton, Organist/Choir Director
Gary Brandt, 9:00 Music Director/Director of Common Grace
Nancy Petrie, Bell Choir Director
Adrienne Jablonski, Nursery Supervisor
Allison Jablonski, Nursery Assistant



GRAND BLANC UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FRIENDS IN CHRIST EXERCISING
LOVE, HOPE AND GRACE TO
ENRICH ALL LIVES



Prayer Shawl Group donates Knitted Knockers to Hurley Hospital!

GBUMC's Prayer Shawl Group has been busy making Knitted Knockers! On August 19th a total of 47 pairs of Knitted Knockers were dropped off at Hurley Hospital and will be shared among the Flint area hospitals. In case you don't know what a Knitted Kocker is just look at the picture below:

