

# Hillsdale First United Methodist Church Times

The new year brings an opportunity to reflect on the past year and to look forward to the coming one. Reflecting on the past year first brings me to the Gospel of Matthew and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. My readings and preparations for sermons in 2014 took me deep into Matthew's writings and Jesus' teachings early in his ministry. Through that reading and study, it became clear that to believe in Jesus meant to follow his teachings not only in generally, but specifically. When we are obedient to his teachings even in seemingly insignificant ways we begin to see the benefit not only for ourselves but for God's world. We become more clearly aligned with Jesus and his ways; and by doing so, we begin to see how our ways (or opposition to some worldly accepted ways) can change other's attitudes and practices over time to be more closely aligned with Jesus' ways.

My reflection and study also offered an opportunity for us as the church to reflect on how our ministries and practices in carrying out those ministries align with Jesus' teachings and ways. Over the summer, that reflection led the Administrative Board to suggest a new administrative structure for the church so that our ministries and practices in carrying out those ministries will align closely with Jesus' teachings and ways. The new structure was approved at the Church Conference in November 2014 and is being implemented now.

And finally, reflecting on 2014, I also see the benefit of this fall's music series celebrating the ministries of this congregation at this location and your efforts of inviting people to come and connecting with them while they were here. Perhaps as a result of those recitals and programs, over 250 people came to hear the story of Christ's birth and to worship God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on Christmas Eve. That's over 100 people more than the average Christmas Eve attendance over the previous 10 years.

We have seen a similar increase in the number of people we are serving at community dinners and on Free Breakfast Sunday. Following Jesus' lead, we not only offer food for the hungry but food for the soul when we connect with the people we invite to come.

Looking forward to 2015, I see new opportunities for us as the church of Jesus Christ to invite people to hear God's word and to live in obedience to Christ. I see new opportunities for us to deepen our understanding of who we are as followers of Jesus Christ. I see new opportunities to align our ministries and the ways that we carry out those ministries with Jesus' clear teachings.

It is a new year; a new year to live in God's mercy and grace, to be attentive to the nudging of the Holy Spirit and to be followers of Jesus Christ.

*Pastor Pat*

January 2015

## Relaxed?

I've always enjoyed the more relaxed week between Christmas and New Year's Day. It's quite a welcome break from a very busy fall, and particularly this one, with monthly community concerts since August, through the November 16 Festival of Song and the December 7 presentation of "I Hear the Prophet" coming within three weeks of each other! All this on top of our first priority of Sunday morning worship and music planning and preparation.

But several weeks of worship services into January have already been framed out, and Ash Wednesday is only eight weeks away. So there's a fair amount of work to be done as we head to an early Easter – this year the first Sunday of April.

I hope you have your calendars already marked for the important dates of the Lent/Easter cycle, and I encourage you to plan your life around these important services, and, of course, worship each Sunday morning. There is no doubt in my mind that our worship together drives everything else we do as a church. :

2/18	Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 PM
2/22	Lent Begins
3/29	Palm Sunday
4/2	Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 PM
4/3	Good Friday Service 7:00 PM
4/5	Easter Sunday

And, this time of year will always be special to me because it marks my anniversary of coming to Hillsdale. It's hard to believe that this year marks the end of my second year. Thank you for all your support and kind comments about my work. It is truly a satisfying thing to be working among you. I pray that worship music at our church never becomes an end unto itself, but that it always truly seeks serve as a means for us to glorify and praise God together.

I've been thinking and praying a great deal about what has happened these last two years – thankful for the many blessings and that we've able to lay some groundwork together. But I've also tried to look ahead at what else I (and we together) need to do in in the area of worship and music for the near future. We have some wonderful things going, even some "successes" beyond any of our expectations. But we can't now just be content and become complacent. I think we probably need to take some rather bold steps, and take them by stepping out in faith. I welcome your thoughts and ideas about where our worship and music ministry might go in the future, not just within our own congregation but especially out to the greater community.

SDG

*John Ourensma,*  
Director of Music

## Bare Trees in Winter

This winter, in my drives especially, I've noticed the bare trees standing strong against the cold and wind. There is a certain magnificence they have this winter for me. Whether the trees are lined up along a fence row, in the middle of a woods, or standing alone, they fascinate me. Trees are rugged and yet delicate. In looking at them, I know that the intricacy that we are able to see above the ground is equally matched below the ground in their root systems. That makes me think of my relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord. I realize that if I don't have a solid foundation and root base in my relationship of faith with Jesus then I have to question how then am I to grow as a Christian, how then am I to serve others as a Christian, and how can I share Jesus's love for us to others and spread the good news with others so that they may know our Lord, too.

