



The Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of Hillcrest United Methodist Church

September 2020

From Pastor Kerry

Hello September. You are here again. How did we get here already? Summer really happened? How did I miss it? Am I the only one feeling this way right now?

It is such a strange time because in some ways it almost feels like time is standing still. There is so much uncertainty that it is easy to feel like the clock has stopped, like all of creation is stuck on inhale just waiting for the news that it is safe to exhale. And yet, here we are speeding through life six months after we realized this Covid thing is going to be with us for a while.

What if we viewed this time of Covid metaphorically as a lifespan? During this time waiting to exhale we are looking forward to the relief of whatever it is that sets us free. Will it be a vaccine? Will the virus simply run its course and die off? Will our bodies become immune naturally? Will a medication be discovered to treat it? These are all unknowns, but they are the thoughts of many who are living in this time.

We each have our own lifespan—you all know that. We each have a time of presence here on earth. While we are here we too are looking ahead to the time we will not. What is our view of what lies ahead? As Christians, we believe we are destined for reunification with our maker where we will be in eternal communion with Jesus. Revelation 22:12 says, "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done."

As we have seen throughout the past 2000 years, God's idea of soon is much different than ours. We are looking for a solution to Covid soon, which means to us by Christmas (a little wishful thinking is okay, right?) But when Christ says I am coming soon, we have no idea what that means. Or do we? We are each alive; when we die, we will return to Christ to live. Perhaps we do have an idea when we will be reunited with Christ. When our time on earth is done. If you are reading this, it seems that you are still alive. Rest assured, Jesus will be coming soon enough, but in the meantime, we are still here and alive.

I will close with the first verse of Charles Wesley's hymn, *And Are We Yet Alive*.

And are we yet alive, and see each other's face?

Glory and thanks to Jesus give for his almighty grace!

Pastor Kerry

Hillcrest Ministry Personnel

Starting September 1, 2020

Finance Task Force

Charles Mwala, Finance Chair (2022)
 - Trustee Chair
 Diane Lewandowski, Ministry Council Chair
 Janice Dean, SPRC Chair (2021)
 Lori Loucks, HCCM Director
 Julie Lininger, Administrative Assistant
 Jim and Cindy Heim
 Carol and Mike Woodworth
 Pastor Kerry

Ministry Council

Diane Lewandowski, Chair (2021)
 Charles Mwale, Finance Chair (2022)
 Bob Whitmer, Lay Delegate to Annual Conference
 Cathy Bloss, Lay Leader, Women's Ministry Chair
 Lorraine Whitmer, Missions Chair (2021)
 Pastor Kerry Clear, Nominating Committee
 Rene Wenger, Radical Hospitality Chair (2021)
 Julie Lininger, Secretary
 Lori Loucks, HCCM Director
 Janice Dean, Staff Parish Chair (2021)
 - Trustee Chair
 Gerald Huntington, at large member (2022)

Missions Task Force

Lorraine Whitmer, Chair (2021)
This is an open committee. If you'd like to serve, please contact Lorraine Whitmer.

Nominating

Pastor Kerry, Chair
 Rene Wenger (2021)
 Jane Hershberger (2022)
 Sharon McSorley (2023)

HCCM Advisory Board

Lori Loucks, Brian Sager (Parent Rep)
 Michelle Haggart (Parent Rep), Cathy Southern,
 Autumn Flynn (Teacher Rep), Tracy Donati,
 Janice Dean, Pastor Kerry

Radical Hospitality

Gloria Griffith (2021)
 Jane Hershberger (2021)
 Rene Wenger, Chair (2021)
 Karen Quarandillo (2022)
 Sherrie Putman (2022)
 Cindy Moore (2022)
 Mary Herschberger (2023)
 Phyllis Osborne (2023)
 Mary Alice Plymale (2023)

Emeritus Members of Hospitality (those who have lifelong duties within the church related to hospitality)

Carol Hartranft	Carole Julian	Donna Mast
Martha Sims	Bev Slaughter	Bernice Simms
Nancy Rowe	Linda Vredingburgh	

