

Hillsdale First United Methodist Church

Elevators

While getting ready for the dedication of the building last month, I began searching for as many elevator puns as I could find. I found a picture of Darth Vader in an elevator with the caption "Elevader". I found: "The person who makes a mistake in an elevator is wrong on so many levels." And the classic - "How's the elevator business treating you." "Oh it has its ups and downs."

Then I began thinking about the word *elevator*. Isn't it interesting that what we emphasize about them is that they lift us up. (The same is true with the British who prefer to use the word 'lifts' for elevators.) Why don't we call them demoters or drops or lowerers or decliners? Actually, that seems rather obvious—who wants to get in a demoter? Or a decliner? We want things that lift us up, that bring us to a better place, that pick us up!

As human beings we can be elevators or demoters, lifters, or depressors. We can be the kind of people who pick up the others around us, or we can be the kind of people that bring every one around us down. If we bring people down, they have a tendency to avoid us like they would a demoter. They would much rather be around an elevator.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11-24, we are encouraged to be elevators. Here is what it says in the Common English Bible translation: "Jesus died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with him. So continue encouraging each other and building each other up, just like you are doing already."

"Brothers and sisters, we ask you to respect those who are working with you, leading you, and instructing you. Think of them highly with love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are disorderly. Comfort the discouraged. Help the weak. Be patient with everyone. Make sure no one repays a wrong with a wrong, but always pursue the good for each other and everyone else. Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Don't suppress the Spirit. Don't brush off Spirit-inspired messages, but examine everything carefully and hang on to what is good. Avoid every kind of evil. Now, may the God of peace himself cause you to be completely dedicated to him; and may your spirit, soul, and body be kept intact and blameless at our Lord Jesus Christ's coming. The one who is calling you is faithful and will do this."

This is what it means to be an elevator. So, let's not just have one elevator in our building, let's have 100. Let's all be elevators!

Pastor Rob

Questions for Reflection:

Who have you known who was an elevator or an encourager?

What did they do that you can learn from and begin to do yourself?

Who around you needs to be lifted up?

Special Conference 2019 | From February 23-26, 2019, hundreds of delegates from around the world will converge on St. Louis, MO, for a Special Called Session of the General Conference. They will seek a way forward on the issues surrounding LGBTQ persons. The Michigan Conference will be represented by a team of elected Clergy and Lay delegates who will vote on a series of measures that hopes to unite faithful United Methodists who differ on these issues, but agree on our mission as a denomination.

The website <https://gc.michiganumc.org> will provide you with accurate up-to-the-minute information, updates, and resources you can use to follow this historic event, as well as live-streaming from the sessions.

(Taken from the Michigan Conference website at gc.michiganumc.org.)

From Bishop David Bard: Weaving Our Tapestry | [As we approach] the special called session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church later this month...images of weaving have been helpful.



Our current denominational weave says that all persons, including LGBT persons, are of sacred worth and in need of the ministry of the church. It also says that LGBT persons can only be woven into the fabric of the church in certain ways, excluding marriage and ordination. Each plan [to be considered at Conference] presents a different tapestry, some with a tighter weave that asks some to begin another tapestry, some with a looser weave that provides needed space for and between people at this time in the history of our church. Each plan also weaves together important Wesleyan values differently...

Each plan weaves those values together differently and the elected delegates will decide how we want to weave Wesleyan values together moving into the future. Continue to pray for this General Conference, knowing that whatever the vote, people will experience the pain that accompanies a kind of tearing of a tapestry...

At the heart of all our weaving, though, the thread that holds all our tapestries together is the love of God in Jesus Christ.

In God's love, we are reminded that our lives are tapestries "of rich and royal hue," all of our lives. In God's love we are, all of us, "wondrous woven magic in bits of blue and gold." Knowing this, and reminding each other of this, may help us "find, yes indeed, that we are beautiful." I remain committed to a church that helps people know God's love and feel their beauty, that helps people grow in God's love — weaving that love ever more deeply into their lives — and that helps people show God's love by working together in the power of the Spirit to weave a more beautiful world. I look forward to continued working with you to weave such a church.

