

IS THE ONE

WHO COMES

IN THE NAME

OF THE LORD.

— *Matthew 21:9*

Church Staff

Pastor

Rev. Greg Culver

Youth Director

Hank Stamm

Choir/Praise Band Director

Tamra Stamm

Administrative Assistant

Polly Preston

Financial Assistant

Michelle Morgan

Custodian

Jean Cook

Heart & Hands

Director and Teacher

Kelli Young

Heart & Hands Assistant

Director and Teacher

Stephanie Sinon

Heart & Hands Assistants

Lindsey DeGraaf, Courtney Zenz

Kids Hope USA Director

Sharon Pendola

“What’s the Good Word?” — *Creation Care and Church*

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Not long before COVID-19 blew across the globe, I spoke with a high schooler who really loved Jesus. What was bugging her was that she could not find a church that really cared about creation care and climate change.

“So what does *your* church do?” she asked me.

“Well, we, umm...” I stammered.

As I write this, I remember that Polly Preston tries to recycle what she can in the church office and Ryan Miller put some recycling initiatives in place as part of his custodial work.

We do know that creation care and climate change are on the minds of many of our young people, don’t we? If our society is indeed witnessing a generational shift toward climate consciousness, what response are they looking for from churches?

There are plenty of surveys confirming the younger generation’s attitude regarding creation care and climate change. One such survey comes from Tearfund and the Youthscape Center for Research (www.tearfundusa.org). This survey interviewed 630 young Christians aged 14-19 and did focus group research with four groups of 18-23 year-olds. They found that 9 out of 10 young Christians surveyed are concerned about creation care and climate change. Just 1 out of 10 think the church is doing enough to address the issue.

For many young people, care for creation is an expression of their faith. Eighty-six percent of those surveyed said, “My faith teaches me to care about injustice.” These young people are clear about the biblical call to care for creation as described in Psalm 24, “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.” Several respondents added, “This is God’s world we’re looking after.”

Many young people are equally aware of the connection between climate change and its devastating impact on people living in poverty who might be without access to clean drinking water and sanitation. The invitation of Jesus to “love God and love others” can’t be separated from the conversation about climate. “Climate change is going to affect us all, but the poorest people will be affected the most,” another respondent said.

There’s a gap between what young people clearly read in scripture and the vagueness they experience among their elders in church. Eighty-four percent of the young people surveyed agree that it’s “important for Christians to respond to climate change,” but the majority have not heard much about it during worship. (Yes, I confess to this gap in the conversation here at VUMC. I hope to do better!) Sixty-six percent said they never hear about it from a church

leader.

(Hank, could seriously addressing this concern about creation care and climate change be part of the puzzle for the youth ministry and church involvement? Might the youth provide us with some leadership? We should ponder that.)

Another young respondent put it like this: “I always go back and forth between wanting to just give up on the church as a lost cause that’s too distracted and fundamentally stuck in its ways to actually start taking meaningful action — and wanting desperately to convince the church to wield the influence it has to change the world for the better.”

Young people are concerned that adults think their passion for creation and climate is motivated by progressive politics. That’s not true. One said, “Don’t dismiss our involvement as us just trying to be fashionable.” Another said, “Please help us create a culture where responding to climate change and justice are central to what the church does.”

Young people are looking for wise mentoring. They are also taking responsibility in the places and spaces where they’re able. But they would like churches to step forward as well. When asked what churches could do, they said: “Acknowledge the issue, listen to us, support, teach about this, recycle, stop wasting, stop denying, publicly support climate activism.”

Young people are ready to do more. They are looking to challenge modernity’s collective reckless consumption and make room for more sustainable choices.

We the church need to listen to young people and respond to their concerns. Together, the generations can be vital participants in the transformation of our culture regarding creation care and climate change. It’s possible to see more young people re-engage with church and assist us all to make more tangible stewardship decisions for the common good.

If ever we are asked, “So what does *this* church do [for creation care]?”

We don’t want to stammer, “Well, we, umm...” — do we?

So what can we say? Words without intentional creation care are meaningless.

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Greg

P.S. — For every time someone emails me (gpculver@vicksburgumc.org) saying that they have read this newsletter article, my family will contribute \$5 (up to \$200) to the “Evangelical Environmental Network” (EEN) — www.creationcare.org.



Jesus Enters as King

Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey.

ZECCHARIAH 9:9

It was time. Jesus was entering Jerusalem, and He knew what was about to happen. He knew it was time to fulfill the promise that God made long ago to rescue His people. Jesus tried to tell His disciples what was going to happen to Him in Jerusalem, but they didn't understand. They still thought Jesus would start His kingdom the way other kings did, by fighting His enemies.

