



The Shepherd's Voice

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MINUTE WITH MIKE

*Then the Lord appeared to Solomon at night and said to him,
"I have heard your prayers and I have chosen this place
for Myself as a house of sacrifice.
However, if I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain,
or if I command the locust to devour the land,
or if I send a plague among My people,
Then, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves,
and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways,
then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sins, and will heal their land.
2 Chronicles 7:12-14*

Dearest beloved saints that comprise the community of faith known as GSPC,

September greetings to you and yours! Praying that your summer was a gift as you may reflect on all that God has done for you, yours and our world. Praying as well that as the children return to school and temperatures cool just a bit, you are able to look into the future with a heart filled with the hope of Jesus who is ever-loving and faithful.

You know the verses above. I preached them before, and many organizations and para-church groups have often and recently quoted them. I am attracted to the "if/and" and "then" statements in the Bible. They speak to my heart as to what might be healthy and faithful practices and postures to take as I seek to grow in my relationship with the Lord Jesus.

I understand these particular verses to be of special interest and benefit as our nation, and really the nations of the world, struggle to make sense of all the catastrophes unfolding around us. Drought, floods, fires, hurricanes, earthquakes and, of course, the global pestilence known as COVID 19. What do we make of all of this? How do we respond? What should we do?

The passage above answers these real and profound questions with a 4-fold solution:

- *humble themselves*
- *and pray*
- *and seek My face*
- *and turn from their wicked ways*

That is "if" we are His people. This is, of course, "if" we are the ones who bear His name, who listen when He calls. I believe you are, my dear ones.

So then, let's help and encourage one another to *humble ourselves* and to *pray*. How much time and how serious are your prayer times? I had a dear woman friend who told me once her best prayers were prayed while

in the shower. Well, I don't know about that as I personally concentrate much more reverently while sitting in a chair with my head bowed and the Bible on my lap.

One of the chief ways we *seek His face* is by worshipping and joining with others who have a real desire to please God's heart and to draw nearer to Him. And finally, we all need to *turn* from any and all ungodliness to all that is righteous. We personally need to repent for our families, our church, our nation, and our world as we are all a real part of these bodies, and we bear responsibility as a member thereof.

Let's take all this to heart – God is calling. We are *His people*, the ones who are *called by His name*. Help us, Father, to be more humble, and to pray more sincerely. Help us to seek You in new and more authentic ways, and to turn away from all that is not of You while turning always to Jesus.

In the love and joy I have in each of you,

Mike

SESSION NEWS

The 71st Stated Meeting of the Session of Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church was called to order Thursday, August 12, 2021, at 3:00 PM at Calvin Seminary, Pastor Mike Baynai, Moderator.

Devotions and Prayer – Elder Gary Lehmann provided devotions and the opening prayer.

Roll & Determination of a Quorum: Present: Moderator Pastor Mike Baynai; Ruling Elders Robert Adams, Bill Keating, Gary Lehmann, Betty Rittersdorf; and Asst. Clerk Jim Miller. Absent: Asst. Pastor Dr. Laura Smit. *A quorum was present.*

Clerk's Report

Next Communion will be observed on Sunday, September 5, 2021; the last communion was observed Sunday, August 1, 2021.

Correspondence – None.

Membership

Active Membership as of 7/12/2020	49
No Change	
Active Membership as of 8/8/2021	49

Worship Services

Attendance	7/11/2021	28 Adults	0 Children (Kentwood Library)
Attendance	7/18/2021	26 Adults	4 Children (Kentwood Library)
Attendance	7/25/2021	26 Adults	0 Children (Kentwood Library)
Attendance	8/1/2021	30 Adults	0 Children (Kentwood Library)
Attendance	8/8/2021	33 Adults	0 Children (Kentwood Library)

Treasurer's Report

+\$15,984.63	Cash on Hand as of 7/31/2021
+\$25,681.32	CD#1 (Northpoint Bank)
+\$15,006.26	CD#2 (Northpoint Bank)

(LESS FOLLOWING COMMITTED FUNDS)

-\$16 Accrued Joyful Noise offerings
-\$11,000 Building Fund

\$45,565.21 Uncommitted Funds Available

Note: Uncommitted funds as of end of June were \$46,404.20. Our Loss in July was \$-747.99.