(Taken from Bishop Bard's blog at <https://michiganumc.org/news-stories/2019/02/04/the-joyful-journey-2/>)

Sometimes the Quiet Finds You

Some of you may know from our conversations, or from other articles I've shared, that I grew up on a farm and that our family spent most of our childhood and teen years riding and showing horses. I have so many fond memories of those years, so many stories, and so many adventures of farm life. We lived on a dirt road that was only traveled by those who lived on it, so we commonly would use it as our own trail to ride horses. Well, that was when we weren't riding through the fields.

As I grew into my teens and my other siblings were married and raising their own families, I'd find myself just taking off and riding for hours on those back roads. There was a chain of lakes that you could see through the trees and if you went far enough you'd end up at the most southern of those lakes, at the pond of Potawatomi Woods. It would be there that I would stop and sit for a while and just be at peace.

It might have been only just over a mile or so from our house, but to me it felt like I was in the middle of nowhere and, other than my horse, the only thing that was there was the quietness of the woods and the water. Even in the winter I'd go riding and the snow would be falling through the trees that overhung the road. It was so quiet and peaceful that I could have stayed out there forever, sitting among God's nature. Those memories are so engraved on my heart that as I write this I can feel and remember how much I loved those times of peace and quietness from so long ago.

I often crave that feeling of simple quietness now that I'm older and so removed from farm life. When you live in the country you can just sit on a bale of hay in the middle of a barn someday and find the quiet time to reflect. Or just lounge in the hay mow—

that's where I'd sometimes write poetry. Living in the city there almost always seems to be noise everywhere. That is, until most recently when God gave me a gift I didn't expect — a very special morning.

I had heard the radio and news channels predicting measurable snowfall over the weekend. Being curious, I went to the front door when I got up that Saturday morning and looked out to see how much had really fallen during the night. It definitely had snowed and was still snowing. But beyond the beauty of a fresh, thick layer of snow, there was something that was even more breathtaking—there was silence. I was drawn to be a part of this quiet morning, so I hurriedly threw on my coat and boots and quickly was outside sitting on my front porch. I listened for a few minutes and looked up and down the street—there was not even one sound. I sat there in awe of just how extraordinarily quiet it was. I recognized the feeling from back when I was riding horses down those dirt roads, and I realized in that rare moment that even here in the city, sometimes the quiet finds you.

That day the quiet found me and in those 30 plus minutes I sat alone, I felt God's presence so strongly, his beauty in the snow on the trees, and his spirit in the wind as it blew. There wasn't any traffic, no people talking, no snowblowers running, there wasn't even a bird chirping. It was just me, the quiet, the memories of childhood, and God surrounding me. I felt so renewed, as in Isaiah 41:1, "*Listen to me in silence; let the peoples renew their strength.*"

Much like 'those good ole days' of riding in the snow or sitting by the pond, I was in the midst of God's silence and beauty. He gave me the quiet I so needed. I hope that the quiet finds you, too, and there you will be renewed and feel surrounded by God.

Melodie Coles, Lay Leader

New Steeple Installed



February 7, 2019 | After nearly a year and a half of research and planning by our Trustees, a new steeple was installed on February 7. Matt Taylor from Foulke Construction led the project for the church while Dillon Powell and Chuck Arnold from Campbellsville Industries hauled the steeple from Kentucky and installed it in dense fog and misting rain. Soft ground initially caused problems for the crane, but crews worked together, and by afternoon the cross was set. Jim Tesch (Chair) acknowledges the commitment of Trustees on this project: Dennis Fadden, Rick Piper, Melodie Coles, Colton Easterday, with Jeff Kornak, Pastor Rob McPherson, and Pastor Pat Brook.



Below (L-R): Trustee Chair, Jim Tesch, presents payment to Campbellsville, KY steeple installers Dillon Powell and Chuck Arnold. **Right:** Powell and Arnold set the cross on the spire.



I wrote last month about protecting our pipe organ from the construction dust, and many of you noticed when the instrument was played for worship on Sunday, January 20. Uncovering it went fairly smoothly, although it wouldn't start until our project electrician tracked down a problem stemming from the relocation and rewiring of some of the electrical panels. I'm delighted that it still works, and that we were able to protect it from the dust storms of demolition and construction during these last nine months.