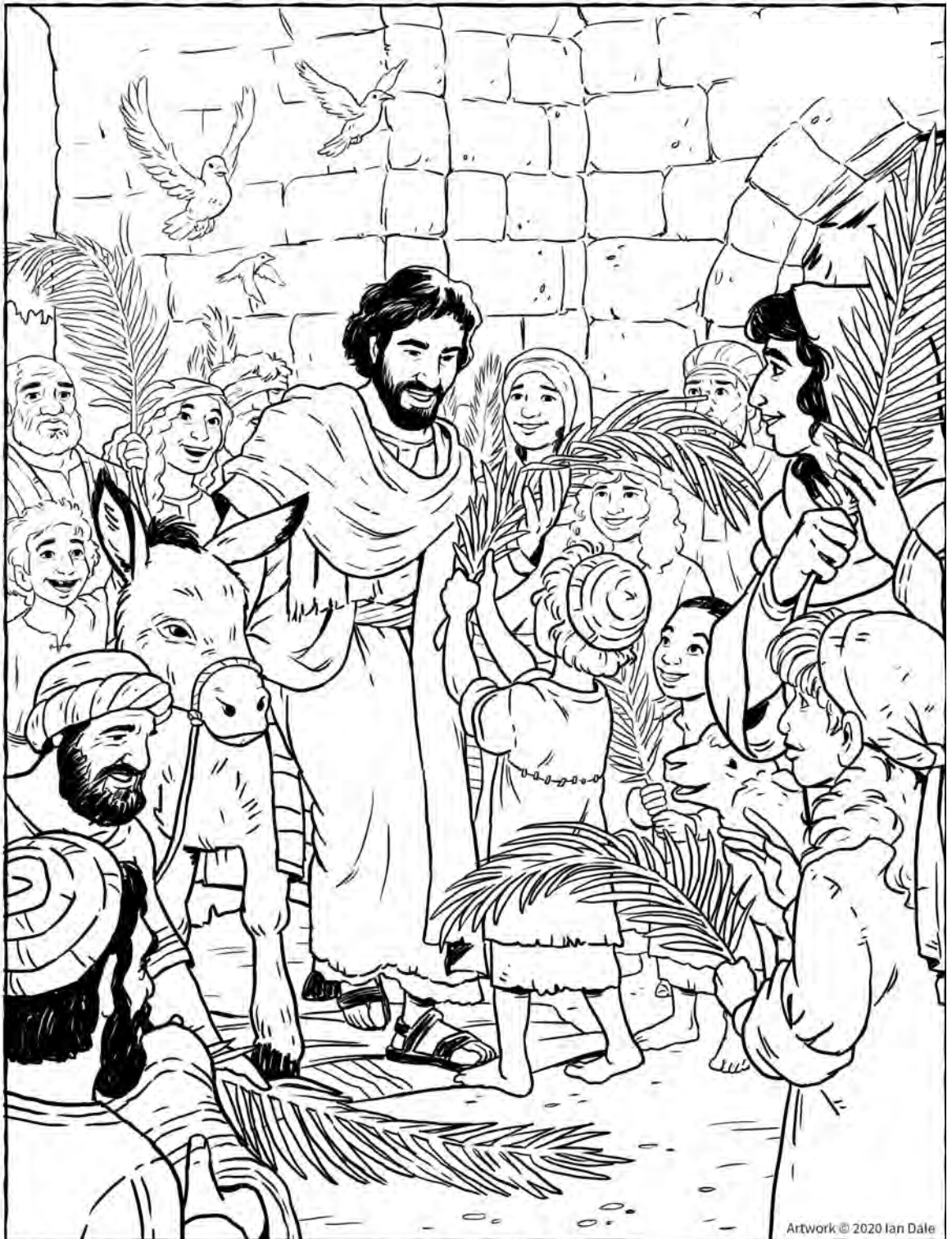
Jesus told His friends to go into the next village. There, they would find a mother donkey and her baby. Jesus told them to untie the donkeys and bring them to Him. If someone asked why they were taking the donkeys, Jesus' friends should say, "The Lord needs them" (Matthew 21:3).

So Jesus' friends went and did exactly what He said to do. They brought the donkeys to Jesus and put their cloaks on them. Then Jesus sat on the young donkey and rode into Jerusalem. He didn't ride on a strong horse like a warrior king. No, not Jesus. Instead, He rode on a small donkey like the true, humble King promised long ago by the prophets.

