

Hillsdale First United Methodist Church

Dreams

Several years ago while I was taking a class in customer service, the teacher of the class gave us all an assignment to write down 50 dreams for our lives. Not just 50 dreams for our church but 50 dreams that covered every aspect of our lives. They didn't have to be easily attainable, but they should be things that were at least possible (so world peace was probably not going to be on the list).

The first five were on the paper before I left the class. The next five to ten within a day, but then it started to get more difficult. What did I really want? Were there dreams that I had, but I was afraid to admit because they were too big? Were there dreams that had hung around in the crevices of my mind that I had not examined? Were there dreams that I had as a youngster that should be dusted off and re-explored? Were there areas of my life that I was missing – had I included dreams for my family, my physical well-being, my spiritual growth, my work (the church), and so on and so forth?

I never did quite get to 50. I think I made it into the 40's and ran out of ideas. But the assignment certainly made me think about my future plans. While it wasn't a bucket list of things I wanted to do before I die, it certainly would influence such a list. It is an exercise that is worthwhile, and I recommend it to you for your personal growth.

Church Dreams

So here I sit at the beginning of a new year, with a renovated building almost completed, and I wonder what the 50 things we might

dream for the church would be. The first five would probably be on the paper in seconds – more people, more children, renovating some other part of the building, some new ministry to the lower income residents downtown, and _____ (you can fill in the blank). But once we get past the first 15 or 20 then the thinking and the dreaming really starts – what would you dream that you haven't dared to dream before? Look at that list of questions I asked myself and ask them of the church. You see, I believe God works through dreams, inspires us with them, and then will help us move into the future.

*...what
would you
dream
that you haven't
dared to dream
before?*

I'd love to have us actually put together such a list. I think I will have us do that at our February Ad Board meeting. So would you help us out? Send me your list (it doesn't have to be 50, but at least 10 would be great) to: mcpherson.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com and mark it **Dreams** in the memo line!

Pastor Rob

Squeezing Him In

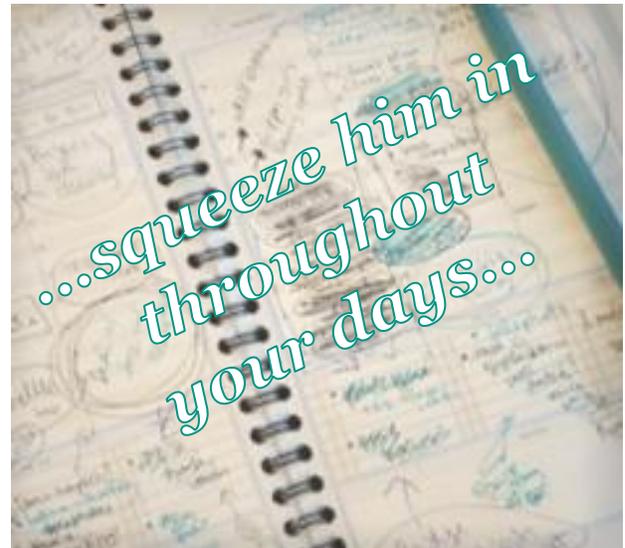
Happy New Year! That has been a popular greeting being shared by everyone now that we are in the new year of 2019. And with the new year, many people turn to making New Year's resolutions and trying to change areas of their lives by adding more positive habits. Some of the most common resolutions are losing weight, exercising more, being kinder, focusing on the positive. While all of those are good things to consider, what if we went a little further and a bit deeper by rethinking the importance of the resolutions being made?

When I think of resolutions this year, I keep going back to a recent message Pastor Rob shared with us about squeezing Jesus into our lives during the busy holidays. In his message he related the nativity story but gave an example of how the tone might change if instead of saying the innkeeper had no room at the inn, we said that he made room for Mary and Joseph by 'squeezing them in' at the manger. Hearing it this way really changed the feeling of the story, emphasizing how compassionate the innkeeper was to find some room for the couple and new baby. It encourages us to take every situation and look at it differently, especially in this new year when we are already making resolutions and changes.

Psalm 51:10-11 reads, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me." This reminds us that we can squeeze Jesus into our lives by just asking him to stay present in it. Then we can continue to grow that relationship with other small changes — memorizing a certain verse each day or week, singing

hymns with more enthusiasm, starting a new prayer time during the day, telling someone each day that God loves them, volunteering to serve at church in some way, praying for those on our prayer list. However we choose to make changes in this new year, let us be encouraged to make changes that include Jesus, squeezing him in throughout our days. Let your love for God be the change this year — sharing his love, feeling his love, squeezing him in all the ways you can.

Melodie Coles, Lay Leader



Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Psalm 51:10-11

From the Director of Music

A huge thank you to all who helped make our sixth annual Community Christmas concert a wonderful time of worship while experiencing God's love and grace through music. Many thanks to the bell ringers and singers for their hard work in preparing for the program, and also to the concert reception crew for handling possibly the largest crowd to ever attend one of our concert programs. May God have been pleased by our efforts that day to honor God's gift of grace and love.

