

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:15 AM

Watch on:

[Greenville First UMC website](#)

[Facebook page](#)

[YouTube Channel](#)

The Connection

Greenville First United Methodist Church

S P E T E M B E R & O C T O B E R 2 0 2 3

Moving Closer to God and One Another

"God has revealed these things to us through the Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, including the depths of God...We haven't received the world's spirit but God's Spirit so that we can know the things given to us by God." (1 Corinthians 2:10,12)

Today someone may hear the Good News for the very first time. And today someone may hear the Good News for the very last time.

We are coming through trying times in our congregation and, as Pastor Jane Duffey preached earlier in August, we are "braving a new wilderness" in the Church.

I believe that when we gather for worship or fellowship or discernment about disaffiliation, what's at stake is that we are seeking a spiritual home with feelings and memories and wondering, **Can I belong here?** Some of us are listening for how God's Word is handled and presented in worship and by the preacher. Some of us may hear a call to repentance and find the room to change that God has been providing for us all along. Some of us may not even be able to say why we are here as we carry great grief and deep questions into this sanctuary.

What we discover time and again is that in this house of prayer, this Body of Christ, we imperfectly hold wisdom and passion, follow Jesus, love our neighbors, and seek God's guidance in the Word and God's presence in the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday, August 27, we took a straw poll after worship about whether to remain in The United Methodist Church or to disaffiliate. After The Way Forward question-and-answer document from the Leadership Board, two Town Hall meetings, a financial report from our Treasurer, and countless scattered conversations, membership inquiries, phone calls, email threads, text messages, and letters through the US mail, 94 votes were cast:

56 (60%) votes to remain United Methodist

38 (40%) votes to Disaffiliate

Per our conditions for the vote, the Disaffiliate choice needed at least 60% for the disaffiliation process to continue. So, we remain a United Methodist Church and the disaffiliation process is done.

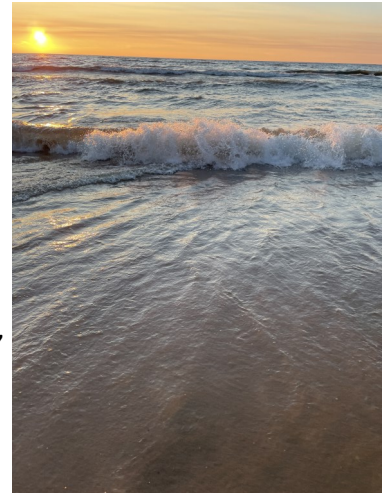
We have learned more about the relationship of who we are and who we think we are in this process. In some ways, this is a natural and continuous discovery process. It is a type of ongoing revelation. **But our journey of considering staying United Methodist or disaffiliating is filled with soul-searching grief and will continue to unfold in the coming days and weeks and months.**

In his book, *The Active Life*, Parker Palmer writes: "There is the experience we commonly call disillusionment, when a trusted friend lets us down, an institution we had relied on fails us, a vision we had believed in turns out to be a hoax, or—worst of all—when we discover ourselves to be less than we had thought. **Many of us try hard to avoid such experiences, and when we are in the midst of them we go through a kind of dying...As our illusions are removed, like barriers on a road, we have a chance to take that road farther toward truth.**

God's revealing work through the Spirit will keep us going into a future filled with hope and disillusionment. So we can join the Psalmist in affirming as a Body of Christ: *Make your ways known to us, Lord; teach us your paths. Lead us in your truth—teach it to us—because you are the God who saves us. We put our hope in you all day long* (Psalm 25:4).

Peace, Pastor Jeff

jeffwrev@gmail.com



September 2023 WORSHIP

September 3

Holy Communion

Pick the Right Ground

For Your House

Matthew 7:21-27

(Wesley Sermon 33)

September 17

3rd Sunday Mission Offering

Time to Check the Inventory

Psalm 103:1-13

September 10

Wake Up to Love

Right Now

Psalm 119:33-40

Romans 13:8-14

(Common English Bible)

September 24

God's Generosity

Can Make Us Angry

Jonah 3:10-4:11

Matthew 20:1-16

October 2023 WORSHIP

October 1

Holy Communion

How Our Minds

Are Meant to Work

Philippians 2:1-13

October 22

Manna and Milk

Deuteronomy 32:10-14 (NLT)