People saw Jesus coming into Jerusalem and remembered all the good things He had done. They remembered the words of the prophets. They knew that He was the Messiah, the King sent by God to rescue them. They

spread their cloaks on the road and put tree branches down to honor Jesus. They shouted out praises, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Luke 19:38).

These people believed. But the Pharisees were angry and told Jesus to make the people stop. Jesus said to them, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out" (v. 40).



Thank You!

I want to thank my church family for the wonderful surprise package at Christmas time, and for the flowers for Mom's funeral. I love reading the Upper Room that was in the package, and every time I drink coffee from the mug, I feel arms around me. ~ Jo Pope

We would like to thank our church family for all the thoughts, prayers and cards during the loss of our mom. We thank you all for thinking of us. ~ Lynn, Beth, Dee, and the family of Barbara Griner

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU to those responsible for delivering a special Valentine's Day greeting I found hanging on my front door Sunday morning. So sorry to have missed you. I was in the middle of listening to Pastor Greg extolling the virtues of the "GIFT and resolution to the question, WHY WORSHIP," when I saw a festively decorated car drive out of my driveway. Thanks to everyone for all the extra effort and devotion to help keep the VUMC train on the track during this extended and difficult time. God's Speed ~ Bill Oswalt

Thank you to those dear souls who brought their smiles and goodies to us on Valentine's Day! ~ L & J Philport

Thanks to all the volunteers who braved the bitter cold Sunday to deliver Valentine treats and Ash Wednesday tattoos. It's so good to be remembered until we can be together again. ~ Karla Stubblefield

Dear church family, what a nice Valentine's Day greeting! Though cold and snowy, Brad Addis and his "crew" showed up at my back door with cheery faces and a message of love. Bless you all. I pray that someday soon we'll be together again as a church family, sharing hugs and smiles. You folks made my day extra special, and I thank you. ~ Bonnie Oswalt

What a fun surprise 90th birthday card shower for Betty Thomas. She received approximately 65 cards in the mail. All we can say is WOW! (Except, of course, we are grateful.) Thank you so much for helping our mom celebrate her special day. We really appreciate it. She was genuinely surprised and felt so humbled and filled with gratitude. She treasures your heartfelt greeting cards, special birthday messages, pictures, and gifts. It was an explosion of happiness and a great mood booster for her! Mom thanks you from the bottom of her heart for all the special birthday wishes. Her heart is still smiling. Many blessings ~ the family of Betty Thomas
[Betty Thomas is in Hospice now. Please pray for Betty and her family.]



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.

Compassion • Justice • Devotion • Worship



UMCOR Sunday celebration is March 14. This offering is collected on the fourth Sunday in Lent and provides major support for immediate assistance in the wake of natural and human-caused disasters and helps support ongoing ministries of food, shelter, health and peace. UMCOR Sunday giving allows 100 percent of designated gifts to be used for the specified disaster response or other ministry.

If you would like to give, please make your check payable to VUMC and designate the offering on the memo line, then mail it in with your regular giving (217 S Main St, Vicksburg MI 49097), or bring it to church with you on Sunday. You may also give online at [UMC Special Sundays Support](#).

Live Stream Worship in the sanctuary

9:30 Sunday mornings

You can also hear the service in the parking lot: tune your radio to FM 101.1.

Also at home:

- ◆ **Live stream** (watch the service live) on your computer or cell phone at 9:30 Sunday mornings at meet.google.com/ybu-swbd-ocn. A GOOGLE ACCOUNT IS REQUIRED.
- ◆ **Listen live** (listen to the service live) on your phone at 9:30 Sunday mornings. Shortly before 9:30, call (413) 340-2217 and enter the following pin when prompted: 950 134 510#.
- ◆ **Watch on YouTube.** After church, the video of the service will be posted on YouTube, and the link directly to that Sunday's service will be emailed to you.
- ◆ **Watch any service anytime** on YouTube. A Google account is not required. Go to YouTube.com and search for Vicksburg UMC. Select "Vicksburg UMC" from the list, then select the service you want to watch.



Heart and Hands Preschool



In the month of February we have welcomed seven new students to our program between our three classes! Our students and staff have continued to be very healthy, and staff members were able to get the first dose of the COVID vaccine.

Our preschoolers learned about simple machines this

month (levers, inclined planes, pulleys, etc.) and celebrated Valentine's Day. In Bible, our students learned about Jesus's parables. Our verse this month was, "Love one another as I have loved you." John 15:12



Susanna Wesley Circle will meet

Susanna Wesley Circle will be meeting on Thursday, March 18, at **11:00 a.m.** (new time) in the Taylor Room. They are still accepting donations for Generous Hands. No refreshments will be served, and they will social distance with masks in place. New attendees are welcome.