I've been asked several times about when we will be able to use our pipe organ again. The organ was carefully protected with plastic to prevent any damage to the instrument by construction dust. In the chancel area, the tone openings through which the sound comes into the sanctuary, were covered with plastic sheet. This was to prevent debris from settling into the various pipes themselves as well as the table top-like surfaces on which they stand. Organ chambers, as they are called, naturally collect dust over the years and benefit from a good cleaning about every 50-60 years. By that time enough dust settles that the sound of the pipes is affected and it just becomes a dirty mess in there!

But it is even more important to protect the inner mechanism of the instrument. These are electro-pneumatic valve systems that allow each pipe to sound when a key is depressed at the console. A simple 12 DC electrical signal goes from the key to a series of valves inside the windchest on which the pipes stand. This signal opens a



small valve, which in turn opens a large pneumatic (air) valve that opens under the pipe and allows it to speak.

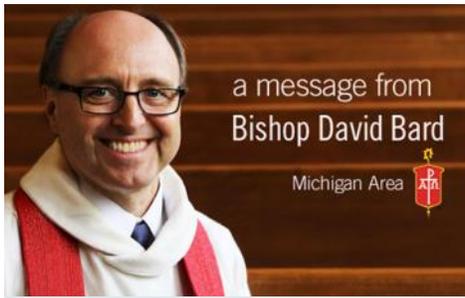
It all begins down in the Music Room where a large blower supplies the wind for the instrument, and lots of it. All the air that operates and makes the organ's sound – every molecule – comes from the music room. Though there is a filter on the air intake of the blower, fine gritty dust still gets through. If a large amount of dust had gotten sucked into the instrument, the

delicate mechanisms would instantly be coated and their movement and function would be severely impaired. It's very likely that notes would not play, or might play sporadically, play on their own, and stay stuck on. This would require some serious maintenance and cleaning of the entire instrument costing tens of thousands of dollars. I've seen this happen in my former life as organ builder-technician, and it's

not a good thing!

With the construction project lingering on so long, I've been reluctant to bring the organ back to life. I was about to do it in time for the Community Concert early last month, but suddenly the process of taking out the floor tile in the narthex covered everything with dust once again. If any of that dust had gotten into the instrument it would have been a disaster. Additionally we've discovered that the process of cleaning the building has raised a bit of dust as well. So in the end I'm thankful we've waited this long. I hope to get the organ back in service soon after the first of the year. | [SDG, JO](#)

Humility, Hope, Heart, and Wisdom



A pastoral letter from Bishop David Bard on the upcoming General Conference

Sisters and Brothers in Christ in the Michigan United Methodist Church, in this new year I bring greetings in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the peace and power of the Holy Spirit.

As 2018 came to a close, many of us watched portions of the funeral services for former president George H. W. Bush and some of the news specials about his life and career. Along the way, we encountered an acronym: CAVU – clearance, and visibility unlimited. It was something President Bush learned as a Navy pilot during World War II. I imagine CAVU was a joy to hear when flying.

Not long after that, I was in Washington, D.C. for some continuing education with the North Central Jurisdiction College of Bishops, followed by two days with our General Board of Church and Society, finding out about their work and having the wonderful opportunity to meet the Chaplain of the United States Senate, Rev. Barry Black. It was a great trip, except for the flight back to Lansing. My plane from D.C. left late and I did not



have a great deal of time between connections. I was worried about making it, and the flight itself was one of the bumpier I have experienced. I need not have worried, though. My flight from Chicago, O'Hare to Lansing was also delayed, by over eight hours! A trip that was supposed to leave at 9 p.m. instead left Chicago at 5:45 a.m. Curling up on airport seats and sleeping for thirty minutes at a time is not the most fun I've had. The reason for the long delay was the opposite of CAVU. Lansing was experiencing significant fog.



As we turn the calendar to this new year, we are all aware that next month delegates will be gathering for a special session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church. Important decisions will be made about who we are going to be moving into the future. Whatever decisions are made, expect there to be hurt and disappointment, and some people may choose to leave the denomination. Just what will happen is unknown. Peering ahead we do

not find CAVU conditions, but rather dense fog. Some days, thinking about all this, it feels a little like trying to sleep at O'Hare airport. By the way, did you know airports are rather noisy even in the middle of the night?

Yet there is something else that draws me. I think of the poem of Wendell Berry.

“When despair for the world grows in me/and I wake in the night at the least sound/in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be.... I come into the peace of wild things....

For a time/I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.”

In the midst of the unknown, the uncertain, the fearful, in the midst of all the noise and discomfort, I invite us all to find some different places where we know grace, the grace of God in Jesus Christ. For those of you who have attended the fall listening sessions, the names of these places will sound familiar. “Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind” (I Peter 3:8).

Go to a place called humility. Humility is not about feeling bad about yourself. It is about knowing yourself, your gifts, your skills, your beauty, your strengths, your weaknesses, your blind spots, your stubborn places. Humility also knows that we can always learn more about the wonder and mystery of life, and the love and grace of God. We can still see more broadly, feel more deeply, think more imaginatively, and love more profoundly.

