

CONNECTIONS

Our purpose is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world



Message from the Pastor



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 25

Memorial
Day
Holiday

June 6

Pastor Jim's
Retirement
Parade

June 7

Zoom Party
with Pastor
& Mrs.
Walker

Dear Friends,

As I was thinking about writing this letter to you, the twentieth chapter of the Book of Acts came to my mind. It contains Paul's farewell to several of the churches that he had worked with. The chapter is a little sad, but contains one of my favorite characters, Eutychus, the patron saint of church attenders. It is sad to say goodbye to friends who have become family.

We have had some wonderful experiences while we were here. It is too bad that we are ending still in quarantine, but such is life. You, as a congregation, have overcome so many things. However even in tough times you have rightly focused on ministry to the world around us. At this moment, there are wonderful thank you notes from the children in Liberia that we have supported in school. Ministry often seems to be so little and so far away that we forget about it. You cannot imagine the impact our gifts have made in the lives of those kids.

Here in Michigan, you have helped so many in countless ways. The migrant families and the homeless in Detroit have certainly been a bright spot in your ministry.

The food closet has made available the solution to some of the needs around us. You have fed many people and been rescuers for them in their time of crisis.

I will not go on to name everybody because you all helped. Some did a lot, some did a little, but all of us together have brought glory to God. You have done it all. While this entire ministry has been going on, I have been the pastor here. We have seen lots of new faces come and sadly seen others go. I seem to have buried many people in the last thirteen years. I miss them. I will miss all of you too when we move away.

Thank you for all of the good memories.

In the grip of His grace,

Jim

Rev. Jim Walker

With Christ as our center, we are His extended family, compassionately sharing Jesus' love with all people.
Our congregation is on a lifelong journey of discipleship to become more like Christ.

Prayers and Praise



PRAYER requests

In the Hospital

Please remember those in Continuing Care Facilities

Luanne Genga
Novi Lakes Health Campus

Bobbie Winters
Superior Woods

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

Christopher Stone
Son of Mike & Dawn Stone

Michael Stone
Son of Mike & Dawn Stone

Blake
Grandson of Betty Hughey

Jared Stabnau
Grandson of Harvey & Elaine Stabnau

Cody Ford-Aimone
Grandson of Mike & Lynda Aimone

Justin Renton
Grandson of Donna Sweeney

Chad Koenne
Grandson of Dick & Lila Timm

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Natalie	Decker	1
Beth	Fancher	3
Ardelia	Lee	4
Mary Carol	Smallwood	6
Wendy	Strickland	6
Terri	Morioka	7
Faith	Redden	7
Bryan	Girbach	8
Anne	Girbach	10
Andrew	Cook	12
Jim	Pollard	14
Melissa (Missy)	Clark	16
Avery	Jones	17
Ed	Dubin	18
Avis	White	18
Stephen	Marosi	19
Chidera	Ikpeama	21
Daniel	Dzierbicki	22
Macdennis	Ikpeama	23
Don	Priest	24
Kelly	Boelter	27
Johanna	Quinn	28
Maxine	Henderson	30
Owen	Strickland	30
Mary	Wood	31

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Stephen & Ardelia	Lee	21
David & Jennifer	Daigneau	28

Prayers and Praise



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Jim	Moore	1
Antonia	Brooks	2
Lawrence	Brooks	2
Rayanna	Decker	3
John	Juriga	4
Michelle	Johns	5
Mitchell	Caldwell	6
Kyle	Sampson	6
Janette	Renton	8
Donna	Sweeney	8
Ella	Germann	9
Danielle	Damon	11
Bob	Payne	12
Stephen	Lee	13
Toni	Hunt	18
Brian	Shephard	18
Lucy	Skelton	19
Julie	Skelton	21
Betty	Parmelee	22
Haley	Murray	23
Wesley	Crocker	26
Natalie	Damon	28
Katelyn	Gierak	28
Mark	Groeneweg	28



Roger & Diane	Ferguson	4	Don & Cindy	Schloesser	16
Chris & Crystal	Strickland	6	Scott & Megan	Skelton	21
Paul & Rebecca	Brooks	7	Jim & Cheryl	Wagner	22
Jerry & Kathleen	Caldwell	7	Michael & Barb	Moore	25
David & Natalie	Damon	10	Mike & Monica	Bournival	28
Gabe & Marlayna	Keelan	10	Robert & Marilyn	McKenna	28
Don & Marj	Priest	15	James & Marilyn	Wood	28



You who live in the
**SHELTER OF THE
MOST HIGH,**

*who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust."*

—Psalm 91:1-2 (NRSV)



As each of us shelters in place to do our part to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we cannot help but be impacted by the scale of illness, death, and financial distress all around us. We could even be led to believe that this is a hopeless situation.

