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The Messenger

February 2018

Pastor
The Rev. Paul Herter

Youth/Family Life
Becky Martinal, D.C.E.

Worship
Sundays
8:30 (Classic Praise)
11:00 a.m. (New Song)

Bible Study
Sundays
10:00 a.m. (all ages)
Wednesdays
10:00 a.m. (ladies)
3:45pm Kids' Club
6:30 p.m. (adults)

Our Calling and Goal - Agape

Dear Ones Loved by God in Christ with an Everlasting Love (Jeremiah 31:3),

The second month of 2018 is upon us already! Typically, the focus of February is on love and romance in the secular society and St. Valentine's Day (a lesser saint's day on the Church calendar) historically was about a loving Christian priest (Valentinus 226-269 AD) who was martyred by the Roman emperor for marrying couples in contradiction to the royal military decree. [Find out more at <http://www.history.com/news/6-surprising-facts-about-st-valentine>]

Whereas "Valentinus" was held up as a Christian who gave his life for the sake of practicing "agape" (ah-gah-pay) – that is, sacrificial/God's kind of love – the "lover's holiday" in our culture is more about celebrating "eros" (air-rus), that is, erotic or physical/sexual love – actually closer to self-centered lust in practice most of the time!

There is a group/movement that calls themselves = "Love has no labels." Sounds attractive but in practice comes out to "we tolerate everything except people holding to principled moral standards." People with a similar attitude to this group are among those making fun of married (non-gay) couples who remain faithful to one another! How contrary to the teachings of Holy Scripture which upholds the sanctity of "the marriage bed" and the sexual intimacy God designed for marriage between one man and one woman (Hebrews 13:4).

Another word for love in the New Testament is "philos" (phil-ose), that is, brotherly love. This is a challenge mainly for us expressing love within families and congregations! "Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters" (Hebrews 13:1ff).

The Bible does acknowledge the role that each term for love has its God-designed place in our lives. Yet, the kind of love that is elevated and praised in Holy Scripture is God's kind of love ("agape") – that is, a sacrificial, unmerited, completely selfless love. Chiefly, the love of God for us – (cf. Romans 5:8: "God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.")

And the love God requires of us toward one another – (Cf. 1 John 3:16: "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.")

Now, let us understand this: every person, Christian or not, has the capacity for love because God has designed us that way. Everyone has the innate ability to act unselfishly at times (although this is not the norm because of our sinful nature). However, although Jesus pointed out that religious people and even pagans are capable of "loving their own," our calling as God's people is above and beyond such love ("agape" – Matthew 5:43-48). I am convinced that true, sacrificial love – God's kind of love – is only possible for the Christian empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Christian calling and goal is to live in love ("agape")! Yes, our sinful nature continues to be a drag on our consistent exercise of selfless love, but that doesn't change God's expectation of us! As the Apostle Paul summarized in one of his letters: "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Galatians 5:6b).

We are blessed in God's Love,

Pastor Paul

Are You a Giver or a Taker?

Even though we know that God wants us to give generously and, when we do, we derive great joy from our giving, oddly enough, we still often hold back in our giving. Perhaps some of our reluctance to give stems from a fear that something will happen, and we will need that money we've given away. This is simply lack of faith, isn't it? God promises to provide for our needs, but we're just not sure He means it.

A second reason for not giving is that, through most of our lives, we've gotten into the habit of taking rather than giving. We have become more comfortable in acquiring things not giving things away. We are taught how to get friends, how to influence people, how to make money, how to invest so that we make more money, and how to hold on to things. Yes, it is natural that many of us are more skilled in getting and keeping than in giving.

By God's grace, we don't have to remain selfish hoarders of God's gifts to us. As we read and study God's Word, we must be struck by His giving nature, starting with His very Son! *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). Through His perfect life, death, resurrection, and ascension, He has given us all we need. *"He Who did spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?"* (Romans 8:32). Through His Word, we are given confidence that He will provide for all our needs (Matthew 6:25-34); we're promised that He will always be with us (Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20). He has promised to give us joy in our giving (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

God frees us from the selfishness and fear that keep our hands clenching our wallets and opens our hearts to give as we've received: *"Freely you have received, freely give"* (Matthew 10:8 NIV). Prompted by the Holy Spirit to give generously and cheerfully, we begin to understand why Jesus said, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive"* (Acts 20:35).

What Is ExtensionPlus?

The CEF ExtensionPlus is an easy-access savings vehicle from Church Extension Fund. Continue to support the ministry of CEF in providing space and place for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and be able to access your investments via your own checkbook or VISA®/ATM Card or withdraw your investment at an ATM. For more information, call them 800.242.3944 or visit www.mi-cef.org.

Keep Saving and Sharing!

