

The Spark



COVID-19 and First Union

This past month can be summarized with one phrase COVID-19. From the President, to the Governor, to local leadership we have had to make adjustments to this virus infection.

Our local school closed. Our businesses had to shut down or adapt. First Union Church was not able to meet on March 15. April 26 will be the seventh Sunday in a row we have not been able to gather to worship in our building.

Pastor Meyers upgraded his iphone so that a message could be recorded. Working with **Sean** at I-Technical Pro Computer in Cedarville, we developed a web page, **firstunion-church.org** and a YouTube Channel. The messages/chats are uploaded to our YouTube channel. They are placed on our webpage and our facebook page on Sunday morning. The first time we attempted to upload the message, there was not enough capability in the manse. **Pastor Meyers** drove to Sault Ste. Marie to access a higher speed connection. We have found a more convenient connection since the first time.

We are confined by a Stay-at-Home directive. Those who are older in our congregation are not leaving their homes. Those with low immunity have others bringing groceries to their homes.

The youth group and Tuesday Bible study have been meeting via a newer technology called Zoom. It gives a way for everyone to be seen and included in the conversation.

Some people are taking regular

walks around town. During those walks people are able to talk with others while maintaining the recommended six-foot distance.

Those who were away for the winter season are slowly returning. As they return they have been following the recommended two weeks of self-quarantine. They purchased their groceries below the bridge or had someone go to Cedarville Foods for them.

Many people are wearing face masks.

People are calling and talking with one another. I know the Board members of our church have been doing this. I have really enjoyed chatting, laughing, and praying over the telephone, Facebook, or using other technologies. Becky and I have even sent and received letters--imagine such an old fashioned technology.

People are giving their tithe and offering by mailing to First Union Church, PO Box 426, Cedarville, MI 49719. Some are dropping their envelope at the church office. Others are using our website, **firstunionchurch.org** and giving via the **tithe.ly** app. Still others call our bookkeeper, Deb St. Onge, and give their offering to her. Thank you to all who have done so.

We have been focusing on Psalm 91. "He who dwells in the secret dwelling place of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. ... For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence."

**May
2020**

**FIRST
UNION**

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Take Heart

Whenever we write articles for The Spark, we try to write with anticipation for the coming season. As I write in mid-April, I am thinking about the season of May when The Spark will be read. However, as we sit in quarantine, everything is up in the air. For our youth, we would normally be in track season now. We would be anticipating the end of the school year and graduation. Our older youth would be coming home from college with stories of their school year and everyone would be headed for their summer jobs.

Right now, there are no definite plans. There are no certainties. Public school is closed and online. Our college students are home and taking classes online. We're attending worship services – including Holy Week – from our homes. Track season is cancelled. Summer events are being cancelled. Any plans that are being made are on hold while we wait to see what the future holds.

One thing is for certain when you read this. There will still be unknowns. The decisions made in our state and in our country will have a ripple effect that will last for quite a while.

When life is filled with unknowns, it is easy to become anxious. It is easy to try to focus your energy into exerting your control over whatever aspect of your situation you can in an attempt to stabilize things. It is tempting to try to exert your energy into controlling your family, friends, and work to bring about your desired ends.

Yet when we come to worship, we pray that God will do his will. We sing that this is our Father's World. We are disciplined to obey the teachings of Jesus. Finally, we live to bring glory to God. Nowhere in the equation is it about us. Nowhere do we ask God for our will to be done or ourselves to be glorified. This is God's world and we are his instruments.

Yet we still find ourselves consumed with emotions that are brought on by the current crisis, whether it is a pandemic or just a relationship with another

person. Our anger, fear, anxiety and the like can blind us from the work that God is doing around us and *could* be doing *through* us during the crisis.

Paul recognizes the conflict between our fragility and the power of God in us. He says to the Corinthians, *“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.”* (2 Corinthians 4:7–10, ESV)

In the midst of crisis, it is our powerful God who sustains us. It is because of our own fragility that God's power in us is more obvious. The power of God demonstrated through us is both personally sustaining and simultaneously evangelistic. How peace-giving it is to see God at work in our lives and know that he is directing our lives. So Paul says, *“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,”* (2 Corinthians 4:16–17, ESV)

As we face unknowns, may we find peace for our fears and anxieties in seeing the power of God at work in our personal lives and in our world. May we “take heart” that these momentary afflictions are preparing us for a future glory beyond imagination!



