

"A Symphony of Gratitude"

Psalm 34:1 (NIV) "I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips."

Devotion

In the symphony of life, our hearts are called to play a beautiful melody of gratitude. Psalm 34:1 invites us into a harmonious rhythm of praise, urging us to extol the Lord at all times and keep His praise continuously on our lips. It's an enduring invitation, not confined to moments of joy but echoing through the corridors of our lives, even in the valleys.

The Conductor's Call

Imagine life as a grand orchestra, with the Lord as our conductor. His arms gracefully guide us through the crescendos of triumph and the softer notes of trial. "I will extol the Lord at all times," declares the psalmist, acknowledging that in every movement, God deserves the highest praise. The conductor's call is not just for the high notes; it's a constant melody, a perpetual symphony of thanksgiving.

The Melody of Adoration

The psalmist's commitment to praise is not contingent upon circumstances. It's not a response solely to the melody of blessings but a choice to praise in the minor chords of adversity. "His praise will always be on my lips," affirms the psalmist, recognizing that every note, whether sweet or somber, contributes to the grandeur of the divine composition.

The Echo of Gratitude

Our lives become an echo of gratitude when we heed the psalmist's call. To extol the Lord at all

times is to embrace gratitude as a lifestyle. It's the recognition that every breath is a gift, every trial an opportunity for growth, and every blessing a reason to sing His praises. The Lord's faithfulness becomes the heartbeat of our song.

A Symphony Shared

As we cultivate a heart of continuous praise, our symphony resonates beyond the auditorium of our personal experiences. Others begin to hear the melody of gratitude and are drawn to join the chorus. Our lives become a testament to the transformative power of thanksgiving, inviting others to join the orchestra of praise.

Reflect on this:

Today, let us take up the psalmist's melody. In the highs and lows, in the trials and triumphs, may our lives resound with the symphony of gratitude. "I will extol the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips." As we play our part in this grand composition, may our gratitude be a fragrant offering, ascending to the heavens like a sweet-sounding incense.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach us the art of continuous praise. May our lives be a symphony of gratitude, acknowledging Your goodness in every note of our journey. In moments of joy and in times of trial, help us extol You at all times. May Your praise be ever on our lips. Amen.

Reverend Dr. Douglas Obwoye





Upcoming Meetings

Our upcoming meetings for summer are as follows:

- Wednesday, July 10 (1:00 pm) – We will meet at the Mancelona Labyrinth of Hope. The labyrinth is located at Cran Park, on the corner of E. Michigan and S. Washington). After a brief business meeting, we will participate in a program about finding peace by “Being Still and Know that God Walks with Us” with a walk through the labyrinth. Ellen Whitehead will lead the program and provide snacks. Bring a lawn chair and an item that brings you peace to hold as you walk the labyrinth.
- Wednesday, August 14 (1:00 pm) – Carol Kingsley will host our meeting and program at her beautiful home on Big Twin Lake. If you need a ride, meet at the church at 12:30 pm.

Labyrinth Walk

What is a labyrinth you might be asking? Labyrinths were used in ancient spiritual customs and are experiencing a revival today. They combine the simple shapes of a circle and spiral to provide a single, circular path that winds its way to the center. It is important to note that a labyrinth is not a maze. Unlike the maze, the labyrinth provides a single path to the center with no dead ends. The way in is the way out.

The Mancelona Labyrinth of Hope is a classical-style labyrinth built by volunteers from our church and the Mancelona community. It was built with field stones and bark chips. Two benches and flowers await visitors. It is open to the public seven days a week from dawn to dark. Group walks are held periodically. Little keepsakes are sometimes scattered amongst the stones. These tokens may be taken home or the next time you visit consider leaving a small “gift” for someone else to find.

Report on May and June Gatherings

May

Our program in May was supposed to be a trip to the Mancelona Labyrinth of Hope, but the weather did not cooperate (rescheduled for July). We sure have had a lot of rain this year, haven't we?! Instead, Ellen led a program called “What is Prayer and How Should I Pray?” Ellen passed out information about prayer from Christianity.com, Campus Crusades for Christ, and The Daily Examen developed by St. Ignatius over 400 years ago. We shared ways that we like to pray. After our discussion, Nancy Wheeler played the piano and we all sang Sweet Hour of Prayer. We then picked a quiet spot to pray in solitude from examples given as well as prayer requests from our group.

