

WHAT IS ShareNet?

If you asked me a year ago, "Joan, what is ShareNet and what do they do?" I probably could have given it the old college try and been pretty accurate in my description. Now that I am part of ShareNet and co-chair with Elder Pat Peters I know so much more about ShareNet and what an integral part they are of congregational care for our church. ShareNet has been meeting for over 25 years and not only do they send birthday cards along with get well and sympathy cards but they also make many phone calls, do home and hospital visits, share communion with those unable to attend church, and actively and fervently pray for the needs of those in our congregation.

The ShareNet mission statement is:

*Caring enough to share
Christ's love by
reaching out to others
with the love of Christ.*

If you have a prayer request, will be having surgery, are hospitalized, or another need arises, please contact Gail, Pat Peters, or myself.

We are happy to announce that birthdays and anniversaries are back in the newsletter beginning this month as we know many of you look forward to honoring those who are celebrating. Please reach out to anyone on the committee if we can be of help or in prayer for you.

Joan Pohl, Co-Chair



They are here!

Pick up your copy of **Our Daily Bread** devotional for March through May. They can be found in the Library Kiosk.

Debby Williams

Let Something Essential Happen to Me

O God,
let something essential happen to me,
something more than interesting
or entertaining,
or thoughtful.

O God,
let something essential happen to me,
something awesome,
something real.

Speak to my condition, Lord,
and change me somewhere inside where it matters,
a change that will burn and tremble and heal
and explode me into tears
or laughter
or love that throbs or screams
or keeps a terrible, cleansing silence
and dares the dangerous deeds.
Let something happen in me
which is my real self, God....

O God,
let something essential and joyful happen in me now,
something like the blooming of hope and faith,
like a grateful heart,
like a surge of awareness
of how precious each moment is,
that now, not next time,
now is the occasion
to take off my shoes
to see every bush afire,
to leap and whirl with neighbor,
to gulp the air as sweet wine
until I've drunk enough
to dare to speak the tender word:
"Thank you"
"I love you"
"You're beautiful"
"Let's live forever beginning now"
and "I'm a fool for Christ's sake."

Mission & Stewardship

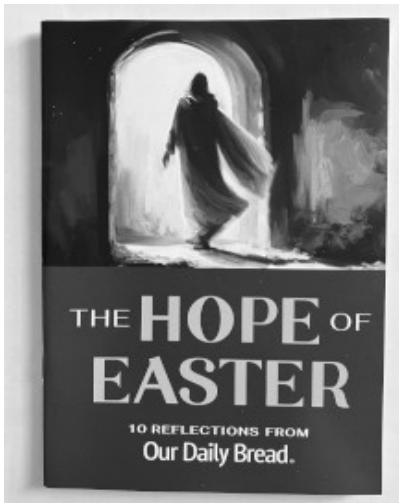
In February we distributed small jars for contributions to our two youth at Montana De Luz, a shelter for children and families affected by HIV/AIDS. We have supported Erik and Lola in this way for several years now. Our portion goes toward their cost of stay. Jars are being collected the first Sundays in March. You may put your jar in the narthex on the Montana De Luz table or give it to either Eleda Zygadlo or Dave and Marlene Suter. We are suggesting that each person give at least 50 cents per day throughout the month of February. Our goal is to raise \$750.

During Lent we are receiving denominational gifts to

One Great Hour of Sharing. Giving envelopes are available in the church narthex. Giving envelopes are also included in your personal giving envelope box. One Great Hour of Sharing supports Presbyterian Hunger Relief, Presbyterian Disaster Relief and the Self-Development of People. Your contribution not only supports world mission through our denomination it is also a personal act of stewardship.

For more information on how your contribution will be put to use visit the One Great Hour of Sharing web site. Gifts in support of OGHS are being received throughout lent, February 14 through March 31.

Tom Shoemaker



What does Easter mean to you? Easter is perhaps the most personal holiday on our calendar. Before Jesus, there was no hope. All of the hardships and uncertainties of life had no answer. But God sent Jesus to live a perfect life in a broken world, pay the ultimate sacrifice that erased our debt, and rose victoriously from the dead to give us eternal hope. No matter what global or personal trial you face, there's victory in Jesus. Don't let this Easter be just another holiday.

"The Hope of Easter" is available in the Library Kiosk.

