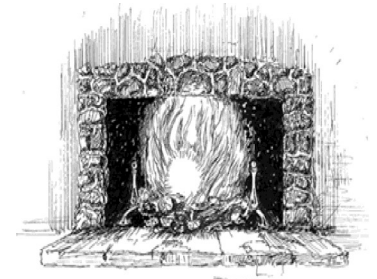


The Spark



“A New Year and a New Opportunity”

It's that time of year again when many of us make great promises to ourselves about what we are going to do differently in the New Year (much of which we unfortunately abandon about the third week in January). I want to write about some new year's resolutions that come directly from God's word, and I credit a pastor named Randy Barker for the four main points, the first of which is to Forget Our Failures. Philippians 3:13 says Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, Let us to not be focused on the past but to be reaching forth unto those things which are yet to come. The bible tells us that when we have placed our faith in Christ, our sins are "remembered no more". If God doesn't remember and hold them against us, why do we? Lord, help us to no longer be held captive to our past. The second point is to Give up our Grudges. Col 3:13 says Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Did you catch that challenge? So also do ye. The Apostle Paul is challenging us to give up our grudges. Grudges destroy marriages, break up families, ruin friendships and even slit apart churches. When you hold a grudge against someone, you hurt yourself as much (and perhaps more) than the person you are holding it against. Holding on to a long-term grudge is like drinking poison but expecting the other person to get sick. Paul is not saying for us to just ignore

whatever wrong has been done to us, but choose to forgive the person who did the wrong to you. Why? Because that's what God has done for us, through his only begotten son Jesus Christ our Savior. The third point is to commit ourselves to restore broken relationships. Romans 12:18 says If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. The Apostle Paul, by using that phrase, is reminding us to do all we can to restore our relationships. This verse is saying that if you have caused a rift in a relationship, then you have a responsibility to do everything you can to restore it. That means doing the one thing we all probably find most difficult, which is to ask for forgiveness. Perhaps this new year is the right time to seek to restore those relationships by asking forgiveness for harsh words, admitting past errors, and humbly seeking to be restored by the one you've hurt. That's what Romans 12:18 is saying to us. The final point is to begin the New Year by Walking away from your Transgressions. The Bible says that Christ died to set us free, the Holy Spirit has given us the power to be free, but many Christians still choose to obey their former master. Even after coming to a saving faith, they still listen more to Satan than they do to God. The Apostle Paul's writings remind us to walk away from that sin and stop letting it control the way we live. 2023 can be not just a new era in history, but a new era in your walk of faith. May God help you to embrace that opportunity!

Jan/Feb
2023

First
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Church

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Pastor James Huber

A Matter of Prayer...

Part 2: We come to God with our specific requests, and we have God's promise that our prayers are not in vain, even if we do not receive specifically what we asked for ([Matthew 6:6](#); [Romans 8:26-27](#)). He has promised that when we ask for things that are in accordance with His will, He will give us what we ask for ([1 John 5:14-15](#)). Sometimes He delays His answers according to His wisdom and for our benefit. In these situations, we are to be diligent and persistent in prayer ([Matthew 7:7](#); [Luke 18:1-8](#)). Prayer should not be seen as our means of getting God to do our will on earth, but rather as a means of getting God's will done on earth. God's wisdom far exceeds our own.

For situations in which we do not know God's will specifically, prayer is a means of discerning His will (see [James 1:5](#)). Prayer was instrumental in the Spirit's sending of Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey ([Acts 13:1-3](#)). Solomon asked for "wisdom and knowledge," and God gave him that and much more ([2 Chronicles 1:10-12](#)).

