

Hillsdale First United Methodist

Church Times

February 2015

So That

Lovett Weems and Tom Berlin wrote a book a couple of years ago entitled, *Bearing Fruit: Ministry with Real Results*. The basic theme of the book is that the church, as a fellowship of believers, is intended by God to be fruitful. In the Gospels, Jesus uses the images of fruit and fruitfulness over and over again reminding his followers that “those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit” (John 15:4-5). The mission of the church is to bear fruit **so that** God’s harvest will be plentiful.

Being fruitful is not being busy. Being fruitful is not simply doing more. Being fruitful is not necessarily doing what we have always done. Being fruitful is doing the work of God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Weems suggests one way to focus on the end result of being fruitful is to add the phrase “**so that**” to the purpose statement of any project, program or event. For example, offering a Vacation Bible School to the community is not an end in itself. But in offering a Vacation Bible School to the community **so that** we will reach children in the community with God’s love whom we have not reached before, the “**so that**” then shapes all decisions about Vacation Bible School from publicity to the people who will be recruited as volunteers. If our purpose is to reach children we have not reached before, then our publicity will not solely be in the church newsletter. If our purpose is to reach children with God’s love, then we are not going recruit volunteers who are grumpy and have a hard time showing love. Asking the “**so that**” question gives focus to our work in and through the church.

The Strategic Leadership Team, the Administrative Committees, and the Ministry Teams here at church are beginning to ask the “**so that**” question of every event, program, and ministry currently in place or proposed. It’s an exciting process that will continue to focus our work together as the church of Jesus Christ.

You will see beginning efforts at this process in this newsletter as the worship and education teams begin to identify, recruit, train, and support people in the ministries and programs and events that those teams oversee. You will also see a beginning step in this process in John’s article that identifies the goal (the “**so that**”) of the Community Concerts.

We are the church when we are about Christ’s work. We are the church when we are serving others as disciples of Jesus Christ **so that** people will experience the love of God and neighbor.

For the Love of Christ,
Pastor Pat



Lent

Lent is almost upon us! The season of Lent harkens back to the earliest days of the Christian Church. Lent was a season of the church year long before Advent or Christmas. The early church created Lent as a season for the people of the church to accompany people entering into the final stretch of their preparation for baptism at Easter. Many of us were baptized as infants, and even in preparation for baptism we may not have considered the formational aspects of the Christian life ... those means of grace ... through which we might discern and respond to the gifts and calling of the Holy Spirit for ministry in Christ's name and the Spirit's power. This year, like other years, there will be additional opportunities for this community to accompany each other and to invite others to join in the journey that God has prepared for all people, *so that* all may be formed as true disciples of Jesus Christ.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18. Our worship service at 7:00 pm that evening will invite us all into the practice of the Lenten Disciplines as we confront our mortality and confess our sin before God within the community of faith. Ash Wednesday is about death because this journey of being born anew to a living hope in Jesus Christ requires that we also die with him, "buried with him in baptism". Then, through the personal spiritual disciplines of prayer, meditation, fasting, study, confession, and submitting ourselves to the ways of God, we just might become more open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Please, for your sake, for the church's sake, for Christ's sake, make it a priority during Lent to not only invite others to worship with you, but also to be present in worship, to be faithful in daily prayer, and to gather together as the church in formation on Wednesday evenings for *Soup and Soul*.

Sunday Worship Schedule for February

Date	Liturgical Date	Focus Scripture	Theme	Sermon Title
February 1	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	Mark 1:26 – "The unclean spirit ... came out."	We can come clean in Jesus and freed to move beyond the boundaries of our own making.	<i>Come Clean</i>
February 8	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Mark 1:35 – "well before sunrise, Jesus went to a deserted place to pray."	What do we do when the chaos is just too much? Worry more? Work harder?	<i>Beyond the Chaos</i>
February 15	Transfiguration Sunday	Mark 9:8 – "They saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus."	Where do we see Jesus?	<i>Epiphanies and Transformations</i>
February 18	Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:12 – "Return to me with all your heart ..."	Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion	<i>Return to Me</i>
February 22	First Sunday in Lent	Genesis 9:9 – "I am now setting up my covenant with you, with your descendants, and with every living being ..."	God's power in covenant	<i>The Baptized Life: In the Fullness of Time</i>

Sunday Worship

I love Sunday morning services. It's a special time for me that I look forward to every week. It hasn't been like that for me all my life but I now look forward to praising and worshipping our Heavenly Father. It's a time that I spend in reflection, listening to the word of God, and truly letting the word of God, as it is shared so reverently through our pastor, enter deeply into my heart. I feel so blessed that those words are shared with me in those moments and that I hear the word of God and feel his love. I think it's awesome how God works through our pastor, and each one of us, to reach out to others and share the love of Christ with one another.

