

The Arbor Vine

Ann Arbor District of The United Methodist Church
Rev. Mark E. Spaw, District Superintendent

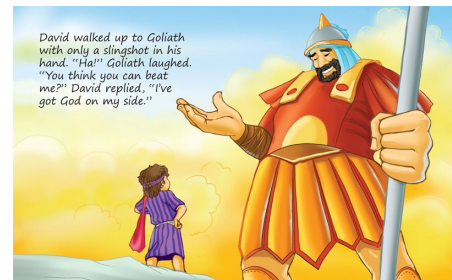


February 2018

GOD IS GOOD OR THE BIGGER THEY ARE

Problems! If it isn't one thing it's another. Each day we face many problems. Someone once told me, "There are no problems, only challenges." Well, if you've got a hot cup of coffee in your car and you're about to take a sip and your air bags go off, it's a problem, not a challenge. "But...with God ALL things are possible."

A friend of mine shared the following thought with me. He suggested that when the Israelites faced the giant Goliath, the onlookers said, "He is too big. We cannot possibly defeat him." The boy David looked at the giant and said, "He is so big I can't miss him."



I went right back to my office and looked at my problems. The illustration stuck with me for a few days, and I began to see all of my challenges in a different light.

No longer were they giants which would overwhelm me. They suddenly became huge targets which couldn't be missed. Once more a Bible story made new sense.

The story from the Old Testament ends when David takes his shepherd's sling-shot and skillfully plants a stone right on Goliath's huge forehead, and the giant is killed.

How does your story end? Do the giants in your life get you or do you get them? As I look back on my own life, I see a few which whipped me. But, with God's help, I also see many which I was able to defeat. There are a few facing me right now. In fact, they are so large that I can't walk away from them to a place where I can't see them. They loom over my horizon when I look in any direction. They are always there. But, now that I've been reminded of David, I know that because of their size, I, with God's help, can't miss them. I'm going to be able to conquer them in time and with God's help.

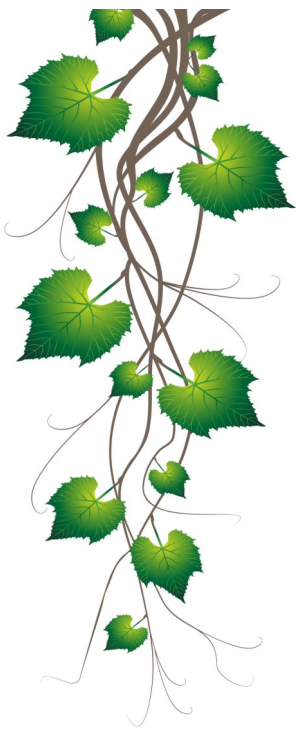
I may not run as fast as I used to and my back issues are serious, but my solution will be on dead center. Life is too rich to be threatened by giants. So, the next time one comes my way, with God's help, I'm going to reach for the proverbial sling-shot and let him have it.

As we approach the Lenten season, my prayer for all of us is to have a new appreciation for the mystery in life and the certainty of Jesus Christ and His Lordship. My hope for the upcoming Lenten season is that we all be awakened to a new childlike trust, faith and hopefulness so that we might better follow the awesome miracle-worker to the fulfillment of God's grand design for ALL of His creation. With God's help, you can't miss!

Getting ready for Lent,

mark

Rev. Mark E. Spaw



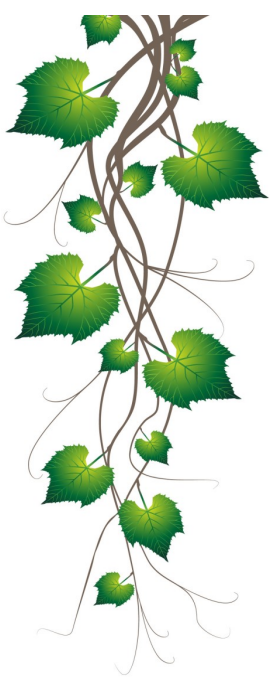
The
Season
of
Lent



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NEWSWORTHY AND IMPORTANT

UMW ANN ARBOR DISTRICT PRAYER BRUNCH ~ SACRED SPACES

Rev. Briony (Bri) Desotell is the featured speaker at the United Methodist Women’s Prayer Brunch. Rev. Desotell is the lead pastor at Ypsilanti: First UMC. She is a graduate of Hope College, Duke Divinity School and Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. Sacred Spaces: Encounters with God and Neighbor is April 7 at Ypsilanti: First UMC, 209 Washtenaw Avenue, Ypsilanti, MI. Cost is \$12 and after March 12, \$15. Registrations are accepted until March 27. Check in is 9:00 am and program begins at 9:30 am. Go to aadistrict.org for registration

Ezra ~ Updates for Local Churches

Please remember to update your leadership in Ezra as this information is pertinent to the district and conference. Please use the links below for assistance:

<http://support.michiganumc.org/knowledge-base/church-dashboard-screencast/>

<http://support.michiganumc.org/knowledge-base/church-dashboard-manual/>

CELEBRATION AND INTRODUCTION OF DISTRICT 8—APRIL 27 AT 6:30 PM

There’s a Friday night celebration of the coming together of the Albion and Ann Arbor districts. The event will be led by Rev. Dale Miller (current Albion District DS) and Rev. Mark Spaw. We will fellowship with others, choose the name of our new district (see article below) and discuss and choose our district officers and leaders and set the 2019 budget. The evening will be hosted by Jackson First UMC located at 275 West Michigan Avenue in Jackson.

ALBION DISTRICT-ANN ARBOR DISTRICT-DISTRICT 8. WHAT’S IN A NAME?

