

Equinox Schmequinox

I understand that the Spring Equinox is the “official” starting point of the season, but in the 11 years I have lived in Michigan, it has never really matched up. It seems like every year, even though the sun has returned to our side of the equator, we still manage to have a snow day... or two... or three, before it really feels like spring around here. So, for me, I like to look for signs of spring within God’s creation, that assure me spring has sprung. That sign used to be lilies, but I have seen far too many of them fight to break through freshly fallen snow.

This week, as I was driving through town, I found my new sign: Tree Blossoms! I love how they all seem to pop out at once, or at least within a couple days of each other. And, since all the other trees are just barely budding, their spring blossoms of purple, white, and pink can be seen from a great distance away. Certainly, this has to be a more reliable sign that winter really is over...Right?

Don’t get me wrong, there is still something special about the equinox. Though it doesn’t necessarily mean full blown spring time, it certainly initiates a season of preparing for spring. If we were to compare it to the church calendar, the Equinox would be Ash Wednesday, the Tree Blossoms would be Easter, and the time in between, Lent. In that Ash Wednesday moment of the Spring Equinox, we acknowledge the inevitable winter/death season and begin turning our attention to the Sun/Son and God’s promises of new life overcoming. That Lenten season, much like our many faux springs, keeps us in limbo between chilly dormancy and the warmth of God’s design that will bring seeds and bulbs and plants and trees and us to a state of resurrected life!

And then, finally we celebrate that glorious Easter moment captured in the beauty of the tree blossoms; that end-of-the-end and start-of-the-beginning event in which death has been conquered and the power God offers in nature and in faith can no longer be contained by shells or bulbs or layers of snow or tombs. What a glorious glimpse of God’s design and ever-cycling offer of new life!

“In our end is our beginning. In our time, infinity. In our doubt, there is believing. In our life, eternity. In our death, a resurrection. At the last, a victory. Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see!” (Hymn of Promise, UMH #707)



In Christ’s Eternal Spring,
Pastor Nate Starkey

DISCUSSION GROUP: INCLUSIVITY AND FAITH

Not sure what to think about LGBTQIA+ inclusivity in relation to biblical teachings? Do you want a safe place to talk about it without fear of arguments? If so, please plan to attend our Inclusivity and Faith Discussion Group on **Sunday, May 1, 2022 from 3PM to 4:30PM.**

Bonnie Morgan and Jim Weingart will help you explore both the "traditional" and "inclusive" view of the subject so that you can better understand the issues and make your decision. You will not be asked to declare your view.

This is not a debate! This is a forum that will allow you to hear, ask questions and learn so that you can thoughtfully consider all issues and make a God Centered decision.

We are here to help you come to **YOUR** decision, not ours. Please Join Us!

Thanks, Jim

APRIL LT MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



Financial Report: As giving remains somewhat diminished, it was determined to continue to reassess current needs and available funds and to delay purchase of new office computers, keeping the allotted money for same in reserve. Funds remain sufficient, though, to cover four months of expenses.

Outreach/Missions: Regarding Inclusivity/Separation talks, May 1, 2022, is slated for small group discussion, from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. Persons representing both positions will be present to aid in facilitating discussions. Upcoming plans include participation in the Edwardsburg Memorial Day Parade. Watch for more information on how you may participate.

Pastor's Report: Amy Starkey and Mike Morgan have been selected to represent Hope UMC at the Michigan Annual Conference in June. Pastor Nate proposed supporting Michiana Family Center, a local organization which offers support to foster children and foster families. The director will be invited to a Sunday morning worship service to share information regarding the various services offered by the organization. The American Rescue Plan Act was introduced and the fact that Cass County, Michigan has received over \$10 Million in CSLFRF (Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds). The church plans to apply for grant money to support eligible projects.

Trustee's Report: Mike Morgan met with three Heating and Cooling Companies to inspect and evaluate the furnaces in both buildings. He is expecting to receive quotes soon regarding replacement or repair of the existing units.



