



St. Paul United Church of Christ
 31654 Mound Road
 Warren MI 48092
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 Worship Service &
 Sunday School — Sunday, 10 am
 Office Hours: M-Th, 9am-1pm
 Rev Dr. K.C. Lazzara, Pastor
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Our deepest
 condolences to the
 family of
 Richard Weiler



THE GOOD NEWS

August 2022

PASTOR KC

“But I will offer sacrifices to you with songs of praise, and I will fulfill all my vows. For my salvation comes from the Lord alone.” Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach. *Jonah 2:9-10*



After exploring the Book of Jonah for three weeks, what have you learned? We’ve certainly learned that rebelling against the Lord is not the answer to our problems. Consequently, we’ve learned how critical our attitude becomes when faced with a task we *think* shouldn’t be done or is simply impossible to do. Rarely do we have God’s perspective in mind. With our fickle human hearts, most often our selfishness takes precedence. While God is creating opportunities for unity, we may very well be stuck in a *mindset* which only begets division.

Perhaps Jonah’s prayer from chapter 2 can loosen your screws, ease your grip, and lead you to a place of openness to God’s call. Jonah’s initial response to the Lord is a great example demonstrating that the more we dig our heels in the ground in opposition, we only *get in our own way!* Offer your sacrifices, sings songs of praise, and fulfill your vows! As Jonah says, “Salvation comes from the Lord alone.” Amen and amen.



- 9 Cindy Weiler
- 11 Betty Wolgast
- 15 George Dimas
- 19 Jim Farrow
- 29 Margo Allen

St. Paul held its monthly Consistory meeting on July 12. Well, the constitution group finished its review of the Church Constitution. The Consistory is reviewing the changes at these next two meetings. When we are finished reviewing, we will make the revised Constitution available to the congregation for review. We want everyone to review and understand the changes, corrections, etc. Then, at the annual meeting, we will bring the revised Constitution up for a vote. Rummage is rolling along. People have been coming in when they can to help sort. We did a lot of cleaning up in the back of the church. It was very overgrown. We received one quote for painting the sanctuary. It included a lot of items that increase the cost. We asked that the estimate be broken out so we may be able to do some things and others may have to wait. We are planning to do a Blessing of the Pets in September. That service is always a lot of fun seeing everyone's pet. The kids have some fun things planned this summer; one was the tie dye shirts that turned out really great. Can't wait to see what's next. Please remember if there is anything that needs attention (building, service, etc.), please let a member of the Consistory know, so we can address it at our meeting.



Dear Friends,

Thank you for your prayers, cards and kind words. It is such a blessing to be part of a church with so many caring people. Your expressions of condolences and love has greatly touched me. Thank you Pastor KC for all of your support.

God Bless all of you, Cindy



Oz & Clara—Aug 6
 Buster & Mary—Aug 10
 Steve & Gail—Aug 11
 Kurt & Laurie—Aug 22

BRANDON

Dear Members of St. Paul UCC,

I always love being able to relate and apply a scripture to my life. When reading this, I think of my present circumstance. This month marks 13 years of incarceration. Now to even just write that and read it back in my head is riveting. Never could I have foreseen actually making it to this point. Being 16 years old facing that much time; it was always hard to see life beyond that sentence. Now being 29 years old, it is remarkable to look back and realize how very wrong I was.



To think about all that this 13 year prison sentence has done for my life is truly glorious. I never would've been the man I am today without facing daily adversity and relying on God's grace from day one, through every battle, and grabbing ahold of the blessings from the burdens. It is inexhaustible what glorious experiences I've come into contact with that have changed everything in my life. And this is not in relation to the physical barbed wire; as barbed wire just produces lots of headaches and heartaches. It's what's beyond that God has 'enlightened the eyes of my heart' to see. And now seeing these words of this passing glory with a true vision to see the end of it all, I can see the glory that now awaits.

Everything in my life will change in the matter of 6 months. Each time I get to write to you will be a large chunk of the time I have remaining. It is so motivating to look forward to literally everything that I get to have once I'm free. I get to leave so much behind and move forward from all of the hurt I've caused and endured. It really will be filled with so many glorious moments. Being able to find the truest peace in the midst of captivity will absolutely allow me to cherish every bit of the glorious encounters to come.

It means so much to convey these last months of this journey through this newsletter and it also means so much for all of the unbelievable support I've gained from you.