As we transition into what was the Albion District and the Ann Arbor District we will be referred to as District 8. District 8 is not the name we will stay with. We are asking for your creative input. Take a look at the boundary lines, counties, the shape of the mitten (or hand) and offer a suggestion. Go to aadistrict.org and click on District Boundaries Report.

Send suggestions to Dar McGee at aadisumc@sbcglobal.net.

SPRING LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES

In 2018, Spring Lay Servant classes are Saturday, April 7 and Saturday, April 21 at Brighton UMC. Flyers will be mailed to churches soon. Mark your calendar and plan to attend.

NEW BEGINNINGS SEMINAR

If your church will have a new pastor appointed please plan to attend one of the New Beginnings for a healthier transition. The dates are March 15 or 17 at Frankenmuth UMC or May 17 or 19 at Rochester: St. Paul's UMC. The brochure contains details about which session you should attend as well as registration information. Please go to aadistrict.org.

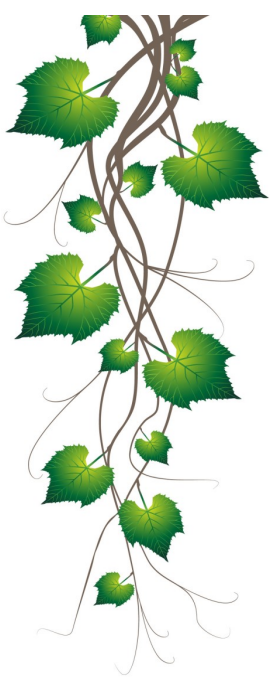
LAKE HURON RETREAT CENTER—COTTAGE AVAILABLE

Lake Huron Retreat Center offers all clergy and laity the opportunity for spiritual renewal through the At the Water’s Edge Cottage. Located in a secluded area on the north end of the campus, the cottage features a full kitchen, living room, bathroom and two bedrooms (one queen bed each). The living room features a gas fireplace and comfortable furniture for study or rest. The wrap around deck is the perfect spot to enjoy the lake and utilize the provided gas grill. A nearby labyrinth offers the opportunity for prayer and contemplation.

This is the perfect location for an individual or couple to come for a prayer retreat, study time, sermon preparation or personal reflection. Lake Huron Retreat Center is in Burtchville at 8794 Lakeshore Road (20 min north of Port Huron). Guest Services Coordinator Heather Marsack is accepting reservations. Come for the day, an overnight or several nights. Contact Heather at 810-327-6272 or lake-huronretreat@comcast.net for availability and cost.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

- Feb 3 Tom Anderson
- Feb 6 Deborah Zender
- Feb 7 Taek Kim
- Feb 10 Earl & Gloria Downing
- Feb 12 Shelley Weatherup
- Feb 12 Larry Job
- Feb 15 Mark Zender
- Feb 17 Andy Lee
- Feb 22 Doug Paterson
- Feb 22 Kyungran Cho
- Feb 22 Paula Timm
- Feb 23 Tom Macaulay
- Feb 23 Rochelle Miller
- Feb 24 Pete Harris
- Feb 27 Mary Barrett
- Feb 27 Margot Cooley
- Feb 27 Nancy Wyllys



EARLY RESPONSE TEAM TRAINING—FEBRUARY AND MARCH

Early Response Teams (ERTs) fill a specific need in the early days after a disaster to clean out flood-damaged homes, remove debris, place tarps on homes, and otherwise help to prevent further damage, while providing a caring Christian presence. Under very specific guidelines, ERTs assist survivors, without causing further harm or being a burden to the affected community. Early Responders receive eight hours of training in order to fulfill this important role.

The Basic ERT Training teaches participants the basics of disaster response, including how to stabilize and secure homes safely, and how to work effectively with survivors and others on the response team. This standardized class is required for the basic ERT UMCOR identification badge.

The Disaster Response Team of the Michigan Area continues to set up ERT Training sessions. All trainings run 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Please contact Bob McCormick to register: 810-357-5617 or mccor1958@gmail.com

February 3: Gladstone: Memorial UMC, 1920 Lake Shore Drive, Gladstone

February 10: Brown City UMC, 7043 Lincoln Street, Brown City

February 17: West Berlin UMC, 905 Holmes Road, Allenton

March 17: Traverse City: Mosaic Church, 1249 3 Mile Rd S, Traverse City

MISSION PARTNERSHIP IN LIBERIA: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AT GRETTA MOFFAT SCHOOL IN LIBERIA

This past fall, congregants at South Lyon: First UMC had the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children in remote John Dean Town, Liberia. Their relationship with the people of John Dean Town and the school's principal was formed through two mission trips to the area in support of the AA District sponsored TBA Health Project, and strengthened through continued contact and mutual prayer.

Gretta Moffat Methodist School is the only school in this remote area of Liberia, and most of the families are not able to pay the fees to enroll and keep their children in school. Education is so important for these children, and for many, their only hope for a brighter future. South Lyon FUMC started an effort to give church members the opportunity to sponsor a student at Gretta Moffat School. The sponsor would be matched with a student and get their picture, name and grade. The sponsorship fee was \$50.00 per student for the school year, and the fee included a little extra to be used for the transportation and communication costs of the principal.

This effort was so successful, that 85 school sponsorships were received and there was even enough for the principal to purchase a motorbike for transportation!

The sponsor families received the names and pictures of their students just before Christmas. This indeed has been a wonderful blessing for all and prayerfully the start of something wonderful.

A great example of Methodists in Michigan reaching out to serve those who are in need and support the United Methodist Church's education program in Liberia. See the District webpage to get involved. <http://www.aadistrict.org/liberia.html>



Gretta Moffat School
John Dean Town
Grand Bassa County
Liberia

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Return Service Requested



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