October 8

Pastor Jeff Vacation

Pete Blinkilde Message

October 29

God Feeds All Creation

Psalm 104:10-13, 27-30

October 15

3rd Sunday Mission Offering

Pastor Jeff Vacation

Pastor Craig Pahl Message

Those In Our Thoughts and Prayers

PAGE 3



HOMEBOUND

Neil Sergent
Harley VanHoose
Louise Noble
Kay Welsch
Fran Wilson
Jim Westbrook

THOSE WHO HAVE CLAIMED ETERNAL LIFE

Linda VanHoose
Corla Morgan
Ken Workman

Caitlin Jensen
Bob Knapp
Betty Knapp
Liz Campbell
Ron DeYoung
Fran Wilson
Jim Westbrook
Harley VanHoose



Thursday Bible Study

Join us Thursday mornings at 10:30. We will delve into the words of scripture. We meet in-person in the Bailey Conference room. You may also join us through Zoom Meeting. We look forward for the opportunity to discuss and learn from each other.

The Zoom link is: [**Thursday Bible Study**](#)

ONLINE GIVING OPTION AVAILABLE



Greenville First United Methodist Church now offers an easy, convenient, and quick way for anyone to make a contribution! Just click on the GIVE tab at the top of the homepage at <https://greenvillefumc.org/>. This will take you to the Giving page. You simply click on the blue "Give Now" button, answer a few easy prompts, such as a one time gift, weekly, monthly, etc., and you will be done! Or, using your phone, scan this **QR Code** to take you directly to the Giving

The Greenville Area Ecumenical Food Mission serves to ensure **NO ONE GOES HUNGRY** in Greenville. The pantry is located at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, south of Greenville on M91.

Open on Tuesday mornings from 10:00—12:00 and Wednesday evenings 6:00—7:30. If interested, they need volunteers on the 4th Wednesday of each month, let the church office know.



Leadership Board Recordings

Greenville First UMC
Leadership Board Recordings
July 24, 2023

Members present: Wendy Bates, Julie Brown, Linda Custer, Steve Homich, Cindy Hill, Chuck Hill, Eric Januzzi, Jeff Loding, Chris Nelson, Pastor Jeff Williams, Tammy Youmans
Members absent: John Raven
Guests: Sally Armstrong, Amy Homich, Vicki Nelson and Chris Ritter

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Chuck Hill and Chuck provided an Opening Prayer.

1. Check in with City Church: Chuck Hill read a note from Pastor Tim Simon. City Church is getting quotes for its new building and may have sold the dome on its property. It has begun a \$2.5 million [capital campaign](#) for the building.
2. The Recordings of June 26 were approved (Jeff Loding motioned and Wendy Bates supported).
3. Exit interview form: Linda Custer reported that an Exit Interview form was created for church employees. A form for child care center employees is being created.
4. Guests Input: Sally Armstrong said she has spoken to many members of the church and they are wondering why disaffiliation is being discussed. Chuck Hill replied that no decision on disaffiliation has been made. In fact, the decision on whether to disaffiliate will be placed in the hands of the congregation (see 5(a)(ii) below).
5. The Way Forward
 - a. Changes: A new version was presented by Chuck Hill and Pastor Jeff and is attached. The revision contained two significant updates:
 - i. If disaffiliation is approved, Pastor Jeff will seek a new appointment in a different Methodist church effective Jan. 1, 2024. Continuing to serve the congregation after disaffiliation would require a transitional leave of absence, not an official appointment. This would interrupt his years of service toward retirement and practically result in the loss of health care coverage through the Michigan Conference in retirement. He has to serve 10 consecutive years under appointment before retirement in order to qualify for health care from the Conference. A leave would reset his consecutive service years to zero.
 - ii. Pastor Jeff noted that only “professing members” can participate in the disaffiliation vote, tentatively scheduled for Nov. 5. Current church attendees should check with the office to verify their membership. According to ¶215 in the Book of Discipline, “The professing membership of a local United Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have come into membership by profession of faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual or by transfer from other churches.” Pastor Jeff will hold a membership class (no date was set) for current attendees who need to establish their membership prior to the disaffiliation vote.
 - b. Congregation discussion: The congregation will be invited to Town Halls on Aug. 6 at 10:30 a.m. and Aug. 9 at 6:30 p.m. to find out more about disaffiliation. Videos will be shown discussing the pros and cons. Rev. Rob Renfro, president of Good News magazine, will present why churches should disaffiliate and Adam Hamilton, author and founding pastor of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan., will present why churches should remain in The United Methodist Church. Each meeting will include time for questions. One or two weeks after the meetings church members will vote in a “straw poll” to give the Board insight as to whether a disaffiliation vote is needed (Disaffiliation requires a two-thirds majority vote).

