

Hillsdale First United Methodist Church

Worship Settings

Every once in a while, I go into the sanctuary and just sit. I look around and pray for the people who usually sit in this pew or that pew. I see the altar, the Lord's table, and remember the Sacrament of Holy Communion served there, and Jesus' call to "do this and remember me." I see the cross and remember our Lord's sacrifice for me and for us all. I look at the baptismal font and remember the babies, the youth, and the adults baptized here in the "name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." I see the pulpit and the lectern and remind myself to turn again to the word of God — a word read and proclaimed in this space for over 150 years.

We've recently changed the cross that sits behind the Lord's table. During the season of Lent, this rough-hewn cross is reminiscent of the cross that Jesus carried to Calvary. The cross is draped in purple, the liturgical color for the season of Lent, reminding us of our need to repent of the sins that enslave us.

The Lord's table, covered simply with a white cloth, functions as the place where the feast of the Lord's supper is held and symbolizes God's presence in the church. The Lord's table, centered in the liturgical space of the chancel, is central to our worship, uniting us to God and to one another through the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Nothing should detract from that central and essential function of the Lord's table — not flowers, not offering plates, not even candles. This is the Lord's table, and our Lord sets the table with the bread and the wine that represents his broken body and his shed blood. Nothing can add to what Christ is offering.

The baptismal font has its own place in our worship space. Not only does the baptismal font hold the water used in the Sacrament of Baptism, its prominent presence reminds us of God's free gift of grace. In baptism, God claims us as God's

own, marking us forever as Christian. The visibility of the font reminds us that it is out of our baptism that we are called to live as disciples of Jesus Christ whose mission it is to invite others to the font of God's grace and mercy.

The pulpit symbolizes the authority of the Scriptures which are opened to the people by reading and preaching. The preacher, however, is not alone in this activity. Through an infinite variety of means, the Holy Spirit works through the preparation both of the preacher and the listener and their interaction with one another that becomes "a seed planted in the soul that grows in secret and reaches fruition as a miracle of God's grace." (*Participating in Worship*, Craig Douglas Erickson, 1989, Westminster John Knox Press).

We become a gathered community at God's invitation. We worship God together as the body of Christ with songs of praise and faith; with prayers of confession and intercession; by attending to the word of God; and by participating in the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.

And we are sent again into the world as the body of Christ to love and serve God and neighbor. The cross, the Lord's table, the baptismal font, and the pulpit point us toward God, and God alone, as the focus of our worship.

This, we remember when we throw our cloaks and palm branches before Jesus when he rides that donkey into Jerusalem for the last time. This we remember when our feet are washed on Holy Thursday. This we remember when Christ is nailed to the cross on Good Friday. And this we remember when the sun rises behind an empty tomb on Easter morning. When we remember, when we worship God with integrity, we become the people, the church, God created us to be.

Come and see, *Pastor Pat*

My Soul Thirsts for You

*...let us allow our souls to thirst for **God**, so that we may feel the quench of that thirst through our relationship with **Jesus**...*

*You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being
longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.*

*I have seen you
in the sanctuary
and beheld your power
and your glory.
Because your love
is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you
as long as I live,
and in your name
I will lift up my hands.
I will be fully satisfied
as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth
will praise you.*

*On my bed
I remember you;
I think of you through
the watches of the night.
Because you are my help,
I sing in the shadow
of your wings.
I cling to you;
your right hand
upholds me.*

Psalm 63:1-8 (NIV)

At the beginning of Lent, Pastor Pat encouraged us to read a Psalm a day, reflecting on those Psalms as something we'd take on, rather than or in addition to something we may give up, during the Lenten season. As I have read through different Psalms they seem to all touch me and help me to reflect in different ways. Most recently, as I read through Psalm 63, verses 1-8, I felt a sense of peace fill me. Knowing that God was responding, through His word, to what I had been feeling lately.

For the past weeks, coinciding with Lent, I have had many changes in my daily work responsibilities each week at a rather fast pace due to some reorganizational changes. And those who know me best, know I dive right in to tackle such challenges, sometimes to a fault, and in a very driven sense. The downside of that type of focus is that I find myself in work mode for 14 hours a day and then repeating it the next day and so on. Over the course of my career, I've had to work on projects that consumed large parts of my time, as I'm sure most of us have at one point or another, for one thing or another, but this time has been different for me. During these last few weeks I have felt myself seeking out to God more and more each day right from the beginning. I felt, throughout the day and at the beginning and end of my days, my soul intensely thirsting for Him. I've found myself thanking Him for my blessings when I'm in the midst of my chaos. I turn to Him praising His name and calling on Him to be reassured that His steadfast love is better than this life. And then on one of the longer days I have had, this Psalm was the one I read for the day, and in those moments I could feel that this was God's answer to me. I felt every word spoken in these verses, and I reflected on Jesus being in the desert, Jesus' steadfast love, and Jesus' life and all that He gave for us.