Recently during our third Sunday breakfast worship service, the fellowship hall was filled with many listening to the word of God while Pastor Pat led us in prayer, and at the end of the prayer she invited us to pray the Lord's Prayer together like we normally do. This time, though, it seemed every voice spoke clearer, and I found myself so moved by the awe of God's love in the room from the strong unison voice that tears filled my eyes. I was reminded in that moment just how much God loves me. And after we had finished I lifted my head and looked around the room at the faces of every person, every child of God there. I felt blessed and thankful to be a part of that moment, to be there with my sisters and brothers in Christ, and to be sharing together the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray.

As I continued to look around the fellowship hall I wondered if in that moment someone, maybe even for the first time in his or her life, felt God's love, or if, in that moment of us saying the Lord's prayer together, someone heard for the first time that God really loves them. Maybe, even, in that moment, in the midst of all of us praying in unison, someone opened their heart to Jesus Christ for the first

time. I realized that we don't always know what impact sharing our love for God with another person will have on their faith journey, but God does, and he works through us to reach out to others. I believe that — because I personally have seen and felt the love of God through others who have touched my life and helped me to have a closer relationship with our Lord. They have helped me know that God loves me and that no matter what I have done or where I have been in my life that I have been forgiven, just as mentioned in the Lord's prayer, through the grace of God.

Through sharing in the message, the meal, and the Lord's Prayer, God's love was shared during that Sunday morning. I could feel it, and I pray that we continue to let God work through each of us by continuing to share our story of faith and belief in Jesus Christ with others. If you are not sure how to begin or what to say, use the prayer that Jesus taught us to say, the Lord's Prayer as written in Matthew 6:9-13: *"Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen"*.

Let others know we are all God's children and that He loves each one of us. Share with others the glory of Jesus Christ and be an invitational ministry so that others can know His love and have a relationship with our Savior.

Melodie Coles, Lay Leader

Volunteer Drivers Needed

About 1 hour on Monday or Friday
6:30pm -7:30 pm.

To transport Jean Dieterle from
Jonesville Dialysis Center (Walmart
Plaza) to her home in Hillsdale.

Please contact Martha Smith for details -
517-437-3059

Mary Jean Tennant Circle

The Mary Jean Tennant Circle will meet
on Wednesday, February 18th, in the
Lounge after the Ash Wednesday
Service. Sue Walter and Jan Tesch are
the coordinators for this meeting.
Please bring at least one canned good
and/or something for the Agape Cart.

Jan Tesch, Chairperson

Free Community Dinner

Come to a ham and scalloped potato
dinner on February 7, 5:00 – 7:00 pm.
Your donations for this free dinner help
Hillsdale County Men with a Vision.

Soup and Soul

What if... Jesus' final day came to life
before your eyes?

What if... Judas had lived to be forgiven
by Jesus?

What if... you had stood at the foot of
the cross?

Be a part of the weekly Lenten discipline
that follows Christ's last hours on earth
through Adam Hamilton's *24 Hours That
Changed the World.*

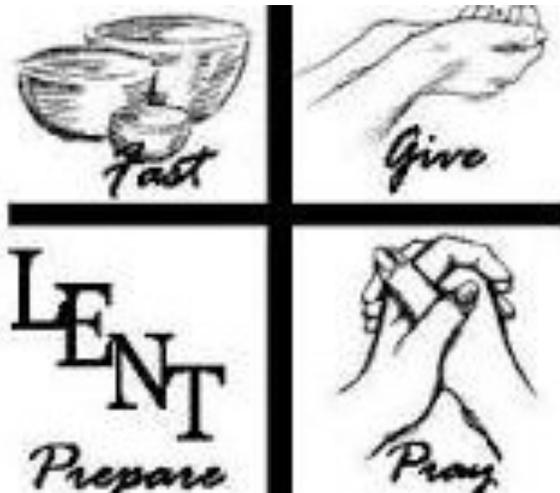
Sessions begin Wednesday, February 25,
6:00 pm. Come and see, and invite a
friend.