6. Leadership committees: Pastor Jeff provided a draft document showing potential members for the following committees: Education, Finance, Missions, Staff-Parish, Trustees and Worship. He will provide an update at the August meeting.
7. Financial Update: Eric Januzelli discussed the impact of COVID from 2020 to 2022, year-to-date performance, and cost for potential disaffiliation.
 - a. Years 2020 to 2022: The Board reviewed an analysis showing the Christian Child Care Center (CCCC) received \$468,503 in COVID-related grants and paid \$66,475 in COVID-related expenses for a net benefit of \$402,028. FUMC and CCCC together received \$144,040 in Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) grants, making the church's total financial benefit from COVID \$546,068.
 - b. Jan. 1 to June 30, 2023: Expenses exceeded revenues by \$45,031, for a cash loss of \$7,505 per month. This does not include principal paid on the mortgage or annual interest (see below). The church reduced its mortgage balance by almost \$60,000, from \$616,920 on Jan. 1 to \$557,045 on June 30. Because of the church's principal payments and interest income, net worth actually increased \$8,746.
 - c. Interest income: The church has \$200,000 in a certificate of deposit maturing December 2023 and about \$75,000 in a money market fund. With rates close to 5 percent, the two investments are projected to generate about \$13,000 in annual interest.
 - d. 2023 Revenues: Year to date, FUMC Givings were \$121,627, up 0.6 percent compared to the same time period last year. CCCC tuition was \$140,661, up 16 percent. Due to the lack of COVID grants, the category Other Income fell from \$333,037 to \$40,325.
 - e. Payment for Disaffiliation: Disaffiliation would cost about \$313,000. The Michigan Conference does not provide loans. The cost to borrow from a local bank would be approximately the Prime Rate (currently 8.25 percent) plus 1.5 percent, for a total of 9.75 percent. If the church borrowed at the end of the year, the church's debt would increase about 63 percent to \$813,000 (mortgage balance is expected to be \$500,000 by 12/31/23). On a 10-year amortization schedule, the disaffiliation debt would cost \$4,093/month, or \$49,117/year. Combined with the church's yearly mortgage cost of \$124,513, the church's annual debt service would be \$173,630 - 72 percent of the church's 2023 projected giving of \$240,000.
8. SubSplash: Pastor Jeff, Linda Custer and Julie Brown updated the Board on the benefits of using Sub-Splash. Julie said the software was easy to use for the Tech Team. Linda noted that FUMC can now provide funeral recordings for families. Pastor Jeff provided data showing that since inception the church app has been launched 1,836 times and there have been 11,939 "app impressions" (impressions are clicks of the app, not different individuals). As a Sunday example, 31 people viewed Pastor Eric's July 16 service. Julie noted that a person has to watch the service for at least three minutes to be counted.
9. Guest input: Amy Homich said church members will want to know a lot more information about how disaffiliation will affect the church's finances and suggested that the Board create detailed projections if the church does or does not disaffiliate. Sally Armstrong asked how church members will know about other Methodist options, such as the Global Methodist Church. Chuck Hill said finances and non-United Methodist Church options would be discussed in the disaffiliation presentations.
10. The Board's next meeting will be Aug. 28 at 7 p.m.

Wendy Bates provided a closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m. Submitted by Eric Januzelli

Becoming God's People in Christ

Greenville First UMC Membership Class

September 2023

Available in-person and by Zoom
Contact Pastor Jeff for the link

Sundays

Tuesdays

September 10 - 10:30 am to Noon	September 12 - 10:00 to Noon
Five Paths of Discipleship	Five Paths of Discipleship
September 17 - 10:30 am to Noon	September 19 - 10:00 to Noon
Four Sources of Wisdom and Action	Four Sources of Wisdom and Action
Faith Times Three	Faith Times Three
September 24 - 10:30 am to Noon	September 26 - 10:00 to Noon
Two Sacraments	Two Sacraments
One Commandment: LOVE	One Commandment: LOVE

New Members Sunday, October 1, 2023

World Communion Sunday

Curriculum: [5-4-3-2-1 Becoming God's People in Christ](#)

You can mix and match sessions.

Contact Pastor Jeff with questions or for help accessing the curriculum.

