**Good News Newsletter**

**First Presbyterian Church of Decatur**

**August 2020**

**Katie's Korner**

After 16 weeks of worshiping only online, we resumed in-person worship July 16th. It has been wonderful to see each other and to gather together in the same place. We’ve taken all the precautions we can to ensure everyone’s safety: everyone enters through the front door and leaves through the back side door, masks are required, hand sanitizer and wipes are available. Our worship service itself has changed, we’re not able to sing hymns or join together in responsive readings, we don’t pass the offering plates, or even stand up throughout the 45 minute worship service. So many of our aspects of our lives have changed and our time together in worship is not different.

In the midst of all these changes, I keep reminding myself of the phrase coined by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, “change is the only constant in life.” Throughout our lives, we’ve experienced great change, whether we’ve lived through the uncertainty of war, or changes in culture or technology. Nothing is like it used to be, and that feels more true now than ever. For the month of August, I will be preaching on the book of Ecclesiastes. It’s a book that doesn’t offer immense amount of hope, but also feels comforting to me. It reminds us that, “There’s nothing new under the sun (1:9),” or “for everything there is a season (3:1).” The author of Ecclesiastes is the known as ‘the Teacher.’ And as our families are considering what school looks like for this year, together we will embrace the Our Teacher, as we continue to seek wisdom through reading the Bible.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank you all for all that you have done to support myself and this community. Thank you for your patience and willingness to change as we have all had to make adjustments. I give thanks to God for this community and the way that we are weathering this storm together. May God continue to bless us and lead us.

**Yours in Christ,**

**Rev. Katie**

**Monthly Activities at First Presbyterian of Decatur**

**EVERY SUNDAY 10 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE**

**Monday.......August 3rd....Session Meets 7 p.m.**

**Deacon of the Month - - - Nancy Vliek 423-8439**

**August Birthdays and Anniversaries**

5th Brian & Laurie Southworth's Anniversary 19th Brian Klimczak

6th Caraline Visuri 20th Burt Houtman

8th Kandi Hawks 25th Shannon Allen

9th Theresa Visuri 26th Jon Baushke

10th Tom & Brenda Visuri 25th Shannon Allen

11th Dave McLeese 26th Jon Baushke

14th Don Drenth 27th Keith and Lauren Leighton Anniversary

15th Matt Sikkema 28th Rev. Katie Hartwell

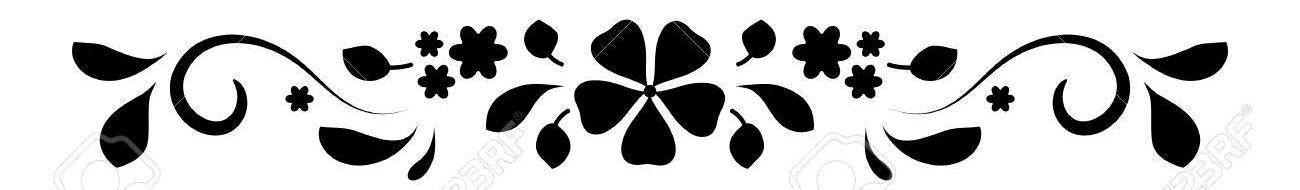
17th Brown & Joan Grosvenor 30th Robert Hovenkamp

18th Jesse Baushke 31st Mark Johnson

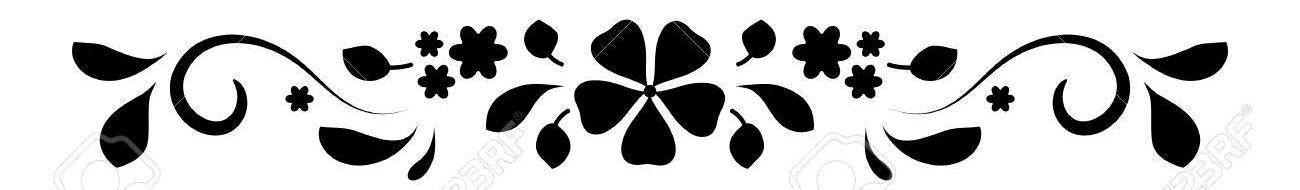
18th Blain and Bobbie Rex’s anniversary

**First Presbyterian Church of Decatur Endowment Grant 2020**

Applications are available in the office this years endowment grant. This is available to students who meet the following requirements: show financial need; have a HS diploma or equivalent; live within the Decatur school system or 49045 zip code. Grants must be used to further an applicants education at a college, university or trade school. Applications must be submitted by August 21st to the church office.



