



HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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March 2024

Hello All

February 27, 2024

I'm in Ann Arbor at U of M Hospital with Deb. Its Wednesday morning February 27, 2024, her improvement is slow but steady. Deb got a tracheotomy last Wednesday the 21st. It seems like she has turned a corner toward real improvement. Rounds each day offer improving discussions...

As I said last month "this has been an adventure of a lifetime." Another month has passed by and we are still here, still in the Surgical ICU (SICU), today's discussion is of soon leaving the SICU for the regular floor. Deb remains on a feeding tube. Yesterday's beautiful weather of 72 degrees and sunny afforded us the opportunity to get Deb in a wheelchair and get her outside for an hour or so. This was her first time outside since December 19th. It took three of us, but it was well worth the effort when we saw the smile on her face. Later in the day a lady came into her room and played some hymns on a harp. Simply beautiful. Debs' road to recovery remains slow.

February is near gone, we are well into the season of Lent and Easter is just over 5 weeks away, on March 31st, March 24th is Palm Sunday, and we will have a baptism that day as well.

Lent is a very special time of preparation as we prepare for Easter and the Holy Week Activities. Good Friday is March 29th, The Good Friday services will be held for all three churches at the Hope UMC at 1:00 pm. This Good Friday Service will be

combined with a Tenebrae Ceremony. I combine them because they both have the same readings, and it offers more symbolism to the Lent / Easter season.

Easter Schedule will be as follows; Palm Sunday 3/24 Regular Sunday Services
Good Friday 3/29 1:00 pm Hope UMC combined.
Easter Subday 3/31 Regular Sunday Services

We are children of resurrection. We are saved through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his blessed gift of Grace. That blessed gift that we could never purchase but, have received through faithfully following Jesus.

The Groundhogs forecasted an early spring, and it feels like he could be correct. Either way we will soon enter spring then Easter. I am ready to plant flowers and finish my garden area this spring.

Deb and I continue feeling blessed by our churches through prayers and continued support. This Journey has been a long endeavor prayerfully, we are nearing the end.

From our March 3rd Gospel Reading, John 2: 13 – 22:

¹³ When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!” ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.” ¹⁸ The Jews then responded to him, “What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?” ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” ²⁰ They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” ²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

I pay close attention to the scripture to see the movement and the purpose within. ~ This is one of very few times that Jesus got upset. I feel that this scripture allows us to see a different side of Jesus. A very human side, with him losing his temper. This is in contrast to his regular docile and calm demeanor that we usually see. Here Jesus is very disruptive and forceful, verse 15 *he makes a whip out of cord and drove them from the temple...*

Do we do that? Do we lose our temper from time to time, in the busy, crazy, noisy out of control world, do we lose our temper? I think we all do.

This is when we need to slow down, stop and think ~ **What Would Jesus Do... WWJD** This is out of character for Jesus, so I'm reaching a little bit... I think Jesus would calm down, step back, re-group a bit and pray to God the father. And quite possibly apologize for his actions. Not necessarily apologize the outburst, because it needed to be done, the temple needed to be cleared.

Anger never brings about the results that God wishes for us. It never brings glory to his kingdom as our actions should...

I pray that the season of lent greets you with many blessings and many opportunities to spend time with family and friends as we approach Easter Sunday...

Blessings Always,

Pastor Bill & Deb Cleland

From Randy to my dear friends from Hope area,

I came across this article and I thought about my Christian journey. When I first came to Jesus I was afraid to lead a group in silent prayer. I remember the day that Rev. Cozadd asked if I would lead the service and give the message, YIKES! No amount of preparation could overcome that fear of not praising God like I felt I should. This article I came across the other day hit home with me.

FIVE REASONS WHY WE SHRINK BACK WHEN GOD CALLS US HIGHER

1. **Fear of the battle.** All who follow Christ are called to active duty. When we step into the fray of spiritual warfare, or if we are wounded in the conflict, we are prone to run away.
2. **Resistance to God's Presence.** We love to sing about God, but when we get close to Him, we learn that His holiness is uncomfortable. It makes us aware of our own sin, purifies motives and consumes offenses. It won't tolerate secret idols. It is painful to our lower nature, but the best place for us to be is in His presence.
3. **Unwillingness to be broken.** Those who want to follow Jesus all the way must submit to His deepest dealings. The One who wrestled with Jacob and gave him a permanent limp wants to overpower our pride and selfishness as well. We say we want to know Him fully, but we forget that He schedules us for surgery when necessary. His knife hurts, but it makes us more like Him.
4. **Reluctance to face persecution.** Those who follow Christ wholeheartedly share in His sufferings. When Paul said he wanted to know Jesus, he knew that he would have to partake in the "fellowship of Christ's sufferings." Please don't let the ungodly actions of people stop us from chasing God.

