



Joint Witness Updates

Pastor Karen Kelley is retiring soon. We are all invited to attend a retirement celebration at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2301 Ridgeway Road, on Sunday, May 26, from 2-5 PM. Please sign up in the Fellowship Room if you will attend.

Upon Pastor Karen's retirement, Rev. Dr. Jacob Kaufman will begin serving as Interim Pastor. He will spend the month of June ministering at WPC's location and getting to know the congregation before making the transition with them to 801 S. Mechanic Street in July.

Pastor Karen shared that during the April meeting, the WPC Session discussed and endorsed the name "Partnership Place" as an inclusive name for our location. The Presbytery also approved our joint witness.

We have an exciting summer ahead of us!



May Calendar

MAY 5 - WORSHIP 10:30 AM

MAY 7 - ENNEAGRAM 4 PM; CENTERING PRAYER 5 PM

MAY 8 - COUNCIL MEETING 5:30 PM

MAY 12 - WORSHIP 10:30 AM; EVELYN'S GRADUATION CELEBRATION

MAY 17 - FOOD PANTRY/BABY SPRINKLES/KIDS CLOSET 10AM-12 PM

MAY 18 - WILSON-HENDERSHOT WEDDING IN PETOSKY, MICHIGAN

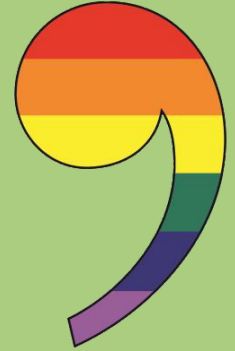
MAY 19 - WORSHIP AT WPC 10 AM

MAY 21 - COMMUNITY DINNER 6 PM

MAY 25 - COMMUNITY SPECIAL NEEDS DANCE 7-9 PM

MAY 26 - SUMMER WORSHIP HOURS BEGIN 10 AM

May 2024



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UCC Genesis Grant Awarded for Partnership Project

With support from the Michigan Conference staff and several local agencies, St. John's United Church of Christ was awarded a Genesis Grant of \$5,000!

This grant will provide funding to hire two consultants from Potentials Coaching and Consulting. One consultant is a UCC minister, and one is a Presbyterian minister. They will guide and support our joint witness project with Westminster Presbyterian Church.

We are embarking on a unique journey of combining two separate entities into one family of faith. We anticipate a few issues to arise along the way. The guidance from seasoned consultants who have experience in joint witness ministry projects like ours is necessary and priceless.

A calendar of events will be distributed in the coming weeks as we schedule dates to meet with the consultants. **Participation by all members of SJUCC and WPC is strongly encouraged.** We want everyone to feel heard, included, and appreciated as we move forward in partnership.

Submitted by Pastor Judy

Joint Committees Forming

As SJUCC and WPC begin to worship together, several committees will be formed to administer all areas of Joint Witness ministry. Each church will maintain its own church council or session. Representatives from each will meet together to form the Joint Witness Board.

Many areas of ministry will need representation. These committees will report to the Joint Witness Board. The categories identified are:

Administration Committees will include Finance, Staffing, Building & Grounds.

Mission Committees will include Outreach, Marketing Evangelism, Vision for Growth, Social Justice.

Worship Committees will include Worship Planning, Music, AV Tech.

Nurture Committees will include Christian Education, Member Care, Fellowship.

We would like everyone to participate, so please choose an area that interests you and let a council member know. In July we will be asking for volunteers, so please prayerfully contemplate where you might serve.

United Center for Caring

The United Center for Caring will be disbursing the remaining funds from the United Way Community Grant. This grant provided \$11,000 in funds last year. The United Center will allocate funds as follows: \$3,000 to Baby Sprinkles for diapers, \$2,000 to the Orchard for weeding and mulching, and \$1,200 to the Community Dances.

-- United Center for Caring Board Members



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From the Pastor's Screen



Sing!

I feel like a kid with a new toy.

Every spring when the songbirds return, I hear their morning songs and I wonder, "What's *that* bird?" A few years ago, Cornell University developed an app called "Merlin." Merlin will record bird songs and identify the birds – right on your cellphone. I downloaded the app, and now I can ask Merlin, and Merlin names each bird. It's like magic.

Recently, here in my Indiana woods, the songbirds were singing their hearts out. I set my phone to record, and Merlin began to work. On a ten-minute walk, Merlin identified 26 different birds. My old favorites were here – Robins, Redheaded Woodpeckers, Goldfinches, Cardinals, and Wrens. They joined the Orioles, Juncos, and Catbirds. They were all singing together, a glorious song to welcome the new morning.

Then I noticed a few unfamiliar birds: the Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Warbling Vireo, and Eastern Towhee. Birds who have been living nearby all along, but I didn't know it. Merlin identified their morning songs, and I was amazed.