A Matter of Prayer..Under his Wing

We have been praying Psalm 91 during this COVID-19 season. The Psalm says: God will cover us with His feathers. Under His wings we may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. We will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day; of the pestilence that stalks in darkness ...It is comforting to be reminded of the word picture created by Psalm 91. God surrounds us with His care. We have been experiencing God's care this past month. Neighbors are being friends with conversations, encouragement and acts of kindness.

Judy Cason has been flying her American flag every day. Just a way to enjoy the fresh air and letting her neighbors see her out and about.

One Sunday morning **Randy Dunn** stopped by the church parking lot. We were chatting six feet apart. It was three years that morning since **Randy** had major surgery on his heart. We were talking about the miracle of life. How God blessed **Randy** to walk his daughter, **Grace**, down the aisle at her wedding. As we were talking the carillon of the church started to chime. It seemed to be God's way of celebrating with us the last three years **Randy** blessed planet earth with his presence. We paused, took off our hat, and gave a hearty prayer of thanks and blessing to God.

John Kovach has had a very difficult month of April. He has been in the hospital in Florida. His surgery led to an infection that led to pneumonia. He has been touch and go. We are praying for his recovery. **Virginia Calven** is not able to go to the hospital to see John due to the COVID restrictions. May God give His peace to **Virginia**.

Our friend **Sadie Nye** is under hospice care. She is glad that some of her good friends are living in Cedar Cove and are able to visit with her at this time. We can't just stop by and

see **Sadie** due to the epidemic. Cedar Cove is doing an excellent job of coping with the COVID restrictions. We are praying for all of those making adjustments while providing medical care in our area.

Some health care workers in our area have been laid off. Hospitals and clinics are struggling financially, too. We ask our Heavenly Father to provide for these individuals.

We are praying for many of our local businesses. The challenges are real. Many people are laid off. School teachers are teaching on line. Children are going to classes online. Some of the individuals who are laid off have found this to be a good time to catch up on much needed rest. Others have done various projects around home. Cleaning out closets, painting a room, remodeling, and just spending time together as a family.

Let's hang in there. This will take a little longer than we thought. God is sheltering us under His wings.

Jeff Meyers

Continued Prayers for:

*Kathy Frontjes *Sherry Preston
*Sadie Nye *Juanita Wilson *Nutters
*Barb Murray *Carole Hopper
*Jeanne Hays *Pat Smith
*Helen Shoberg *Bob Smith
*Yvonne McDonald *Joan Leach
*Sandy Tassier and all our friends at
Cedar Cove *Loren Dingman *Roger
Beukema *Sharrie Steinbach
*Katherine Kee
Babies: The Sirmons Twins
Deaths: Paul Sims (Kitty Sim's son)
Kerri Mertaugh (Pat Duncan's
daughter)

How About You?

I have, on good authority, information concerning bad weather and junk mail. Blaming the bad weather on the weather forecaster (which many people do) is the same as blaming the mail carrier for the bills and junk that comes in the mail. The mail carrier just delivers the mail and the meteorologist just reports the weather conditions that God has designed for us.

If God decides to change things up a bit, well, we just have to adjust to His timing. Both of these kinds of work, have a huge arsenal of equipment available to them but the number of variables that can alter the eventual outcomes are numerous as well.

How about you? Do you blame God for the things that go wrong in your life? God planned our world to be perfect and in harmony with His people. We have only ourselves to blame if the system does not work perfect every time. If we go about our day doing our "thing" without even consulting with God, even for a few minutes, then we may as well expect things to go

awry a bit. "As for me and my house we will serve and (consult) with the Lord ".

Joshua 24:15



Just Off the Highway

In Sarasota, Florida, just off I-75 at exit 217 is the John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art.

In 1925, John Ringling, one of 5 brothers of the Ringling circus empire, decided to build a museum both as a legacy meant to out last his business interests and as a memorial to his wife, Mabel, and himself. The museum is a pink Renaissance-style palace with 21 galleries enclosing a courtyard graced with copies of iconic sculptures.