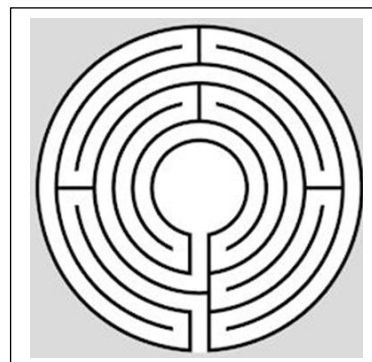
During our business meeting, we addressed the following items:

- Approved Laurie Allison as our new Vice President, as Jackie Bates needed to resign from this position.
- Discussed our annual Pledge Program where members designate an amount to be used for our missions donations.
- Planned Senior Recognition Day. Julia Kirby was honored with a book, gas card, and a cake during Fellowship Dinner.

June

On June 12, we met at The Dockside restaurant on beautiful Torch Lake for our annual luncheon. No business meeting was held. We set aside this gathering each year to just enjoy each other's company, have a nice lunch together, and breathe in the sunshine that fills our hearts with joy! Some members brought guests to join us.

Submitted by Ellen Whitehead, UMF secretary





Community Meal

If you are too busy to cook dinner, it's too hot, or you want to enjoy a wonderful meal, feel welcome to come! You may feel you do not want a free meal, remember there is a Donation Jar. Invite a friend or neighbor! If you know of someone that you would like to take a meal to, that is another option. There is lots of friendly laughter! Our volunteers continue to prepare excellent, nutritious meals! May and June were filled with such meals.

Troy Orman and Michelle McClelland, once again, prepared their well-loved Shepherd's Pie. There was so much left that a whole pan was frozen and used for the next Church Potluck! According to Health Department rules, we cannot freeze leftovers and use again for Community Meals.

Thanksgiving in May with Ellen Whitehead and Rhonda Allen. They served roast turkey breasts, mashed potatoes, dressing, gravy, green bean casserole and a tossed salad. No pumpkin pie, however, chocolate cake and muffins, plus assorted cookies for dessert. *Remember, Rhonda Allen is our "Gravy Maker" for Harvest Supper.*

Thanks Bob Barr and Dale Stephenson who lead the Pathways for your faithfulness all these years. We could not do this without you! They prepared Chicken Parmesan (using the new breaded chicken patties), spaghetti, mixed veggies, tossed salad, plus dessert.

Marilyn Avery-Swan and Shirley Tracey continue to WOW! Marilyn recently served her delicious goulash, cornbread muffins, salad, and strawberry shortcake (Homemade biscuits)! Marilyn treated everyone to fresh strawberries and Laurie Allison added ice cream! Just like Avery's strawberry shortcake that everyone enjoyed at their restaurant for years.

Menus vary each week and in addition to the above they have included chili, meatloaf, mashed potatoes with gravy, vegetables, salads, and desserts. Each week, the cooking teams have the generosity of homemade bread from the Hen's Den. Some weeks, teams choose to make their own biscuits or muffins and do not use the Hen's Den's generosity. Any leftover fresh fruits, vegetables, or extra baked goods that have come from Food Rescue, are put on the "Free Table" so attendees have an opportunity for not only take outs but items to stock their refrigerator.

Numbers for May and June (to date) continue to remain steady, except for last Tuesday! It was very hot! The Pathways only served 19 people! Lots of take outs that night! May's totals were 238. June totals are 252 as of the fourth Tuesday. The totals reflect meals served, seconds, and takeouts.

As in any endeavor when a lot of people are involved, some things need extra attention, we asked that servers or anyone who is cleaning up after a meal function, clean with the sanitizer all of the shelves on the black serving carts. They get yucky!

And of course, the ovens! We ask each team to clean up after you cook or at least let Lou Patton know so that the oven can be cleaned when cooled. Better yet.... when possible put pans on the big cookie sheets that will catch spills. Easier to clean. Thanks, Ellen, for taking care of an oven that had caked and burnt food on the bottom tray from past cooking. It would have been embarrassing to have a visit from the Fire Department. Opening the windows and the back door, scraping off the burnt-on food, and cleaning the oven tray was a smart move and not on your agenda that day!