I believe the answer is in the written word of the Bible, in continual prayer with God, and in worship by inviting Jesus Christ into my life daily through every aspect and living for the Holy Spirit. The answer is in living life intentionally to serve and worship God.

With the New Year here many people make resolutions for this or that to improve their lives. But the true way to improve life is through Jesus Christ our Savior. The scripture of Ephesians 3:14-21 touched me deeply and is the focus of my New Year. I hope that you will join me in sharing the glory of God with others through joy, love, kindness, and invitation to Jesus Christ as we worship and serve our Lord.

“My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:14-21)

*Melodie Coles, Lay Leader*

**Pastor:** Rev. Pat Brook  
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## Serving This Month

### **Greeters**

January 4 Shirley Cummings, Cheryl Paul  
January 11 Martha Smith, Ginny Delauter  
January 18 Bill and Joan VanArsdalen  
January 25 Steve and Janice Simons

### **Audio Technicians**

January 4 Don Gambill  
January 11 Melodie Coles  
January 18 Rick Lee  
January 25 Craig Connor

### **Ushers**

January 4 Martha Smith, Stuart Risedorph,  
Dick Emery  
January 11 Janice Simons, Shirley Cummings,  
Beckie Miller  
January 18 Dick Emery, Stuart Risedorph  
January 25 Janice Simons, Martha Smith

### **Acolyte**

January Sam Nash

### **Counters**

January Jack and Pat Bowditch

### **Birthdays**

January 4 Jackie Maddox  
January 7 Elaine Rich  
January 10 Dan Nestorak  
January 11 Carol Tindall  
January 14 Jeff Hart and Donna Wellein  
January 16 Anna Mae Bertalon  
January 19 Joanne Fuller  
January 28 Mary Curry and Richard Emery  
January 30 Yvonne Anderson

### **Anniversaries**

January 01, 1971 Aaron And Ginny Delauter  
January 10, 1959 Richard and Sonja Slagle  
January 24, 1986 Dan and Kathy Nestorak

### **Prayer Requests**

Current: Robin Curtis, Jean Dieterle, Crystal Gimenez, Kristine Hasty, Bonnie Hinderer, Dorothy Jagger, Nancy Payne, Wyatt Tucker

Continuing: Peter Deller, Butch Draper, Pat Laurell, Jaidyn Lee, Jackie Mitchell, Earl and Dawn Nesbitt, Gene Parker, Spencer Swank, Maggie Swan, Daryl Sweet

In Nursing Care or at Home: Bill and Dorothy Aspinall, Maxine Bowman, Sammy Brink, B.J. Clark, Warner and Shirley Connolly, Ed Dieterle, Susie Eichler, Jean Elliott, Kiff and Maxine Hughes, Ruth Huston, Bettie Monroe, Dorothy Proctor, Colleen Ridenour, Art and Carol Tindall, Erwin Wells

Serving in the Military: Keven Shaffer, Matthew Mitchell, Emily Mitchell, Ricardo Arellano

**Gatherings for First Light** begin again the week of January 19 with the reading and studying the gospel of Mark.

Tuesdays, 7:00 am

Wednesdays, 9:30 am and 6:00 pm

# January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 9:30am Worship 11:00am Worship	5	6	7 1:00pm Quilters	8 6:30pm Choir 8:00pm Praise Band	9	10
11 9:30am Worship 11:00am Worship	12	13 5:00pm Handbell Choir	14 1:00pm Quilters 7:00pm Organizational Gathering	15 6:30pm Choir 8:00pm Praise Band	16	17
18 9:30am Worship 11:00am Worship with Breakfast	19	20 7:00am First Light 5:00pm Handbell Choir	21 9:30am First Light 1:00pm Quilters 6:00pm First Light	22 6:30pm Choir 8:00pm Praise Band	23	24
25 9:30am Worship 11:00am Worship	26	27 7:00am First Light 5:00pm Handbell Choir	28 9:30am First Light 1:00pm Quilters 6:00pm First Light	29 6:30pm Choir 8:00pm Praise Band	30	31

## Organizational Gathering for 2015

Implementation of the new administrative and organization structure approved at the Church Conference in November will require some patience and some intentional work on our part as leaders. We will begin that process by gathering all elected leaders to any of the Administrative Committees (except Finance/Foundation) or NOW (Nurture, Outreach, Worship) teams on Wednesday, January 14, at 7:00 pm. The agenda will include appointing leadership to the NOW teams, discussing procedures and functions and setting meeting dates. If your name is listed below, please make every effort to be at this Organizational Gathering. This, too, is the work of the church.