The quick checklist of things for everyone to be saving:

- 1) canned & boxed goods for community food pantries;
- 2) UPC codes on Campbell products;
- 3) UPC codes on "Our Family" products;
- 4) Boxtops for Education coupons on General Mills products;
- 5) Motel/hotel freebies (shampoo, unwrapped soap, etc.)
- 6) Loose change ("mites")

Any questions on any of these items (just what to save, where to put items, etc.), call the Church Office, 263-4317.

December 2017 Stewardship Summary

Average Church Attendance: 93
 Average Holy Communion Attendance: 48
 Education Hour - Adults & Youth: 32; Confirmation & Elementary: 6;

Receipts/Income – not reported

General Fund:	\$0
Benevolence Fund:	\$0
Other Designated:	\$0
Total Giving:	\$0
Expenses Paid:	\$0
Net Income for December	\$0

Balances - not reported

Checking Account:	\$0
Savings Account:	\$0

Giving Averages (Approximate)

August 2016	\$3,600.00 per week
September 2016	\$3,900.00 per week
October 2016	\$4,200.00 per week
November 2016	\$4,400.00 per week
December 2016	\$5,000.00 per week
July 2017	\$3,900.00 per week
August 2017	\$4,200.00 per week
September 2017	\$3,600.00 per week
October 2017	\$4,000.00 per week
November 2017	
December 2017	



Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018.**

We join fellow believers around the world in this day of repentance. Our Ash Wednesday service will be **at 6:30 p.m.** on February 14. Communion will be celebrated. Ashes will be

available for those who wish to participate in this symbol of repentance.

Lenten services will continue *on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m.*

Guests are always welcome at all our services. Invite a friend or neighbor to meet Jesus.

Take Heart, Take Action

February 24, 2018 – 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Everywhere we go, we go as a witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But what does it mean to be a witness? Can my witness be used to help someone believe? How can I be a witness to people who really don't seem to care about church or the faith? *Take Heart, Take Action* is a conference for laypeople and church workers. Featured speakers will share biblical insight into our calling as witnesses of the Gospel, as well as practical advice on how to do so. Please join us on Saturday, February 24, 2018, at Our Savior, 7910 E. St. Joe Hwy., Lansing. Register online at michigandistrict.org/theological18. Registration cost is \$20 (\$15 for students) until January 31. On February 1 price increases to \$25 (\$20 for students) See event page for Livestream details.

Marriage With Dr. Paul David Tripp

What Did You Expect?
February 17, 2018 – 4:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Somehow, somehow, every marriage will become a struggle. If you want to enjoy a beautiful, life-long relationship, you will need more than romance. You will need something deeper than shared interests and mutual attraction. According to best-selling author and marriage expert Dr. Paul David Tripp, you need realistic expectations, and you need radical commitments. Most importantly, you need grace. Telecast is at The Centre. Cost is \$5.00 per person.

KIDS' CLUB!

Hey, students in Grades K-4, Kids' Club is happening at Hope each Wednesday! Join us for Bible lessons, music, crafts, games and snacks! Have fun growing in Faith and Fellowship! Kids' Club will begin with snacks and fun at 3:45 p.m. It will run until 5:15 p.m.

Parents are encouraged to stay. Younger siblings may attend if they are accompanied by a parent.

For more information, talk to Becky.

Animal Magic with Mark Rosenthal

CPC of Lenawee and The Centre present this performance on Saturday, February 10, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. at The Centre, 1800 W. US223, Adrian. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for kids and can be purchased at www.thecentre.info/cpc.

Thank You

So many thanks and blessings to all during my surgery and recovery. As my church family, I have depended on your help and prayers for me and Mike. The cards, visits, calls, and mostly prayers are my help in trying to get back to health. Again, many, many thanks, with love and God's blessings

Patti Vergiels

Help is Available

WIC is a health and nutrition program that has demonstrated a positive effect on pregnancy outcomes, child growth and development. The program is for pregnant women, postpartum women, infants, and children up to the age of five. Besides specialized services, monthly food packages are available for children. For more information, contact the Community Action Agency at 517-263-7861.



**Find your treasure in God's Word
Read your Bible every day**

Regular Meeting

Hope Women in Mission will meet Monday, February 12th. At this 6 p.m. meeting we will divvy-up and box our College & Military Care Packages and write letters to each recipient. Then we will discuss making new Chrismons to decorate our sanctuary Christmas tree and maybe make something sweet.

College Care Packages for February shipping:

We have 3 college students and 4 military personnel. The students are Mikaela Starr, Katherine Fowler, and Emily Goodson. Those in the military to whom we will send packages are Adam Liske, Ryan Liske, Christopher Vuiller and Ian Vuiller. There is a box in the lobby to put your items into or bring to our meeting.

