



BRANCHES



A Publication of **Muskegon County Cooperating Churches**
Convening the Community of Faith
to serve the needs of the people of Muskegon County for over 70 years.

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MCCC is a non-profit ecumenical organization serving all faith congregations in Muskegon County

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What's New at Cooperating Churches?

RECOVERY CONGREGATIONS

Beginning April 1 MCCC has acquired a grant to start up a program called Recovery Congregations

In the next couple of months Lily will be traveling to churches who show interest in learning more about the program.

The goal of the grant is to establish 5 Certified Recovery Congregations in the greater Muskegon area. If this is something your church would like to learn more about, call our office.

MOBILE FOOD PANTRIES

If you would like to schedule a Feeding America Mobile Food Pantry at your church, please call our office. If you would like the most recent schedule check out our Website: www.cooperatingchurches.com

CHURCHES CAN UTILIZE THE BENEFITS OF A MUSKEGON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMBERSHIP AT A DISCOUNTED RATE!

The Muskegon County Chamber of Commerce is currently offering discounted memberships to all members of the Muskegon County Cooperating Churches. Our membership fees for MCCC continue to be the low rate of \$50 annually. Under the MCCC umbrella can get you a Chamber membership for \$75. The combined fee is \$125 rather than the combined fees (without the discount) of \$245. It is a great deal and the Chamber would be willing to come to your church and talk to you about all the benefits of a Chamber membership.



Gleanings by Tom Wagner



Homage of the Pines

Following a few stumbles since equinox, spring has arrived in earnest. Tree buds are swelling. Pastures are turning green and the song of spring peepers echoes through the surrounding wetlands. It took me a while to clean up the yard after January's ice storm. The ice that brought down many large pine branches in turn froze the branches to the ground. Those pine branches further extended the duration of that grip by insulating the ice. By mid-April I was able finally to remove all the branches and even rake up the pine straw. The day after I finished was Palm Sunday. As I drove to church there were a few snowflakes flying through the air. I didn't think much of it. Snow flurries in April aren't unusual in west Michigan. By the time I returned to the car I had to remove nearly an inch of snow from the windows before driving home. Throughout the afternoon and evening I watched incredulously as heavy wet snow accumulated inch by inch and white pine boughs drooped lower and lower. A number of large branches had already broken off by twilight, but I wasn't able to survey the full extent of the damage until I returned from work the following day. The snow had brought down nearly as many branches as had the earlier ice storm. It's amazing what can be accomplished when a few snowflakes stick together. As I cleaned up the yard Good Friday afternoon, a bit of whimsy crossed my mind. Many of the branches lay in our driveway and footpaths between the house and outbuildings. Perhaps by bowing and laying their branches in the paths the pine trees were contributing their own *Hosannas*. As I recall from the Gospel text, Jesus answered critics who wished to silence the crowd, "...if these were silent, the stones would shout out." (Luke 19:40)

As the weather warms, most of us will be spending more time outside. For me it's time to clean out the barn, cut firewood and hunt for morels. Though I may help with early soil prep, these days Lois handles most of the gardening activity in our household. Whether engaged in specific tasks or taking a leisurely stroll through the woods, I best sense the presence of the divine in God's handiwork. I don't mean to dismiss the value of joining with fellow believers in gathered worship. It is vitally important to build and maintain our human relationships. Yet when I step into woodlands or a mountain pass I can imagine myself stepping into a vast cathedral with tall wooden columns or massive stone walls, and endless windows and skylights in the canopy, more intricate than the craftsmanship of the best known rose windows. While dramatic settings easily evoke a sense of awe, perhaps it's even more important to spend enough time in habitats closer to home to discover that same sense of wonder. It's a way to connect the poetry of worship to the prose of our ordinary lives.



While the thought of the pine trees observing Palm Sunday is admittedly a bit fanciful, the notion of creation worshipping the Creator has biblical precedent. In addition to Jesus' comment during the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, I think especially of Isaiah's joyful description of mountains and hills breaking into song and the trees of the field clapping their hands (55:12). I'm also reminded of Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of Brother Sun". Many readers are likely familiar with William H. Draper's early 20th Century translation, "All Creatures of Our God and King". In such poetry or natural settings we may be reminded that we too are creatures within creation. We share interdependent relationships both within the human family and natural world. Indeed we are members of a community much greater than our congregations, denominations, faith traditions or all humanity. The world is not merely our home for now. We live in relationship to all creation. I think of the line from Henry van Dyke's "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" set to the theme from Beethoven's 9th Symphony: "Mortals join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began..." That kind of awareness of our place in creation can help us make better choices about how we live in this world.

