

Sunday
September 13, 2020
9:30 a.m.

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor Greg

Becoming disciples,
serving God's world.



217 S Main St
Vicksburg MI 49097
269-649-2343
vicksburgumc.org

Pastor Greg Culver
231-675-4452
gpculver@mac.com



Call to Worship — based on Exodus 14:19-31

The sea of apathy surrounds enticing God's people with self promotion luring them with greed. The sea of apathy surrounds bloated with decay the remains of injustice and idolatry.

The sea of apathy surrounds.

Our task this day is to cross the sea. Our task today is to say "NO!" to the stench. Our task if we choose it is to say "YES!" to life and faith.

YES, Lord! Let us cross the sea together!

Opening Prayer: Psalm 114 (*NRSV*) *God's Wonders at the Exodus*

¹ When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, ² Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion. ³ The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back. ⁴ The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs. ⁵ Why is it, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back? ⁶ O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs? ⁷ Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the God of Jacob, ⁸ who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a spring of water.

Scripture Lessons: Matthew 18:21-35; Romans 14:1-12 (*Kingdom New Testament*)

Sermon: "Grace Given; Grace Received"

Congregational Prayer, and the Lord's Prayer

God of grace and God of glory, this past week we remembered the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Grant us the wisdom to remember the lessons from that tragic day that make us more Christ-like. Drive away from us any vengeful urges, any hate-filled sentiment, any whisper from within or without that goads us to return evil for evil.

As we look back and recall where we were, who was with us and how we felt that fateful day, may those vivid memories compel us to acts of kindness, words of love and demonstrations of community. May the myriad of images of helpers — firefighters, police officers, pastors, office workers, ordinary citizens — be the icons that inspire us to be helpers, too. May texts and voicemails of "I love you" and "You are everything to me" assure us that love always has the last word, but that we should never wait to say it.

As the world still heaves with violence and hatred that seems to never end, assure us, Prince of Peace, that ultimately crying and mourning will be no more in your new creation. In the midst of suffering, our own and that of the world, speak again, Creator God, your performative Word of life and its goodness.

We pray for those whose lives were forever changed on September 11, 2001. Grant comfort to those who grieve. Strengthen those who struggle with questions that remain unanswered. Assure those who worry that they should have said or done something differently that you gather up all the fragments of our lives, bless and use them in ways that nourish.

We thank you, Lord of all, for the people who every day put their lives in danger in order to protect and serve others. We pray for all first responders, for medical personnel, police officers, firefighters and others who never know what a shift at work will bring on any given day. Grant them wisdom, courage and rest.

As we consider that fall day 19 years ago, grant us the ability to cling to the examples of goodness that emerged out of the horror: strangers banding together to thwart more carnage, people lining up to donate blood, congregations offering respite for anyone and everyone, people offering comfort and care to those they knew and those they had never met. May these acts of mercy emulated in our lives be the ripple that reverberates through history, revealing your sure power to bring redemption, reconciliation and resurrection out of the depths of death and despair.

We are grateful for the new life born since the attacks – for those beloved children who

don't remember that day. We give thanks for the saints who were with us then, but have since gone on to eternal life.

When we mark anniversaries of sorrow, corporately or alone, may they be occasions to discern what truly matters, let go of what really doesn't and recognize your grace, Almighty God, that pervades it all.

In the name of Jesus, the light of the world, the Prince of Peace, the Good Shepherd, our friend and our helper, we pray... *Our Father...*

Sharing God's Gifts, and Offertory ~ Karla Stubblefield

Offering Prayer — based on Matthew 18:21-35

Thank you for your continued support in prayer and finances.


Patient Lord, you amaze us each day with your ability to forgive our many sins. You display merciful acts and answer our prayers in profound ways. Help us to be stewards of your mercy and grace as these monetary gifts are transformed into active ministries. Multiply the span of these ministries to reach people in new ways. We pray in the name of the one who teaches true forgiveness, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Benediction

Go now to follow the way of Jesus: see others as he did; dare to give freely as he did; and to love unconditionally as he did. Go, embraced by the Source of life, love and hope; in the company of the Word of life; encouraged by the Breath of life. Amen.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

VUMC's Mission Statement



The General Rule of Discipleship

To witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer for Family and Friends

Previous Requests

Please pray for the family of Darrel Iobe (Lynne Melvin's friends), who passed away recently: his wife, Tammy, and children, Rebecca and Scott, and three grandchildren.

