

## MINUTE WITH MIKE

*Enter through the narrow gate;  
for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction,  
and there are many who enter through it.  
But the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life,  
and there are few who find it.  
Matthew 7:13-14*

Dearest brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

2023 New Year grace and peace to you and yours! Praying that the new year affords you the opportunity to be renewed in Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer, worship, and grace.

The above verse is one of those that when I first read it my eyes had to stop right there on the page and take a moment to ponder what I had just read. You may want to read it again for yourself...

What are we to do with a verse like this? Jesus Himself spoke these words; they must be absolutely truthful. "Many?" "Few?" Don't we all want to travel the wide road, the easy pathway? Don't we all want to be socially accepted and popular? Who wants to travel on the narrow or the hard way, to enter through the small gate? I pray the answer to those questions is that we do.

Our world is changing, and immorality and self-absorption is becoming the wide road. Sacrificial and selfless living is becoming more and more the narrow way, the small gate. But that small gate leads to life! It's the wide gate that leads to destruction, and who among us wants that?

I encourage you as we begin a new calendar year to rededicate yourself to the narrow way, the small road; it's the way of the cross, and it's the way Jesus walked. Keep your eyes on the prize, and seek the way that leads to life.

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2*

This year please pray hard for yourself, your church, your family, and our country, and lead the way for those who look up to you. The enemy wants us to travel on the broad way, but we know that way leads to death. We are followers of the Lord Jesus, and that means we must walk the narrow road.

May the Lord Jesus bless you at this time of the year and forever more.

Thank you for the privilege of being your brother, friend, and pastor,

*Mike*

## SESSION NEWS

The 85th Stated Meeting of the Session of Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church was called to order Thursday, December 8, 2022, at 7:32 PM via Zoom conference by Pastor Mike Baynai, Moderator.

**Devotions and Prayer** – Elder Jim Miller provided devotions and the opening prayer.

**Roll & Determination of a Quorum** – Present: Moderator Pastor Mike Baynai; Ruling Elders, Bill Keating, Betty Rittersdorf (Elder Emeritus), Gary Lehmann, and Jim Miller. A quorum was present.

### Clerk's Report –

Next Communion will be observed on Sunday, December 18, 2022; the last communion was observed Sunday, December 4, 2022.

#### Membership

Active Membership as of 11/10/2022	42
Active Membership as of 12/8/2022	42

#### Worship Services

Attendance	11/13/2022	28 adults and 2 children at GSPC
Attendance	11/20/2022	17 adults at GSPC (snow)
Attendance	11/27/2022	30 adults at GSPC
Attendance	12/04/2022	28 adults at GSPC

### Treasurer's Report –

\$ 19,303	Cash on Hand as of 11/30/2022
0	CD #1 (Northpointe Bank)
0	CD #2 (Northpointe Bank (less following committed funds)
-25	Accrued Joyful Noise offerings
0	Building Fund
\$ 19,278	Uncommitted Funds Available

Treasurer's Notes: Uncommitted funds, as of end of Oct. were \$22,501. Our LOSS in Nov. was \$-3,223. Our trend of losing significant uncommitted funds every month is continuing. We need to discuss this at the Dec. Session meeting. Potential Additional Costs: Camera (Dana L. TBD)

**Consent Agenda** – Approve the Clerk's and Treasurer's Reports, and the minutes of previous Session and Congregational meetings. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented.

**Pastor** – Following items, events and dates were discussed:

- No communications have been received from Dr. Smit, but we still expect her back in the country by the end of the year.
- Preaching dates were reviewed for December, and Bob Askoul will be the guest speaker at the Dec. 15 Lunch 'N Learn.

**New Model** – Discussions ensued to continue exploring a new model for church governance and operation, particularly concerning pastoral care. Considering subsequent events, and the abandonment of this new model, further details will be introduced to the congregation in early January.



Week of Jan 8: Greeting: Bettye & Marilyn  
 Sound Booth: Gary & Dana  
 Musician: Marjorie  
 Preaching & Special Music  
 Pastor Mike  
 Cleaning: Mike, Donna &  
 Bev

Week of Jan 15: Greeting: Roger & Marie  
 Sound Booth: Gary & Dana  
 Musician: Marjorie  
 Special Music: Marjorie with  
 Dana & Dana  
 Preaching: Pastor Mike  
 Communion Bread &  
 Cleaning: Rachel

Week of Jan 22: Greeting: Henry & Mercy  
 Sound Booth: Gary & Dana  
 Musician: Maureen  
 Special Music: Mercy  
 Preaching: Pastor Mike  
 Cleaning: Bill & Sandee

Week of Jan 29: Greeting: Donna  
 Sound Booth: Gary & Dana  
 Musician: Marjorie  
 Preaching & Special Music:  
 Pastor Mike  
 Cleaning: Mike & Donna

## MEMBERS/FRIENDS IN NEED OF PRAYER

Recovering from surgery: Bill Keating, Joyce VanderLaan, Marie Zoerner; special needs the Norcha family, Ayla, Chuck, Chris, Linda V. Linda M. and Home members: Joan and Don Walstrom, Bob Schaafsma.

## THANK YOU

Thanks to all who contributed to the Christmas Staff Gift Fund. The Personnel Team is pleased to announce that we received \$360. This will be divided between the pastoral staff and the two musicians.

