



The Shepherd's Voice

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MINUTE WITH MIKE

*I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people.
Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.
²Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and
quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.
This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved
and to understand the truth.
1 Timothy 2:1-4*

Dog days greetings to you and yours,

Hard to believe we are in August of 2020! I pray the summer has been a good one for you and yours in light of all the very real and difficult things that are going on in our world today. Shalom! Like all of you, I continue to watch the news with the utmost of concern. Concern for the health of our people, for the economic wellbeing of our nation and for peace and civility in our communities.

Many of you know August is primary election month (August 4th) and guess whose name is on the ballot? Mine! A year or so ago I thought I would put my feet and heart where my mouth was and get involved in order to make a positive contribution for our community. I am running (unopposed) as the Delegate to County Convention. My name will be the very last name listed on the primary ballot.

The reason I want to serve in our community in this capacity is much the same reason I love serving as a pastor; I want to help people. I want to be a blessing for others, and I want to show others the love, joy and truth of our Lord Jesus. I understand the vast differences between serving in the church and serving in the community. But Jesus calls us to be engaged, to care about and even to pray for those who serve us in elected positions. I believe that that our community and our country need thoughtful, kind, and godly men and women to help lead her. To that end I pray every day for our President, his administration and even for those who strongly oppose him. I pray God would fill the halls of congress, our courts and all our statehouses with god-fearing, godly women and men. I pray that every man, woman, and child in this nation would be saved, and would understand the truth.

To the glory of God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

Bless you,

Mike

SESSION NEWS

Treasurer's Report –

\$ 26,646	Cash on Hand as of 6/30/2020
+ 25,421	Certificate of Deposit (Fifth/Third) (less following committed funds)
- 11,000	Building Fund
<u>\$ 41,067</u>	Uncommitted Funds Available

Notes: Uncommitted funds as of the end of May were \$36,776. *Our cash GAIN in June was + \$4,291.*

Consent Agenda -

Approve the Clerks and Treasurer's Report and the minutes of the Stated Session Meeting of June 15, 2020, and the minutes of the Congregational Meeting of June 21, 2020. **A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented.**

Pastor – Pastor Mike offered the following for consideration and discussion:

- Communion wine issue continues to remain on hold until the Fall.

Other Business –

- Worship – the outdoor service is now scheduled for August 30th. After extensive discussion, it was agreed that:
 - Mike will ask the Adams family to provide acoustic music.
 - Service will be at 11:00 AM.
 - Church will provide grilled burgers and dogs, with buns and bottled water; individually packaged condiments and chips will be made available, as well as paper products (plates, napkins, utensils).
 - Church members will be asked to bring any side dishes they would like to have on their own; NO dishes to be passed.
- Fellowship – discussed; decided to table restart of coffee hour until the August Session meeting.
- Adult Bible Study and Children's Classes on hold until September at the earliest; discuss at August Session meeting.

Next Presbytery Meeting – The fall meeting will be 1 – 3 October 2020 at Mackinaw City. Elder Jim Miller was previously selected as the voting commissioner. Other attendees still pending. Meeting will be a hybrid of on-site attendance and on-line, with a possibility that the physical meeting may be cancelled in favor of a Zoom meeting.

Next Session Meeting – The next Stated Session meeting will be on **Thursday, August 13** at 6:00 PM. Location to be determined.

DATES

Sunday (2nd) Worship and Communion at 10:00am
Tuesday (4th) Primary Election day – be sure to vote
Thursday (6th) Bilyea's Home Group meeting
1:00pm

Friday (7th) Men's Breakfast – Bob Evans (M6
@ Kalamazoo) 9:30am
Sunday (9th) Worship at 10:00am
Thursday (13th) Session 6:00pm
Friday-Sunday (14th-16th) Family Camp
Sunday (16th) Worship at 10:00am

(DATES – *continued*)

Thursday (20th) Bilyea's Home Group meeting
1:00pm
Saturday (22nd) Newsletter deadline
Sunday (23rd) Worship at 10:00am; Rev. Dr. Laura
Smit preaching
Friday (28th) Ladies Luncheon – Grand Traverse Pie
Company 1:00pm
Sunday (30th) Worship at 11:00am followed by
annual picnic

BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

8	Jean Bailey
12	Bev Schaafsma
15	Toni Kenyi
17	Dan Vanderberg
24	Marcia Jones
31	Vi Squires
21	Al and Marjorie Boerema (anniversary)