Consent Agenda – Approve the Clerk’s and Treasurer’s Reports, and the minutes of the Stated Session Meeting of July 8, 2021. **A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented.**

Pastor – Following items, events and dates were presented by Mike and discussed:

- Discussed a stipend for accompanists when Mike visits members that cannot attend Sunday worship services. A motion was passed in support of reimbursing Mike \$20 per month to cover the stipend.
- The Session confirmed the rest of the summer worship dates and locations. Mike will continue to check with the seminary about our return. September 5 (potluck) and 12 (chicken?) at Shadyside Park. September 19 and 26 in the Kentwood Library (if necessary)
- Mike asked about the interest in having a midweek phone call-in prayer. A motion was passed in support of starting on Wednesday, October 7 at 7pm, and continuing weekly.
- The presbytery will be meeting October 1 and 2 in Mackinaw City and is encouraging pastors to stay until Sunday which would require a fill-in pastor for Sunday, October 3. A motion was passed to support Mike’s leave on Sunday, October 3. Mike will contact Tia Bawi about filling in for him.
- A motion was passed in support of Robert Adams being the voting commissioner at the presbytery meeting.

Mission, Website, & Newsletter

- Betty presented that In the Image will be collecting monetary gifts to buy elementary students new shoes for school. The item will be in the newsletter, and a bulletin insert will be created in the coming weeks.
- Jim will look into the possibility of creating a pictorial membership directory.

Other Business

- Jim reported two properties available for rent. Chateau Center in Wyoming looked promising but is not zoned for a church. Bretwood Center is the top contender. Jim also presented a sample budget for setup costs and monthly operating expenses. Jim and Mike will create an overview/rationale and a simplified sample budget for presentation to the congregation prior to a congregational meeting on August 22. The goal of the meeting is to answer questions and to get a consensus of whether or not the congregation wants the Session to continue pursuing the possibility of moving out of the seminary.
- Robert raised the issue of social media outreach and agreed to look into using Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter as marketing tools for the church.

Next Presbytery Meeting – An in-person meeting is scheduled for October 1 and 2 at the Church of the Straits in Mackinaw City.

Next Session Meeting – The next Session meeting will be **Thursday, September 9** at 7:00 PM on Zoom.

Closing Prayer – Pastor Mike closed the meeting with prayer; adjourned at approximately 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Adams. Clerk of Session

DATES – SEPTEMBER

- Thursday (2nd) Bilyea's Home group meeting –
1:00pm – All are welcome
- Friday (3rd) Men's Breakfast Devotional at (Bob
Evans) – 9:30am
- Sunday (5th) Outdoor Worship and Communion –
11:00am. Dutton's Shady Side Park; Church
Potluck to follow. Devotional at Samaritas / The
Woods – 2:30pm
- Monday (6th) Labor Day
- Thursday (9th) Session meeting – 2:00pm
- Sunday (12th) Outdoor Worship – 11:00am
Dutton's Shady Side Park; Church Fried-chicken
picnic luncheon to follow. Devotional at Brook
Crest – 2:30pm
- Thursday (16th) Bilyea's Home group meeting –
1:00pm – All are welcome
- Friday (17th) Newsletter deadline
- Sunday (19th) Worship – 10:00am at the Kentwood
Library; Devotional at Grand Village – 2:00pm
- Friday (24th) Ladies Luncheon at Grand Traverse
Pie Company – 1:00pm
- Sunday (26th) Worship – 10:00am at the Kentwood
Library; Devotional at Brookcrest – 2:30pm
- Thursday (30th) Bilyea's Home group meeting –
1:00pm – All are welcome

BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES – SEPTEMBER

- | | |
|----|--------------------|
| 6 | Donna Baynai |
| 7 | Dana Lehmann |
| 8 | Turah Adams |
| 8 | Don/Joan Walstrom |
| 10 | Alem Tekalgn |
| 15 | Yesem Hamilemariam |
| 17 | Richard Soward |
| 19 | Diane Solomon |
| 21 | Leesa Lehmann |
| 21 | Cathy Jo Wolters |
| 27 | Glenda Williams |
| 28 | Rose De Young |
| 29 | Dorothy Postema |
| 30 | Jaxson Vanderberg |

SERVING THIS MONTH

Musician: Marjorie Boerema 5th & 12th,

Maureen Sweet 19th & 26th
Special Music: Adams Family (5th & 12th),
"The Danas" (12th), Gachini/Wahome (26th)
Preaching: Dr. Laura 5th & 12th; Pastor Mike 19th
& 26th

MEMBERS/FRIENDS IN NEED OF PRAYER

Jean Bailey, Joyce VanderLaan, Linda Van
Heuvelen, Vi Squires; Home members Barb Bailey,
Pat Doorn, Bob Schaafsma, Cathy Jo Walters, and
Joan Walstrom (home member in loss of son)

JOYFUL NOISE OFFERING

Our September/October recipient of our
Joyful Noise Offering will be Women at Risk
International (WAR), a very well-known and
respected ministry operating in Grand Rapids.
WAR has offices and a gift shop located at 2790
44th St. in Wyoming, MI 49519 - PH (616) 530-
1234.