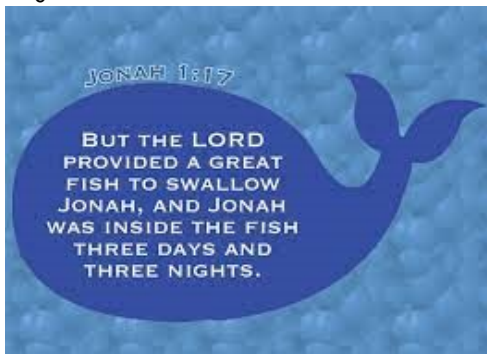
Ebel #752523, Baraga Correctional Facility, 13924 Wadaga Rd., Baraga, MI 49908

SUE

RUMMAGE SALE

Just about ready. With a few more adjustments, rearrangements, additions, subtractions, pricing, washing glassware, setting up Christmas Room, making sure we have enough help, helping Rose with her area, cleaning up mess of bags/boxes, planning Bake Sale and helping Herman check electrical items, getting toys straightened up, purses checked and arranged, pictures and frames out on display, hanging more clothes on new racks - yes, we are just about ready! However, it would go much quicker if we had your help. So far most of the work has been done by a

few hardy souls and they are tiring. More hands make the work go quicker. There is usually someone at church Monday-Thursday about 9am and we leave by 12:30pm. If you would like to come on Saturday, check with Shirene. Remember, this is our only fundraiser and the rewards benefit everyone. We will have more information on the Bale Sale next month, so be ready!



That's all most people know about Jonah, and that's a shame, because there's so much more to know about him.

The life of a prophet in ancient Israel was not an easy one. Many of them did not welcome their fate. It took visions from God to convince Jeremiah and Ezekiel to become prophets; they weren't enthusiastic about the calling. And once you were a prophet? Jeremiah was imprisoned in a cistern (a type of large, stone well) because the king did not like his prophecies. Hosea was instructed by God to take a whore for a wife to show God's redemptive power. Elijah was hunted, under a sentence of death, by Queen Jezebel, when he defeated her prophets (of a pagan god) in a contest. Clearly the life of a prophet in ancient Israel was no bed of roses.

Jonah had it more difficult than many. God tells him to preach to the citizens of Nineveh, sworn enemies of the Israelites. Preaching to the enemy is the last thing Jonah wants to do, so he does what any sensible person would do. He hops on a ship going in the opposite direction from Nineveh! God is not pleased by Jonah's attempt to escape his fate, and whips up a massive storm. In an attempt to discover the source of their bad luck, the sailors on the ship cast lots and the lot falls, correctly, on Jonah, who admits he's their bad luck charm. They promptly throw him overboard. Enter one big fish...

After his sojourn in the belly of the big fish (or whale, as we like to think of it), when Jonah is spat up on shore, he reluctantly accepts his commission and goes to Nineveh. There he preaches about the one true God, the God of Israel, Yahweh. The miraculous happens! The people of Nineveh are converted with record speed to worshippers of Yahweh.

It should be noted that there is absolutely no basis in historical fact for this conversion. The people of Nineveh were never worshippers of the Israelite God, so far as we know. And Jonah's reaction to his success? He is royally ticked off (to put it politely). The last thing he wanted was for his enemies to be saved! He is the only prophet to be totally successful and the only one to feel totally shafted (again, putting it politely). Thus Jonah is the only ONA prophet, preaching to non-Jews, including them in God's great plan. Daniel preaches to the Babylonians and Joseph provides an example to the Egyptians, but they are not prophets, they are role models. Jonah is a true prophet, the only one, acting inclusively to the gentiles.

So what does he do to bask in his success? He built himself a small booth on a hill above Nineveh, probably hoping the conversion won't "take" in the long run. But God has another lesson in store for Jonah. He causes a bush to grow quickly and entwine itself on the booth. It provides welcome shade for Jonah in the hot sun. Then God sends a worm to kill the bush, which in turn causes Jonah to mourn for the demise of the bush, being angry enough to want to die. God calls Jonah out for being a hypocrite. "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow...should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons...and also many animals?" (Jonah 4:10-11, excerpted, NRSV). Scripture does not record Jonah's answer, for he has none. Here ends Jonah's story, and our lessons. Jonah's story teaches us that we cannot escape God's will for us and that God's redemptive plans are for everyone.