

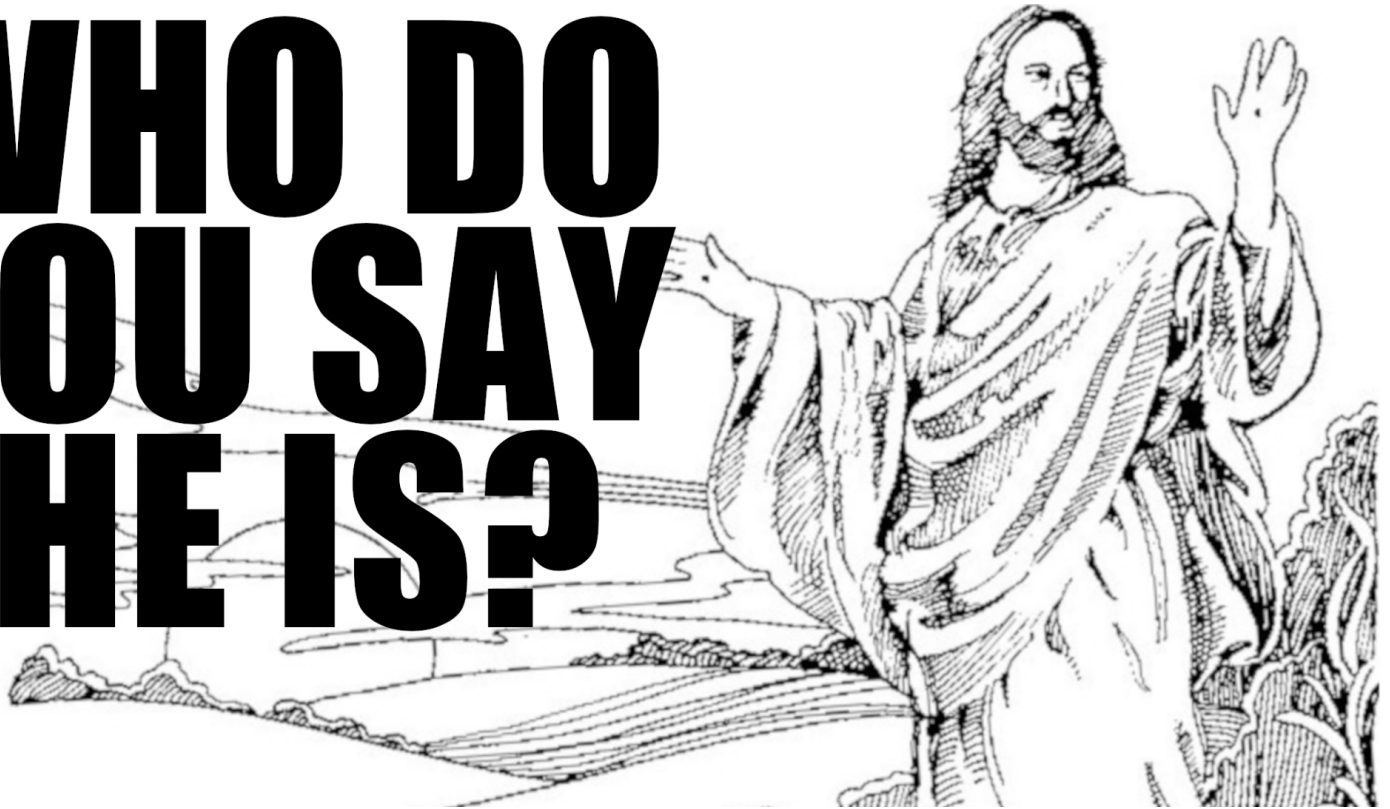
# Presbyterian News

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, Michigan

Volume 92 Issue 9

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## WHO DO YOU SAY HE IS?



Greetings Friends in Christ,

This summer, I preached a sermon titled: *Who Do You Say He Is?* It was built on Matthew 16:13-20, where Jesus asks the disciples. "Who do people say I am?" He then turns the question on them, "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answers (of course), "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

It's an important question for us too! Who do you say Jesus is for you? It is a question that shapes our lives as disciples of Christ, and it allows us to share with others why we follow Jesus. Moreover, how a church sees Jesus shapes their identity and the way they do ministry.