The huge European painting collection, and by huge, I mean the size of the paintings and number of paintings is breath taking. The colors are vivid and the number of paintings related to the life of Christ are numerous. There are other rotating exhibits and a center

for Asian art. At his death in 1936, Ringling bequeathed the museum to the people of Florida.

A Circus Museum is located on the property and houses many of the circus wagons and exhibits from the heydays of the circus. For more information go to "ringling.com" .



To Your Health

Back up to Speed

What a month we have all experienced being safe and staying home during the pandemic. It will not be long before we can slowly resume our regular activities.

Remember to include is to resume your exercise routine. It is easy to get into a pattern of sitting listening to the news or watching movies because we had to stay home. However, our bodies need to return to the strength, flexibility and endurance level they were at before the stay at home order was given. It may take some motivation to resume any exercise program. Exercise is one way to catch up with friends while you walk or go to the gym. It will get you away from the refrigerator and help burn up calories, strengthen muscles, reduce stress and have fun. Consider what motivates you to exercise your body properly.

Some ideas you can work on at home before the restrictions are lifted would be to stand behind a chair or in front of the kitchen counter and raise up on your toes and hold for about 4 seconds before lowering your heels to the floor. Use the chair or counter for support, if needed. Repeat 5 to 10 times, resting in between. Another idea is to hold onto the chair or countertop, bend one knee back and balance on the other foot for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 to 15 times. Then bend the other knee and balance on the other leg as before. Walk slowly with your arms outstretched for 10 steps at a time. Stop and repeat. Keep your head up, looking at a distant point to keep your balance.

Preventing falls is one of the many benefits you will gain as you strengthen your body and become more steady on your feet. Other benefits include better circulation, stress reduction, better concentration, better eating

and improvement in your quality of sleep.

Any exercise you do, either indoors or outside, will benefit you and ultimately your family, in many ways. You just need to get up and get moving, doing something you enjoy!

Source: www.agingcare.com/articles/enhance-exercise-motivation ;

www.agingcare.com/articles/balance-exercises-for-seniors

“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.”

Proverbs 4:23



The Recipe Box



Hello Everyone! It's a beautiful day out, sunny and bright but COLD. I'm confident that spring weather will get here...someday!

I was intrigued by this soup and how easy it is to make, so I tried it. It's very good. I'll put in my tweaks at the end of the

recipe.

Shortcut Minestrone Soup

Put 1 (23 oz) jar of marinara sauce in a large pan, add in 5 cups of water and bring to a boil. Stir in 12 oz green beans, 1 can great northern beans, 1 bag (16 oz) mixed vegetables, 4 oz small pasta and cook until pasta is done. (about 5 minutes). The veggies will cook all at once with the pasta. Top with pepper and grated parmesan cheese and you've made a delicious soup in a matter of minutes!!

My tweaks were:

- I didn't have quite enough marinara sauce so I threw in a can of diced tomatoes
- I used canned green beans
- I used "Acine de Pepe" pasta, but I put way too much in so be careful of amounts or you'll have stew instead of soup, altho I do really like this particular pasta...
- I add parsley to everything...I dropped in a little butter also. You can tweak this as much as you like, making sure you keep the marinara sauce and water as your broth- base.
- If you want meat, maybe tiny meatballs?
- And...if you hate the lima beans in mixed vegetables, **Schwan's** brand has no limas!



Here's another easy soup recipe for these days that we have to hunker in and get cozy.

Creamy Chicken & Rice Soup

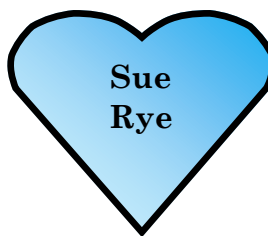
- 1 box Rice-A-Roni long grain & wild rice
- 5 cups chicken broth
- 1/2 cups grated carrots
- 2 cups chopped broccoli
- 1/2 medium onion, diced
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 8 oz cream cheese divided into chunks
- 3 cups of chicken, cooked and diced

Bring to a boil the first 5 ingredients, simmer 20 minutes

Blend in the soup and cream cheese chunks until smooth. Add chicken and simmer a little longer.

