



## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR/RECTOR**

**The Rev. Mike Wernick**

Sometimes, we find ourselves painted into a corner. Or between a rock and a hard place. Sometimes, it seems like there's "no way out." We may have made a bad decision, or find ourselves the unwitting recipient of someone else's bad decision.

Years ago, when I lived in Fairfield, Iowa, the startup investment company for which I was working, had its funding pulled by the parent company in Chicago, because after six months, the revenues didn't match the projections. The six of us were told, with only days notice, that our employment would end. In effect, I was the recipient of someone else's myopic (and perhaps not well thought out) vision. Immediately, I prayed: "God, I'm turning this over to you right now. I can't know what's best for me or where to turn, but I trust that you have my good at heart, and I ask you to help me find those doors which may open to me." Within two weeks I was working again.

When it became apparent that my former wife and I would divorce, it also became apparent that we could not divorce. The math just didn't add up. Considering what our joint incomes were, and what our joint expenses were, there just simply wasn't nearly enough left over to set up a new second household. Even a very modest one. One room. One bath. And a kitchenette. Not to mention child support. But I also knew that we could not remain together. The situation seemed untenable. There was gridlock. There was stalemate. There was no way forward. But I knew there had to be.

In her address ("A Sexual Ethics for My Children") given at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Evanston IL, on October 4, 1992, Catherine M. Wallace said: "The contractual language states, "til death do us part." But the more humble, more realistic, more deeply Christian recognition is that this sacramental relationship will endure as long as openness to God's grace endures on both sides. It will endure only as long as the two people can remain blessings for one

another." And given who we were, and who we had become, we had ceased to be a blessing to each other. Doors opened, and I continued my work and established a second small apartment.

During the summer between my second and final year of seminary, Joel lost his employment with the Ohio Historical Society, where he had been working for almost sixteen years. I was attending seminary full time, and the loss of our sole income felt devastating. It felt like being between a rock and a hard place. Or being painted into a corner. My seminary career seemed to be over. We would both need to find work to pay our bills. But someone at Bexley Hall reminded us to breathe. Reminded us to pray. Reminded us to be open to the workings of the Holy Spirit.

And they shared a quote with us, which I subsequently learned has been attributed to the German writer and statesman Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and to W.H. Murray in the 1951 book *The Scottish Himalayan Expedition*, and is said to be at least connected to the 1835 translation of part of *Faust*, by John Anster. But whoever wrote it, it does in my opinion and experience, contain truth, and I understand it as the movement of the Holy Spirit. It says:

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely

commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now."

The world continues to spin, sometimes seemingly out of control. And there is nothing--no thought, or feeling, or speech, or action, or consequence, or regret that God cannot redeem. Sometimes, we make the mistake of believing that we must jump in and act without a moment's hesitation. That may be particularly true if someone's bleeding. But in the unfathomable web of countless interactions in which we find ourselves, sometimes, it's best to breathe, pray, let go, and invite the Holy Spirit to guide us.

As *Two Churches* looks ahead to 2019 and the issues we face, I invite all of us--leadership and worshippers--into deeper individual and corporate prayer, listening perhaps a little bit less to the mind's knee-jerk, fix-it, auto-response, and more to the whispered urgings of Holy Spirit in our heart; after all, the heart is an organ of perception too. It will take patience, and it will take time, and it may lead us down a path we didn't expect. But it's what Jesus did.

The Rev. Mike Wernick

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## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### February 3 - Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 1:4-10  
1 Corinthians 13:1-13  
Luke 4:21-30  
Psalm 71:1-6

### February 10 - Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 6:1-8, [9-13]  
1 Corinthians 15:1-11  
Luke 5:1-11  
Psalm 138

### February 17 - Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 17:5-10  
1 Corinthians 15:12-20  
Luke 6:17-26  
Psalm 1

### February 24 - Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

Genesis 45:3-11, 15  
1 Corinthians 15:35-38,42-50  
Luke 6:27-38  
Psalm 37:1-12, 41-42

## COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Kim H. & Laura K.

### Recent Events

The **Christmas offering** of \$935 is being divided among Journey to Adulthood (J2A) Youth Group, Diaper Depot, and our adult English as a Second Language (ESL) program. Thank you for your generosity!