I'm very excited to let you know that our own Nick Nestorak will be presenting a recital of sacred vocal music as one of our Community Concerts on **Sunday, February 24 at 4:00 pm**. His program will feature music of Bach, Mozart, Rossini, and Schubert as well as settings of favorites like *How Great Thou Art* and *Shine on Us*. Nick continues to build a successful vocal performance career as an operatic tenor with a steady string of engagements around the country, from Washington DC, to Oregon. When he is in town for any length of time he sings with professional ensembles in Detroit, and if he can find a Sunday off, we've tried to have him sing for us in worship here. We were thrilled he could sing several things for us this past Christmas Eve, and thankful that on Sunday, February 24 he's free to do a recital!

Nick will be accompanied by pianist Debbi Wyse, who teaches piano at Hillsdale College and is a well-known performer in the area. She and Nick have known each other for many years, but they haven't performed together since Nick's student days. They are both excited to be collaborating in this recital and have put together a beautiful program. Debbi will also be playing some solo piano music and offering some of her

own creative piano arrangements as accompaniment. Please mark your calendars, spread the word, and plan to invite a friend to come with you to what promises to be a very special concert!

Christmas often doesn't seem like it was that long ago! While these mid-winter months might seem to have less obvious cultural focus than the seasons of Christmas and Easter, for those of us who regularly plan worship and music, we're already thinking of what's coming up weeks away — beginning with Ash Wednesday, March 6, followed by the six weeks of Lent. Palm Sunday this year falls on April 14; Maundy Thursday on April 18; Good Friday on April 19; and Easter on April 21. As we're already beginning to plan worship for those rich days of following Christ to the cross, I encourage you to just take a moment to mark your calendars for the dates I just mentioned. And then before you plan something else for those days, consider attending particularly those rich and meaningful special services. So often it is just a matter of getting things on the calendar—I can't tell you how often I've heard "Is *that* when Ash Wednesday is already?" Many folks remember Easter for a variety of reasons, hopefully one of which is the resurrection of Jesus, and church attendance on Easter Sunday seems to reflect that. But I hope you will also remember the beautiful services of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday that lead up to Easter. For that matter, all the Sundays of Lent usually tie together thematically and prepare us for the climactic Easter weekend. So before we completely forget Christmas—let's think ahead now and prepare to celebrate why Baby Jesus came in the first place! | [SDG](#), [JO](#)

Bulletin Board Headlines

February

Anniversaries

- 9 Jamie and Pat Vreeland
- 17 Dick and Carol Emery
- 21 Steve and Jill Monroe

Birthdays

- 4 David Knowles
- 12 Corbett Amburgey
- 21 Roger Brook
- 24 Ginny Delauter
- 26 Kristi McPherson

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)

March

Anniversaries

- 17 Dennis and Colleen Fadden
- 30 Dave and Judy Burgee
- 30 Steve and Janice Simons

Birthdays

- 2 Penny Swan
- 9 Joan Vanarsdalen
- 17 Colleen Fadden
- 18 Martha Hart
- 19 Charlene Moore
- 23 Lori Caldwell
- 28 Bert Hill
- 30 Susie Eichler
- 31 Jaidyn Lee

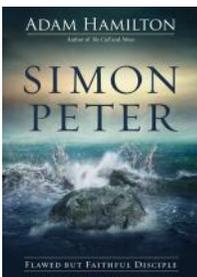
Note of Thanks | The First Presbyterian Church of Hillsdale duly acknowledges your church's [gift] of \$3,500. We express our sincere appreciation for this most generous gift amount. It has been a privilege that FPC was able to have honored your request for the use of our church building during your building project. Hopefully our facility met the needs you sought. Continued blessing to our church neighbors across the way of North Street. | *Sincerely, David Lipps, Treasurer, FPC Hillsdale*

Prayer Requests | Prayers for anyone who is in need of God's comfort and peace.