Go to a place called hope. God is not yet done with God’s church. The United Methodist Church may go through a hard time but the mission we have identified of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, that is, bringing people into relationship with Jesus Christ so that their lives can be different and the world can be different, that mission continues. God still calls each of us to that work. God empowers each of us for that work. Forms and structures may change, but God’s love and our ability to know that love, show that love, and grow in that love, does not change.

Go to a place called heart. There is fog up ahead and fearful things along the way. We all feel some fear, but we need not be defined by our fear. There is fog up ahead and fearful things along the way, but we can, in God’s grace “be joyful, though you’ve considered all the facts” (Wendell Berry). We can be open-hearted and gracious, even when many want to pull us in other directions.

Go to a place called wisdom. “Thinking is hard. Fear and blame are easy” (philosopher Martha Nussbaum). We are called to think more deeply than we often do, think more deeply than perhaps we are even comfortable with. Are we at a moment where the danger is “all the people did what was right in their own eyes” (Judges 21:25), or a moment when the more appropriate word is “let all be fully convinced in their own minds” (Romans 14:5)? What reasons do we offer for our own point of view, and are we listening deeply to others who may differ? In all our thinking are we able to focus on “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable” (Philippians 4:8)?

I invite you in the coming weeks to find places of humility, hope, heart, and wisdom, places where you can rest in the grace of God. As the new year begins, we will quickly find ourselves in the church season of epiphany. Epiphany is a celebration of light, a celebration of a star that brought wise ones from the East to the place where Jesus was born. In the Bible, there are stories of light that shine so brightly and powerfully that people are blinded. In the story of the Magi, the light seems to shine a bit less brightly, maybe appearing through cracks. Why else would the wise ones stop to ask for directions? The rays of light of God’s grace are sometimes spotlight bright and sometimes like the light seeping in under a door. Places of humility, hope, heart, and wisdom will sometimes be bright and easy to locate. They may sometimes be harder to detect. Find them. Find those places of grace. Regardless of what happens at General Conference, letting the light of God’s grace touch us more deeply, profoundly and beautifully is always needed, needed for our own healing, needed for the healing of the church, needed for the healing of the world.

Grace and Peace, *David A Baul*

Missions and Ministries



Blankets and Tools | Your contributions to missions in January will go towards the Church World Services Blankets and Tools program. In addition to supplying emergency kits and blankets to those who have experienced natural disasters or displacement, this program offers financial support for a variety of projects that provide food and water as well as other resources that empower people to meet their own needs. **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*

Bulletin Board Headlines

January

Anniversaries

- 1 Aaron and Ginny Delauter
- 10 Dick and Sonja Slagle
- 24 Dan and Kathy Nestorak

Birthdays

- 1 Jeri Little
- 7 Elaine Rich
- 10 Dan Nestorak
- 14 Jeff Hart
- 16 Anna Bertalon
- 28 Dick Emery

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

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

Continuing: The family and friends of Dorothy Aspinall, Wendy Billman, Jack Bowles, Ruth Brown, Lorna Busch, Marie Crall, Shirley Cummings, Aaron Delauter, Kristine Hasty, 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

Notes of Thanks | Many thanks to Pastor Rob and the many who visited me while I was in the hospital and on my return home. All the get well cards were greatly appreciated. I can't forget the many phone calls and the delivery service I received. I'm on a slow mend and it is trying my patience. I'm still in need of your prayers. | *Shirley Cummings*

I miss you all and hope you have the happiest New Year | *Jackie Mitchell*

God bless you...and all good wishes for 2019. With love, prayers, and happy memories. | *Marion Barron, UK*

Save the Date!

Building Dedication Service | On **January 20, at 11:00 am** we will celebrate the completion of the elevator installation and building renovation project with a Building Dedication Worship service and breakfast in the Fellowship Hall **which is now accessible to everyone by the new elevator!** We encourage you to join in this celebration service.

JANUARY 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2	3	4	5
6 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship (Fellowship Hall) 7p Boy Scouts	7 KJP resumes classes at HFUMC	8 12p Kiwanis 6p Lions Club 6:30p Finance	9 9:30a Bible Study 6p ONE Team 6:30p Bible Study	10 1p Quilters 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band	11	12
13 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship (Fellowship Hall) 7p Boy Scouts	14 5:30p Trustees	15 12p Kiwanis 6:30p Habitat	16 9:30a Bible Study 6:30p Bible Study	17 1p Quilters 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band	18	19
20 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship with breakfast & Building Dedication 7p Boy Scouts	21 6:30p Worship Team NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	22 12p Kiwanis 5:30p KJP Board 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band	23 9:30a Bible Study 6:30p Bible Study	24 1p Quilters	25	26
27 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship (Fellowship Hall) Noon Sanctuary Preparation	28 7p Ad Board	29 12p Kiwanis 7:30p Handbells	30 9:30a Bible Study 6:30p Bible Study	31 1p Quilters 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band		

Free Community Concert

Sharing the gift of music in the name of Christ

Sunday, February 24

4:00 pm

Featuring Nicholas Nestorak

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