Twelve Baskets needs volunteers

Twelve Baskets is a growing food pantry in Portage, serving over 100 families a week in Vicksburg, Portage, Schoolcraft, and Three Rivers. They are looking for individuals who are interested in volunteering some time. Click here for more information: <https://twelve-baskets.org/index.php/volunteer/>.

Deadlines

ScripCents orders are due in the church office by 2:00 p.m. March 1 and 15. Items for the April newsletter are due in the church office by March 23.

Loaves and Fishes

Free groceries will be distributed on Saturday, March 20, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., in the church parking lot. No referral or appointment is needed. Bring bags and boxes to carry food. Need Food Line: 269-343-3663.

Prayer requests by phone

You can hear the weekly prayer requests by calling the church (649-2343). When the voicemail connects, dial 370.

Donate through consignment

United Methodist Women has an account at Home Again Consignment Store at 815 W. Prairie, Vicksburg. Anyone can drop off good new or used items at the store, and the proceeds will be donated to UMW. You must make an appointment at 649-1944, Facebook page, or <https://www.homeagain-vicksburg.com/>. Facebook and website have the rules for consigning.

Daily devotionals

The devotional emails we have been receiving each weekday have been a blessing. You are encouraged to share devotionals as well. Email them to Polly, reception@vicksburgumc.org, and she will send them out to everyone.

Midweek prayer meeting

To join the online prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings from 8:00 to 8:45, please click this link: meet.google.com/hji-yaux-qgs.

Otherwise, to join by telephone, dial: +1 415-604-0783; enter PIN: 815 342 983#.

Twelve Baskets offers free food

If you are in need of food, you can shop twice a month at Twelve Baskets on the following dates each month:

- 1st and 3rd Fridays from 2:30 to 5:30
- 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 10:00 to 1:00

Currently, drive-through shopping is necessary, and food will be delivered to your vehicle.

Twelve Baskets is located at 10332 Portage Rd., Portage, just north of E. Osterhout Ave.

If you are in need of food and are not able to get out to shop, please contact Kris Miller at (269) 760-3036 or millerberg@comcast.net. Kris can accommodate one home delivery per week.

Donations from Heirloom Rose

Jim Stamper, Master Florist, is donating his services to Vicksburg United Methodist Church to provide a rose bud for members who pass away. In addition, he will provide altar flowers for \$25. Please contact Dee Morton before you place an order.

HEIRLOOM ROSE

Flowers For All Occasions

407 South Grand (131) Schoolcraft, MI 49087

Phone: 269 679-3010 FAX 269 679-3017

www.heirloom-rose.net

Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Saturday 8:00 a.m. - Noon

Closed Sunday

Jim Stamper - Owner
Designer
Master Florist
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Vicksburg United Methodist Church

217 South Main St
Vicksburg MI 49097

Rev. Greg Culver

269-649-2343 ♦ vicksburgumc.org

Becoming disciples, serving God's world.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 a.m. Live Stream
Worship in the sanctuary
and at
meet.google.com/ybu-swbd-ocn

Church Office Hours

Tuesdays & Wednesdays
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

The doors remain locked,
so ring the doorbell if you
have something to drop
off or pick up.

The Visitor

March 2021

March Celebrations

Birthdays

2 Harrison Barton
2 Tyler Hawkins
4 Jeff Geiger
7 Mike Tuinier
12 Chuck Girolami
13 Barb Addis
13 Nelly Avis
14 Justin Moberley
16 Andrea Luegge
19 Jo Pope
23 Gabriel Culver

23 Marc Tilbury
23 Shirley Valencourt
24 Brad Beams
27 Dee Dee Hoy
29 Robert Gruber
31 Vernon Noel

Anniversaries

6 Jeff & Mary Ann Kudary
15 Ken & Deb Franklin
22 Jack & Liz Page
31 Mike & Jody Tuinier

March Calendar

2 7:00p Trustees
12 11:00a Blood Drive
14 Daylight Saving
Time begins —
spring forward
14 UMCOR Sunday
17 St. Patrick's Day
18 11:00a Susanna Wesley
Circle
20 8:30a Loaves & Fishes
22 6:00p Finance Commt.
22 7:00p Church Council
28 Palm Sunday

Weekly Activities:

Sunday

9:30a Live Stream Worship in
the Sanctuary

Wednesday

8:00p Midweek Prayer Meet-
ing via Zoom

Fridays are Pastor Greg's days off (his Sabbath).

Please
call him only in an emergency:
231-675-4452.