Staff Parish

Janice Dean, Chair (2021)
 Sharon McSorley (2021)
 Corrie Bartell (2022)
 Marie Young (2022)
 Marilyn Anson (2023)
 Lee Lehman (2023)
 Cathy Bloss, Lay Leader
 Bob Whitmer, Lay Delegate to Annual Conference

Trustees

Bob Whitmer (2021)
 Lorraine Whitmer (2021)
 Gerald Huntington (2021)
 Gari Lewandowski (2022)
 Jerry Rowe (2022)
 Ryan Wireman (2022)
 Tracy Donati (2023)
 Kate Ferro (2023)
 Freeman (Fritz) Lambright (2023)

Women's Ministry

Cathy Bloss, Chair, Terri Longacre,
 Leaders of all Women's Ministry groups

Lifestyles Class

Upon my retirement, I've had time this summer to enjoy my flower gardens, so the following daily devotion from the July-August 2020 Upper Room, written by Andrea Woronick from Connecticut spoke to me. It is entitled, "Producing Beauty" and is based on Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV): The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

On a recent trip to the garden center, I was hoping to select a flowering plant that would continue to produce beautiful blossoms throughout the entire summer. The clerk told me to be sure to pick off the faded blossoms. That way the plant's energy would go into producing new flowers.

I began to think about my own life. Do I spend my time and energy projecting God's beauty in the world, or is my energy being wasted on things that aren't life-giving? Do I harbor feelings of anger, jealousy, or resentment toward anyone? Do I waste my energy feeding my fears and doubts? When I began to take an inventory of my thoughts and feelings and how I spend my time, I came to realize that my negative thoughts are using energy that could be used to allow God's light to shine through me.

I followed the clerk's advice, and my plant produced beautiful blossoms throughout summer. Each time I picked off the faded blooms, I prayed for the wisdom and guidance to use my energy to produce beauty in the world through kindness, joy and love.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to learn from all of your creation how to spread the gospel message of peace, joy, and love. Amen.

Andrea Woronick (Connecticut, USA)

Thought for the Day: What everyday tasks can teach me the ways of God?

In these days of still being isolated and socially distanced from our Lifestyles Class friends, I urge all of us to take an inventory of our everyday tasks and find those that offer beauty and a way to teach us the ways of God. Are we wasting our energy on doubts and fears related to COVID? Are we harboring feelings of anger, jealousy or resentment toward anyone? Or are we using our energy to allow God's light to shine through us? Sending a note of encouragement, making a call to someone who may be lonely, or letting others know we're praying for them are all things we can do to use our energy to produce new blossoms pleasing to God!

A reminder that even though we're not meeting in Lifestyles class, we are still one body in Christ. Please send any prayer praises or requests you may have to me, and I'll be glad to send them out to our class. Miss and love all of you!

Patty Moore

September's Mission of the Month CROP Walk

Church World Services, the umbrella organization for CROP Walk, targets areas where education and advocacy are components in confronting the root cause of hunger. CWS raises awareness about hunger, poverty, water access, trade, human rights, climate change, peace building, and other issues.

When CROP began in 1947, CROP was an acronym for the Christian Rural Overseas Program. Its primary mission was to help Midwest farm families share their grain with hungry neighbors in post-World War II Europe and Asia.

Today, they've outgrown the acronym but retain it as the historic name of the program. CROP Hunger Walks are community-wide events sponsored by Church World Services and organized by local congregations or groups to raise funds to end hunger at home and around the world.

This year is different. So is the 2020 CROP Walk; yet because it is so important when there is so much need in our community and worldwide, the Elkhart organizers feel it is important to continue to walk. So instead of a gathering and group walk, they are asking that each participant or team plan their own walk, either with a small group or individually, for Sunday, October 4. Please keep current guidelines on COVID-19 safety in mind.

