



The Grand Blanc UMC "Connection"

March, 2021

Please see the Worship
article in this newsletter
for Worship details.



Sermon Series: "24 Hours That Changed The World"



March 7

3rd Sunday of Lent

Communion

"Condemned"

Mark 14:53, 55, 61-68,
70-72



March 14

4th Sunday of Lent

"Barabbas"

Mark 15:1-15



March 21

5th Sunday of Lent

"Humiliation of the
King"

Mark 15:15b-23



March 28

Palm Sunday

"Crucifixion"

Mark 15:25-39



We are Still Being the Church

As you're reading this, you might be realizing that we are quickly approaching the one year mark of making the decision to cancel in-person gatherings at the church, of course including in-person worship. At that time, there was so much uncertainty around how the Coronavirus would impact our lives, for how long its impact would last, and what the future would hold for the church. As the year has gone on, some of our questions have been answered while still, others have not. Certainly, far more could be said (and has been said) about the pandemic's impact, it seems a fair summary to say that this past year has been a distinct challenge for each one of us. As we see the staggering number of people who have lost their lives to COVID-19 and the countless others who have survived, and yet have had their lives and health forever affected, we take time to pause and grieve.

Stephanie and I have a love for the decades long-running show, "Saturday Night Live." Not terribly long ago, there was a character played by Rachel Dratch named Debbie Downer. As her name might suggest, she had an annoyingly funny way of taking any moment and turning into a downer of a time. It would eventually get to the point that, despite the otherwise good circumstances, everyone else in the scene would eventually get so frustrated and "down" by her attitude that they'd all turn on one another until the only one left in the scene would be Debbie Downer, herself.

It seems like a silly comparison, but I think about just how much our attitudes and outlook are linked to our choices. You know, is the glass half full or half empty? Is the forecast partly cloudy or partly sunny? Our outlook on the world and our circumstances matters.

And so, we might be tempted to look at this past year and only see that its been a year since we last sat in pews together. As the one writing this letter, I grieve that I've yet to sit in the pews with you, at all. And that grief is real, acknowledged and needs not be dismissed! We might also be tempted to review the year, and think only of the gatherings we missed, holidays that were non-traditional, and friendships that have been strained. Those things are true, as well. But it's also important that we name, acknowledge, and refuse to dismiss all that is good! Here are some examples coming from the church:

- Our online worship attendance, based on a formulation of 1.8 people per view on either Facebook or YouTube means that there have been services where we've estimated approximately 500+ people worshipping with us. Most services are somewhere around 300 people "attending"!
- We are currently working on the necessary technical infrastructure to be able to continue live streaming worship once we are able to safely regather indoors so that we can maintain a strong online presence.
- With our online presence, including daily devotionals, Wednesday Dinners, etc., we have been able to connect with people from all over the country (even one view from Australia, if you can believe that!)
- At the time of writing this, I have hosted 3 different Zoom Bible Studies, and we've discovered ways of connecting with folks who otherwise would not be able to commute to church if we were only meeting in person.
- Despite fear of financial hardship (please note that it hasn't been easy by any means), your pledges have continued to roll in, reflecting your generosity, and the Finance Committee is now working with a balanced 2021 budget!
- The Finance Committee was also able to pay 100% of our ministry shares as part of our connectional ministry with the Michigan Conference of the UMC! Additionally, our Outreach and Missions team accomplished amazing goals in our mission giving!

Continued on next page...

- On March 6th, I will be holding a New Member Class over Zoom, and will be meeting with nearly a dozen perspective new members to the church.
- In the next few months, we'll be welcoming two little ones into the family of God through the sacrament of baptism.
- Our Christmas Eve worship services in the parking lot made it possible for us to travel to Bethlehem and the entrance of the stable where we celebrated the birth of Christ! The drive-in environment was a pleasant experience for many!
- Our youth groups and their leaders have continued to engage middle and high school youth through zoom and safe outdoor gatherings (sledding, anyone?).
- Our church's J.A.M.-aged children have been cared for via deliveries of goods and other fun stuff to their homes, as well as digital content created just for them!

You see, the intent of this list is not to diminish the hurt and loss that has taken place over this past year. But, what it is, is permission to enter into the Debbie Downer sketches and remain determined and resolved to stay positive and confident in God's presence and guidance through this storm. In other words, its an invitation to remember that nothing during the past 365 days has had the power to keep us from being the church!

As we look forward, this resolve will need to be a permanent part of who we are. Good news greets us as we discover that positive COVID-19 cases are slowly decreasing, as is hospital occupancy! This is good news, indeed! What we know is that this is a result of a number of things: we are far enough removed from holidays that the impact of those surges is waning. We're also now able to vaccinate our frontline medical staff, other frontline workers, and some of those who are most vulnerable to the Coronavirus, which will also have a meaningful impact as time goes on! Though, perhaps the greatest reason for this decrease is that many are remaining vigilant, safe, and refraining from unnecessary gatherings. Even with masks and 6 feet of distance which can *help* mitigate the spread, in-person gatherings still remain the greatest means of spreading the virus, especially by those who are asymptomatic or unaware of their symptom's severity.