Continuing: Wendy Billman, Jack Bowles, Ruth Brown, Lorna Busch, Marie Crall, Shirley Cummings, Aaron Delauter, Kristine Hasty, Dave Holliday, Beth Crapo Liebold, Peggie Long, Bettie Monroe, Randy Omo, Carolyn Parker, Gene Parker, Jack Reamer, Betty Scheibner, Maribeth Watkins, Gary Welch, Frances Wells, Rev. Tamara Williams | **In Nursing Care or at Home:** Sammy Brink, B.J. Clark, Shirley Connolly, Susie Eichler, Lois Fosbender, Bert Hill, Ruth Huston, Jackie Mitchell, Bettie Monroe, Colleen Ridenour, Betty Scheibner | **Serving in the Military:** Ricardo Arellano, Emily Mitchell

Missions and Ministries

Blankets and Tools | Your contributions to missions in February continue to go towards the Church World Services Blankets and Tools program. Through UMCOR's partnership, **100% of your contribution will go to this program, and your gift of \$10 will provide one blanket to someone in need.** Thank you for your prayerful support of the Blankets and Tools mission this month. | *Missions Team*



Lenten Soup Suppers and Study | This year's Lenten Soup Supper and Study will be based on Adam Hamilton's six-week video series focusing on **Simon Peter: Flawed but Faithful Disciple**. The first five sessions will be held on Wednesdays—**March 13, 20, 27, and April 3, 10**. The **final session will be on Maundy Thursday, April 18**. All sessions will begin at 6:00 pm with a soup supper in the Fellowship Hall followed by the video study and discussion.

Community Concert Series

Nicholas Nestorak, Tenor
with **Debbi Wyse, piano**

Sunday, February 24, 4:00 pm

In a program of sacred repertoire

Free Admission

2019 Community Concert Series - *Sharing the gift of music in the name of Christ*

Hillsdale First United Methodist Church



FEBRUARY 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
SPECIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE, FEBRUARY 23-26, 2019 LIVESTREAM WILL BE AVAILABLE AT https://gc.michiganumc.org/					1	2
3 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship (Fellowship Hall) 7p Boy Scouts	4	5 12p Garden Club 12p Kiwanis 5:30p Early Childhood Music Class 6p Lions Club 7:30p Handbells	6 9:30a Bible Study 6:30p Bible Study	7 Steeple Installation 11a Red Cross Blood Drive 1p Quilters 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band	8	9 9a HCSA Group Lessons 11a Radio Club Board
10 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship (Fellowship Hall) 7p Boy Scouts	11 5:30p Trustees	12 12p Kiwanis 5:30p Early Childhood Music Class 6:30p Finance 7:30p Handbells	13 9:30a Bible Study 6:30p Bible Study 7:30p ONE Team	14 1p Quilters 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band	15 KJP No School 1p Rehearsal-Nestorak/Wyse	16 10a Radio Club
17 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship with breakfast 7p Boy Scouts	18 KJP No School 6:30p Worship Team	19 12p Kiwanis 5:30p Early Childhood Music Class 6:30p Habitat 7:30p Handbells	20 9:30a Bible Study 6:30p Bible Study 7p Rehearsal-Nestorak/Wyse NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21 1p Quilters 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band	22	23
24 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship (Fellowship Hall) 4p Community Concert 7p Boy Scouts 7p Singspiration	25 7p Ad Board	26 12p Kiwanis 5:30p Early Childhood Music Class 7:30p Handbells	27 9:30a Bible Study 6:30p Bible Study	28 1p Quilters 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band	1 March	2 March 9a HCSA Group Lessons 11a Radio Club Board 5-7p Free Community Dinner

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE—7:00 PM, MARCH 6

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS—6:00 PM, Wednesdays, MARCH 13, 20, 27 and APRIL 3, 10, and Maundy Thursday, APRIL 18

Free Community Dinner

For the love of God and neighbor

Saturday, March 2, 2019
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

All donations received from this dinner will go to a local non-profit organization

February

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45 N. Manning St , Hillsdale, MI 49242
517.437.3681 | office.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com
www.hillsdalefirstumc.com
facebook.com/HillsdaleFirstUMC

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Pastor: Rev. Rob McPherson
mcperson.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com

Director of Music: John Ourensma
ourensma.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com

Associate Director of Music: Reneé Nestorak
nestorak.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com

Church Administrator/Director of Youth Ministries
Pam Laurell, laurell.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com

Children's Ministries Director: Tana Trombly
trombly.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com

Facilities Supervisor: Jeff Kornak
kornak.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com

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