Statistics show that almost 20 percent of families here in Elkhart are nutrition insufficient. Imagine your children or grandchildren crying themselves to sleep because they are hungry, or going to school hungry. 25 percent of the money collected will stay here in Elkhart. It will go to Church Community Services to purchase food for the food pantry. They are able to purchase food at a greatly reduced price.

Hillcrest Church has the opportunity to join with other churches to raise money for the hungry. Please know that our monies are needed to make a difference both locally and around the world. Give as you can to meet this great need for so many that are hungry. THANK YOU and God bless you!!!

Any loose change in the offering will also go to the CROP Walk..

Thank you,
Missions Committee

Dear friends, church family,

Thank you for all the cards, notes, flowers, and calls that you have made in the last six weeks. They have been appreciated and kept me hoping I would get better soon. Thanks to all your prayers and well wishes. I am now on the mend and so grateful to have such a wonderful church family. God Bless!

—Jane Hershberger

Scoutmaster Minute

by Ronn Foster

It was a typical foggy evening in London around the early 1900's. An American businessman, on his way to a safari, became lost on his way back to the hotel. Soon he came across a young man walking down the street. The businessman asked the young man for directions back to his hotel. Instead of just telling the businessman how to get back to the hotel, the Scout accompanied the businessman to his hotel. The businessman made it back to his hotel and offered a reward to the Scout. The Scout refused the reward and counted it as his good turn.

Returning from his safari, the businessman found himself back in London. This time he made a point to find the Scouting headquarters and inquire about the program. He learned all that he could before returning to the United States. Once he returned, William Boyce, the American businessman started a similar program on February 8, 1910. He called his program the "Boy Scouts of America."

This is the popular tale of how the BSA was formed. As with most lore, the details may have changed over the years. One thing is certain though. There was a Scout who did his good turn and helped Mr. Boyce. Mr. Boyce then did go on to start the BSA. One lone act of assistance on a foggy London evening continues to help youth and contribute millions of hours in community service projects.

The point of this Scoutmaster Minute is to not be concerned with the size of the good turn, or the perceived value of a good turn. We cannot possibly fathom what the Father is using us for. Matthew 17:20 tells us, "He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."



We're getting full! We now have 22 e-learning children that we are helping. Again, we're asking that the general public ages 65 and over stay out of the building while the children are here, per guidelines given to us by the Family and Social Services Agency. Thank you for your patience and cooperation with this matter.

Please continue to pray for wisdom, health, and strength for us.

—Lori Loucks, Director

Please note: there is no "Serving in Worship" chart for September because the Trustees will be taking care of the necessary responsibilities.

HILLCREST WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Circle of Friends Stamping Ministry

There are some newly designed cards in the card rack at church. If you need a card, please take a look. Please leave any money in my mailbox there at church. I have also made a couple of house calls to people who didn't want to get out. If you would like a special house call to look at cards, please let me know. I will be glad to come. Thanks again for your support. It is very much appreciated.

—Marilynn Anson

The Mat Makers

(Sleeping mats for the homeless made from plastic bags.)

2nd Wednesday each month

9:00-app.-11:00 a.m. in the HeBrew Café

Martha Sims and Mary Herschberger, Co-Leaders

Hillcrest workers donated sleeping mats #38 and #39 to Guidance Ministries in August.

Considering the pandemic, let's continue to work at home on our own at least through September:

- Trimming tops and bottom seams and flattening out used plastic bags.
- Cutting the flattened bags into 2-1/2" strips.
- Looping strips together and winding the looped strips loosely into balls.
- Crocheting strips into 3 foot by 6 foot sleeping mats, using a large crochet hook (size N).

Just exchange supplies in the storage room located to the left of Hillcrest's kitchen, or call me if you'd prefer for me to drop off or pick up your work.

I can use 2-1/2" strips for the mat I am crocheting, and Bev Slaughter will welcome balls of strips for the mat she is working on.

Hillcrest folks, we wish all of you could see the smiles that welcome each mat we take to Guidance Ministries. The support we've received from our congregation has been outstanding, and we sincerely thank each of you.