And so, for the meantime, we will continue to do our part as a church and refrain from in-person gatherings. This is neither out of fear or over reaction, but rather an action of love for our neighbor and faithfulness that God will see us through. Hopefully the need for such precautions will change sooner rather than later, and we'll be able to resume in-person ministries and gatherings that we've been missing, but it will still take time, patience, and love for one another!

But in the meantime, let us become so resolved to remain in love with one another, patient with one another, an example of safety as we continue to thrive, and a beacon of what unprecedented ministry can look like if we simply believe in our God who is already guiding us.

What do you say?



FOR THE HOMEBOUND:

Marge
Woody

Autumn Ridge of Clarkston
Shirley Robertson
Great Lakes Christian Home
Helen Floyd

OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

Shirley
Cheryl
Sharel
Ed
Marcia
Eleanor
Marilyn
Dick
Phil
Mary
Paul
Bob
Eileen
Robert
Norma
Bob

FOR OTHERS:

Rita
Randy
Robin
Tony
Pat
Alexandra
Nancy
Chris
Scott
Robert, Sr.
Michael
Terry
Jay
Kathy
Gerry
Wayne

Carol
Naomi
Charlie
Betty
Connie
Gloria
Jeff
Donna
Marty
Barb
Sunny
Jim
Sharon



We extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Robert Sharpe.
Robert passed away on February 7, 2021



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!

WORSHIP INFORMATION

Sundays at 11:00a.m.

There are 3 ways that the worship service is made available for you at this time:

1. Listen in the church parking lot, through your car radio at 11:00am
2. Watch live on Facebook at 11:00am (the Facebook video can be accessed again later).
3. Watch on YouTube anytime after 11:00am.

We hope you will take the time to join us in which ever way is most comfortable for you.



"24 Hours that Changed the World" will be Pastor's Sermon Series during the season of Lent, beginning Sunday, February 21st. During those six Sundays, we'll walk with Jesus and the Disciples through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life, beginning in the Upper Room for the Passover meal, and ending on Calvary's hill where Jesus is crucified. While Easter Sunday will bring with it a message of hope, life, and resurrection, it is important that we understand the events that draw us toward that moment of freedom."



Maundy Thursday, April 1, a virtual worship service will be available on YouTube and Facebook.

Good Friday, April 2, a virtual worship service will be available on YouTube and Facebook.

Easter, Sunday, April 4, As we anticipate continued need for COVID-19 precautions, the Worship & Arts team, together with Pastor Brian, are currently planning for a meaningful and inspiring worship service that will take place outside on the church's property. While we are hopeful for a safe return to the sanctuary as soon as possible, providing meaningful opportunities for worship, alongside our responsibility for one another's safety and care for our neighbors remain our primary concerns. As more details come out about our Easter Worship service, you can look forward to a lively celebration of Christ's resurrection, and our own invitation to exit the tomb and walk into life!



Beginning April 11th through May 9th, Pastor Brian will be sharing a 5-part sermon series called "Women of the Bible," highlighting five remarkable women of the Bible, both the Old Testament and the New Testament. By understanding who these women of audacious faith were, we will find ourselves drawing closer to God, more convinced of God's call to faithful discipleship, and excited to serve as God's hands and feet in the world.



Pastor Brian's Drop-In Online Bible Study

10-11am Every Thursday

No start date or end date. Just come and join us!

A weekly Bible Study lead by Pastor Brian for everyone who has ever wanted to take a closer look at Scripture. Drop-in anytime you want!

Contact the Church office for more information and how to join the Zoom gatherings
office@grandblancumc.org or (810)694-9040



The Zoom link for this Study is available on the church website.



Are you considering joining Grand Blanc UMC as a new member? Pastor Brian is holding a New Member Class by Zoom.

Saturday, March 6th from 10:00-11:30am.

Sign up by contacting Pastor Brian or the church office

pastor@grandblancumc.org office@grandblancumc.org (810)694-9040

UMCOR Sunday is March 14th

On Sunday, March 14th there will be a special offering for UMCOR Sunday (formerly One Great Hour of Sharing) which is observed the fourth Sunday in Lent. Your gift allows UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) to act as the arms and legs of Christ's church, moving toward the most vulnerable in their darkest days. Convinced that all people have God-given worth and dignity—without regard to race, religion or gender—together we are assisting those impacted by crisis or chronic need.

For more than 50 years, United Methodist congregations have been taking part in this special offering. Your gift to UMCOR Sunday pays the administrative costs so when you donate to UMCOR for disaster relief such as hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, etc., ALL the funds donated can go directly to the relief effort 100%. Together, we reach children, families and communities who have experienced devastation in the wake of disaster. Thank you!