We appreciate Mike Allen's attendance and reporting on the monthly Food Coalition meetings (Food Rescue is part of the Coalition). Noteworthy is that the Empty Bowls fundraising event raised \$40,000 for the Food Rescue program. Attendance was down, but profits were up!

Mike reported 180,000 lbs. of food was rescued in June. Year to date over 883,000 lbs. have been rescued and passed on to Community Meals and Food Pantries. He reported asparagus will be available soon. Later this fall, they are expecting frozen lake trout and ground beef. What an inspiring program!

From Carol: *Thank you, Sandy, for your devotion to making sure our Community Meal pantry is full of a great variety of meats, vegetables, fruits, and staples! In addition, every week Sandy sends out to all the Community Meal Teams a report of the Tuesday meal and an update of what's new in the pantry. Her diligence makes for a smooth operation!*

As always, we have some very faithful volunteers serving! From keeping the dining room and kitchen clean to providing nutritious meals, we are grateful!

Submitted by Sandy Neumann and Carol Kingsley
Community Meal Co-Chairs



Summer is finally here. Thank you to Doug Derrer who signed up to mow at the church in June. There are many opportunities to mow the rest of the summer/fall. The Kingsley's signed up for August the last couple of years. Due to Marv's health, they cannot help this year. What they have agreed to do is pay a young person to mow for the month of August. We will open this opportunity to make some cash to Jason, Ryan, Bidwell and Julia. I know they can always use a little extra money.

The Give Back Day was canceled due to poor weather. Fortunately for us there was not much damage due to snow plowing last winter.

We have once again scheduled a garage sale for Friday and Saturday, July 19 and 20. The Cummings have already stored a few things in the garage. I will organize the space to make room for more, while still being able to get the lawn mower out. This is always a good opportunity to get rid of things that haven't been used in a while. One man's trash is another one's treasure! Rain date will be the following weekend.

Submitted by Laurie Allison- Trustee Chair



Each week (usually Monday) an email is sent noting prayers, praises, and announcements, that have been shared in our service on Sunday, and it includes Pastor Douglas's Gospel Lesson, Music, and Message for the week which is posted on Facebook. If you wish to be on that email list, send an email request to carolkingsley62@gmail.com

July 14 – Potluck

July 19-20 – Church Garage Sale.

July 28 - Snacks and Chat in the Welcome Center..

August 8– 6pm potluck picnic, 7pm concert in Triangle Park on 131.

August 11 –Potluck

August 25 - Snacks and Chat in the Welcome Center..

MUMC September/October Newsletter deadline will be August 25, 2024.



United Women in Faith hosted a funeral luncheon on June 15 for long-time community member Don Biehl. The family was very appreciative for our hospitality. Thank you to all who provided food, helped set up the Fellowship Hall and worked the luncheon. It takes a village!



Anniversaries

Mancelona

David & Sharon Brooks	July 15
Dave & Ellen Whitehead	July 18
Chris & Lori Derror	July 30
Brian & Denise Nixon	August 8
Chad & Courtney Rasor	August 11

Mancelona United Methodist Church
 PO Box 301
 117 E. Hinman Street
 Mancelona, MI 49659
 231.587.8461
 Sunday Service @ 11:00am

**Ad Council Meeting - 2nd Monday of month/Odd
 Months at 4PM**

Boyne Falls UMC
 3057 Mill St
 Boyne Falls, MI

Sunday Service @ 9:30 am



July & August Birthdays



Mancelona			
Cindy McCulloch	July 1	Jack Patterson	August 1
Dave Fisher	July 5	Julie Castle	August 2
Theresa Peterson	July 6	Ginny Moeke	August 2
Courtney Rasor	July 8	Dave Curtis	August 5
Kallie Derrer	July 11	Chad Rasor	August 16
Wyatt Derrer	July 11	Alexis Felton	August 21
Ann Cole	July 12	Noah Felton	August 25
Douglas Obwoge	July 14		
Fiona Mochama	July 22		
Cooper Thompson	July 28		