Sometimes it's easy to get wrapped up in our own lives, in the everyday situations, but during this time it is important for each of us to take on spending extra time with God and His word even if we think our lives are already too busy or too full. During Lent let us allow our souls to thirst for God, so that we may feel the quench of that thirst through our relationship with Jesus, as we praise Him with joyful lips knowing that His steadfast love is better than any life we know. May we bring to others who thirst the kingdom of God through our lives each day. Praise to you, O God. Praise to you, Jesus! | *Melodie Coles, Lay Leader*

Education News and Notes

Has God called our church to minister to children? Yes! Children are important to God! Recall that Jesus said in Matthew 18, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." In Matthew 19, Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." Wow! Just welcoming one child is welcoming Jesus!

Ministry to children multiplies our efforts long-term. There are few ministry opportunities that allow you to impact the future in such a direct way. When you love and teach kids today, you are also influencing generations to come. Children we teach can one day become parents and church leaders themselves. We can change the world in the long run, one child at a time.

It has been proven that most people who will come to Christ do so when they are young. The childhood years are the greatest opportunity for the Gospel. So reaching children needs to be a top priority for our church.

Build your humility and patience! If building the church and kingdom of God is not enough encouragement, look at the other personal benefits: increased humility and patience! Where better to build your patience while building God's kingdom?

Love is all that is required! Just in case you feel like you are unqualified to minister to children, recall that love is all that is required.

Confirmation Class | If you are in 6th grade or above and are interested in learning more about growing your faith in God and living your faith commitment, you are invited to join this class. Time and dates are yet to be determined. We are considering Sunday mornings either during children's church or from 10:30 to 11:30, but will tailor the meeting times and dates to any who are interested in being part of the conversation. You can contact me at church on Sundays, Tuesdays or at my church email.

Kids' Fest Booth, Wednesday, June 15 at the Fairgrounds | I'm beginning to plan coverage for Kids' Fest 2016. I will need a few extra volunteers since I cannot be on site this year. Setup can be done either on Tuesday during the day or on Wednesday morning. The booth needs to be completely ready by 9:30 am for a 10:00 am event opening. The event ends at 3:00 pm. We have had crafts and free items for around 1000 children in the past. There will be sign-up forms for Vacation Bible School and Music Camp, too. Come share the love of Jesus with the children of our community!

Keep your eye on this space for outreach and neighbor-loving opportunities as the month of July approaches. You can contact me at the church on Sunday or Tuesday mornings, or by email: bowen.hillsdalefirstumc@gmail.com.

God loves you! And so do I! | Marla

Hillsdale First United Methodist Church presents

ISRAEL'S MISSION

Becoming a Kingdom of Priests
in a Prodigal World



Wednesdays at 6:00 pm
February 17, February 24, March 2,
March 9, March 16

Soup served at 6:00 pm, followed by a video from the program "Israel's Mission" with teacher and historian Ray Vander Laan.

Free and open to the public.

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Missions and Ministries

March Mission Hillsdale County Habitat for Humanity

Thank you for your support of our February missions, which included not only the *Blankets+* program, but also a special mission for the *Flint Water Appeal*.

During March, we will be supporting our local Hillsdale County Habitat for Humanity affiliate.

The mission of Habitat for Humanity is to make safe and affordable housing available to everyone. Partner families pledge to provide 250 hours per adult into the completion of their home and must also attend financial management classes.

There are currently six Habitat homes in Hillsdale County.

HCHF will soon be taking applications to partner with a family on a seventh home located in Litchfield.

Building Renovations | John Laster of Horizons Stewardship has completed a Feasibility Readiness Study as we continue to consider building renovations. The study had three parts: historical and present data analysis, oral interviews, and confidential surveys. The purpose of the Feasibility Readiness Study is to provide an independent assessment of the potential success of a capital campaign to fund all or part of the project.

John Laster will be here at the church on **Sunday, March 13, at 4:00 pm** to present the results of the study. This is an important step in the process of what needs to be done and what can be done now or in the near future. Please make plans to be at this meeting.

March Mission | The Hillsdale County Habitat for Humanity affiliate meets in our church on the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm. New volunteers and board members are always welcome. Please prayerfully consider how you can support this local ministry that serves in Christ's name.