My tweaks were:

- For rice I used a bag of Success rice, I just dumped it in out of the bag because I didn't have the Rice-A-Roni on hand.
- You can buy the carrots grated in a bag now, it's so much easier than having to grate them.
- Gordon Foods has cooked, diced chicken in a bag, ready to use
- I always buy the Campbell chicken soup with herbs in it for a little more flavor & I always add parsley and a pinch of nutmeg to any cream soups. I learned that tip from the Farm Stand Kitchen.
- This recipe was in the Cloverland magazine from Carolyn Hillock.



Worried about COVID-19? The Bible can help...

In times of crisis, I sometimes struggle to read the Gospels or the New Testament letters. The promises seem so blithe, and the early church with all its spiritual power seems too perfect. I take refuge in the Old Testament. Here are stories of mere mortals – imperfect people who God met and used and transformed. An unbelieving, sinful, largely unrepentant people on whom God poured out his mercy again and again. A nation led at times by wicked and foolish leaders – yet God still reigned over all.

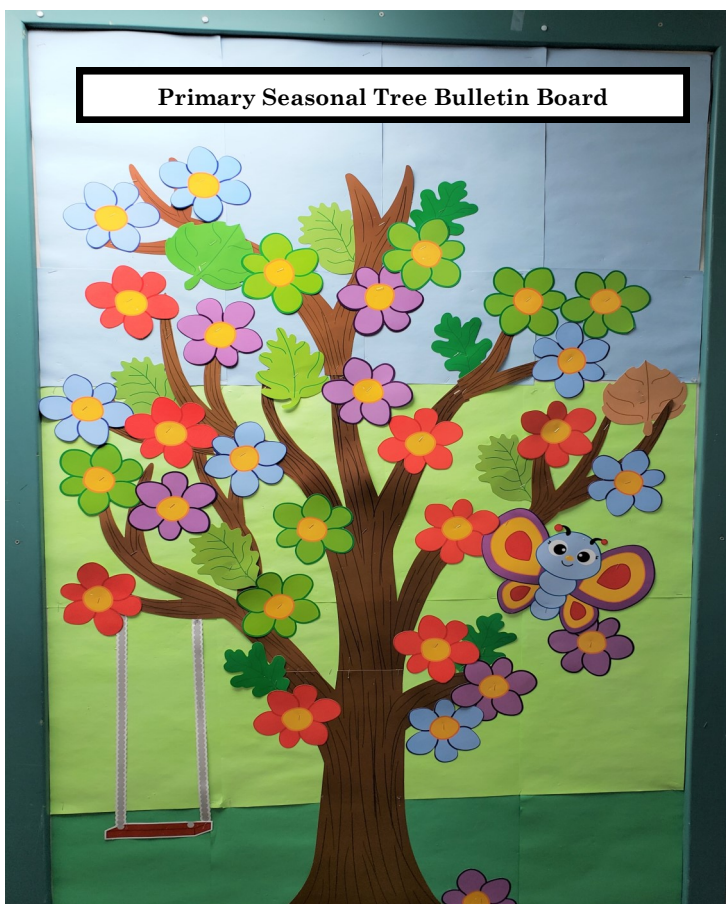
What if the coronavirus is God's judgment on us for the sins of the nation and the world? Is it fair to ask God to suspend his righteous judgment? Yes. When we acknowledge our sins and repent, he stops the plague – Read Numbers 16, especially v.41-50. We are priests (see Rev 1:6) so we can pray on behalf of our people as Aaron did. See also Numbers 25:1-13 (another plague that miraculously stops immediately) and 21:4-9 (where the people are bitten by poisonous snakes.) And 2 Samuel 24 tells the story of another plague which started because of sin, and ended because of repentance.

With the virus spreading in food processing plants - or if we're laid off of work - will we have enough food to eat? Yes – if we follow and listen to God. Psalm 37:5 says, "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread." 1 Kings 17:1-16 fleshes this out – showing one way that God took care of one of His people. Note that God didn't use the same ways to feed Elijah the whole time, and that he didn't show Elijah the second part of his plan until after the first one was done.

These stories in the Old Testament remind me that God knew from the dawn of time that this virus was coming and that the whole world would essentially shut down for a while. He knew that it would expose our national and individual inadequacies, our powerlessness, our lack of control. Yet God is still sovereign, still loves us, and still answers our

prayers.