But, thank God, that is not true!

Together, we can give compassion and care to others in this time of great need. By way of cards, telephone calls, but mostly by prayers! Even as you shelter in place, you can be there for others.

Stay Home! Stay Safe and Healthy!



Ralph Bird Funeral Service



These are very strange times. The funeral arrangements for Ralph Bird will be held at David C. Brown Funeral Home on Friday, May 22, 2020 from 10am-11am for family only. 11am until 2pm will be the general visitation and 2pm will be the service.

Anyone visiting must wear a mask. Only a total of ten people will be allowed in at a time. As people leave others may come in. The funeral service will be for family only. Let me suggest that you send a card or a note to Arlene.

Let us continue to pray for her and the healing of this land.

*May God bless you all,
Rev. Jim Walker*



Greetings Church,

Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. I am so very excited to be drawing closer to living and ministering among and with you. As that day approaches, I covet your prayers for me and my family as I am praying for all of you.

You may be wondering what direction your new pastor will take in leading you forward into the future. The way I know best to answer that question is to tell you how I take the next right step on my own journey.

Whenever I am in a new situation, my first next right step is to get to know those with whom I will be journeying. I am hoping, even with COVID-19 restrictions in place, to be able to have some listening sessions that the Staff Parish Relations Committee will set up for us. We will most likely do these as Zoom meetings and for those without internet access or abilities, we will do conference calls. In these meetings, the focus is on me listening to you. There will be three questions that you will answer as I listen.

- (1) What is one thing I, as your new pastor, need to know about this church?
- (2) What is one way that we can reach new people together?
- (3) What is one dream that you have for our church?

I will be revealing more and more of myself to you through my sermons, but I will answer a few questions during these listening sessions, too. But remember, the main emphasis is on me listening to you.

Second, I remove any obstacle on the path where God is leading. This can be an unresolved grief, unforgiven hurt, a deed undone, or a relationship that needs mending. Over the years, I have recognized that I get stuck sometimes. Each time I have learned to live into convicted humility. This allows me to be open to the other and willing to listen and change while also knowing my own convictions. When I can remain in convicted humility, nine times out of ten, I learn something that softens the edges of my convictions. I continue to grow.

In my introductory meeting with the Staff Parish Relations Committee, I heard that there are many divisions among you. Whether it's early vs. late services attenders, traditional vs. contemporary worship, conservative vs. liberal, there are obstacles getting in the way of following God on the path where God is leading us, individually and as a faith community. The distractions of our divisions keep us stuck like a log jam with an inability to move forward.

One of the main things I have been doing during my time in quarantine is to study how to facilitate healing and open conversations. I will be utilizing such resources as *The Anatomy of Peace* from the Arbinger Institute, *Another Way: Living and Leading Change on Purpose* by Stephen Lewis, Matthew Wesley Williams, and Dori Grinenko Baker, and the many webinars on how to lead during COVID-19. It is my hope to begin to heal the divides and begin having decisions made, not as us vs. them, but as us.

What I know and understand from my own faith journey is that if you don't get the obstacles out of the way first, your ability to follow God and do God's work is greatly stifled. I am not afraid to talk about the elephant in the room and, in fact, I like to help the elephant dance.

Finally, I believe that it may be time for Belleville First to go through the process of the Local Church Assessment. This is a district/conference facilitated assessment that helps the church to look at where it's been, see where it is, and then move it into the future with confidence. In my own faith journey, I take time about every six months to contemplate these areas. I journal, so it's easy for me to look back at where God has been leading, even if I didn't get it at the time. I also do this on a daily basis through the ancient practice called the daily examen. I ask myself, "Where did you see God today? Where did you follow God's path? Where did you get distracted?"

Through building relationships, tearing down the dividing walls and assessing where God is leading us into the future, we will be stronger disciples of Jesus Christ and live into being God's church in the community of Belleville. I am looking forward to what God has in store for us as we work together and with Jesus to make disciples that transform the world.



God's richest blessings,
Pastor Mary Loring



Your word
is a **LAMP** to
my feet and
a **LIGHT** to
my path.

Psalm 119:105, NRSV

May Newsletter - News from the Emergency Food Closet

Beginning the week of March 15th, the Emergency Food Closet became a “drive thru” food pantry due to the efforts of Mark Groeneweg. So far, it is working very well. Our volunteers include Mark & Dee Groeneweg, Lori Summer, and Paul McCrary. We are limiting the number of volunteers who work on Tuesdays and Wednesdays to two, to safeguard all of our volunteers and to reduce the chance of exposure to the corona virus. Volunteers are wearing gloves and masks and are continually sanitizing the carts, pens, clipboards, tables, and doors. “Social distancing” is taking place from each other and clients. Clients are addressed on the passenger side of their car, and the bags are placed in the backseat or trunk of each vehicle. Clients are asked to remain in their car and are not permitted in the church.