Tom Bildner, Jack Bowditch, Pat Bowditch, Jim Bowen, Marla Bowen, Judy Burgee, Gail Clow, Melodie Coles, Shirley Cummings, Dick Curtis, Dick Deller, Colleen Fadden, Dennis Fadden, Susan French, Don Gambill, Pam Laurell, René Nestorak, John Ourensma, Rick Piper, Stuart Risedorph, Martha Smith, Penny Swan, Jan Tesch, Jim Tesch, Sue Walter

## Education News and Notes for January 2015

Happy New Year!

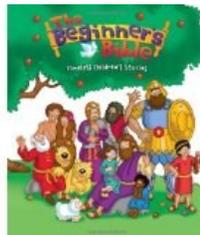
What a busy year it was! I'm looking forward to a wonderful 2015. Thanks to everyone who helped make 2014 such a great year for children of all ages.

**CPR and AED training:** Our first CPR and AED training will be on January 10 in the afternoon.

**VBS:** We'll start planning for vacation Bible school early this year.

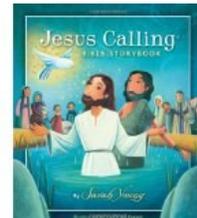
Information about Children's Bibles:

Since a few people have asked where I purchase children's Bibles and which children's Bibles are my favorites. Here is some information about some of my favorites:

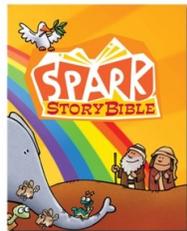


For a general children's Bible that is inexpensive, I like "The Beginners Bible."

I also like the "Jesus Calling Bible Storybook" because it has connections from all stories back to Jesus.



There are two Bibles available from Augsburg Fortress that we use for children's church. They are the "Spark Story Bible" and the "Whirl Story Bible."



All of these Bibles have many big stories from the Bible. The "Whirl Story Bible" has stories listed and marked for the 3 year cycle that we have been following in worship called the Revised Common Lectionary.

If you have questions about any of these or other children's Bibles please let me know!

You can reach me at my church email or see me at church on Sunday, Tuesday or Thursday mornings.

*Marla Bowen*

Director of Educational Ministries

## Worship Themes in January

In the church, we often associate the celebration of Epiphany with the Magi who, following a star in the sky, brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Christ child. That's what we remember and celebrate on the day of Epiphany, January 6. Our worship on January 4, the first Sunday of the new year, will remember the Magi and their willingness to follow the star to Bethlehem.

The word epiphany simply means appearance or revelation. The birth of Christ was revealed to the Magi by means of a new star that they noticed in the night sky. An epiphany question for us during the church season of Epiphany is this: How is God being revealed to us today?

God gathers us as his people on the first Sunday of the new year, revealing Christ as the Word made flesh and the light of the world. On January 4, Christ will be revealed again in the Sacrament of Holy Communion and we will have opportunity to dedicate our lives to him in 2015 by reciting together John Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

On January 11, we will be reminded that there is power in God's Word, in Creation, in Baptism, and in life beyond what we can perceive or acknowledge. As we remember our baptism and participate in the liturgy of Baptism renewal, we find an opportunity for new beginnings and new life.

On January 18, the Second Sunday after Epiphany, we find in the first chapter of John's gospel that there just might be something to Jesus beyond what we can know or understand, but we come anyway. Jesus' first disciples barely knew him, but still they responded to his invitation to "come and see."

On January 25, the Third Sunday after Epiphany, we go back to the story of Jonah in the Old Testament. Jonah doesn't want to go where he is told by God to go, but beyond the horizon of our limited vision, there is work to be done in the name of Jesus Christ. Will we go on to do it, as followers of Christ?

During the season of Epiphany, we are offered opportunities to catch glimpses of the divine in the Word and in life. There is in our world a Light that overcomes all darkness.

*Pastor Pat*

## Hillsdale Methodist Women

One of the purposes of Hillsdale Methodist Women is to financially support ministries of the Church and community. In 2014, we offered funds to the Karan Jenkins Preschool, the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, and to One Step Ministries.

*Shirley Cummings,*

HMW chair

# 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.

Hillsdale First United Methodist Church

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