Pastor Jeff Williams

Cell: 269-944-9231 * * Email: jeffwrev@gmail.com



United Women In Faith

Wednesday, September 13th
& Wednesday October 11th
10:00 AM Brotherhood Hall

Jump back into Fall.
Join us for an uplifting spiritual journey
into the life and calling of Queen Esther.
PROGRAM: Esther

*“And who knows, maybe you have been chosen . . .
for such a time as this.”*
Esther 4:14b

Esther/Lois Circle
Come join us for a time of fellowship
Tuesday, September 19th & October 17th
2:00 pm
Brotherhood Hall
Devotions & Spiritual Up Lift
Sponsored by United Women Of Faith





Happy Fall, Church Family!

September marks the return of our monthly meetings, the first Wednesday of each month. We are studying and discussing a very interesting topic, The Miracles of Jesus, led by Tammy. We will meet on Wednesday, September 6 at 6:30 in the Conference Room. Stephen Ministers, please join us!

One of the most important things we are taught to do in Stephen Ministry Training is how to really listen when someone is speaking with you. We should not be thinking about how we feel or how to respond to that person, just listen to the person and to be open to what God wants you to share. Sometimes you just let them know you care while they figure out how to get through their situation.


If you feel called to this wonderful, individual, confidential ministry, we would love to talk with you. Please contact Pastor Jeff, Tammy Youmans, Virginia Curtis, or me!

Blessings,
Barb Perry
Stephen Leader

**Listening is about being
present not just about being
quiet.**

~ Krista Tippett ~

First United Methodist Church ~ September 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 8:00 am - Noon - Church wide cleaning	2
3 9:00 am - CCG Worship @ Farm 9:15 am - FUMC Worship	4 	5 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	6 6:00 pm - Stephen Minister Leader Meeting 6:30 pm - Stephen Minister Meeting 6:30 pm - City Church Jr High Small Groups	7 10:30 am - Bible Study	8 8:00 am - Noon - Church wide cleaning	9 4:30 pm - Emmaus Gathering
10 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 9:15 am - CCG Leader Worship 10:30 am - Faith Connections 11:00 am - CCG Worship 6:30 pm - CCG Sr. High Group	11 5:45 pm - Missions Meeting	12 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	13 10:00 am—UMW/F Meeting 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	14 10:30 am - Bible Study	15 8:00 am - Noon - Church wide cleaning	16
17 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 9:15 am - CCG Leader Worship 10:30 am - Faith Connections 11:00 am - CCG Worship 6:30 pm - CCG Sr. High Group	18	19 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 2:00 pm - Esther Lois Circle 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	20 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	21 10:30 am - Bible Study	22 8:00 am - Noon - Church wide cleaning	23
24 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 9:15 am - CCG Leader Worship 10:30 am - Faith Connections 11:00 am - CCG Worship 6:30 pm - CCG Sr. High Group	25 7:00 pm - Leadership Board Meeting	26 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	27 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	28 10:30 am - Bible Study	29 8:00 am - Noon - Church wide cleaning	30

Please remember: The church doors will be unlocked 15 minutes prior to each meeting/event. If you are in need of getting into the building sooner, please contact the church office during business hours to let us know. Many people have been ringing the daycare doorbell and it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, for members of the CCC staff to leave their classrooms to let groups in.



September Birthdays

Brant Gunn	09/05	Nick Springsteen	09/18
Betsy Stevens	09/11	Mike Pfaff	09/22
Homer Shrader	09/11	Ronald Dudzik	09/23
Betty Knapp	09/11	Elaine Pendrick	09/24
Dwight Wheelock	09/17	Char Johnson	09/28
Kristie Smith	09/17	Chris Ritter	09/28



Tom & Judy VanSyckle	09/02	George & Lynne Bosanic	09/11
Robert & Barb Schuster	09/02	Bob & Betty Knapp	09/12
Dwight & Janice Wheelock	09/07	Roger & Barb Blumberg	09/19
Eldon & Ann Lutz	09/09		

If we have accidentally omitted you from our birthday or anniversary list or have a wrong date, please let the church office know so we can update our records.