In new church development or redevelopment this is a pivotal question as a congregation gets serious about discipleship and sharing the Good News! It is who we believe Jesus to be that both shapes our individual lives and our communal life as First Presbyterian Churches of Decatur and Paw Paw.

Take a look at the answers people gave during my sermon at both Decatur and Paw Paw (similar answers have been consolidated) Is there a pattern you see? How would you sum up what our congregations say about Jesus?

## Who is Jesus to me? (Answers from the congregations)

- Christ is Love
- The Son of God
- My friend
- Savior
- My teacher
- My guide in life; the one I lean on; my go-to friend; my confident
- Someone I can talk to; he brings me comfort, strength, and peace in difficult times and in my life
- Always there for me and accepts me as I am
- Jesus is my merciful advocate
- Jesus is my friend and my Lord
- Love, compassion, and forgiveness
- Redeemer
- My strength, my rock, my provider
- Strength during good times and bad times. Helps carry burdens in all life
- He is the foundation for how I treat people and look at the world. He is also someone I talk to when I'm feeling scared, uncertain, or grateful
- Jesus leads me in love for others. He is like a living holy parent who is there in times of my needs, and is ever forgiving. He leads me into good.
- I guess Jesus means that I don't have to solve all my problems, but wait for an answer or signs of what he wants me to do.
- He is always in my heart and loves me. He asks me to be nice and to get along with others
- Jesus is my friend and redeemer, always by my side guiding and listening to my hopes and needs
- Jesus is my role model, my mentor, my comforter, my savior
- Jesus is the best of love and acceptance
- Jesus is my guidepost for living: Spiritual, Mental, and Physical
- Jesus is my guide in how to treat and care for others
- A symbol of our faith to emulate
- Faithful friend, loving, caring for all
- He knows all my failings and shortcomings, but is always there to catch me when I fail and encourage me to try again
- Jesus is who I turn to in times of happiness and trouble. He is like a father and mother.

Without a doubt, Jesus is an important role model, mentor, and teacher; he is someone we are to emulate. He shows us the way to live. Did you catch too how Jesus is loving and accepting? Jesus best shows us the love of God and how to live our lives.

The answers given show us that we are serious about knowing and living a life focused on Jesus, the Risen Christ, in the here and now. We are to follow and emulate his life and the spirit of the Risen Christ into the path of salvation. Jesus changes us, and we in turn, change God's world.

I also appreciate what David Lose, an Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) scholar and preacher, says about Jesus, "I think Jesus also came to show us what's possible. And so rather than give into the threat of disease, Jesus healed. Rather than surrender people to demons, Jesus showed compassion. Rather than let people starve because there's not enough to go around, Jesus fed people who were hungry. Jesus refused to be satisfied or limited by the status quo and invites us to do the same, because if Jesus' life and death show us how much God loves us, Jesus' resurrection shows us that that love is more powerful than hate and fear and even death. Jesus shows us, in short, that God's love wins."<sup>i</sup>

So, watch for more opportunities to follow Jesus together as we begin the fall. You'll notice various mission opportunities like the *Community Dinner*. *Pub Theology* will be back; a Wednesday evening class about *Christ in Culture* will begin in October along with the Methodists; *Review/Preview* starts Sept 11 at Decatur; and *Sunday Morning Bible Study* starts again mid-September with the Gospel of Mark in Paw Paw. And of course, please join us on Sunday mornings for worship.

Finally, reread the answers or better yet, keep them on your desk or refrigerator. In a world starving for meaning and deeper relationship, in a world where incivility and hatred are commonplace, we have something to offer others — a caring community committed to following Jesus by supporting each other, helping others, and welcoming all.