Something needed for our volunteers are gloves. Our supply is getting low and cannot be found in area stores. If you have any you would like to donate, there is a plastic tub in the entry way on the parking lot side to accept donations. The church doors are open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Since March 17th through April 15th, we have had 18 new clients. Each client is receiving a bag of food (or more depending on his/her family size) and toilet paper. Our refrigerated items are gone, and so is our bread supply. Personal care items are being given out when requested. Due to the supply of food in stores being limited, and restrictions on the amounts that can be purchased, shopping for restocking the food closet has stopped. Stores are not taking special orders at this time. But, most importantly, we do not want to put any one at risk to shop. Once we can no longer fill bags with their weekly menu items, we will make half bags and give out FOOD ONLY gift cards that can be used by clients at any Meijer store.

News from the Emergency Food Closet



In March, the Meijer Simply Give program donated \$5,000 in FOOD ONLY small denomination gift cards to the Emergency Food Closet to help feed the hungry in Sumpter and Van Buren Townships and the City of Belleville during this unprecedented health crisis. This will help so many who are struggling with food insecurity at this time. We thank and appreciate Meijer's philanthropic efforts to help those in need.

We would like to thank Reggie Miller, Van Buren Township Trustee, for her efforts that secured a grant from the United Way of Southeastern Michigan. Due to her efforts, the Emergency Food Closet received many needed items. We would also like to thank Lynette Jordan for coordinating the delivery and the township staff who delivered and unloaded these at the church.

The Letter Carriers "STAMP OUT" Hunger Food Drive has been cancelled. It was scheduled to be held on Saturday, May 9. Hopefully, it will be rescheduled in the fall.

Stay safe and healthy!

Your Emergency Food Closet Team

May Food Closet Items of the Month: Canned Chicken and Canned Tuna
June Food Closet Items of the Month: Canned Ravioli, Spaghetios, Macaroni (Like Boyardee)



**Celebrating
Rev James Walker
Retirement**

Let's send Rev Jim cards
and make his retirement special.
With a story or two, of your favorite memories,
or photos of the Rev Jim and you.

Please mail card to

Rev James Walker
417 Charles St
Belleville, MI 48111

On Saturday at June 6, 2020 at 1pm. Please come to the church parking lot with signs to thank Rev Jim and Susan for their service to the church. We will be creating a parade to the front of the church where Rev Jim and Susan will be. Either have the signs attached to your car or depending on the weather in front of the church (earlier in the day.)





The Staff Parish Relationship Committee has planned a gift from the congregation for the Walkers in recognition of Pastor Jim's retirement and their years of service to Belleville FUMC.

While not expected, if you would like to contribute to a congregational gift, you may do so by:

- Mailing to the church or dropping a check in the church mail slot with **"Retirement"** in the memo line.**
- Making an extra donation through myEoffering and emailing Micky Keelan (beankeelan@yahoo.com) to indicate this is for the retirement gift.**
- Send a Venmo payment to Abby Fleming (@Abby-Fleming-9) and indicate retirement gift. Abby's cell phone number is (734) 740-2219.**



Pastor Jim's Retirement Party Invitation to Pastor Jim's Retirement Zoom Party

A special Zoom party has been planned as an open house for Sunday, June 7, 2020 from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. Register now for this party to receive the Zoom details.

If you have never used Zoom before and need assistance, call Susan Featheringill at 734-552-8741 before Sunday, June 7.

**Visit the Belleville First UMC website
(<https://www.bellevillefirstumc.org/pastor-jim-s-retirement>) for additional information about Pastor Jim's Retirement celebration.**

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.

When: June 7, 2020 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcrcOysqD4sHd2xGnFCFW9enpBfR8ybThWx>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



SUMMER WORD SEARCH

S B W K I S U N W M K W V
Y E K Q H X A E S K O V P
N A D A O B D N J I N A M
G C L C T B W M D T U C O
N H I P L Q N T H E F A R
I I C E C R E A M A R T M
W D R P O P S I C L E I C
S W I M N I E J T A M O A
B A O E T C G U L D M N M
R T A N E N S M H A U T P
I H C A E I O P S V S L I
S A Y E U C P O O L N O N
V R S E S S A L G N U S G

WORD BANK:

HOT	PLAY	SUN
BBQ	POOL	SUNGLASSES
BEACH	POPSICLE	SWIM
CAMPING	SAND	SWING
FUN	SUMMER	VACATION
ICE CREAM		
JUMP		
KITE		
PICNIC		