First United Methodist Church ~ October 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 9:15 am - CCG Leader Worship 10:30 am - Faith Connections 11:00 am - CCG Worship 6:30 pm - CCG Sr. High Group	2	3 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	4 6:00 pm - Stephen Minister Leader Meeting 6:30 pm - Stephen Minister Meeting 6:30 pm - City Church Jr High Small Groups	5 NO Bible Study	6 8:00 am - Noon - Church wide cleaning	7
8 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 9:15 am - CCG Leader Worship 10:30 am - Faith Connections 11:00 am - CCG Worship 6:30 pm - CCG Sr. High Group	9 5:45 pm - Missions Meeting	10 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	11 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	12 NO Bible Study	13 8:00 am - Noon - Church wide cleaning	14 4:30 pm - Emmaus Gathering
15 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 9:15 am - CCG Leader Worship 10:30 am - Faith Connections 11:00 am - CCG Worship 6:30 pm - CCG Sr. High Group	16	17 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 2:00 pm - Esther Lois Circle 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	18 10:00 am - UMW Meeting 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	19 10:30 am - Bible Study	20 8:00 am - Noon - Church wide cleaning	21
22 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 9:15 am - CCG Leader Worship 10:30 am - Faith Connections 11:00 am - CCG Worship 6:30 pm - CCG Sr. High Group	23 7:00 pm - Leadership Board Meeting	24 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	25 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	26 10:30 am - Bible Study	27 8:00 am - Noon - Church wide cleaning	28
29 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 9:15 am - CCG Leader Worship 10:30 am - Faith Connections 11:00 am - CCG Worship 6:30 pm - CCG Sr. High Group	30	31 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice				

Please remember: The church doors will be unlocked 15 minutes prior to each meeting/event. If you are in need of getting into the building sooner, please contact the church office during business hours to let us know. Many people have been ringing the daycare doorbell and it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, for members of the CCCC staff to leave their classrooms to let groups in.



October Birthdays

Eric Januzelli	10/06	Toni Wenger	10/25
Gloria McComb	10/09	Emily Weller	10/25
Lauri Bahlman	10/14	Olivia Youmans	10/25
Donna Campbell	10/19	Vicki Nelson	10/26
Brandon Wood	10/20	Craig Weller	10/26
Madison Homich	10/21	Peter Blinkilde	10/28
Norice Rasmussen	10/23	Jennifer Loding	10/31
Beverly VanHoose	10/25		



David & Judith Nulf	10/01
Bruce & Carol Schnepf	10/16
Chris & Vicki Nelson	10/18
Dr. Eugene & Connie Shatz	10/26

If we have accidentally omitted you from our birthday or anniversary list or have a wrong date, please let the church office know so we can update our records.

World Communion Sunday October 1

Holy Communion joins us in Christian unity. This sacrament invites us to focus on the holiness of communion with God and one another. On World Communion Sunday - United Methodists, in conjunction with other denominations and believers worldwide, participate in communion to recognize our unity in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. This universal and inclusive connection is the foundation of the special offering for World Communion Sunday.

Your donations support racial and ethnic students in achieving their educational goals and transforming communities. In 2021, World Communion Sunday offerings awarded 242 scholarships and grants. Your generosity continues to provide scholarships, grants, mentoring and training for leadership development. The needs exceed what we can fund, and your gifts provide further growth and success.

Meals for Those in Crisis

God has been whispering in my ear and I've finally decided to take action. There are so many areas within our church to become involved in. I am about to add another one. Organizing a meal service for those in need. We have many people who are in crises and need a helping hand.

What do we do? All of us are capable of helping but organization is the key. It might happen a lot or possibly only occasionally. We could have a variety of ways to do this. You do not need to be a gourmet cook. Often times when we are in the middle of a crisis we are unable to fix food for ourselves and our loved ones.

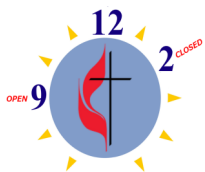
We will have to meet to help with clear understanding of how this will work. This isn't a brand new idea as I remember when we used to help each other in this way. Somewhere along the way, we have lost that. I believe that it is time to start this again. Hopefully some of you will feel that way also.

Please see me at church, or sign up on the sheet of paper on the table after church. Hopefully with your help this will become something that can become a part of our church again. Continue to pray about this and let's help make this happen.

Thank you for your help!
Diana Surrell

Greenville First United Methodist Church
204 West Cass Street
Greenville, MI 48838

A Note From Your Church Office:



The church office will be open on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday between **10:00 am - 2:00 pm.** Please contact the office by phone or email with any questions: **616-754-8532** or email office@greenvillefumc.org. Pastor Jeff can be reached anytime by email jeffwrev@gmail.com phone, or text (269-944-9231).

FUMC Event Scheduling: If you would like to schedule an event at FUMC, please contact Jennifer Loding at the church office: 616-754-8532.

Submission Deadlines: Deadline For the November/December Connection is **Tuesday, October 24th.** Please forward your submissions to the church office by calling 616-754-8532 or email at: office@greenvillefumc.org.