LOGAN BENTZER	5/01
SANDY FLEMING	5/02
JUDY MONTGOMERY	5/03
SHAREE LEIST	5/04
PENNY WERNER	5/04
SHARON RADDE	5/04
JESSICA STEVENSON	5/04
MATTHEW ANDERS	5/04
SHEILA LEININGER	5/05
LINDA HARDEN	5/06
WILLIAM MILLER	5/06
CHARLENA MAPLES	5/07
ADRIENNE JACQUEZ	5/07
MAKAYLA LONG	5/07
TRACEY BUNNELL	5/08
JANICE LEIST	5/08
JIM HANSON	5/08
BARB BROOMELL	5/08
STEVEN STRONG	5/09
STACEY ROUCH	5/09
BILL MACUMBER	5/09
JEFFREY NOWICKI	5/10
CHARLIE DEW	5/10
TINA TROSPER	5/10
AMANDA TAFUNAI	5/13
SHELBY HARDIN	5/14
JAMES E BOWMAN	5/14
LARRY ACKELS	5/14
ERIC SCHUMAN	5/16
HANNAH LEIST	5/16
DAWN WEINGART	5/16
KALEB JOHNSON	5/17
BRITTANY GARVIN	5/18
NICHOLE DOHM	5/18
DUSTIN LONG	5/19
KEIFER BORN	5/21
TONY LEININGER	5/21
BECKY HAYDEN	5/25
KEVIN DUIS	5/28
LISA KRILL	5/28
SUE MORGAN	5/28
PAIGE MILLER	5/29
BILL FRIES	5/30
TONY LANG	5/30
MARTY EBY	5/30



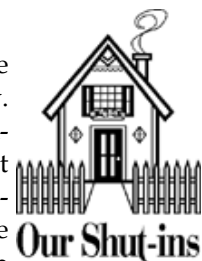
WENDY & PETER EMMETT	5/03
STACEY & KEVIN ROUCH	5/07
JEANEANE & GREG DEVENNEY	5/10
SHAREE & STEVE LEIST	5/14
CAROL & JAMES BOWMAN	5/17
AGGIE & GARY BUSSEN	5/18
LYNN & BOB STRAKA	5/18
NICHOLE & ANDREW DOHM	5/18
GWEN & STEWART JUIP	5/18
ROBIN & KEVIN ENGLISH	5/19
SUE & JACK RINEHART	5/25
MIRANDA & BRAD ANDERSON	5/26
PAT & GARY HERR	5/31



Hope's online Prayer Chain has faithfully continued during the pandemic. To have a prayer concern added call **Melissa at Hope, 269-663-5321**, and leave your request on her answering machine. Or email your request to Marti Bartels, mbbartels@aol.com.

SHUT-IN PRAYERS

Those Hope members listed below are restricted to home or nursing facility. The term shut-in reflects that their condition warrants "shut inside" or not able to leave the home on a regular basis. Should you have additional people to add to the list please call the church at 269-663-5321 Ext. 2.



Please remember these people in prayer: Bob Fuller, Ar-dith & Carl Higley, Verlaine Hoffman, Sherry Leininger, Grace Werner, Ray and Nourma White.



FINANCES

Current Hope Financial Information

Month of March Ministry Fund Summary

Ministry Fund Donations: \$ 12,183

Ministry Fund Expenses: \$-18,687

Shortfall for the Month: \$ -6,504

Monthly Budget amount: \$ 19,207

All March bills have been paid. Our Ministry Fund balance is \$70,772. Thank you for your continued support!

March Mortgage & Mission Fund Allocation:

\$432.85 Missions

\$1,000.00 Parsonage Mortgage Extra Principal Payment

\$850.00 Designated Donation to Parsonage Mortgage

Paydown

\$2,895.62 Capital Improvements

\$5,178.47 Total Donations

Parsonage Mortgage Update:

\$998.58 Regular Mortgage Payment - Ministry Fund

\$1,850.00 Extra Principal Payment from Mortgage Fund

\$2,848.58 Total Payment

Current Parsonage Mortgage Balance = \$132,786 after the April 2022 Payment.

Our projected payoff date is November 2036, which is 42 months earlier than the original payoff date!

UKRAINE, UMCOR AND HOPE



Hope has donated \$500 this year to UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) to help with the Ukrainian and other international crisis so far this year. Praise God, two of shipments of medical supplies arrived in Kyiv in April.

To find out more about how we are working with others in the Ukraine, review this article. <https://umcmmission.org/press-releases/umcor-collaborating-to-relieve-the-suffering-of-ukrainians/>



Keep our Service People in Prayer

Joshua Adams, Charles Berry, Andre Brower, Phil Bryden, Sam Chapput, Jonathan Ditson, James Gallo-way, Justin Gerou, Shane Karkiewicz, Dakota Kizer, Andrea Long, Alyssa Malott, Josh Marner, Jay Moore, Brandon Morgan, Jessica Ramus, Jason Salter, Dylan Smallwood, Jeff Starr, and Tyler Wilson.