Tom Wagner is a former pastor in the Church of the Brethren (Dunker) and serves MCCC as clerk and archivist. He can be contacted at gleanertw@hotmail.com.



From Lily

Muskegon County Cooperating Churches would love to hear from you. If you have something you would like to share, please e-mail me at staff@cooperatingchurches.com or send it to me in the mail. Please include pictures and/or your organizational logo. Information is due into the office no later than June 21, if it is to be included in the next July-August issue.

Hackley Public Library Programs

Summer Reading 2019

A Universe of Stories-June 17 to August 17.

Explore a Universe of Stories this summer. Read through the levels of space to earn different prizes. The more you read the more you earn. Adults, teens, and children welcome.

The SuperB Woman, Mother's Day Tea, Author event with Janet Neal, 2-3 pm, Saturday, May 11.

Gives hope to women everywhere who are trying to do it all, with an entertaining take of a burned-out Superwoman. Celebrate all the mothers and women we love during Hackley Library's Mother's Day Tea, accompanied by an author talk and signing.

Astromony 101, 6-7pm, Tuesday June 11.

Learn about the starry sky when Michael Galvin, of the Muskegon Astronomical Society gives a presentation on how to enjoy the night sky with little or no equipment! Find out how to use a star chart, learn to spot satellites, and hear about interesting things to look at this month.

Star Wars Day Crafts, 2 pm Saturday, May 4.

A long time ago in a library far, far away . . . Star Wars Crafts! This *Star Wars Day* we are leaning towards our artistic sides and creating a variety of projects-including a special one for Mother's Day. All ages.

Readers in Space: Magician Brad Lancaster, 2-3 pm Saturday, May 18.

Explore a universe of stories through magic, puppets, books, and engaging storytelling. This family-friendly show includes audience participation and lots of laughs. All ages.

Fly Me to the Moon, 5:30 pm Monday, June 17

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first Apollo mission to land on the Moon on July 20, 1969! Investigate how gravity keeps the Moon in orbit around the Earth and what it takes to escape Earth's gravity to get to the Moon. Experience the creation of Moon craters and the challenges involved in landing safely on the varied surface of the Moon. Learn more about current and future missions to other moons and planets in our solar system. All ages.



PAINTING THE STARS

Science, Religion and an Evolving Faith

7 Week DVD series produced by: *Living the Questions*

Tuesday evenings, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

May 14 – June 25

Jim DeGood – facilitator

at Samuel Lutheran Church, ELCA

540 Houston Ave

(parking at 8th St. and Muskegon Ave.)

Muskegon, MI

Suggested \$15 donation for series

Please register at <http://www.c-sat.org>

VOLUNTEER FOR DENTAL

DO YOU NEED DENTAL CARE? Volunteer For Dental offers basic dental services in exchange for volunteer service for Muskegon County residents who qualify. Our services have recently expanded to partial and full dentures through the Sr. Resources Millage grant. Please call Suzanne to discuss your dental questions and to see if you qualify! (231) 766-7129.

Feeding America Has Increased the Mobile Food Pantry fees on March 1, 2019

100 Family (apprx. 5,000 lbs.)	\$595.00
150 Family (apprx. 7,500 lbs.)	\$725.00
200 Family (apprx. 10,000 lbs.)	\$875.00
300 Family (apprx. 15,000 lbs.)	\$1,150.00
400 Family (apprx. 20,000 lbs.)	\$1450.00

CLUB 188 SUMMER ACADEMY OF ARTS AND ACADEMICS- 2019 Mount Zion Church of God In Christ- Muskegon, MI

Club 188 is a youth outreach ministry of the Mount Zion Church of God In Christ that began in 2009. The goal of the program is to provide summer programming for youth that will help minimize summer learning loss. Elementary through high school youth participate in a variety of academic and enrichment experiences during the seven week summer session. The program is open to all Muskegon County youth, however, we target youth from the cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights. Instructional activities include a variety of hands-on learning activities involving reading, writing and mathematics; also a small computer lab is used to support the instructional efforts. Additionally, Club 188 children are exposed to the cultural arts, and they take a variety of field trips. We also offer recreational and other healthy lifestyle activities.