Please continue to pray for the following people:

- **Patty Carr**, Various health issues
 - **Candy Perkins**, on-going health issues
 - **Jack Hays**, Recovering at home from his lung disease and also pray for him as he has lost his mother and is grieving
 - **Loren Dingman**, in stage 4 kidney failure, turns 84 this week. Let's all send him a birthday card, his address is: Thornapple Manor, Room 111, 2700 Nashville Hwy, Hashtings, MI, 49058
- Eunice Newville**, needs prayers for her kidney failure, which she struggles with on an on-going basis
- Claudia Brood**, for her hearing
- **Mike Sweeney**, for his lungs as he struggles to breathe, He was hospitalized for this problem
 - **Donna Beckley Shaff**, former Cedarville resident with gall bladder cancer, just finishing up chemo but is facing other treatment
 - Praise for **Gene Nutter's** Bible study Group at the Cove, which had 9 residents at the first meeting!

They say death comes in threes and that was the case for 3 beloved Cedarville residents who went to be with the Lord this month.

Sincere sympathies to the family of **Steve Patson**, who was married to the former **Dusty Stevenson**, he died of cancer. Cards may be sent to: 634 N-M129, Cedarville, MI 49719

Keith Kester also passed away after a lingering illness. He had moved into the Cove a few months ago, where his daughter **Stacy** works. He was an active member of First Union Church and operated Kester Plumbing in Cedarville. He was also active as a volunteer fireman and a ambulance core member.

Our condolences also go out to the family of **Joan Leach**. She was not well for a long time and lived in the Cove in her later years. She also was active in many different groups at First Union Church.

***To read full obituaries, please see the St. Ignace News or go to the Galer Funeral Home website.

Many of us have been praying for the health of baby **Winifred (Winnie) Elizabeth Hovland**, born 2 mo early at 2.7 pounds. She is doing remarkably well. She is the daughter of **Nick & Audrey**, the granddaughter of **Brad & Shelley Koster** and the gr-granddaughter of **Nancy & Bruce Glupker** who attend First



How About You?

As we celebrate the close of another year and the beginning of a new one, it is good to do so with our mind focused on those who helped us get to this point.

Besides our friends and family, think particularly of our loving God and keeping HIM in the forefront of our plans for the new year so that we can enjoy life and what God has in store for us.

So, as we dream about the year ahead, lets write our goals, new resolutions and plans in pencil.

God will use His pen, and as HE says in, Proverbs 16:9, 'We can make our plans but it is He that determines our steps'.

How About You?... We need to listen and be willing to adjust our course as we navigate this new year. HE only wants what is

best for us and I look forward to seeing how HIS plans and mine can work together to make this a year of hope for all of us.

Happy New Year and may our paths keep crossing in the Les Cheneaux Islands and the First Union Church.



Mike Davis

Just off the Highway

'Hobby Lobby Store'

At 4284 I-75 Business Spur in Soo, Michigan is the well known faith based Hobby Lobby store, always closed on Sunday. The store chain started by making picture frames in the family garage in 1970, in Oklahoma City. The Hobby Lobby founder David Green announced in October that he is giving away the company. David Green's net worth is estimated to be 14 billion. There are over 900 stores with 43,000 employees in 47 states. It all started with a \$600 loan. 100 per cent of the voting stock has been moved to a trust. Separate details of how he is giving away the company have not been revealed. Hobby Lobby has been associated with national religious news over the last few decades especially when Green decided to keep all of the stores open during the pandemic saying everything is in God's control.

Green said that wealth can be a curse. Let's hope that honoring the Lord and operating on Biblical principles, that Green brought to the stores founding, remains.



The Recipe Box



Ah Winter. Hi Everyone, well Christmas is behind us for another year, for me I'm kind of glad, as I ended up in the ER the day after Christmas and the day after New Year's.

Who does that,, right? Lol!

I guess I always think of January as a time for new beginnings, Time to start over, time to right wrongs, lose weight, talk less-listen more, stay out of other people's business, break a bad habit, show a little kindness, and the list goes on...We can try to do our best... (follow the bulletin board advice in the church hallway).

Barb Smith gave me her recipe, at my request, for almond bars that she brought to coffee hour.

Fancy Almond Bars

1/2 cup butter
3/4 cup sugar
1 egg
1/2 t baking powder
1/2 t almond extract
1/4 t salt
1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
Milk
1/3 cup sliced almonds

Beat first 6 ingredients with mixer, mixing well. Add flour and beat just to combine. Cover & chill dough ...1 to 3 hours. On a floured surface, roll dough out half at a time to a 12 x 6 inch rectangle. Cut dough into 12 x 3 inch strips. Cut each strip crosswise into 1 inch bars. Brush with milk.