We need you to get your items in before February 12. These should be in the hands of these students for their mid-terms so think about things that will help them through the study times.

The following is an idea list of things that we have traditionally put into the boxes of those of our congregational member's children away from home at school. This list is by no means all-inclusive. Use your imagination but keep the goods light-weight because of the shipping costs.

Gum	Stationery
Stamps	Tape
High Lighters	Lip Balm
Emery Boards	Pens
Breath fresheners	Post-in Notes
Sharpies	Fruit Snacks.
Power Bars	Candy Bars
Packaged Nuts	Makeup removal wipes
Mio, Crystal Lite or Propel or something similar	
Small bags of pretzels or suitable snacks	
Non-liquid Drink packets (chocolate, coffee, tea)	
Microwaveable popcorn or Mac 'n' Cheese	
Homemade cookies (if they can be put into containers to keep them from being turned into crumbs!)	

Our military personnel do not need school supplies and mailing packages to them can be problematic, so we are collecting money to purchase gas cards or something similar to send them in a flat mailer. See Sharron if you want to contribute.

Mighty Mites at Work

What are "mites"? Mites are our change – coins of all denominations and perhaps some folding money as well – from our shopping which we place in a special container to be dedicated to the Lord's service through the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML). If you would like a container for your "mites", talk to Sharron Sheridan or Mary Martinal.

This month as you put money into your mite container, say a prayer for Refugees in Crisis.

Christ taught in "the Good Samaritan" that we are to be "neighbors" to those who find themselves in need through circumstances beyond their control (Luke 10:25-27). Michigan is becoming home for thousands of Middle Eastern refugees, including Christian families, who have fled from ISIS and the atrocities of war. Through POBLO International, synodical members have learned to become "Good Samaritans" to meet refugees' needs, a great effort, which however, is only scratching the surface. Through POBLO International and Michigan congregations and volunteers, much, much more needs to be done to serve refugees in the face of the thousands of new people arriving in Michigan.

The LWML Michigan District, in July 2016, granted the sum of \$25,000 to enable Michigan churches and their volunteers to become "Good Samaritans" to Middle Eastern refugees in need.

Mites for LWML Michigan Needed!

The books will be closed April 30, 2018, and the Mission Grants are not completely funded. Please bring in your mites so we can help with these ministries!

Zone Retreat

There is still time to register for the Irish Hills Zone Retreat on Saturday, February 10. The retreat begins at 10:00 a.m. and will conclude by 3:00 p.m. We're meeting at Camp O'the Hills, 2100 Pink St., Brooklyn MI. Our theme is "Kinship of Women." We'll have an opportunity for faith growth and relationship growth with a special woman in your life – a mother, a daughter, a sister, a sister in the faith. Register by January 31. Cost is \$20. Forms available in lobby.

Serve the Lord with Gladness!

February Celebrations

Happy Birthday

John Fowler	1
Linda Oberhaus	5
Jim Ritzert	9
Erika Lewis	15
Ryan Liske	15
Nancy Housman	18
Bob Wachter	18
Jacob Sande	22
Marilyn Caggiano	23
Judy Theung	26

Baptismal Anniversaries

John Fowler	1
Janice Bilkey	10
Sarah Morgan Fuss	13
Joann Udy Wachter	14
Benjamin Martinal	16
David Weisenfelder	17
Lisa Baumea Frison	27

Wedding Anniversaries

Aaron & Teresa Blomster	14
Mark & Debra Gauthier	14
George & Ranetta MacBlaine	24

Congratulations to...

...George and Ranetta MacBlaine, who celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary on the 24th!

Happy Valentine's Day

We Pray This Month:

For the Nations of the world for peace, healing from their troubles, and spread of the Gospel
For Our Nation –

that God would provide comfort and support to all who are suffering from natural disasters
that God would guide and protect our local, state and national elected officials
that God would guide our schools, colleges, and universities to useful learning
that God would guide and protect our military wherever they are serving.

For His Church –

that God would strengthen and protect all His people who are experiencing trials, testings
and/or persecution and all who are serving His Church as missionaries, pastors, teachers

For Hope –

that God would bless our 2017 Administrative Board
that God would bless and grow our Sunday School, our congregation, Youth Ministry
that God would bless our worship of Him throughout the year