He will use this time of quarantine (and, for some, a stay in the hospital, or the loss of jobs) for his purposes: he will call us back to prayer and dependence on him – or else he will expose our unwillingness to trust him. He will help us to care for one another – or else he will make our selfishness and self-reliance plain for all to see. God will speak to us, guide us, and take care of us through this season. Our job, as always, is just to take time to listen to him and obey him. And Elijah and David and Moses and the other 'ordinary heroes' of the Old Testament help me see God's power and love at work through ordinary people in extraordinary times.



Library Leaves

I just finished reading a book that was incredible. It is *Still Alice* written by Lisa Genova. *Still Alice* is a fictitious story of a woman who has early-on set Alzheimer's Disease. The main character, named Alice, is a very competent doctor of psychology at Harvard, specializing in language and linguistics. She travels all over the country and the world giving speeches at conferences about the development of language and linguistics. She just celebrated her 50th birthday.

I thought the author did an amazing job of taking such a personality and really describing how Alice slipped into the fog of Alzheimer's - that the disease so severely impacts on a person's ability to use language...to process...as well as to remember. It isn't just forgetting things...it is a real debilitation of the thought processes and the ability a victim of Alzheimer's has in being able to use his or her intellect and thoughts as he or she was able to do before the onset of the disease.

One story in the book was that Alice, who used to write textbooks and books about her research into language, became unable to remember or to process what she was reading. She would pick up a novel to read and after a paragraph or so, could not remember what the first sentence was about. Nor could she follow the thread of the characters through even a page of reading. She began highlighting with a pink highlighter key words and phrases so she could look back at what she highlighted and be reminded of the character or story plot. Even that did not work because she saw the pink highlighting and thought: 'why is there cotton candy all over my book?' Her mind became so befuddled she felt she was swimming through a fog of cotton candy whenever she looked at the book.

I found the book, *Still Alice*, to be very insightful and compassionate as it chronicles the relentless progression of Alzheimer's in its victim's life.



***Julianne

Moore starred in the movie *Still Alice* which came out in 2014 and is still available to rent or watch on Netflix etc***



Update picture of the
Jay/Kathryn Hills Family
The kids are growing!
Eli, Easton, Parker and Hayden

I am always looking for people to write a book review for the *Spark* (with few results). I'm not sure that people read as much as they used to. I think being on our devices has a lot to do with that. But if you *are* a reader, please share a little review if you have read a good book. .



The Spotlight's on....Wayne Brood

Psalms 37:23

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way."

After 46 years of working for the Les Cheneaux Club, **Wayne Brood** has decided that the time has finally arrived for him to take a much needed extended year-round "vacation" for the remainder of his life!

In May of 1974, **Wayne** was hired by the Les Cheneaux Club, located on Marquette Island near Cedarville, MI. He was 20 years old at the time and engaged to **Claudia Perkins**, his now-bride of 45+ years. For nearly 24 of those years, he served the membership of the LCC as Manager/Caretaker. **He and Claudia** lived on Club Point during that time in the Caretaker's Cottage.

It was God who brought **Wayne** to the Les Cheneaux Club all those years ago. There is no doubt in our minds about that. He loved his job and cared about the people he served. It's not been easy for him to say goodbye to something that's been a part of his life for such a long time.

Now God has chosen a different journey for **Wayne** filled with all kinds of adventures that I plan to be a part of! Rumor has it his bride of 45 + years has a "Honey-do List" that will keep him busy till Jesus calls him Home!

Look out world! **Wayne Brood** is a free man!

"He's off to great places
Today is his day
The future is waiting
So, get out of his way!"



Written
with love by
Claudia



The Spark

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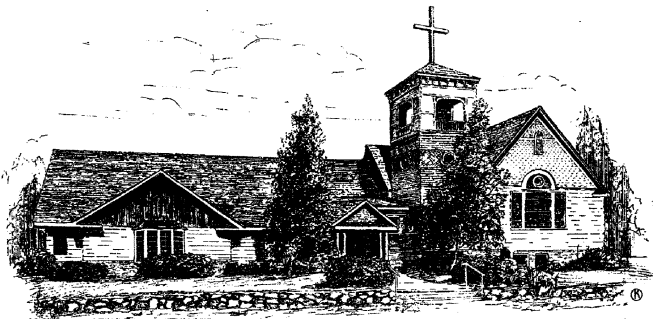
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