Stay safe and healthy, everyone! Until we meet again, God bless you all.

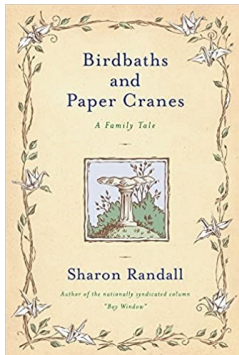
Martha Sims

(574) 264-9740 (home) or 596-4918 (mobile)

simsville3537@comcast.net

Hillcrest Women's Book Club
 Thursday, September 24, 6:00 p.m.
 Diane Lewandowski, Leader

Birdbaths and Paper Cranes
 by Sharon Randall



Birdbaths and Paper Cranes is a collection of heartfelt essays by Sharon Randall, a nationally syndicated columnist whose thoughts on life appear each Sunday in the Elkhart Truth. It is the Hillcrest Book Club's choice for September.

Among the book's many poignant topics are her blind brother's first attempt at driving a car, her daughter's penchant for tea parties, and her husband's courageous battle with cancer. In Randall's hands, even a simple story about a birdbath has meaning.

In this book from 2001, Randall gives readers pages of inspiration, laughter, tears, and joy. Her authentic and intimate style vaults her to a plateau few can match as she shares stories of her flawed and familiar clan full of people and places everyone has known, or wish they had.

Born and raised in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North and South Carolina, Randall lived for 35 years in "California of All Places." From 1972, when her first child was born, until 1982, when her third child entered kindergarten, Randall was a self-described "full-time homemaker, Sunday School teacher, Little League scorer, and PTA volunteer." Her first husband, a longtime teacher and coach at Monterey High School, died in 1998.

Remarried in May of 2005, Randall and her husband live in Carmel Valley, California. As a winner of numerous professional awards, she proudly notes that she has also "scrubbed a lot of toilets, washed a lot of towels and burned a lot of cookies." She credits her training as a writer to "30 years as a reporter and a columnist, some 40 years as a wife and a mother, and more than 50 years as a daughter, a sister, a friend . . . and now a nana!" Her nana stories are the heart of many of her current columns.

All readers are welcome to participate in the Hillcrest Book Club meetings. We talk and laugh, like and dislike the books...but we listen to all opinions! A fun hour on a Thursday evening in the Hillcrest welcome center (narthex). Watch for news of how we are going to meet in September....

L.I.F.T. (Ladies In Fellowship Together)

1st Tuesday of each month – 9:00 a.m.
 Perkins Restaurant (107 N. Pointe Blvd., Elkhart)

As you know, L.I.F.T. is temporarily suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions. We will let you know when we're able to meet again in person.

—Gloria Griffith

Staff Parish Relations Committee

Hillcrest Church has been sponsoring Charles Mwale as a candidate for ministry in the UMC for the past year. Many of you have had an opportunity to get to know Charles in the months before COVID. We've all enjoyed his messages from the pulpit when filling in for Pastor Kerry. I'm pleased to announce that the SPRC has interviewed Charles, through both written responses and an in-person interview for his candidacy for ordained ministry in the UMC. As a result of his very successful interview, the SPRC believes Charles has been called by God and is a suitable candidate for ordained ministry and has recommended Charles for certification to the Indiana North District charge conference. Charles plans to continue his seminary classes at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary to prepare for ordained ministry. In order to get finished with his seminary classes sooner, Charles is not employed now and is looking for ways to earn some extra revenue. Charles has been blessed with many skills, so if you have any jobs around the house or in the yard, he is capable and willing to help you out!

Please congratulate Charles in achieving this first step of the candidacy process and continue to support him with both prayers and any financial assistance during the months ahead.