In Christ's love, light, and hope, Gail

Rev. Gail E. Monsma revgailfpcpawpaw@gmail.com

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.davidlose.net/2014/08/pentecost-11-a-who-do-you-say-i-am/>

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## Sunday 9:15 am Bible Study Returns Sept. 17

After a summer vacation Dave and Tom are ready to restart the Bible Study class. This fall the group will take an in depth look at the Gospel of Mark. The first class meeting will take place on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September in the church library. Bible study will meet from 9:15 am until 10:15 am, dismissing in time for worship. There will also be a hybrid offering for those who can not join in person. The class will be made available to join via Zoom. If you attended last year an announcement with a Zoom link will be sent to you each week. Although we

encourage face to face meeting, we understand that there are times or situations that preclude in-person meeting.



Regardless of how you attend, we invite anyone interested to join us for a deeper look into The Word of God.

Tom Shoemaker

## Paw Paw Community Chorus Plans Christmas Concert



The Paw Paw Community Chorus will begin practicing on Sept. 11th, 7 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, located on the corner of Kalamazoo St. and Pine St. in Paw Paw, in preparation for their 23rd Annual Christmas Concert which will be presented on Sunday, December 3rd, 4 p.m. The chorus, under the direction of Theresa Vaughn, will be accompanied on piano by Carmon Posada.

The following selections will be presented by the chorus: "Can You See the Star?" by Sally K. Albrecht and Jay Althouse, "When Will He Come?" by Don

Besig & Nancy Price, "Come on Down to Bethlehem" by John Parker & Joel Raney, "By Candlelight" by Ruth Elaine Schram, "The Little Cradle Rocks" by Jay Althouse, "The Snow Begins to Fall" by Andy Beck, "A Family Christmas Spectacular", "Home for Christmas (I'll Be Home for Christmas & There's No Place Like Home for the Holidays)" by Douglas E. Wagner, and "The Twelve Days After Christmas" by Frederick Silver.

The chorus welcomes all singers from the Southwest Michigan area to join in this endeavor. For further information, contact Jil Hoekstra at 269-657-6382, Anna Vervoort at 269-365-2735, or Theresa Vaughn at (269) 668-4631.

Theresa Vaughn

## WORSHIP TIME CHANGES:

August 27, combined service  
for Decatur and Paw Paw at 10 am at  
PAW PAW

September 3, combined service for  
Decatur & Paw Paw at DECATUR

September 10 (Grape & Harvest  
Festival), combined at the  
Amphitheater, PAW PAW at 10 am

September 17, NEW TIME for PAW  
PAW 10:30 am

Nancy Turk

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## Helping Those Who Need It Most

How can we improve our charitable programs to change lives for God? The book "Toxic Charity", available now in our church library, offers up many solutions.

Here's one: "Strategize ways to become more personally, relationally involved in the lives of those you serve."

Warning: Author Robert D. Lupton is not kidding about the "toxic" part! Is all our hard work done just to make us feel good? He goes deep here.

I got a lot out of this book and I think you will too.

Chuck Williams

# *We are having such fun this summer*

Right: Thanking the Duncans for teaching VBS this summer -- but Chuck Duncan is missing.

Row 2: (left) At a migrant camp north of Bloomingdale, Detroit & Paw Paw Presbyterians serve meals to migrant workers. (right) New visitor Lucas.

Row 3: (left) The girls putting a rose on the altar for Bridget's new baby sister Charlotte. (right) Freida weeding the front flowers at church. Several more ladies are volunteering for this as well.





## **Afternoon with the Arts:**

# **Art Reception Featuring Artist Patrick Thomas and the Paw Paw Community Chorus**

The Paw Paw Community Chorus will be performing in collaboration with Artist Patrick Thomas on Sunday September 10<sup>th</sup> at the Portage District Library from 2 pm to 4 pm The chorus, under the direction of Theresa Vaughn, will be accompanied on piano by Evonne Heystek. The Portage District Library is located at 300 Library Lane, Portage, MI.

"Afternoon with the Arts" is a special art reception and concert featuring artist Patrick Thomas and the Paw Paw Community Chorus. The afternoon will begin with a short concert of choral melodies sung by the Paw Paw Community Chorus. Following the concert, guest artist Patrick Thomas will give a retrospective presentation about the art of pastel painting. Attendees are invited to enjoy refreshments, a special meet and greet with the artist, and an artist-guided gallery tour of the exhibit "Fleeting Moments: A Retrospective exhibition of Pastel Paintings" to conclude the afternoon.