Tim Melvin is home from the hospital and slowly doing better every day.

Pray for persecuted Christians around the world.

Outside/In-person Worship continues!

Sunday, September 20
9:30 a.m.



Vicksburg High School parking lot
(east side by the lacrosse field)

For Cheer and Hello

David Bretz
Barb Griner
Flossie Lang
Nona Mattheis
Beverly Nimmo

Robert & Carmen Parsons
Marv Starbuck
Mina Willett
Betty Witcher

Moving to Phase II

On Sunday, Oct. 4, we are moving forward to Phase II of back to in-person worship! We will be gathering in the Family Life Center at 9:30 a.m.

The Strategic Planning Team is working on precise details on how we will proceed SAFELY. Pastor Greg will communicate as soon as possible what folk can expect and what they should do once they enter the church building.

So stay tuned....

Thank you

Dear church family, I had a visit from good Samaritans on Sunday. I looked out front to find Rob and Rachel Ball trimming branches of a tree overhanging the sidewalk. Bless them. ~ *Myrna Forsythe*

Thank you so much for your cards, continued prayers and flowers that were delivered personally by the Reeds. Tim has had a couple of setbacks but is doing everything the doctor has recommended to get better - it will just take time. Thank you for keeping both of us lifted up in prayer - we can feel it. Sincerely, ~ *Tim & Lynne*

This Week's Celebrations

Birthdays

9/15 Cynda Buckallew
Rodger Hughey
Susan Moberly-Hayes
9/17 Chuck Walker

9/19 Bud Lash
Anniversaries
9/14 Loren & Holly
Tarnar
9/18 Joe & Susan Hayes

Sunday, October 4
**WORLD COMMUNION
SUNDAY**

Your generous gift today enriches
Christianity around the world



"All that I am doing now is to prepare me
to make a difference."

— The Rev. Cangfu Wang, World Communion International Scholar



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church*

World Communion Sunday

Throughout the year, we encourage giving to United Methodist Church special offerings. **World Communion Sunday is October 4.** This offering is collected the first Sunday in October and supports World Communion Scholarships, the Ethnic Scholarship Program and the Ethnic In-Service Training Program.

If you would like to give, please make your check payable to VUMC and write World Communion Sunday on the memo line and mail it to the church or bring it to church Sunday morning with your regular giving. Or give online at UMCgiving.org/giveWCS.

Coming deadlines

- ScripCents orders are due in the church office by 2:00 Tuesday, Sept. 15.
- Items for the October newsletter are due to Polly (reception@vicksburgumc.org) by Monday, Sept. 21.

In Service to Our Country

Walker Polsinelli
Tyler Smith

Geoff White

Youth Groups



Where do I start and end in writing about youth groups at VUMC? Emphasis on helping youth inside (and outside) our church is so integral to the thinking of this church that it has become another mission effort in and of itself as of this writing.

When this church began in 1870, the belief among many adults in how children/teens were to be treated was much different than in today's culture. In 1870, offspring were, for the most part, "to be seen and not heard," unless called upon! From the time they were able, they were expected to help out with family life and family work. I am sure they loved their children, but they did not have the luxury of worrying and constantly caring for them. However, the parents themselves did their best to keep Sundays a holy time by either reading to their children from the Bible or attending a church.

By the early- to mid-1900's, we had large groups of youth who were happy to attend a meeting and enjoy fellowship with their church friends. And of course, they were always encouraged to bring along any of their school buds. The youth fellowships were led and taught by couples from our church. We had many devoted leaders over the years: Vera and Chuck Walker, Marilyn and Paul Schutter, Marilyn and Fred Simonds, Diana and Chuck Girolami, Bonnie and Tom Holmes, Mercer Munn, Mike and Lori Hardy, Barb and Brad Addis, Carla and Rob Bland. Who did I miss?