On January 20, several beautiful afghans made by Two Churches' **Warm Up America** volunteers Ruth B., Deb F., Agnes K., and Kay S. were blessed by Rev. Mike. Thanks to Kay S. for bringing in the afghans and setting up the display in the sanctuary. These works of love go to children entering foster care, providing them with warmth, comfort, and something to call their own. If you're interested in participating, please see Kay S. Donations of **washable yarn** (no wool, please) are always much appreciated and can be placed in the basket on top of the collection bins in the Narthex. If you purchase more than one skein at a time, purchasing two or more of the same color is most helpful, as it takes at least four skeins of yarn to make one afghan.



### Current/Upcoming Events



The **Super Bowl collection** of canned soups for **The Pantry** kicked off January 13 and runs through Super Bowl Sunday, February 3. If we collect **1,500 cans**, Rev. Mike will get a manicure and have one hand's nails painted in the New England Patriots' colors (red, white, blue, and silver) and one hand's in the Los Angeles Rams' colors (blue, gold or yellow, and white)! As of Sunday, Jan. 27, we're at approximately 600 cans. Watch for sales (and, hopefully, pictures of Rev. Mike's colorful nails in next month's newsletter!!) and let's score a touchdown against food insecurity!

Save the date: Our next workday at **St. Mark's Breakfast Café** will be Sunday, March 31.

Community Ministry's **next meeting** will be Thurs., March 21, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at Kim H.'s condo. Our meetings are open to everyone and **include a potluck dinner**. We are looking for new members. If you'd like to see what we're all about, please come! Just let Kim know you'll be attending so the meal can be planned accordingly.

### Ongoing Programs

Don't forget our **"Noisy Offering"** (loose change offering, although paper currency is also gladly accepted!) that we take in on the **first Sunday of each month**. This money is donated to **ACCESS of West Michigan**, a local ministry seeking to end poverty and food insecurity. The January offering brought in \$82. Thanks to Kay S. for counting the donations every month.

**The Pantry is hoping for a grand re-opening date in March** at its new location at 4301 Kalamazoo Avenue, S.E., Suite 25, the former site of Russo's Market. The date will be announced as soon as it is set. This month we are collecting **dried pasta, canned pasta, and spaghetti sauce**. We also continue to collect personal care items for The Pantry's clients, such as feminine hygiene products, toilet paper and other paper products, "ziplock" baggies, toothpaste, etc. These items cannot be purchased with Bridge Cards and can be costly, especially for someone already struggling with food insecurity. Watch for "BOGO" sales!

We continue to collect SpartanNash store receipts to reach the **Direct Your Dollars** goal of \$150,000 in qualifying receipts for the third time. Please remember that the entire receipt is needed and that e-receipts do not qualify. Once the goal is reached, Diaper Depot will receive another check for \$1,000. Let's fill up that truck again!

The **Samaritas** collection of magazines (non-news-oriented preferred), greeting cards, artificial flowers, and fabric is on-going. Please place your donations in the far-right collection bin in the Narthex. Thanks to all who donate, and to Joel F. for delivering the donated items.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

The **Diaper Depot** can use your help! If you can assist at the scheduled distribution times, please sign up (on the bulletin board next to the Sacristy door) and lend a hand. Please note that, currently, help is no longer needed with re-packaging diapers on Sundays. Diapers are ordered online and delivered directly to the church, saving a lot of time in shopping and hauling. Due to the timing of deliveries, a dedicated person or persons repackage the diapers shortly after their arrival. Thanks to everyone who helps with or donates to this important ministry! For more information, see Shirley N. or her article elsewhere in this newsletter.

**The Pantry** can always use volunteers! If you're interested, please see Kay S.

### **Care Team Ministry**

Help is available with rides, food, visits, communion, and calls. If you have a need, or know someone who does, please contact Laura K. or Rev. Mike.

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## **DIAPER DEPOT**

**Judy M.**

**Volunteers are needed at the following distribution times:**

Thursday, **February 7th** from 6-8 p.m.

Wednesday, **February 20th** from 10:00 a.m.- Noon

Please sign up on the bulletin board if you're able to help.

Many, many thanks to the **Great Start Parent Coalition** for arranging a huge donation of diapers from Huggies to benefit local diaper pantries. We received over **10,000 diapers** as a result!

We began our third collection of Spartan Nash **Direct Your Dollar** receipts for Diaper Depot on December 9<sup>th</sup> and already have over \$24,000. Please ask friends and family to contribute their receipts as well and we'll have this collection finished in record time!

Thanks for supporting Diaper Depot.