Debby Williams

Anniversaries & Birthdays

March Anniversaries

3-22 Jeff and Laura Wells
3-30 Jim and Sally Brinkman

March Birthdays

3-1 Tom Smith
3-2 Marlene Tucker
3-3 Phyllis Gruizenga-Sahr
3-4 Andy Thorburn
3-6 Billie Stewart

3-8 Theresa Yarbrough
3-8 Lexis Fath
3-11 Ann McGrew
3-14 Kathy McGuire
3-15 Danna Dent
3-15 Steve McCloskey
3-19 Martha Shoemaker
3-28 Jack Wyatt
3-29 Dick Schallhorn
3-30 Nathaniel McCloskey

-Joan Pohl

A NEW DIRECTION FOR OUR NEWSLETTER



With the outset of email and social media, churches have found these various tools to be vital pieces of communication for congregations. Here we've been utilizing a Weekly Update via email for over a year, along with Facebook postings, and we're finding these venues help keep people better informed on congregation life than a traditional monthly newsletter. In fact many churches have done away with the monthly newsletter in favor of other creative communication avenues.

So, like many other churches, we will be living into a transition of our monthly newsletter from a mainly events-and-dates emphasis into a discipleship-and-faith-story emphasis. Sure, we'll still carry information on events, but you will notice a change in direction.

The newsletter will begin to reflect to the congregation who we are as a people of faith to ourselves and to the community. Moreover, the emphasis will no longer just be on the pastor sharing faith perspectives, but from a myriad of voices amongst ourselves.

Why? Because we grow from other people's stories in our own faith and discipleship!

Then, in a world where younger generations are asking, "What is church?", this transition will help in assisting all of us to be better witnesses of Christ's transforming presence and power. Furthermore, in a world where Christianity desperately needs credibility, this transition will help us live into this.

We invite you to write about your faith journey or reflections for the newsletter

We invite you to share stories, essays, thoughts, devotionals, and poems, etc. Pictures and art can be submitted too!

Your faith story can be up to one page or as simple as one paragraph. Photos should include a short description. If you're under 18, include your parent's permission.

Send your faith story to Chuck Williams at aroundvanburen@gmail.com. He'll get in touch with you to let you know when we're planning to use it. We reserve the right to edit submissions but we'll contact you if there will be any major changes.

Whatever works for you! It may be easier to text/voice Chuck at 269-621-5359 or simply talk to him at church. Or place it in his mailbox at church. "If we can sit down together in a quiet room at church where I can take notes, that would be best," he says.

Sharing your faith journey, your relationship with our church, and your passions in life and mission are what this is all about. So if you're interested in sharing something about your own faith journey or your thoughts on faith, speak with Chuck or Gail. Have suggestions for people Chuck can interview? Let us know.

We are sharing our faith struggles, joys, and journeys together here. But please no politics or writing to change other people's minds. Remember, we are PCUSA.

Chuck Williams, Newsletter Editor
Rev. Gail Monsma, Interim Pastor



*The Martha
Shoemaker family will
be hosting an Open
House to celebrate
Martha's 101st
birthday on Sunday,*

*March 24th at the Maple Lake
Assisted Living Community Room.
The Open House is from 2 until 5 pm.*

Members of our congregation who may wish to come by and say hi to Martha are cordially invited to attend. The Maple Lake facility is at 677 Hazen Street in Paw Paw. - Tom Shoemaker

Presbyterian Women Future Events

We are having a plant sale in the parking lot on May 11. If you have any plants you want to contribute please contact Jan Odgen. We could use your help in May potting plants for the sale. We will let you know times and dates as we get closer to the sale. We need containers to put them in too.

On June 22 we will be holding a Thrift Sale. As you do your spring cleaning set any items you no longer want or use aside. We will let you know when to bring them to church.

Be sure to come to our next meeting March 6 at 1:00 pm. Notice the new time. See you then.

Marge McKee

The Riches of God's Grace

I was looking up Easter references when I found these next verses from Ephesians 1:7-10 in the book *Where To Find It In The Bible* and they spoke to me.

-Chuck Williams

Ephesians 1:7-10 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment — to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

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Your faith, discipleship, and mission stories are always welcome in the church newsletter.

Do you know the average Facebook post is about one sentence long? So here's my question to you for next month's newsletter: HOW HAS FAITH GUIDED YOUR LIFE? Tell me your answer in a sentence or two ... either in-person or by email, text, phone-message, or drop a note in my church mail box.

Write it in a Facebook post and let me know at facebook.com/aroundvanburen for extra points.
Thanks! Chuck Williams

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw
P.O. Box 435
120 Pine Street
Paw Paw, MI 49079

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Presbyterian News

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Church Office 269-657-3111 + firstpres120@gmail.com + Office hours Tues-Wed-Thu 9 am - 3 pm

Rev. Gail Monsma + 269-275-6998 + revgailfpcpawpaw@gmail.com