The following selections to be presented by the chorus are as follows: "Come To the Music" by Joseph M. Martin/Amy Lin-Piccolo, "Homeward Bound" by Marta Keen/arr. Jay Althouse, "The Drinking Gourd"-Traditional/arr. Andre J. Thomas, "Skye Boat Song" by Robert Louis Stevenson/arr. Jay Althouse, "Bring Us Hope" by Ruth Elaine Schram, and "A Tribute to Queen" (We Will Rock You, Another One Bites the Dust, & We Are the Champions)/arr. Mark Brymer.

Members of the chorus this concert are as follows: Jennifer Antisdale, Sherryl Bosker, Barbara Bryant, Bill Buhl, Les Buhl, Vincent Cabras, Darrel Drummond, Judith Halseth, Jil Hoekstra, Jane Makowski, Wynonia Mankowski, Jon Mills, Kathy McCloskey, Margaret McNeil, Viva Nelson, Pat Peters, Ike Porter, Joy Porter, Lois Richardson, Connie Ruch, Teresa Rzonca, Bruce Safbom, Michele Sivley, Doris Stratton, Anna Vervoort, Steven Vornsand, Caleb Whitfield, Grace Zimmerman, and Eleda Zygadlo.

Theresa Vaughn



# First Pres Hosts Mission Team from Detroit

Each summer a mission team from the Korean Presbyterian Church of Metro Detroit comes to Van Buren County to serve the local migrant farm worker community. Our church family hosts this team each year, opening homes for their stay. This year the team numbered over 70 members aged from teens to adults. The group arrived Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup> of July and stayed through August 2nd. Some team members slept in our Fellowship Hall while others were lodged at church member homes. Guests left early each morning going off to Covert Schools where the migrant summer school day program was being held. In the evening,

mission team members visited migrant camps joining with others from local schools and agencies to provide families with food, clothing, housekeeping supplies, entertainment, and helpful information.

Thanks to Jerry and Sue Miller, Dave and Jan Wilder, Dave and Marlene Suter, Sue Zygadlo, and the Boothby-Shoemakers for offering sites for team members to stay. Another big thanks to Chef Jerry Dundon who showed up early each morning to make pancakes for the group of young men who slept in Fellowship Hall. Our mission team offered thanks by hosting a Korean BBQ at our church on August 26<sup>th</sup> and inviting the host families and local migrant summer school employees to attend.

Tom Shoemaker

Photo: Young boy attending the prayer meet and community meal on July 30 at a migrant camp north of Bloomingdale.

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## Presbyterian News

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### *September Birthdays*

9/1 Craig Hess  
9/5 Dan Hulst  
9/5 Jeff Wells  
9/7 Johnell Cuddeback-Weintraub  
9/8 Bill Buhl  
9/10 Greg Vantzelde  
9/13 Wendy Mickle  
9/17 Fran Kubicek  
9/17 Bert Ogden  
9/19 Harold Schuitmaker  
9/20 Richard Baker, Jr.  
9/22 Dave Combs  
9/22 Brandon Mattson  
9/23 Jack Zabonick  
9/24 Sally Brinkman  
9/25 Greta Taylor  
9/28 Donna Rook

### *September Anniversaries*

9/5 Dave and Marlene Suter  
9/15 Andy and Randy Thorburn  
9/22 Richard and Susan Zygodlo  
9/23 Robert and Karen Klimp

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### **UCS Giving Tops \$1,000!**

First Presbyterian Church participated in the summer fund raiser "Christmas in July" for United Christian Services. Alison Harrop, UCS Director, reported we contributed \$1,050 to mission work in our community. Money went to relief from eviction, outstanding utility bills, security deposit for a new living space, and assisting with

the many needs that UCS provides for.

United Christian Services is a community organization that seeks to share the love of Christ through emergency assistance. Along with their emergency support program UCS provides food at The Pantry, clothing at Lydia's closet, and opportunities to connect with agencies at Coffee Connections. The all-volunteer staff at UCS puts the generous giving of individuals and churches to work helping to change lives in our community.

"Thank you to the many who gave from their hearts to help others," Allison Harrop said.