MEMBERS/FRIENDS IN NEED OF PRAYER

Jean Bailey
Bob & Bev Schaafsma
Marv DeYoung

A WORD ABOUT REOPENING OUR CHURCH

The Session has discussed at length when and how to carefully reopen all of the activities and programs we are accustomed to experience. We, of course, want to keep all of us safe and healthy. To that end we have decided to take up the matter at our August meeting and perhaps then specify dates for reopening the following:

- Sunday morning 8:00am Prayer Meeting
- Sunday morning 9:00am Bible Study Class
- Children's Church
- Congregational Fellowship after the 10:00am worship service

OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICE AND CHURCH PICNIC

We have now moved our outdoor worship service and church picnic to Sunday, August 30. **Worship will begin at 11:00 am**, and the picnic will follow. We have again selected Shady Side Park in Dutton for this year's location. Our church will provide hamburgers and hot dogs. Church members will be asked to bring their own side dishes they would like to have - NO dishes to be passed. If you have any questions or comments, please speak with Pastor Mike. Thanks!

UPDATE FROM VOICES IN THE PAST

Hi Mike and GSPC family:

The Johnsons are doing well down in Florida. We moved into a house from an apartment in September. It is nice to have a little more space for everyone. Peter continues to work at St. Matthew's House and is very grateful to have a job through the pandemic. Because so many people have lost their jobs in the pandemic, St. Matthew's House mission--to advance Jesus' exhortation in Matthew 25--is more important than ever before. Ashley kept her job working for the DeVos Foundation and continues that work remotely. She also managed to earn her doctorate from MSU in May 2019--even though we were already in Florida. Lilly is going into 7th grade and does a lot of gymnastics and (parental monitored) Tik Tocs. Hank is 9 and wrestles (like his Daddy) and was a fierce 51 pounder this last season. He also plays a lot of Fortnite with Maggie. Maggie is 5 and going into Kindergarten. She considers Hank her "mega best buddy" and the two of them have been just cute enough to keep Ashley mostly sane during the homeschool days of the pandemic. Peter was an essential worker and never stopped going to work--so all of the homeschooling fell to Ashley, who managed to juggle working from home and virtual school for the kids. All on all, we are feeling blessed and wish everyone well at GSPC.

Peter Johnson

And from Reita:

My family and I are doing well.

Konomi, now 14 years old, is now in the final year of a junior high school. Towa, age 10, is in the 4th year at an elementary school. They sometimes struggle with adjusting to Japanese school environments, but they are working on it.

Misako is an assistant pastor at a local church. I moved from a Christian high school to a university as Director of Christian Program and Professor of Christian Studies at Hokurikugakuin University.

We are grateful for being planted by God in this place. We are thankful for all the good days with you and pray for God's blessings upon the journey of your church and each one of you. Blessings,

Reita Yazawa

FAMILY CAMP

Family camp is scheduled for the weekend of August 15th. Anne, Carrie, and Shauna have been planning it. Arrival and set up time begin Friday night, August 14th. It will kick off with the usual spaghetti dinner. Kids will be fed upon arrival allowing adults to set up tents. Following dinner the group will walk two houses down to Greg and Diane McCormicks,' Anne's parents, for a swim in their pool before returning for a bonfire with marshmallows.

Saturday will be spent at the beach at Lake Michigan. That evening will be another bonfire while the kids jump on the trampoline, shoot hoops, and play in the woods.

Sunday will be the annual sack races, water balloon fight, and water balloon volleyball with sheets. They are hoping that either Pastor Mike or Pastor Laura could give us a sermon, too!

Meals are all planned out as follows: Friday dinner - spaghetti and garlic bread; Saturday breakfast - scrambled eggs, sausage patties, pancakes, juice and coffee; Saturday lunch - picnic lunch at the beach with sandwiches, chips, cut watermelon, bottled water; Saturday dinner - hot dogs and brats on the grill, Mac and cheese, homemade baked beans, coleslaw, chips, and garlic butter shrimp for appetizer; with s'mores and marshmallows at the

bonfire in the evening; Sunday will be breakfast casserole or cereal and sandwiches, chips, and leftover spaghetti for lunch.

RETIREMENT HOME CHAPLAINS' WORDS OF HOPE

Below are thoughts of chaplains from the retirement communities of two of our members. Although different in content, both speak to Christian faith during these difficult times.