5. Refusal to become a voice for others. Ultimately, God wants to send us to a mission field--whether it is on the other side of the globe or in the office next door. We tend to recoil from such assignments because they are never convenient, and always require boldness and faith. Like Jonah, we run in the opposite direction when God asks us to speak for Him.

Randy

NEWS FROM THE MYF

We are in exciting times for the growth of the church and in particular, the development of our youth program. Our youth will be lead by the following cohort: Jillian Brady, Lynsey Crego, Daniel Russell and Brian & Tami Hock. Tami will lead the Sunday Youth Program at 11 am.

Our MYF, Methodist Youth Fellowship, brainstormed and prioritized ideas for youth events this year. They have also started planning a youth fellowship space for youth to create in the church with ideas on what they would like in it. More to come later on a potential youth fellowship room/center. In the meantime, the youth program will focus on the events laid out on the MYF event schedule for 2024 below.

2024 Hope UMC MYF Youth Group

Sundays 11 a.m. - MYF Youth Ministry, Social & Planning & Preparation Meetings

March – Mission Work - East Side Soup Kitchen & Lunch At Real Seafood Company in Bay City – Date/Time TBD

April 14th – Fundraiser - Chili Cook Off/Soup Fundraiser – After Church Service

May – Fundraiser - T-Shirt, Bake Goods & Book Sales @ Midland Mall – Date/Time TBD

June 28th – Mission Work - Youth Sponsored Food Drive

July 20th – Fun Activity – A day of tubing and boating with Hock's

August 6th – Fun Activity - Cedar Point

September 8th 1- 5 p.m. - Mission Work - Kids Sports Camp – An opportunity for kids to experience multiple sports taught by our youth and play a game or two.

October 4th 6 p.m. – Oct 5th 6 p.m. – Fundraiser - Youth Rock-A-Thon – Kids pledges based on the number of hours they can rock without stopping. Food, games, movies for 24 hours. Rock for 55 minutes and a 5 minute break each hour.

November - Volunteer w/ Elderly (Meridian Acres) – Date/Time TBD

December - Meal Packaging – Date/Time TBD

January 2025– Red Wings Game – Date/Time

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Children's Sunday School Class is collecting money to help children and their families by purchasing livestock, chickens, and seed to have a garden. These things help feed the family. If you would like to help them, there will be a jar in the narthex for you to add your money to it. Thank you from the Sunday School program.

HOPE POTLUCK will be on Sunday March 10 after church. Please bring a dish to pass. If you forget to bring one, please attend and join in the fellowship with your friends in Christ. Drinks, plates, napkins and tableware is provided.

POP UP FOOD PANTRY will be on March 28 from 12:00 – 2:00 pm. The truck arrives around 10:00 and setup starts then. Please come to claim your spot in the distribution of food and doing Jesus' work to feed those who are in need. Please park on the east side of the fire barn.

APRIL POP UP FOOD PANTRY will be on April 25 from 2:00 – 4:00. The truck arrives around noon. Please continue to park on the east side of the fire barn.

As spring approaches, we are getting more and more anxious for the spring and summer seasons. Please support your church and the many activities we have planned to keep our youth engaged and you and your neighbors meeting with each other on a regular basis. The MYF group has some great adult leaders and monthly activities planned through January of next year. Please support their efforts to help our youth to grow up much like we had the opportunity to in the Hope United Methodist Church.

On a Christ like thought, Pastor Bill is in need of as much support as we can offer him. With Deb in the hospital since December 19 and him still caring for her and our needs as a congregation, we really need to make his life in our community as happy and pleasing as possible. Continue to pray for Deb but please keep him saturated in our prayers that Jesus will guide him through it all.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

2 Pastor Pat Poag
16 Karen Leuenberger
23 Tom Fillmore
24 Bill Horning
24 Chris Elmore
25 Pam Geiling
30 Caryn Leuenberger

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

3 Duff Sova
4 Bill Elmore
9 Kathy Arthur
12 Katie Trewella
15 Brian Hock
16 Jillian Brady
19 Dale Shedden
24 Avery Crego
24 Roni Cassaday
27 Shelly Brady
27 Amanda Heatherington

April Anniversary 29 Kirk and Pam Geiling

**Happy Birthday and anniversary to all of you marvelous Christian people.
God loves you and so do I.**

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