Sad news this month is the death of Reverend David McShane. In his late 80's he took on the role of our Interim Pastor when we were on a search for a new worship leader. He spend many days in Decatur, and even with his short time with us, we grew. We will miss him as he still filled the pulpit when asked. There has been no obituary posted yet in the paper, but donations can be made to First Presbyterian Church 321 W. South Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007 where he was Pastor Emeritus................. Rev. Dr. David W. McShane (1924-2020) RIP



Our special music for the past few weeks, and next week is by Laura Pollock Cerven. Laura is a graduate of Decatur's Class of 1972, and lives on Vashon-Maury Island in the state of Washington. She is the Liturgical Accompanist at the Church of the Holy Spirit Episcopal on Vashon Island.

**A little Church History**

Thanks to Amy Druskovich, Local history Librarian, we have a little more interesting news about our church building. The Church built in 1856, and was consumed by fire 1917, and the new one was dedicated May 4th, 1919. Here are a few little tidbits that Amy sent us, and again, thanks.

**JANUARY 1918**

The new Presbyterian church is well on its way to completion. The brick work and roof were given the final touches several weeks ago. The interior of the building has received a complete coast of plaster, and all that remains to be done before the building can be used for services, is the placing of the art glass windows and interior wood work.

The frames for the art glass windows were shipped to Decatur from Chicago a few weeks ago, and fitted to their places. They were then reshipped to the city to be fitted with the special art designs ordered for them. As soon as these are returned the work of finishing the interior will begin at once, and it is hoped that the first of the year will find the building ready for occupancy.

The church, will, beyond a doubt, be one of the finest edifices ever built in a town the size of Decatur, and one of which the congregation and church workers can be proud. The construction work has been done by Edgecomb Parks Company, contractors of Benton Harbor, who in the face of shortage of all kinds of materials, and slow transportation facilities, have pushed forward the work of constructing and will complete it in record time.

**NOVEMBER 1918** We are glad to announce that after several weeks of 'closed churches', we will begin our regular activities next Sunday in the Free Methodist church Preaching service 10:30 a.m. AND 7:00 p.m. Sunday School at noon. Junior Christian Endeavor Sunday after afternoon. Senior Christian Endeavor at 6 p.m.

We feel the need of religious service and a spiritual uplift; our organization needs your help in giving its best. Let us all be there, on time and in the spirit of worship. - - The Pastor

**DECEMBER 1918**

The art glass windows of the new Presbyterian church arrived and were placed in place position last week by carpenters from Benton Harbor. Edgcombe and arks. it will now be possible to complete the interior of the church, and society is planning a Christmas celebration in the new building.

**JANUARY 1919**

BAPTIST CHURCH BELL GOES TO DECATUR

The Baptist church bell has been sold to the Presbyterian Church in Decatur and when the edifice is completed it will call its members to worship.

This was one of the best toned bells in the county and it is a source of regret that it could not have been kept here.

The Baptist association was organized in Lawrence in the forties and has held meetings since that time until about six years ago, when regular services were no longer considered practical. The church was built in 1858 and the bell was installed about fifteen years ago. Lawrence Times

**(In 1918 W.H. Tuttle wrote about our old bell: In passing by the burned Presbyterian Church a short time ago, I walked behind the basement to see--probably for the last time--the old bell that had done such good service for the last sixty years. I stood and watched the bell on the night of the fire, and at last, when the belfry had burned away, the old bell went down into the basement with a great crash and flying sparks, and I thought I had lost an old friend.)** He actually wrote a very long article about the bell and over the next few months we might be able to include the story, as it is very interesting

Remember, back in the day, when school started and we had to write those annoying essays, How I Spent My Summer Vacation? You didn't! Lucky you!

**Well, my essay today is entitled How I Spent My Coronavirus Lockdown.**

To begin with my three-month appointment to get my hair cut coincided with the first week of the lockdown in March, one or two more weeks wouldn't hurt. However, when one or two weeks turned into two or three months, I knew I was in big trouble. That meant six months of naturally curly hair (don't say it) growing out of control in all different directions, until I looked as if I had a giant bush on my head with little corkscrew twigs shooting out in at all angles!

Then one week later my brand new hearing aid (had less than one month) quit. Deader than a door nail. When I called the hearing center they had just shut down and didn't know when they could fix it. Call back. THEN my tom cat Thomas made one of agile leaps (I'm being sarcastic here) onto my work table and knocked my glasses to the floor where they popped a lens! Called the vision center, call back. So, I started my lockdown deaf in one ear, blind in one eye, with a giant bush on my head that would not quit growing!!!

My point here is not to whine (well maybe a little bit) but to say life goes on. No matter how bad things are out there in the world and our country, and this is the worse I've ever seen them on so many levels. Not only do we need to keep apprised of what's going on "out there", but try to make sense of our personal worlds that have just been turned upside down. How do we do this?