4TH OF JULY PRAYER

(Submitted by Dorothy Postema)

Heavenly Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, your work in this world reveals the truth, about you, and about us. We stand just beyond the halfway mark of 2020 in a time of uncertainty, yet we praise and thank you for your faithfulness and constant presence. We can only testify to what we have seen, so move mightily to show us where You are in this moment. We are Easter people, who have celebrated the Ascension and Pentecost in social lockdown. As we celebrate Independence Day, may we recognize our total dependence on you, for it is through you that we live, move, and have our being.

Lord, we pray that we would see Jesus, even in the upheaval of our communities in times of pandemic, economic uncertainty, and racial reckoning long overdue. We confess that while we are compassionate about many things, we have blind spots. The truth of our blind spots will cause unsettling in our hearts and organizations. But you are the Lord of the storm as much as you are Lord of the still.

Open our eyes to see all people as being created in your image; whether black, shades of brown or white, .all are precious in His sight and long for equality and justice. Lead us to the actions of repentance and restoration, knowing this is Your action in our hearts. We testify to what we have seen with our eyes. O God, do a work in our eyes, that we might see and follow you truly in these days. Hear this prayer, O God, in the name of our victorious, constant companion, Jesus. Amen, Curt and Phyllis Roelofs, Estates II – Raybrook

(Partially adapted from Do Justice Prayers)

WAITING FOR THE OLIVE LEAF

(by Beacon Hill Chaplain Travis Jamieson)

I opened up the envelope and there was a picture of a large boat, a man with a long beard, and more animals than I could count. My father-in-law had sent a card for my daughter with a depiction of the well-known story: Noah and the Ark.

The Ark served Noah and his family well. It kept them dry and safe in the face of a catastrophic flood. However, the day came when Noah was ready to get out of the Ark. So he opened a window and sent a dove out to find a sign of life. The dove returned with nothing. What a disappointment. Then seven days later, Noah sent out the dove again. This time, the dove returned with a freshly plucked olive leaf in its beak. Can you imagine the joy Noah must have felt as he ran to tell his wife and children, “A leaf, a leaf! We are going to get out of this ark and step back onto dry land!”

The olive leaf was a sign of hope; a sign of new life. It was a sign that God’s promises would come true and that Noah and his family would be taken care of.

I think there is more than one connection between the story of Noah and our lives today. We’ve experienced a flood of sorts, i.e. a global pandemic. It has affected everyone of us in one way or another. Whether you know someone who has gotten sick, experienced financial stress, or is missing the embrace of friends and family, this pandemic has had a catastrophic effect. Yet, your Lord and Savior has kept you and so many safe from the virus. The Ark has done its job, but like Noah, you are ready to get out of the Ark. You are ready for a new beginning. A life with no masks or distancing.

Yet, as you look out your window, you probably don’t see the dove flying towards you with the olive leaf in its beak. Instead, you see a world of chaos and turmoil. You see violence, fear, and unrest.

In a time like this, what is your olive leaf? What is your sign of hope that is helping you get through this day?

In the Christian Scriptures, the dove is a symbol for the Holy Spirit. The Spirit descended upon Jesus at His Baptism and descends upon the early believers at Pentecost. The Spirit bears fruit, maybe not an olive leaf, but the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Can these virtues be your signs of hope today? Perhaps, you’ve had a moment of profound patience or love that you just can’t explain. Perhaps, you were having a hard day, but still found the strength to encourage a friend. Maybe you have been able to find hints of goodness in the midst of consistent bad news.

Each of these moments can serve as reminders that the challenges we face today will not have the final say. We may have to stay in the Ark a while longer, but there is still hope that good abounds.

HELPFUL HINT

Do you get frustrated with your glasses fogging up while wearing a mask? Cleaning them with rubbing alcohol will help solve the problem.

THANK YOU NOTE

Thank you, everyone, for the retirement cards and well-wishes. I believe Mike was more excited about this new chapter than I was! I am looking forward to what the Lord has in store and your prayers for clarity in that would be much appreciated.

In His love, Donna

GIVE THANKS WITH JOY

1 Thess. 5:16-18

Give thanks with joy is a banner that can be used throughout the whole church year. The words are derived from the benediction that concludes 1 Thessalonians, *“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”*

I love the words on the banner. The green background is used for “Ordinary Time” in the church year. This banner can also be used for Spring, Summer, and Thanksgiving. It is one of my favorite banners. I also made a larger one for John Knox that was used there for many years (in case it looks familiar).

Diane Solomon