February 18, 7:00 pm,
Ash Wednesday Service

April 2, 7:00 pm,
Maundy Thursday Service

April 3, 7:00 pm,
Good Friday Service

April 5, 9:30 and 11:00 am,
Easter Services



Pastor: Rev. Pat Brook
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Director of Music: John Ourensma
ourensma.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com

Associate Director of Music: Reneé Nestorak
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Director of Educational Ministries: Marla Bowen
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Director of Youth Ministry: Pam Laurell
laurell.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com

Sunday Servants

How many people (not including the staff) does it take to run worship on Sunday morning? Two greeters, three ushers, an audio tech, a projection/video tech, a liturgist, a nursery attendant, and an acolyte are ten people who serve every week. Then sometimes there is communion or special decorations or preparations for the sanctuary. That's a lot of people for one service! For two services that could be more than 20 people from the congregation participating in worship weekly!

Under the new leadership structure adopted by the church last year a worship team was formed to help oversee the worship life of the church. One of our tasks is to find people to fill these jobs. So, the worship team is asking for your help in serving the church. There are many ways to serve on Sunday mornings and we need people to fill all of them. These include (but are not limited to):

Greeters	Liturgists	Communion Stewards	Church Bell Ringer
Ushers	Audio Techs	Nursery Attendants	
Acolytes	Projection/Video Techs	Altar & Sanctuary Preparation	

Thank you to everyone who already serves in these positions. There are many jobs though and we still need *more help!* If you are willing to serve in one or more of these positions we will have a sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary for the next few weeks. We will then contact people to arrange a schedule for these tasks.

The Worship Team, Stuart Risedorph, chair

Soup and Soul

Will begin on Wednesday, February 25, 6:00 -7:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

This year, we will be following Adam Hamilton as he guides us through the last day of Jesus' life, in 24 Hours That Changed the World.

Hillsdale First United Methodist Church

2015 Community Concert Series

Cameron Wilkens, Concert Pianist

In a program of sacred and classical repertoire

Sunday, February 22, 4:00 pm

Another Note

In the November 2012 issue of the church newsletter, I asked for your prayers for our granddaughter, Chloe, who had been diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) and for all of us as her family. We didn't know what was ahead for us then, but we were blessed by your prayers and appreciated all of your expressions of concern. The good news now is that Chloe's last day of chemotherapy treatment is February 6! It has been a long road with many unknowns and many ups and downs. But Chloe and her family are well and strong. Chloe will continue to be closely monitored for relapse over the next three years and I continue to covet your prayers for her, her mom and dad, and her brothers.

Pastor Pat

February Education News and Notes

Children's Church: We're still working through the lectionary readings using the Whirl curriculum and bibles. Each week we sketch an item on our Whirl poster to remind us where we are in the year and in the church year. Different segments of the poster are colored for different seasons of the church year like Pentecost (green), Advent (blue), Lent (purple), and Easter (orange-yellow). The video segments are usually funny but also help us see how we can be open to seeing and hearing God. We're continuing to have our snack in our classroom so we have a bit more time.

Nursery Opportunities for the month of February:

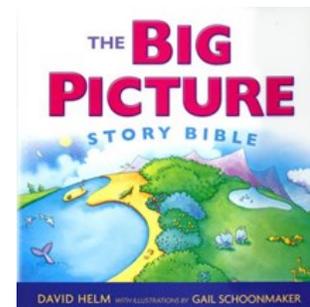
We always have loads of opportunities for nursery volunteers! Although we don't regularly have infants in our services we need to make sure this is covered every Sunday. If there are no infants or toddlers the volunteer can return to the worship service. Please join us for this opportunity to serve our youngest children of God.

When: Sundays in February. Time: arrive by 9:15 am

Sign-up sheet: Posted outside the nursery. (If you are interested in being a part of a team to offer nursery care, please indicate so on the Sunday Servant list in the sanctuary.)