Sprinkle with almonds, gently press almonds into dough. Transfer to a cookie sheet, placing cookies 1 inch apart.

Repeat the process with the second half of the dough. Bake 375 degrees until very lightly browned, cool on wire racks.

Glaze:

1/2 cup sifted powdered sugar
1/4 t almond extract. Add 2-3 t milk to make a drizzling consistency.

Drizzle over bars

Makes about 48 bars

Barb says to be sure to butter the pan well or use a silicone mat or parchment paper

Chicken Salad

"Not your regular Chicken salad"

This is more-like a Chicken Waldorf Salad

2 cups (more or less) cooked, cubed chicken
1/2 to 1 skin-on-apple, small cubes
3 stalks celery, de-string, chopped fine
Salt and pepper
Walnuts, chopped
Mayonnaise
Mix all together and refrigerate

Crescent Pepperoni Roll-ups

On a crescent roll, lay 3 pieces of pepperoni and 1/2 stick of sting cheese. Roll-up (you can use other meat such as chicken) Bake on parchment paper at 375 deg. For 12 minutes. Can dip in pizza sauce or for chicken, ranch dressing

See you next month, going to the kitchen to make Chicken Waldorf Salad I made it-I would add more apple next Time.

Sue Rye



To Your Health...

“Heart Beats”

Our heart is an amazing life giving organ we seldom have to think about. It keeps beating without any conscious effort on our part, minute by minute, day by day.

However, there are times when the electrical impulses that make our heart beat in a nice regular beat get

out of sync and the heart will beat with an irregular beat or rhythm. This is referred to as atrial fibrillation

(AFib). Symptoms you may notice are a racing heart or palpitations, shortness of breath.

Some people may not notice any symptoms but the irregular heart beat is detected by the doctor hearing

an irregular beat during a physical exam or the results are noted in an electrocardiogram (ECG). When an irregular heart beat happens the heart may not be able to pump enough oxygen rich blood

throughout your body. The blood will tend to pool in the left atrium or upper chamber of the heart.

When

blood pools, it is more likely to cause a clot to form and get pumped out of the heart and travel through

the blood vessels to smaller vessels in the brain, causing a stroke.

d

Some of the risk factors for AFib are high blood pressure, heart disease including previous heart attack

diabetes, sleep apnea or prior heart surgery.

Some behaviors that may affect AFib are excessive alcohol

and smoking. These behaviors can be controlled to help decrease your risk for AFib.

If you feel you, or someone you know, are having any of the symptoms of AFib, you need to be checked

by a physician, even if the symptoms go away.

There are medications or other treatments to help control

an irregular heart beat and help prevent a stroke.

Since someone with AFib is at greater risk for stroke, it is important that you are aware of the symptoms

of a stroke. The acronym for the warning signs of a stroke is F.A.S.T. The letters are a quick way to

recall the warning signs of a stroke:

F - Face drooping

A - Arm weakness

C - Speech difficulty

T - Time to call 9-1-1

Other changes you might see in someone having a stroke are weakness on one side of the body, sudden

confusion, vision problems, dizziness or severe headache.

Knowing the F.A.C.T.s will help you to recognize the warning signs of a stroke and the wisdom to act

quickly and help save a life.

More information on AFib and stroke may be found at: heart.org/AFib.

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Proverbs 4:23.



Betty Mitchell BSN

**Christion Music...
thinking outside the box**

A couple of Sundays ago, **Joni Izzard** accompanied while **Alyssa Cloud** sang and **Emilie Bigelow** signed "**Mary, did you know?**".

They did a wonderful performance of this beautiful Christmas Song.

The song lyrics were written by **Mark Lowry** in 1984. The music was written by **Buddy Green** in 1991.

Both men performed in the Gaither Vocal Band. It has now been performed by countless artists and congregations all over the world.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
will one day walk on water?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
will save our sons and daughters?