Free Community Breakfasts | We will be offering two community breakfasts during the month of March. We will be serving breakfast during the 11:00 am services on Palm Sunday, March 20 and also on Easter Sunday, March 27.

Free Community Dinners | We offer free dinners so that we can invite members of our community into our church for a balanced meal, so that through this fellowship all of us may grow in the love of God and neighbor. Through this ministry we are also caring for others with donations that help nonprofit organizations in Hillsdale County.

All dinners are from 5-7:00 pm. Upcoming schedules and menus follow.

March 5

Baked Pork Loin
Redskin Potatoes
Green Beans
Coleslaw
Applesauce
Rolls and Butter
Pie
Beverages

Donations to:

Hillsdale County Senior
Center (Perennial Park)

April 2

Baked Chicken
Mashed Potatoes and Gravy
Corn
Coleslaw
Rolls and Butter
Pie
Beverages

Donations to:

Hillsdale County
Habitat for Humanity

From the Director of Music

For some time now our church has had student interns from Hillsdale College involved in helping us with our ministries. Although interns have been effective in various capacities, most have served in the music department. I've wanted an opportunity to introduce you to our current interns.

Faith Liu, soprano, is a senior from Morganville, New Jersey, majoring in English and Music and has been with us since early 2013. She has sung in choirs and ensembles as long as she can remember. Faith has enjoyed roles in several college musicals and plays, conducts the SIA sorority choir, teaches private voice lessons, and sings in the college choirs. Soon after I arrived in Hillsdale I asked the Hillsdale College music department if they could recommend a good soprano. We met and I instantly knew Faith was the perfect person for the job. She has continued to impress us all with her beautiful voice, her musicianship, her bubbly personality and vibrant Christian faith.

Kaleb Molina, tenor, is a senior from Clare, Michigan, majoring in Biology and has been with us since late 2013. Kaleb is a natural musician who until recently has had little musical education or even experience. He played some guitar in high school, but everything else – piano, singing, percussion, winds, and strings – he's taken up since coming to Hillsdale. He also sings in the college choir. You'd never know from his creative drumming with the praise band, his solid singing, or his incessant and creative messing around on the piano that music is a relatively new adventure for him. I've been delighted to have him in the tenor section of the choir. We all appreciate the variety of his skills, his kind personality and deep knowledge of the Bible, and his strong commitment to the faith. Kaleb is trying to decide if he wants to put his biology major to work in researching cures for devastating diseases, or pursue further education and training in music.

Quinn Reichard, bass, is a freshman from Lovettsville, Virginia, majoring in Political Economy and Music. He just joined us this fall when he came to town. Quinn has had a lot of

musical training in piano and organ, with good experience singing as well as choral directing. At Hillsdale he's in the HC Jazz Combo, the HC Little Big Band, sings in the choir, and takes organ lessons. Quinn will be doing some playing and accompanying here for us as time goes on. In fact, he'll be playing the entire service on March 6. He's been raised a Methodist, so feels very much at home with us.

David Woods, baritone, is a freshman from Frankfort, Illinois, majoring in History. He's been singing since he was a little boy; his father, a church music director, taught him to read music at the same time he taught him to read! So, David's sight-reading skills are amazing. He was in all the high school ensembles you can imagine, including various musicals, and also played trumpet in his high school jazz band and concert band. We've already heard his clear, rich voice at the Ash Wednesday service and during a recent Sunday morning. Born and raised in the Orthodox Church he's been enjoying exploring the Methodist corner of God's big church. David joined us in January.

Marie Vande Hey, alto, is a freshman from Kaukauna, Wisconsin, majoring in Music. She's the oldest of eleven children in a very musical family and plays piano, recorder, ukulele, oboe, percussion, and sings. Marie has been a part of many musical ensembles, including a band called Lavender Blue, and the Lawrence Academy of Music Girl Choir program. She's been a church singer/pianist since the 5th grade, and has taught piano since 8th grade. She hopes to teach music in some capacity after college, as well as write her own music and poetry. Marie is a born and raised Roman Catholic but has been thrilled to find a good church choir to be part of and enjoys worshipping here. Marie has been with us since January. | SDG, JO