We are just like songbirds. Here at St. John's, we've been singing together for many years. We're very familiar with our song and our singers. This year, some new birds are appearing -- birds who have lived nearby all along. Birds who sing a new song, a different song, and want to join our chorus.

Enjoying the sounds of a Tufted Titmouse or a Mourning Dove will be lovely! But what if one of our new birds sounds more like a crow? Or a screeching Bluejay? Or a gobbling turkey? What happens if they sit in our nest? What if they roost in our tree? What if they eat our worms?

What if all these new birds attract the neighborhood cats?

Yes, beloveds, all sorts of things can go wrong when we welcome new birds into the flock. In July, our Presbyterian family will arrive. There may be squabbles over music, sacred items, and wall space. We may feel squeezed out of our nest. If that happens, let's remember the songbirds.

Somehow, despite their differences, they all sing together.

O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Psalm 96:1



BE THE BLESSING

SOMETHING FOR
EVERYONE!

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO
TO BE A BLESSING:

INVITE FRIENDS TO CHURCH

ATTEND THE COMMUNITY
DINNER - OR BRING DESSERT

HELP WITH THE NHL LIBRARY

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH

BRING MISSION DONATIONS

VOLUNTEER TO BE AN USHER

OFFER YOUR MUSICAL GIFTS

HELP WITH CLEANING

NOTICE WHO'S MISSING
FROM WORSHIP

... AND REACH OUT WITH
LOVE!

(Continued, next page)

From the Pastor's Screen

Sing! (Continued)

Despite their numbers, they all find their place in the same woods.

And when they sing together – wow! It's beyond beautiful. It's breathtaking. Their song is an incredible praise to the Creator. Ours can be too – if we welcome our new birds with curiosity, and we lift our voices together.

Every-birdy's welcome --

Pastor Judy

(with thanks to Harry Wilson, who introduced me to Merlin)

Graduation Party



Our office administrator, Evelyn Park, graduated last December with a bachelor's degree in Anthropology. It's not too late to celebrate her accomplishment! On Sunday, May 12, we'll have a graduation cake for coffee hour, and everyone is encouraged to bring cash gifts (no checks please). Let's shower Evelyn with love and financial support!

In April, 23 individuals received emergency food and 12 people took showers. The Samaritan Fund provided assistance for 1 eviction and 6 utility payments.

Contributed by Michele Wilson

Our April Baby Sprinkle and Kids' Closet was held on April 19 and served 34 families, representing 70 children.

Contributed by Donna Benedict

Our April food pantry served 145 persons representing 338 family members. 2800 pounds of food were distributed. Thirty-nine persons were served at our Community Dinner on April 23.