For those who grieve: families of: Linda Kitchen, Larry Powers, Gordon Snyder

For those who struggle with illness or injuries –

Myrna Sheldon, shut-in	DeLight Sieler	Ron Gentz (hamstring)
Maryann LeBlanc, shut-in	Dave Weisenfelder	Virginia Woodard, shut-in
Dee Weisenfelder (Oct. surg.)	Patti Vergiels (Oct. surg.)	Margaret Parker
Bonnie Posten (eyes)	Ron & Dianne Gentz	Maynard Howard
Ruth Lamley (back)	Carole Pahl (back)	Esther von Fange
Dorothy Studnicka	David Brevoort (broken legs)	Val Villarreal
Phil Joannis (hip replaced)	Jim Johnson (eyes)	Tim Tuttle (stroke)
Eric Montroy (needs new liver)	Fonda Bozeman (arthritis)	Larry & Betty Bendes
Penny Jobe (car accident)	Kimberley Balowski	Dave Allwardt
Ethan Jameson	Bill & Jeanie Landry	Phyllis Hackney
Diana Gulliksen	Jamie Murphy (cirrhosis)	Bill Henes
Israel Woolwine	Dick & Sharon Baron	Dick Applin
V. J. Cortez (cancer)	Christopher Keefe (cancer)	Gregg Woods (cancer)
Jill LaFray (cancer)	Christy Lemley (cancer)	Joe Eaton (cancer)
Joe Eaton (cancer)	Marvin Howard (cancer)	Paul James (cancer)
Leonard Schiefer (cancer)	Todd McCrate (cancer)	Kay Nickel (cancer)

Thanks for all blessings!

Contact the Church Office, 263-4317 or hopelcms@tc3net.com, with new requests and/or updates.

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February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9:30am Home School Group 7:15pm Choir	2	3
4 5 th Sunday a. Epiphany 8:30am Classic Praise [C] 10am Education Hour 11:00am New Song 12:30pm Youth Group	5	6	7 10am Ladies Study 3:45pm Kids' Club 6:30pm Bible Study	8 9:30am Home School Group 7:15pm Choir	9	10 Ladies Retreat in Brooklyn
11 Transfiguration Sunday 8:30am Classic Praise 10:00am Education Hour 11:00am New Song [C]	12 6pm Hope Women & Care Package Packing	13	14 Ash Wednesday 10am Ladies Study 3:45pm Kids' Club 6:30pm Ash Wednesday [C]	15 9:30am Home School Group 7:15pm Choir	16	17 4pm Marriage Enrichment Telecast at The Centre
18 1 st Sunday in Lent 8:30am Classic Praise [C] 10:00am Education Hour 11:00am New Song 12:30pm Youth Group	19 Newsletter Deadline 6pm Admin Board	20	21 10am Ladies Study 3:45pm Kids' Club 6:30pm Lent II	22 9:30am Home School Group 7:15pm Choir	23	24 1pm Sande Party
25 2 nd Sunday in Lent 8:30am Classic Praise 10:00am Education Hour 11:00am New Song [C]	26	27	28 10am Ladies Study 6:30pm Lent III			[C] = Communion
	DCE RETREAT Feb. 26-28					

February 2018 Servant Schedule

USHERS: 8:30 a.m. Feb.: Mike Griffith, Jerry Johnson,
11:00 a.m. Feb. 4 & 18: Otto Bilkey, James P. Sheridan,
11:00 a.m. Feb. 11 & 25: Rick Wetzel, Jon Henzi, Tom Sande

Feb. 4 8:30 a.m. **ELDER:** Bill Kohn; **ELDER ASS'T:** Jerry Johnson; **LITURGY ASS'T:** Jim Logan; **READER:** Sue Muck;
COMMUNION: Jerry & Phyllis Johnson
 11:00 a.m. **READERS:** Youth; Jon Henzi

Feb. 11 8:30 a.m. **ELDER:** John Butler; **LITURGY ASS'T:** John Butler; **READER:** Judy Parros
 11:00 a.m. **COMMUNION ASS'TS:** Dale Martinal & Otto Bilkey; **READERS:** Carol Herter; Rick Wetzel;
COMMUNION: the Sande Family

Feb. 14 **6:30 p.m.** **ELDER:** John Butler; **ELDER ASS'T:** Bill Kohn; **READER:** Bill Kohn; **COMMUNION:** Martinals

Feb. 18 8:30 a.m. **ELDER:** John Butler; **ELDER ASS'T:** Hans Jacobsson; **LITURGY ASS'T:** Dick Kuntz; **READER:** Dee Weisenfelder; **COMMUNION:** the Jacobssons
 11:00 a.m. **READERS:** envoy

Feb. 21 **6:30 p.m.** **ELDER/READER:**

Feb. 25 8:30 a.m. **ELDER:** Bill Kohn; **LITURGY ASS'T:** Jerry Johnson; **READER:** Judy Theung
 11:00 a.m. **COMMUNION ASS'TS:** Rick Wetzel & Jim Logan; **READERS:** Patti Vergiels; Dale Martinal;
COMMUNION: the Hoyts

Feb. 28 **6:30 p.m.** **ELDER/READER:** Jim Logan