## LADIES LUNCHEON

You're invited to join some of the ladies of the church each LAST FRIDAY of the month at 1:00pm. It's a great time of prayer and fellowship as the "sisters" meet (everyone is "Dutch"). For more

information and location please contact Elaine Miller or Betty Kay.

## MEN OF THE CHURCH

The Men of the Church meet every FIRST FRIDAY of the month at 9:30am at Bob Evans (Kalamazoo Ave. at M6). After a brief devotional and prayer, the gents enjoy a breakfast and great conversation. All are welcome to join us.

## PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

**NEW:** A Mid-Morning prayer hour at the church at 10:30am has begun recently. Pastor Mike will lead this time and everyone (members, friends, visitors and guests alike) is invited. For more information, please contact Pastor Mike.

## JOYFUL NOISE OFFERING

The Joyful Noise Offering for this month and next will be taken up for the Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC).

Their web site states, "At PRC Grand Rapids, we pride ourselves in providing care to the men and women in our community in a professional and respectful manner. We offer compassion and resources to those who seek support at our center."

### Pregnancy Testing & Confirmation

We offer lab-quality pregnancy tests administered by our trained medical staff and pregnancy confirmation services at no cost to you.

### Ultrasounds

Give you critical information about your pregnancy, determine abortion types, and help you make an informed choice.

### Abortion Pills & Procedure Info

Get the info you need on the abortion pill, abortion pills by mail, abortion clinic procedures, and all your pregnancy options from a medical professional. Equip yourself with accurate and updated information about abortion before making a decision.

### STD/STI Testing & Treatment

If you've recently had unprotected sex, experienced STD symptoms, think you may be pregnant, or have an abortion scheduled, get tested today. We provide free limited STI

testing and treatment and sexual health information for women and men.

You can contact the PRC at 415 Cherry St. SE Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503 or by calling [616-326-2957](tel:616-326-2957).

## **BANNER BOOK**

Thanks to Diane, our dear sister in the faith, who has recently put together a Banner Book containing a photograph of all our banners and a brief explanation about their origin and use. Thanks, Diane!

## **SCRAP BOOK**

Did you know that the church has a scrap book? Cindy Cook began the work years ago. The Scrap book can be found on the bookcase in the dining room.



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## **A CHRISTMAS LETTER FROM FIKRE**

Dear Good Shepherd family,

Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We hope and trust the Lord that you are well and doing good with your family and your church life. You are always in our thoughts and prayers.

By the grace of the Lord, we are doing fine. Children are busy with school things, and Amanuel is already in his third-year college study. Yesem is a senior struggling to apply for college for the following year. It is stressful thinking of college tuition fees, questioning which college she should attend, and so on. The good news is that she had an excellent GPA, and we hope she can get some scholarship assistance. Mieraf is a high school freshman, and she is doing very well.

I am still struggling to move forward with my dissertation writing. My advisors are very slow in their response, and I have been waiting so long. The delay in their response also causes me to be frustrated, thinking about what to do and praying. I have done all my course work with a 3.5 GPA, but when I came to the dissertation, it seemed somewhat unexpected. Something is hindering my work, and it gives me a lot of thought and just praying.

Alem is still working to support the family and is involved in our diaspora church women's ministry.

Our diaspora church is gradually increasing in number. Still, we do not have a building and are using a nearby church fellowship hall. I preach every Sunday and sometimes also give training for choir members, prayer groups, elders, and deacons.

Our home country Ethiopia is still in the dreadful civil war in the North and West part of the country. The inflation crisis is unimaginable, and people are experiencing hunger everywhere. Due to the brutal civil war, killing each other is beyond our imagination, and it reminds me of Paul's words in Galatians 5:15, "If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other." So, we pray that may the "Prince of Peace" bring lasting peace to Ethiopia.

Yesterday I preached from Isaiah 9:1-7, particularly verse 2, "walking in the darkness." When we look into the context of Isaiah chapters 7-9, Isaiah envisioned the coming of Emmanuel the Light while the house of



David was suffering war crisis and darkness during the dark time of the evil king Ahaz. I tried to see this context with the suffering of the people of Ethiopia. In short, Jesus is "the Light of the world" (Jn 8:12), and Ethiopia and the whole world needs Him.

We wish you a very Happy Christmas and New Year!

With our love and prayers, as always.

Fikre & Family

## PHOTO ALBUM



Samaritas Participants in our  
Christmas Concert



Some of the gifts for Samaritas



Dedication of the Prayer Shawls and Scarves

# Lunch-n-Learn

Jett's Pizza/Antipasto Salad

(\$5.00 per person)

January 26, 2023

12:00 Noon

Special Guests:

## John & Paula Kasica

John and Paula Kasica are classical musicians who believe that God will use the Arts to profoundly affect the world. As founders of the Creative Arts Fellowship they encourage others to recognize the gifts God has given to each of them and then allow Him to use those gifts of beauty to bring healing, inspiration, and encouragement.

John and Paula have co-authored a devotional workbook entitled *The Master's Work; A Handbook for Life + Godliness*. Its purpose is to help others "to know Him, to be like Him, to speed His coming".

For more information or for reservations

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