Contributed by Carl Robinson



NHL Update

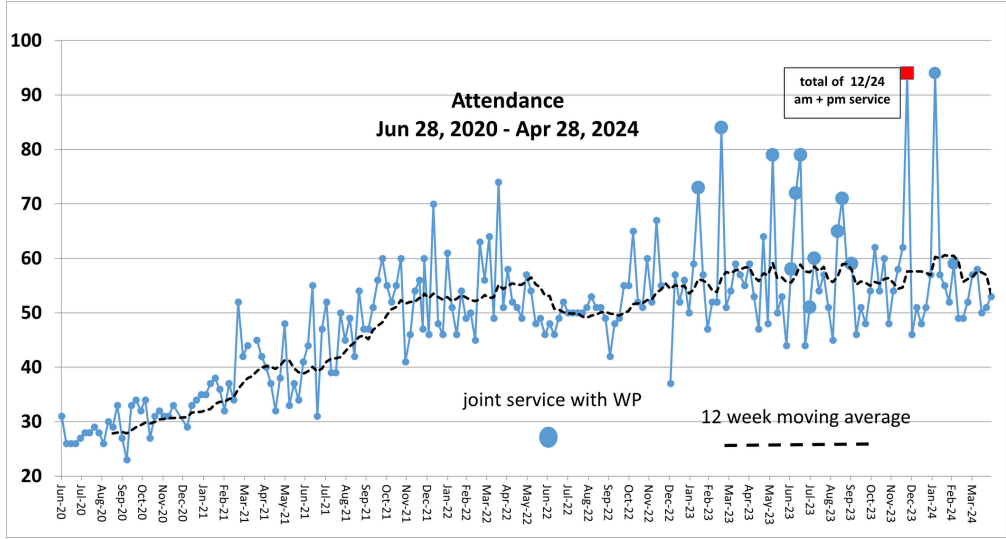
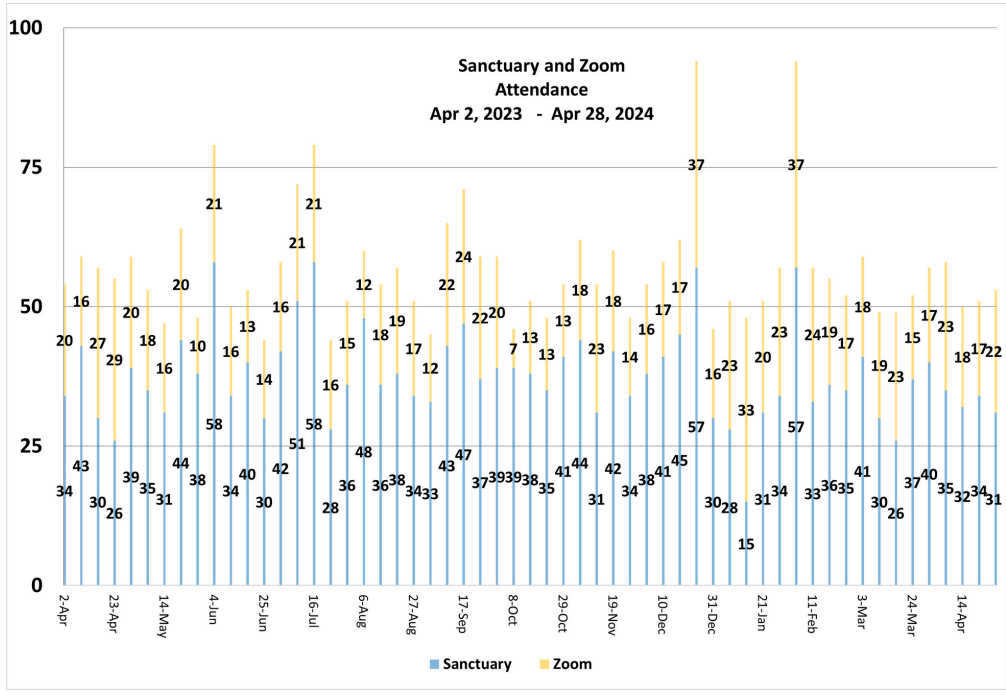
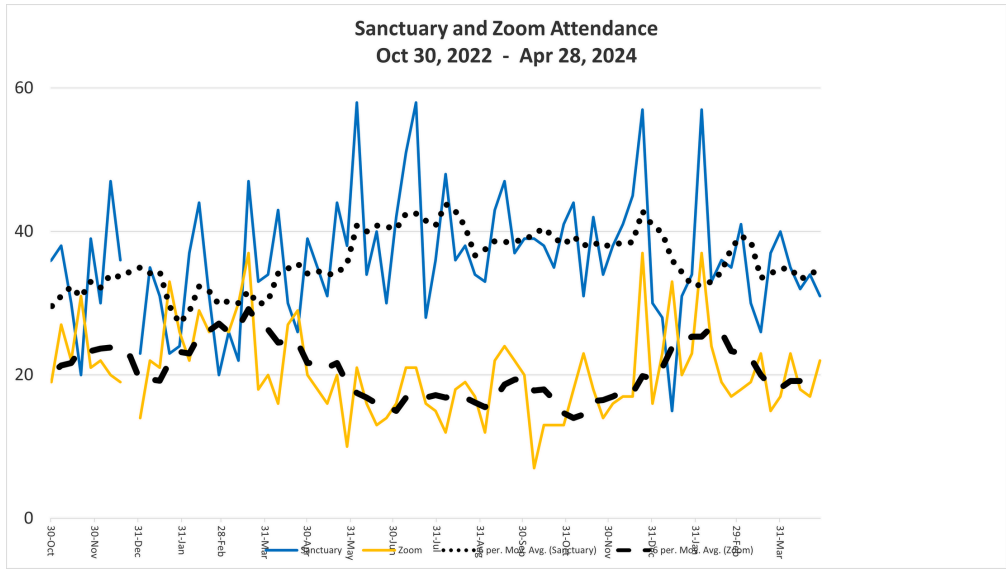
The Nancy Hackworth Literacy Initiative (NHL) has come a long way since it first started over a year ago. We are approaching over 150 literacy coaching sessions provided to a total of nine students. We are starting summer storytime sessions where students from St. Mary's Catholic School will be attending. We are always looking for volunteers to help run the library during the summer!

Contributed by Sara Vowler

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Attendance and Giving

Cleaning Update



On April 20, fifteen volunteers gathered for our inside & outside spring-cleaning day. One crew hauled away a huge brush pile, another group cleaned and organized the classrooms, and the sanctuary was dusted and polished. On April 30th, another crew worked in the basement “music room,” and organized diapers for the Baby Sprinkle room.

There’s more to come: the church office will be organized to create space for Westminster’s use, and the pastor’s office will become a shared space as well. Outdoor landscaping needs to be weeded and mulched.

Everyone is welcome to help. Contact Judy or Carl to let us know your availability.



Charts contributed by Bert Steck, Financial Secretary

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Love God ♥ Love People ♥ Serve Both