Lent and “In lieu of Lilies” Donations

Easter Sunday is April 4, 2021 this year and we will be supporting Temba Nkomozezi who is the agriculturalist at Mujila Falls Agriculture Centre in Kanyama, Zambia with our Lent donations. Previously we supported Paul Webster who has retired as of last summer. This program has a wide range of agricultural, education and health projects as well as church growth and development. They raise essential crops and support cattle and goat milking, fruit culture, tree nurseries, fish culture and research. To support this worthy mission please use your yellow Lent envelope in your giving box envelopes or mark your donation for Lent mission offering.

“In lieu of Lilies” donations this year are being given to God’s Country Cooperative Parish which is comprised of seven churches spread over 250 square miles of the eastern part of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. These churches combine their resources, share their faith, and actively work to serve God throughout the area with mission teams who do home repairs and home improvements, and also coordinate food and clothing distributions.

To donate “In lieu of Lilies” please fill out the form below (or include this information for who you want to honor or remember) with your check or cash and mail or drop off at the church office before Easter. The “honor of” and “memory of” list will be provided in the Connection after Easter.

Thank you for your continued support of these two mission projects. GBUMC’s congregation is awesome in your support of our mission projects.

In lieu of Lilies donation:

Memory of _____
(Or) _____

Honor of _____

Given by _____

Amount \$ _____

Overeaters Anonymous (OA)

Meets at the church every
Saturday (when possible)
10:00am to 11:00am

We are all Compulsive
Overeaters & Food Addicts.
Our program is built on the
Spiritual, Physical and Mental.
We follow AA guidelines.
Everyone who has an eating
disorder is welcome and no
cost to come. We are more
than happy to welcome
newcomers. If you would like
more information please feel
free to call

Our C.A.R.E. Team is ready and
willing to contact you or anyone
you know who could benefit from a
phone call or card or whatever it is
that would help them with what
they (or you) might be dealing with
today.

Feel free to contact them at
care.team@grandblancumc.org



Have you been watching
Pastor Brian's daily
devotionals? He shares his
recordings every morning,
Monday through Friday.
Go to our website:
www.grandblancumc.org
and you can find a link to
the devotionals on our
home page.

MARCH

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthday Wishes

1st Tony
3rd Pat
4th Grace,
Brennen
5th Matt, Kaja
6th Zach, Nathan
7th Rich
8th Bob, Shelly,
Isabella
9th Don, Dianne
11th Susie
12th Carol
13th Jacob
14th David,
Alyssa
15th Tessa
18th Melanie,
Stephanie
19th Kristin, Zach
21st Kelli, Alexis
22nd Carrie, Libby

24th Alexandria,
RaeAnn
25th Scott,
Charlotte,
Henry
26th Nicole
27th Lisa
28th Sandra, Karen
29th Renee, Carrie
30th Seth
31st Laura



Anniversaries

3th Gail & Michael
5th Judi & Ken
7th Barb & Bob
31st Melissa & Jesse



1st World Complement Day
2nd Read Across America Day (Dr. Suess Day)
6th National Oreo Cookie Day
12th National Plant a Flower Day
13th National Good Samaritan Day
14th Pi Day
15th Ides of March
17th Corned Beef & Cabbage Day
20th National Quilting Day
21st World Down Syndrome Day
22nd National Goof Off Day
23rd National Chip & Dip Day
26th National Make Up Your Own Holiday Day
30th Take a Walk in the Park Day
31st National Crayon Day

Grand Blanc United Methodist Church
Building and Roof Mortgage Summary

MORTGAGE BALANCE (as of 01-31-21)

Mortgage Balance with UMF = \$179,554.79

Mortgage Reserve Fund Balance (as of 01-31-21) = \$13,070.89

Roof Reserve Fund Balance (as of 01-31-21) = \$15,034.90

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

My apologies for the tardiness of this information:

In lieu of Poinsettias for December 2020:

Given by:

In Memory of:

Luann & Dave Griffus

Charles & Betty Williams

Sharon Bohms

Leon Bohms

Val & Jim Wise

Kathleen Wise



Nancy Bigler is a member of the Michigan Widow Sisters and she organizes the local "Meet & Greet" once a month for ALL widows. She would like to invite any widows to the next meet-up on Saturday, March 20th at 10:00am at Sophia's Kitchen, in the back room.



Youth Group News

Senior High Youth

After earnest consideration and discussion with the leadership at the Appalachia Service Project, it is with heavy hearts that we have decided to postpone our trip, once again. We are researching other possible (safe) mission work that we can do this summer. In the meantime, we will continue to plan activities that will keep us engaged. Please do not hesitate to contact the church office if you have any questions.

Brian Rice
Jennifer Lengyel



GRAND BLANC UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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



Hey!!

J.A.M. kids and Families...

Wednesday Dinner videos by Pastor Brian are uploaded to YouTube every Wednesday morning, for use during your family dinner!

(J.A.M. = Jesus and Me)



Junior High Youth

March 6th

2:00pm to 3:30pm

Walking to Dawn Donuts and then a bonfire at the church. Dress accordingly.

The blankets that you made have been donated to the New Life Center in Flint. They are very grateful for your kindness! Thank you for being an amazing group!

Leader: Jessica Smith