MARCH 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 12p Kiwanis 1p Garden Club 5:15p Handbells 6p Lions Club 7p Young Adult Bible Study	2 1:30p Quilters 6p Lenten Soup Supper 6p Radio Club Board	3 6:30p Choir 7p Boy Scouts Parents' Meeting 8p Praise Band	4	5 5-7p Community Dinner
6 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship (Fellowship Hall)	7 7p Boy Scouts	8 12p Kiwanis 1:30p ED/J Circle 5:15p Handbells 7p Finance/Fdn 7p Young Adult Bible Study	9 1:30p Quilters 6p Lenten Soup Supper	10 1p Love, INC 5:30p KJP Board 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band	11	12
13 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship (Fellowship Hall) 4p Feasibility Study Report	14 5:30p Trustees TBD 7p Boy Scouts	15 12p Kiwanis 5:15p Handbells 6:30p Habitat for Humanity 7p Young Adult Bible Study	16 1:30p Quilters 6p Lenten Soup Supper 7p AYSO Board	17 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band	18	19
20 Palm Sunday 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship with breakfast (Fellowship Hall)	21 6:30p Worship Committee 7p Boy Scouts	22 12p Kiwanis 5:15p Handbells 7p Young Adult Bible Study	23 1:30p Quilters	24 7p Maundy Thursday Worship	25 7p Good Friday Worship	26
27 Easter 9:30a Worship (Sanctuary) 11a Worship with breakfast (Fellowship Hall)	28 1:30p ArtWorks Board 6:30p Ad Board 7p Boy Scouts 7p Kiwanis Board	29 12p Kiwanis 5:15p Handbells 7p Young Adult Bible Study	30 1:30p Quilters	31 6:30p Choir 8p Praise Band		

Bulletin Board Headlines

Emily Dewey/Joy Circle | On March 8, members will hold a “baby shower” to collect items for donation to the Hillsdale Hospital’s birthing center. They will be collecting diapers, blankets, hats, onesies, and other layette items. If you would like to donate baby shower items to help the Emily Dewey Joy Circle with this outreach, you may bring your unwrapped gifts to the church office, or contact Shirley Cummings at 437-4370.

Mary Jean Tennant Circle | The Mary Jean Tennant Circle will not meet on March 16. Members are encouraged to attend the Lenten Soup Supper and program that evening to enjoy the food, fellowship, and the *Israel’s Mission* video and discussion.

Note of Thanks | Dear Church Family,
Thank you so much for the Valentine package. I found all the items very useful, and I enjoyed the chocolates. | Thanks, Colton

Anniversaries

March	12	Gilbert and Betty Schaerer
March	17	Dennis and Colleen Fadden
March	30	Dave and Judy Burgee
March	30	Steve and Janice Simons

Birthdays

March	2	Penny Swan
March	3	Marcia Brenke
March	3	Helen Haslam
March	9	Joan VanArsdalen
March	17	Colleen Fadden
March	18	Martha Hart
March	19	Charlene Moore
March	20	Robert Sawyer
March	20	Betty Schaerer
March	23	Lori Caldwell
March	28	Bert Hill
March	30	Susie Eichler
March	31	Jaidyn Lee

Prayer Requests

Current: Dorothy Jagger, Donna Wellein

Continuing: Ralph Baker (Laurel Ourensma’s father), Joan Bertalon, Dewey Carpentier, Adam Delcamp, Dick Emery, Crystal Gimenez, Deb Graver, Kristine Hasty, Bonnie Hinderer, Kent King, Danielle Laurell, Dawn and Earl Nisbett, Carolyn Parker, Gene Parker, Katelynn Raymond (Noble and Anna Mae Bertalon’s great-granddaughter), Daryl Sweet

In Nursing Care or at Home: Dorothy Aspinall, Sammy Brink, B.J. Clark, Warner and Shirley Connolly, Jean Dieterle, Susie Eichler, Bev Hart, Bert Hill, Ruth Huston, Jackie Mitchell, Bettie Monroe, Colleen Ridenour, Bob Scholl, Mary Sodergren, Carol Tindall

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

Holy Week and Easter

Palm Sunday
March 20 ~ 9:30 am and 11:00 am
Breakfast served during the 11:00 service



Maundy Thursday
March 24 ~ 7:00 pm

Good Friday
March 25 ~ 7:00 pm

Christ Is Risen!

Easter Sunday
March 27 ~ 9:30 am and 11:00 am
Breakfast served during the 11:00 service

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Coming Events

APRIL 17, 4:00 PM

THE KALAMAZOO RINGERS

An outstanding handbell choir in concert!

The Kalamazoo Ringers is the oldest continuously operating community choir in the country. Founded in 1981, and directed by its founder Janet L. Van Valey, the fifteen member ensemble has played extensively throughout Southwest Michigan, as well as touring throughout the Midwest, Ontario, England, and Japan.

You have to see it and hear it to believe it!

March 2016

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