FINANCE QUESTIONS?????

If you have a question about the how the church finances work, please contact Dawn Weingart at extension 6 or Pastor Nate at extension 8 at 269-663-5321. We also have summaries of the information that has been published in prior newsletters in the office.



Saturday, May 14th

8am-12pm

Lunch will be provided

Come whenever you are available!





Kids, sugar, and joy were in abundance at our Easter Egg Hunt! Thank you Hope for pulling together to make our Community Easter Celebration so wonderful!

Our Easter Bunny lost count, but Reese Hall was filled to the brim with family and friends. Thank you to all who dropped off candy and prizes, filled 11 totes of eggs, "hid eggs" and generally organized the chaos.

It is wonderful to be able to work together to bring some family fun to our community. We even got to see some new families that we met at the hunt at Easter Morning's service. Thank you to Rene' DeYoung, Susie Edgerton, Patty Johnson and Dawn Weingart for coordinating it!



CRAFT NIGHT

Friday, May 6

Craft night is coming on Friday, May 6, from 6PM – Midnight in Reese Hall. Join us whenever you are available. Bring a friend and a current project that you are working on. We'll be collecting personal care items for the food pantry.



WANT TO DONATE TO THE FOOD PANTRY?

THESE ARE THE ITEMS WE CURRENTLY NEED

Cereal
Canned Soup
Boxed Potatoes
Stuffing
Baking Items
Crackers



EFP

Edwardsburg Food Pantry

Helping our neighbors with their most basic needs

Amazon Smile

If you are already shopping on Amazon, you can support Hope. Using Amazon Smile will donate a portion of your purchase to our church! All you need to do is go to smile.amazon.com and select that you are supporting Hope United Methodist Church of Edwardsburg.





Three Crosses

The cross of love freely given to everyone on earth.
The cross of acceptance (belief) given for eternal life.
The cross of denial offering all their free will to choose.
Our answer to a cross we choose determines our eternity.

God sent His Son Jesus to tell His story to the world.
We can choose to accept worldly ways to follow.
Living each day to please our earthly lives only.
Working to further our earthly goals and riches.

Jesus gave us the answer to eternal life with Him.
When we accept His teaching we will follow Him.
We will also spread His word & offer salvation to others
Knowing all believers will dwell in Heaven forever.

On that final cross Jesus won the victory over death.
He showed us His love for all mankind that day.
One accepted, one denied and Jesus said "It is finished"
Jesus bore the burden of all our sins and forgave all.

He returned in glory to confirm His story is the truth.
He instructed all believers to tell His story to others.
Jesus is building all believers a new home in Heaven.
Our new bodies will be glorious and without any pain.

His story is written that all may read and choose belief.
God gave us Jesus to prove His love for everyone.
He allowed the 3 crosses to show His free will to choose.
There He demonstrated His written story is the truth.

One thief questioned Jesus, one asked to be with Him
Jesus assured one Heaven and even though (I'm sure)
His heart was broken by the other, allowed free will.
He is a God of love to give choice,

Deb and Tony Lang

More than 150 years ago, Memorial Day took shape amid the backdrop of the U.S. Civil War. Before it ended, women began decorating the graves of fallen soldiers. In 1868, when May 30 was designated as Decoration Day, loved ones placed flowers on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers alike.



By 1882, Decoration Day became known as Memorial Day, and soldiers who died in other wars were honored too. Over time, it became a day to remember all loved ones who have died — in war and otherwise. In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be observed on the last Monday in May. On Memorial Day, we pause to remember people who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and for our freedom. We also pray for those who continue serving, especially those in harm's way.



Prayers prayed in the Spirit never die until they accomplish God's intended purpose. His answer may not be what we expected, or when we expected it, but God often provides much more abundantly than we could think or ask. He interprets our intent and either answers or stores up our prayers. Sincere prayers are never lost [and] will never be wasted or go unrewarded.

—Missionary Wesley Duewel



Next Messy Church Sunday, May 22nd 6-7:30pm

**WANT TO DONATE TO THE FOOD PANTRY?
THESE ARE THE ITEMS WE CURRENTLY NEED**



Cereal
Crackers
Pancake Mix
Baking Items
Condiments