The Academy is located at the Mount Zion Church of God In Christ in downtown Muskegon, MI. It meets Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm during the summer. Some activities are held in other venues in greater Muskegon; and a few special activities are held during the school year, such as a college tour and theater trips. The staff includes retired educators and other professionals, community volunteers, college student interns, and high school students completing work skills training or community service hours. Funding is solicited from several different sources, including the Community Foundation for Muskegon County, Mercy Health, corporate foundations, area banks and businesses, organizations and churches, individual donors and the Mount Zion Church. We have collaborations and partnerships with other youth serving organizations. The program is free to youth, and meals are provided through local summer feeding programs at no charge to program participants.

2019 Program Highlights:

Dates: June 17 – August 2

Academic Emphasis: Reading, Spelling, Writing and Applied Mathematics

Enrichment/Recreational Activities:

- Arts and Crafts
- Broadway Boot Camp
- Local and regional theater productions
- Choir practice and performances
- Camping, Fishing, Golf, Kayaking, Tennis, and Swimming

Special Activities:

- Gardening and “Cooking Matters”
- Healthy Lifestyle Presentations
- Anti-bullying and Conflict Resolution
- Field trips to museums
- Community Service Projects
- Celebrating Latino cultures

General Registration: May 6 – May 31 at the Mount Zion Church, 188 W. Muskegon Ave.

Contact: Janie P. Brooks-Davis, Program Director, (231) 722-6765 church; or (231) 220-6647 cell



We are writing to invite you to participate in a youth-adult partnership with BOOM Youth, the youth leadership team for MYalliance System of Care. We have been busy planning the upcoming **Youth ReCon Resilience Conference, coming up Friday May 31 from 9:00-4:00**. The event will start at the Hilt Building downtown and conclude at the Muskegon Farmer's Market. Topics include trauma, resilience, self-care and community resources.

We have a couple opportunities for adults and agencies to be involved in this exciting event:

1) Volunteer at the event. There are a variety of volunteer shifts available to help chaperone and assist with the event: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/adult-sign-up-for-recon-youth-summit-volunteering-and-resource-booths-tickets-60406760246>

a. For those who are volunteering we have a volunteer preparation meeting Tuesday, May 28th from 5:00-6:00 at HealthWest (376 E. Apple.)

2) Host a community resource booth for your agency. These booths will be part of an interactive "social scavenger hunt" downtown Muskegon taking place from 2:00-3:30 (asking agencies to report to the Farmer's Market at 1:30.) More details will follow for agencies that sign up. If you are receiving this invite it is because youth identified your agency as a helpful resource for young people to learn about and connect with. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/adult-sign-up-for-recon-youth-summit-volunteering-and-resource-booths-tickets-60406760246>

3) Help spread the word to youth in our community: Here is the link for youth to sign up for the summit (make sure they download the permission slip!): <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/recon-youth-summit-tickets-59169368173> Please see and share the attached Save the Date.

Questions or ideas? Please contact:

Andre Williams, 740-7159 or andre.williams@healthwest.net or Lauren Meldrum 312-848-0541 or lauren.meldrum@healthwest.net

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We would not exist without your generous support. Contributions have been received during the last 2 months from the following individuals, churches and organizations.

John & Lois Parker
Church of the Brethren
1st Congregational UCC
Fruitport Congregational UCC
Phillip Chapel AME
New Bethel Baptist, Evangelical

Nancy Waters
Church of the Living God
Community United Methodist
St. Francis De Sales
Mediation & Restorative Services
Harbor Unitarian Universalist

Sacred Heart Church
Bill D. Page
St. Gregory's Episcopal
St. Paul's Episcopal
Phyllis Wahlberg
Lebanon Lutheran

Don Holtrop
Forest Park Covenant
Bethany CRC
Samuel Lutheran
Mission for Area People

Calendar

- May 6-May 31: Registration for Club 188, Mount Zion Church, Pg. 5
- May 14-June 25, Painting the Stars, Samuel Lutheran, Pg. 4
- May 23-5pm-MCCC Board of Directors' Meeting
- May 31, 9am to 4pm, Youth Recon Resilience Conference, Pg. 6
- June 17-August 2: Club 188, Mount Zion Church, Pg. 5
- June 21- last day for articles for the Branches
- June 27-5 pm MCCC Board of Director's Meeting