Vera tells me she recalls that most of their time was spent on having fellowship, games and crafts with a *bit of time on Bible lessons*. It was a common occurrence for these kids to attend Sunday school class on Sunday mornings with their parents. Before the 1990's, the schools and churches abided by an unwritten rule that Wednesdays and Sundays were for church activities only. This has changed drastically with the school scheduling all kinds of activities all seven days of the week! It may be unavoidable, because the schools have added more sports and more girls sports to their schedule, so they have more time slots to fill (no aspersions intended).

In 1983-1993, we hired as an associate pastor Larry Wood. Besides assisting our senior pastor, one of his primary duties was to take over the youth programs. He lived in our second parson-

age on Maple Street. There is a four-year blank period for which I have no memory or records. In 1997-2001, we hired associate Jana Lynn Almeida with the same responsibilities. In 2001-2007, we hired Heather Humm as our youth leader, and she was on staff. There was a short period from 2007 till 2008, Sarah Bird filled in for us until Hank Stamm came aboard in 2008.

Today, the church has become one of the primary ways that children/teens hear the gospel's message and learn from it how to live their lives. Many of the youngsters we see participating in our programs are not offspring of our members, but the young from our community. Many of these youth's parents do not have any particular church or faith in our Bible. Our schools, many years ago, were prohibited from reciting the morning's prayer, teaching any religion, or reading or assigning any Bible texts.

As Christians, we are called to fill in the gaps, and luckily we have been able to do this for many years now. Our present youth leader, Henry (Hank) Stamm, says in 2020, "I would say probably 80% of our time is devoted to Bible study and discussion, with 20% devoted to fellowship and games. My personal opinion is not that I am trying to counteract a lack of Sunday School, but I am trying to include more time with God because the church is the only place that blatantly offers it. They can play games and have fun with their friends anywhere, but they are less likely to be discussing their faith, or how to grow as Christians, while they are playing video games. When we play games or have 'fun activities,' it is to highlight a point in the lesson we are teaching; thus the games become teaching tools!" WOW! Did you realize how very much times have changed and how much our youth leaders must do to supplement? Hank has now been with us as part of our staff since August 28, 2008.

He has had as many as 25-30 middle school students attend, known as HELIX (Helping Everyone Live in Christ), and 15-20 high school students known as RAW (Right After Worship) for the last ten years. His primary goal at the beginning of each new year: personal love for a relationship with Jesus Christ. And he loves MISSION TRIPS so he can expose students to a new and unfamiliar culture. **Thank you, Hank, for all you do.**

Thoughts, memories and research by Nancy Fulton

There will be no Caring Ministry meeting in September. Maybe in October.

UMCOR needs your help

UMCOR-trained volunteers are assisting people in Iowa and Texas/Louisiana following the recent storms. Your help is needed to provide the tangible items necessary for relief work, including personal protection equipment that volunteers need to stay healthy.

A donation to UMCOR will go a long way to help as cleanup continues. Make checks payable to VUMC with UMCOR storms on the memo line, or give online at ad-vance.UMCOR.org.

Lay Servant Classes

This fall more than 20 Lay Servant courses are being offered on ZOOM by districts throughout Michigan. Course credit transfers from district to district. Lay Servant Ministries is one of the significant lay leadership development programs available within the United Methodist connection. Read more at MichiganUMC.org/resources/laity.

Part-time custodian needed

VUMC is looking to hire a part-time custodian (16-18 hours a week) who will be responsible for the daily, semi-annual, and annual cleaning and care of the church and grounds. This person is also responsible for the scheduling of maintenance and repair appointments for all mechanical and electrical systems (as directed by the board of trustees). Candidates should have a high school diploma or equivalent, be organized, have effective communication and interpersonal skills, be able to meet deadlines, and must have a passion for the church's mission. For more detailed information about this position or to submit a letter of interest, please contact Pastor Greg, pastor@vicksburgumc.org. The deadline for submitting a letter of interest is September 18, 2020.