*"Thank you" doesn't seem to be quite enough as we say farewell and Godspeed to our faithful organist, Suzanne T. You have blessed Holy Cross and Two Churches for many years with your talent and your musical knowledge and leadership and with your caring. You will be missed. God bless you!*

**UNITED THANK OFFERING**  
**Lisbeth E.**



**United Thank Offering**  
*Sharing Blessings with Thanksgiving and Love*

The United Thank Offering Report for  
the 2019 Joint Annual Meeting  
January 20, 2019

The United Thank Offering (UTO) is an Episcopal Church program but is open to all. The mission of UTO is "to expand the circle of thankful people". UTO is an on-going expression of thanksgiving, not a stewardship program or a fund-raiser. We are asked to think of and then give thanks each day for all our blessings, both small and great, in prayer and by putting coins (or currency) in our UTO "Blue Boxes". The size of our offerings is less important than the practice of expressing our thanks. The contents of the "Blue Boxes" are collected during Ingatherings held once or twice a year and sent on to the national church for deposit into the UTO account. All the funds earn interest until they are awarded the next year as grants made to further the mission of the church. All the money given to UTO goes to grants and none is used for administrative or other expenses.

In 2018 we switched from holding two Ingatherings a year, one in the spring and one in the fall, to holding only one in the fall. The tangible portion of the thanks of the parishioners of Two Churches at the November 4 (and 11) Ingathering amounted to \$854.80. Per the UTO Handbook for Diocesan and Parish Coordinators/Organizers 2018-2020, the money was sent directly to The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (the legal name of the Episcopal Church) for deposit into the UTO account.

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## **OUR NEW LEADERSHIP**

Those elected at our annual Joint Congregational Meeting, or continuing their terms:

### **Ascension Lutheran's Council**

Kevin Barry  
Jeff Stormoen  
Dan Weller  
John Standley  
Rich Walker  
Mike Wernick



### **Holy Cross' Vestry**

Tony Bowie  
Jon Getz  
Chuck McKean  
Hannah Mattson Temple  
Mary Lyda Trasky  
Colleen Walter

Specific offices/liason roles to be determined.



JOIN US FOR LUNCH!

SOUP &  
SALAD

**J2A Youth Group will be holding one last fundraiser to help support their June pilgrimage trip.**

**A soup & salad luncheon will be served following the 10 am worship on **Sunday February 10<sup>th</sup>** – no set cost, but any donations to J2A will be accepted.**

## **SUNDAY COFFEE SERVERS**

Please check the list on the bulletin board next to the Sacristy for possible changes/corrections.

Feb 3 Laura K. & Agnes K.  
Feb 10 Esther Y. & Marjri W.  
Feb 17 Sara H. & Connie E.  
Feb 24 Jill B. & Kathy T.

Mar 3 Gwen H. & Lisbeth A.  
Mar 10 Liz R & Ann A.  
Mar 17 Mary A. & Hannah T.  
Mar 24 Jan S. & Barb C.  
Mar 31 Sue R. & Robin G.

Apr 7 Viv R. & Laura K.  
Apr 14 Agnes K. & Esther Y.  
Apr 21 Marjri W. & Sara H.  
Apr 28 Connie E. & Jill B.



### **Coffee Procedures**

1. Make sure coffee has been made following the 8:00 am worship service.
2. Set out cups, carafes, treats (doesn't have to be elaborate!), creamer and sugar.
3. Heat water for tea, make tea in designated carafe.
4. Stay at table to help serve.
5. Wash dishes after coffee.
6. Take trash to dumpster.

*If you cannot make a scheduled day, please swap with someone else on the list. Also, if you would like to volunteer, but don't see your name please let me know and I will add you to the schedule. Thank you!*

Questions? Please contact Hannah T. at [Hannah.c.temple@gmail.com](mailto:Hannah.c.temple@gmail.com)

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## **FEBRUARY PRAYER LIST**

*We want to pray with and for each other as we move along our spiritual journey together. Please lift up in prayer the designated persons throughout the week. May our Lord Jesus Christ use this ministry of prayer to build His Church in love!*

February 3-9: Andrew and Hannah T.; Mary T.; Andrea T.; Katie V.; Rich and Judy W.

February 10-16: Co and Randy W.; Dan, Marjri, Lizzie and William W.; Rev. Mike W. and Joel F.; Ivan W.; Helen W.

February 17-23: Esther Y.-P.; Susan and Larry Z.; Ann and Al A.; Mary A.; Ruth B.

Feb. 24-March 2: Kevin, Jill, Kate, Meg and Beth B.; Tony and Cheryl B.; George C.; Barb C.; Lenore and Dick Czyzyk.

*Please remember also to pray for all troops stationed throughout the world.*