What I didn't do was panic (I did go on a week- long chocolate binge, but I was due for that, and it only lasted a week), and I was never afraid. Fear is the opposite of faith and panic just gets you a bunch of toilet paper. Fear and panic are no way to face a crisis, faith and calm are. Like you I watched the news to get as much info on what this virus is and how it is being fought. All I got was confusion, mixed messages, bad advice and just plain lies. No direction and no solutions.

Well, here we are now what? We were advised to have a daily routine to help get through the lockdown. We already had one of those it's just that it doesn't work anymore. Over the years I've lost count of the times I've had to do to change my daily routine. However, I now have a daily core ritual. Animals are a big and important part of my life so first thing when my feet hit" the floor is feed the critters (I'm down to 2 cats), breakfast, shower, Bible study, read devotionals, prayer, and there is a lot to pray for and about, clean litter boxes, make the bed tend to house plants. That's the core. The rest is adjusted to present needs I do exercise, everyone should, I don't care what you do but MOVE!!! It gets your mind off yourself and just plain good for you. I would suggest yoga it really works. Then out to tend my garden.

One last thing, I turned off the TV. Yep, I'm only listening to the radio, you know radio, little box noise, no picture. Ya, that radio. As a child I used to listen to the radio as my main source of entertainment. We called it theater of the mind. Operative word here is LISTEN. There is news and a lot of interesting, informative programs on a lot of topics, they enlighten me and make me think. Listen, think. Get where I'm going here. And lots of music.

When the virus broke out I was studying the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel the prophet. God had had it with the Israelites, again, and Ezekiel was in Babylon with them trying to get them to get their act together. God even told them what their punishment would be if they didn't. Pestilence, plague and the sword! YIKES! Of course they didn't listen. I did and something about this threat and our current situation resonated with me. Our pestilence is the Covid19 Virus; our plague is the atmosphere of hate, bigotry and just plain meanness that seems to be so prevalent in our society today; our sword came in the shape of a white Minneapolis police officers knee pressed against the neck of a helpless African American man, handcuffed and lying on the ground, and the knee stayed there until the man's death. As I said there's a lot to pray about and for.

So folks this is where we are, what comes next. The answer came in an envelope containing a beautiful origami butterfly and a card with 1 Corinthians 5:17 on one side and a spot on answer to my question on the other. We don't know what comes next. But it won't be the same old same old. We've been caterpillars just going along doing what needed to be done, or what we thought needed to be done. Now we've been thrust into the cocoon of isolation and, what comes out will not only be changed it will be BEAUTIFUL! All new, fresh and ready to fly even soar, depending on what you've done in your cocoon.

Life is an adventure and your direction can be changed in a heartbeat. Take the risks pray for guidance and get going. As Christians and citizens of the World there is a lot for us to do and we can! Thank you Reverend Katie you gave us all hope and that is exactly what we need more than anything.

Thanks for reading this. Stay safe. God Bless. Hope to see you all soon. Your Friend, **Phyllis Graham**

Highlights of the July 6, 2020 Session Meeting Minutes

The stated Session meeting of the First Presbyterian Church of Decatur, Michigan was held at 7 PM at the Church. All present except David Vliek who was excused.

**Report of Treasurer –** Fred Reeder presented a January – June report.

Beginning balance $55,250

Receipts $60,529

Expenses $80,133

Current Balance $21,073

***Sailboat Church* Discussion –** discussed Chapter 6

**Old Business**

* Unity Prayer Service held July 14. Approximately 25 of our members attended
* Summer Collaboration with Paw Paw cancelled due to them having in-person worship.

**New Business**

* Discussed the Covid-19 Task force requirements for reopening June 19th

**Report of Clerk**

* No report

**Pastor’s Report**

* Attended zoom General Assembly meeting
* Officiated at Bob Krueger’s funeral
* Requested August 30th off

**Board of Deacons**

* The Deacons are each making calls to all members making sure all are ok, as well as sending birthday & anniversary & sympathy cards. Lori Jerue is Deacon of the month.

**Endowment Committee**

* No report

**Stewardship, Audit, Personnel Committee**

* Patsy back in office for regular hours beginning July 13th.

**Building and Grounds Committee**

* Gutters and window cladding complete
* Facia needs repair
* “Critter hole” in backside of the Church needs repair

**Memorial and Mission Committee**

* Memorial gift received from Don Reits family

**Worship and Music Committee**

* Looking for special music volunteers

**Christian Education and Youth Committee**

* Upon return to in-person worship, Pastor Katie will have in-pew activities for the kids.

**The next Session Meeting August 3, 2020** at 7:00 p.m. at the Church.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Makay, Clerk of Session