Women At Risk, International (WAR Int'l)
is a Michigan based, 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable
organization, established to create circles of
protection around those at risk. Through culturally
sensitive, value-added intervention projects and
partnerships, we provide safe places to heal from
abuse, trafficking, exploitation, and more. Their
passion is to empower survivors to live and work
with dignity and hope.

Their programs and partnerships span the
globe, reaching over 40 countries, including the
United States. Each month additional projects and
partnerships are formed, increasing their ability to
offer the rescued and at-risk a "hand-up" instead of
a handout. They can be reached Monday-Friday
(8am-5pm EST) by calling: (616) 855-0796 or toll
free: (877) END-SLAVERY (363-7528)

LADIES LUNCHEON

You're invited to join some of the ladies of
the church on the last Friday of each month at
1:00pm, meeting at the Grand Traverse Pie
Company on 28th Street near the Belt Line. It's a
great time of prayer and fellowship as the "sisters
meet with Pastor Mike. (Everyone is "Dutch.") For

more information contact Pastor Mike at (616) 822-9988.

HOST A HOME GROUP

For more than four years now we have been blessed as a result of Dana Bilyea opening her home to a church group for fellowship and prayer. It's called the Bilyea Home Group, and we meet every other Thursday at 1:00pm. If you would like to host a Home Group of your own, I would be thrilled to join you and offer my assistance in building your group and developing a format. The church could use another Home Group, and God, of course, gets all the glory. Please consider opening your home up for this kind of ministry.

PRAYER OPPORTUNITY

With all that's going on in our world many of the children of God are crying out more and more for God's help, mercy, and strength. As I write, Haitians are picking up the broken pieces left in the wake of a terrible hurricane. There are floods in Europe, fire's burning in the west, drought and "natural disasters" occurring all over the globe. All of this "birth pangs" in light of the pandemic caused by COVID 19. So, it is fitting for God's children to call upon our heavenly father for relief. We are doing this in a number of ways to be sure. Certainly, in private devotions as each of us spend more time in our "prayer closets." We are also gathering together to pray with the Body of Christ.

To that end the Elders along with pastor Mike would like to invite you, your family members and friends to a time of telephone prayer. We'll begin this prayer time on Wednesday, September 8 at 7:00pm. You can join in the call by dialing the Dial-in-number (1-602-580-9612; Access Code: 694064) and following the prompts.

Some of you may simply wish to call in and listen, others may wish to share prayer needs and concerns, while others may wish to pray – you'll not be asked to do anything you would not want to do. Pastor Mike will be leading the call and depending upon how many join in, the call should last about 15 minutes.

We encourage you to make this a regular part of your spiritual discipline as we all need and even must cry out to God for help.

PRAYER SHAWL UPDATE

Dana Bilyea recently counted the prayer shawls on hand and was surprised to find almost 20 stored in a big tub in her basement. She believes most of our congregation have one. If you do not, however, and would like to have one, please see her so she can make arrangements to have it presented.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry group is currently comprised of only Marie Zoerner, Ayla Lehmann, and Dana. Do you knit or crochet? Would you like to join them? Dana reports she has plenty of yarn available, but perhaps you would just like to donate more yarn to ensure meeting the stated goal. Currently her goal is to have at least 50 scarves to deliver to Wedgewood by early December. They sometimes care for a thousand children a year. The group has done this for the last couple of years, and Wedgewood is most grateful.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

The first of August Diane Solomon announced that School Supply Santa's was again collecting supplies so teachers themselves were not having to provide supplies that the schools were not, but the time line was short. She said she was willing to deliver donations for any who wished to participate. Below is some history of the program. Thank you to any and all who have participated.

School Supply Santa started in 2007 during a conversation with a local elementary school teacher. It was discovered that there were many children, of all ages, who lacked the proper school supplies at the start of the year which were needed for growth and learning.

The founder of School Supply Santa, Denise Kooiker, had a determined purpose and passion to help children in the local West Michigan communities. School Supply Santa passionately lives out its mission of "investing in students to bring joy and empower success through the gift of school supplies. Our prayer for each of these children being served is for them to know they are cared for, loved, and not forgotten.

Also, another missed opportunity was the In the Image S.H.O.E.S. (Shoes Help Our Elementary Students) program. This year is the 25th anniversary of this program which over the past 24 years has purchased NEW shoes for over 65,000 elementary students throughout the years. It's been a difficult

year for many families with jobs lost, businesses closing, and the COVID-19 virus. Unfortunately we did not receive this information early enough to disseminate the information in time for the deadline for contributions, and we had already designated In the Image for Joyful Noise funds. As time is approaching for the Mission Team to determine recipients for the 2022 Joyful Noise, these two projects are both worthy of consideration.