On behalf of the SPRC, I would like to thank Pastor Kerry and our staff: Kasey Clear, Kelsey Clear, Mark Gledhill, Lori Loucks, Julie Lininger, and Derald Gray for their continued dedication and for going above and beyond in their respective roles during the months of COVID. Also, hats off to Ryan Wireman, Gerald Huntington, Bob Whitmer, Gari Lewandowski, and Harry Sims for their "behind the scenes" efforts with the technology and set-up for the online services. Because of my involvement as SPRC chair, I have observed the ways every member of our Hillcrest staff has unselfishly devoted their time, skills, and knowledge during this difficult time in continuing the ministry of our church. Pastor Kerry and our worship staff have had to learn new things like using Zoom, performing the online services, and streaming those services so our congregation can enjoy them through Facebook or YouTube. They have offered devotions and music throughout the week on Facebook, which has provided a way for us to remain "connected" when not meeting in person for worship. And as though he didn't have enough going on already, Pastor Kerry had to deal with his family having the virus themselves, in addition to bringing new baby Sullivan into the world! There will never be enough thanks for the wonderful pastor and worship staff we've been so blessed to have. Truly they are all good and faithful servants and are giving God the glory!

A huge thank you, also, to Lori Loucks, the Director of Hillcrest Children's Ministry and Julie Lininger, our Administrative Assistant. You wouldn't believe the changes COVID has made and the additional responsibilities it has added to Lori's job, from daily sanitation and the requirement for all staff and children to wear masks, to the many state-mandated COVID-related regulations that had to be followed to pass the recent state inspection with flying colors! Julie has not only been doing her church administrative duties, but is helping Lori out wherever and whenever needed. Every

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person entering the church during the week, including all parents, has to be fever tested and questioned regarding COVID. Can you imagine the additional time this takes! These two gals and the HCCM staff have put in countless hours in building back up the school and daycare enrollment after it was closed for a few weeks due to COVID. We can never thank Lori and Julie enough for their commitment, loyalty, and extreme caring. God has certainly blessed us with these two faithful servants!

Whenever you get a chance, please let our dedicated and caring Hillcrest staff know that you appreciate them. I know for sure that the SPRC and I do!!!

Patty Moore
SPRC Chair

Visiting with her passenger, Uber driver Latonya Young mentioned her determination to finish college — and a \$700 debt that barred her from enrolling in more classes. "Every time I got ready to pay the money, my kids needed something," she said later. "I said, 'Okay, I'll just wait.'"

To Young's great surprise, a few days after that Uber conversation, she learned that her customer, Kevin Esch, had paid her debt; she could reenroll! In response, Young persevered to finish her degree with strong grades. "When he paid the balance, I had to do this for him," she said of Esch, who attended her graduation.

Young's self-sacrifice for her children and Esch's self-sacrifice for a stranger both pale, of course, in comparison to Jesus' sacrifice of his very life to save us. Like Young held back by debt, we were captive to sin until "the Son of Man came ... to give his life as a ransom" (Matthew 20:28, ESV). Young did nothing to earn Esch's gift, and we can do nothing to earn salvation. But as she responded by using the gift to its fullest, we embrace God's gift by living in thanksgiving and praise, love and service.

—from the *News/letter* newsletter

September Birthdays

4	Janice Dean	17	Patty Moore
6	Cindy Heim	19	Stan McSorley
9	Gavin Franks	20	Dave Teeter
10	Carol Pilmore		Sharon Teeter
11	Cathy Bloss	26	Karen Gouker
14	Kevin Gerring	30	Sharon Schafer

September Anniversaries

5	Karen and Ron Gouker
9	Jamie and Ronn Foster
17	Sharon and Stan McSorley
23	Maria and Dave Purciarele
27	Kate and Chris Ferro

Please let the office know if your special day was missed.

Hillcrest United Methodist Church

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STAFF

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Charles Mwale

Ministry Council Chair:

Diane Lewandowski

Staff Parish Chair:

Janice Dean

Trustee Chairs:

Hillcrest Community Childcare Ministry:

Lori Loucks, Director

574-266-7427

hccmdir@gmail.com

WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship

10:30 a.m. HeBrew Café fellowship

11:00 a.m. Adult Studies

12:00 p.m. El Refugio Church

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: *September 18*