Did you know...that your baby boy has
come to make you new?

This child that you've delivered, will
soon deliver you.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
will give sight to a blind man?

Mary, did you know your baby boy will
calm a storm with his hand?

Did you know...that your baby boy has
walked where angels trod?

When you kiss your little baby,
you've kissed the face of God.

June Davis

Woman's Christmas Tea 2023



“Wisps from Willow” Greg Wagner



A man found a cocoon of a butterfly.

One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as

it struggled to force its body through that little hole until it **suddenly stopped making any progress** and looked like it was stuck.

So the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily, although it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.

The man didn't think anything of it and sat there waiting for the wings to enlarge to support the butterfly. But that didn't happen. The butterfly spent the rest of its life unable to fly, crawling around with tiny wings and a swollen body.

Despite the **kind heart of the man**, he didn't understand that the restricting cocoon and the struggle needed by the butterfly to get itself through the small opening; were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings. To prepare itself for flying once it was out of the cocoon.

Moral of the story:

Our **struggles in life develop our strengths**. Without struggles, we never grow and never get stronger, so it's important for us to tackle challenges on our own, and not be relying on help from others.

Nativities



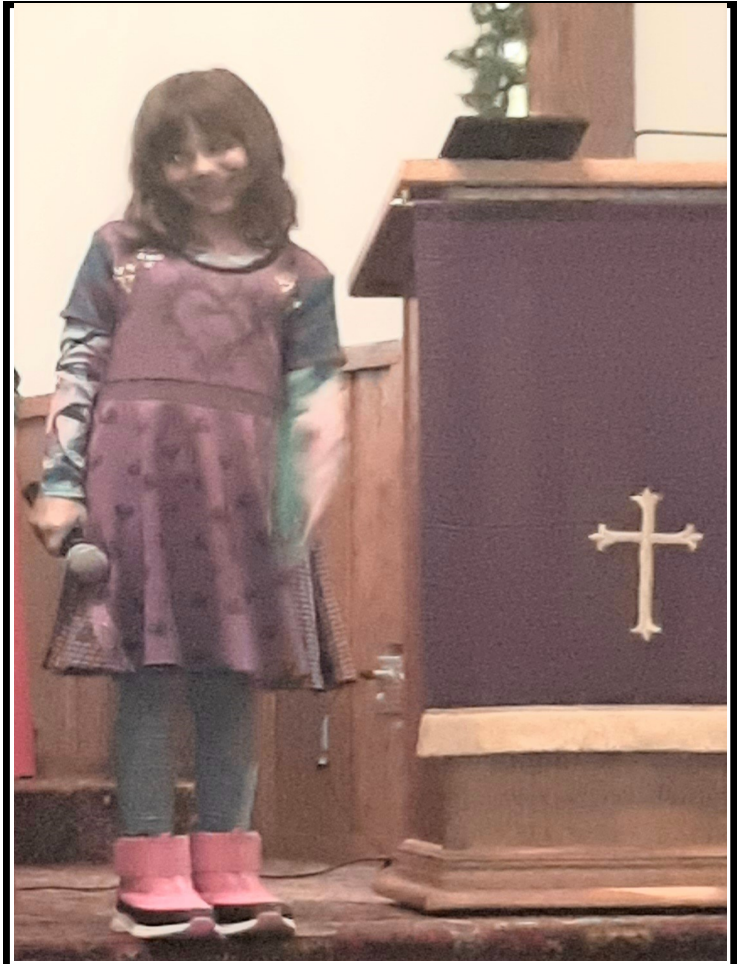
Janaan Meyers, who travels all over the world, brings her mom (and maybe dad too,) a nativity scene from every country she visits. She also has a large mug collection as well.



Janaan also runs marathons around the country, doing very well for herself. She's highly motivated and has lots of energy.



Christmas Program



Snowshoers



Relaxing and eating luscious desserts
at **Bob Smith's** lovely home after
caroling.

Carolers resting after singing...



Our Church is Growing!!!



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