MY DREAM

Submitted by Marie Zoerner

I dreamt that our Good Shepherd congregation had their own building. Rog and I were greeters, and it was Easter Sunday. People

were streaming into our building to worship with us. People kept coming and coming. The building was so full that people were standing along the walls, and more people were trying to come inside for worship. We were just amazed at the size of the congregation. We were greeting people we had not seen for a long, long time.

When I described this dream to a member of our congregation, she said, "Marie, God was speaking to you. God has a plan for our congregation."

This dream was two weeks before I read the handout, "A New Way Forward." Pastor Mike has asked me to share this dream with our Good Shepherd congregation.

STATE OF THEOLOGY

The 2020 State of American Theology Study is the fourth in a series of surveys of American adults examining their theological beliefs. Previous surveys were conducted in 2018, 2016 and 2014.

Beliefs About God: In all four surveys, two-thirds of Americans have considered the resurrection of Jesus an actual occurrence. But, a majority of Americans deny the deity of Jesus or that He even truly lived. Almost six in ten Americans categorize the Holy Spirit as being a force rather than a personal being. A consistent seven in ten Americans believe in one true God in three persons, and almost two-thirds believe that God is perfect. Almost as many believe God accepts worship from all religions.

Belief About Goodness and Sin: Another consistency across all four surveys is that two-thirds of Americans find most people good by nature. For the first time, more than a quarter of Americans believe any sin deserves eternal punishment. More than half of Americans believe God measures righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ rather than one's works.

Beliefs About Rewards and Punishments: More than six in ten Americans expect Jesus to return and judge all people. However, fewer expect people to be punished in a place called hell. More than a third believe God always rewards true faith with material blessings in this life.

Statement # 18: Hell is a real place where certain people will be punished forever.

34% Strongly Agree (correct answer)

22% Agree

16% Not sure

12% Disagree

16% Strongly Disagree

The Bible consistently testifies to the existence of a place of eternal and conscious punishment for those who do not turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior (Isaiah 66:24, Daniel 12:2, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 2-13 & Revelation 20:7-15). Jesus Himself, more than any other Biblical figure, talked about this place of punishment called "hell", "Gehenna", "sheol", "lake of fire", "bottomless pit", or "outer darkness." (Matthew 5:22-29 & 10:28) Jesus clearly taught that hell is a real place (Luke 12:5).

Americans with evangelical beliefs are more likely to agree than those without evangelical beliefs (92% -vs- 47%). Further, Americans who attend a religious service at least once or twice a month are more likely to

agree than those who do not (77% -vs- 39%). Finally, Americans age 35 to 49 are the demographic most likely to agree (64%).

There is an amazing account of two men, one lifted to heaven and into the arms of Father - Abraham upon his death; the other man banished to the lake of fire for all eternity upon his death. The man in torment can see, recognize and even speak with Abraham. But Abraham tells the man that a “chasm” has been fixed and no one from either side can cross over. The man in torment cries out, “Send word to my brothers that they would not make my mistake and end up in this place...”. But Abraham replies that these brothers must believe the Word of God themselves in order to escape such punishment (Luke 16:19-31).

The Bible is full of warnings about the divine judgment that will come, and all people will have to give an account of their lives. With that judgment there will be an eternal separation.

Light from darkness (Revelation 19:20 & 20:10, 14-15)

Sheep from goats (Matthew 25:32)

Wheat from chaff (Matthew 3:12)

Wheat from the tares (Matthew 13:24-30)

Righteousness from wickedness (Matthew 13:49)

Saved from the lost (Acts 4:12)

Elect from the reprobate (Matthew 24:24-31)

Those who belong to Jesus and those who don't (Romans 8:37-39)

Be sure you are living your life in the knowledge of the truth concerning hell. We thank God for His mercy and the promises we have in Jesus that we will fellowship with Him forever (John 14:1-3). And pray that all people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus and that no one, not even the most repulsive human being, would be condemned to hell.



*Dancing sunlight flows
Through newborn baby green leaves
Creation proclaimed*

*Join in the worship
Birds sing, breezes blow, rejoice
Nature's cathedral*

*Voices all singing
Together, Almighty praise
Under the blue sky!*

Praise and Picnic in the Park

**Hosted by Good Shepherd Presbyterian
Church (ECO)**

All are welcome to worship with us!

DATES: Sunday, Sept. 5 and 12, 2021

TIME: 11:00

WHERE: Shady Side Park in Dutton,
Michigan (7343 Hammond Ave.)



After the service we will gather for fellowship and lunch. Sept 5th will be a potluck and Sept. 12th the church will provide fried chicken with side dishes. Bottled water will be offered at both events.

COVID precautions and regulations will be followed.