One more favorite children's Bible:

The Big Picture Story Bible presents the bible as a real account of God's love for the world. "All ages will enjoy this exciting discovery of a God who keeps His big promise." This bible comes with 2 compact discs of the author reading the book, one for the Old Testament stories and one for the New Testament stories.



Future events:

Kids' Fest Booth, probably June 17th, 2015.

One day event sponsored by American 1 Credit Union.

Vacation Bible School – summer 2015,

possibly with a children's music theme culminating in a concert. Time and date is TBD dependent upon theme and available volunteers.

As always, you can contact me at church on Sunday or Tuesday mornings. You can e-mail me at my church e-mail address at bowen.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com.

Blessings to you!

Marla Bowen

Director of Educational Ministries

From the Director of Music

In just a short time, our Community Concerts have become wonderful opportunities for us to be invitational and reach out to our community! I am so grateful for everyone's help and support in making these programs successful. Our 2015 series will have four programs spread out over the year: February, April, October and December, with one possible "floating" idea without a specific spot at this time. Our goal is to present programs of a distinctive sacred flavor and with high musical standards in order to offer us unique opportunities to be invitational in offering the good news of Jesus Christ to our community through the gift of music.

Our first concert is coming up rather soon: Concert pianist Cameron Wilkens on Sunday, February 22 at 4:00 PM. Cameron is a friend of our Associate Director of Music, Reneé Nestorak, and has enjoyed success with her career. We are so fortunate to have her come and play for us. She offers programs with great variety of musical style and works hard to integrate the sacred and classical repertoire.

Currently living in Rochester, New York, Cameron is a pianist, teacher, and musical academic. She has given solo, collaborative, and concerto performances across the United States and has received numerous awards for her teaching and research. Born and raised in rural Oregon, she began taking piano lessons at age 5 and teaching them at age 11. She completed a BA in Music at Hillsdale College in 2009, graduating Summa Cum Laude and with honors. While at Hillsdale, she was a National Merit Scholar and President of the Honors Program. She studied piano with Brad Blackham and Omri Shimron and appeared as soloist with the Hillsdale College Orchestra in 2007.

In 2011, Cameron received an MA in Music Theory Pedagogy from the Eastman School of Music, regularly listed as the "#1 ranked music school" in the country by US News & World Report. In 2014, she received an MM in Piano Performance from Eastman. She currently maintains a private piano studio, with students ranging from age 8 through adult, and teaches high school- through doctoral-level theory and aural skills at Eastman and various community music schools. Cameron continues piano study with Natalya Antonova and Vladimir Feltsman at Eastman and will begin her doctorate in piano performance in 2016.

But of course, our first priority in the music department is the ongoing worship and music on Sunday mornings, these next weeks with the goal of enhancing and enriching our observation of Lent. Look for a variety of musical styles and moods to support the themes of the season. I personally appreciate very much your openness to trying some new things mixed in with the familiar. Since my process of choosing music is so driven by the scripture and theme of the day, I often end up with a list of some really great but new material as well as familiar. So I try to find a balance between hymns/songs that we know and love, with ones that are new. While familiar songs have strong spiritual association and depth for us, a brand new song can often open a window to something fresh and stimulating – even challenging! All it takes is an open mind and a little bit of courage to step out and give it a try! As one of my mentors said to me years ago, "Every song you now know and love was once totally unfamiliar!" So, let's continue to enjoy "mixing it up" as we seek to express our praise and gratitude to God.

SDG

John Ourensma,
Director of Music

Sunday Worship Services

First Service at 9:30 am

Held in the Sanctuary includes hymns and songs with the organ or piano, music by Chancel Choir, soloists and instrumentalists, prayer, Bible readings and preaching.

Second Service at 11:00 am

Held in the Fellowship Hall includes songs led by a live band and vocalists, prayer, readings from the Bible and an interactive, discussion oriented reflection on the Bible readings.

Ash Wednesday Service, February 18, 7:00 pm

Hillsdale First United Methodist Church 2015 Community Concert Series

Cameron Wilkens, Concert Pianist

In a program of sacred and classical repertoire

Sunday, February 22, 4:00 pm

Mark your own calendars and begin to invite your friends.

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