



Cross Talk

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by loving, engaging, and serving our neighbors

"The prophet Isaiah writes,
"The grass withers, the
flower fades, but the word of
our God stands
forever" (Isaiah 40)"

CHURCH STAFF

PASTOR:
Reverend J. Harlen Rife

ADMINISTRATIVE ASST:
Pam Moore

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR:
Margo Holmes

ORGANIST/BELLS:
Betty Gross

WORSHIP LEADER:
Dustin Oliver

CHOIR DIRECTOR:
Brian Lawson

NURSERY DIRECTOR:
Diana Langenfeld

LOVING HANDS DIRECTOR:
Shannon Miller

ADMIN COORDINATOR:
Brittney Hurley

I've been thinking a lot about grass. It's that wet cool time of year when it seems to spring up overnight. I'm cutting it in stages and starting to worry I won't make it back where I started in time! I will be honest that I have cursed this lawn for its extreme vitality. At the same time, I know other people who obsess over getting grass to grow. Your local home and garden center is full of seed, fertilizer, aerators, and sprayers meant to prod a recalcitrant lawn. The groundskeeper at a golf course or soccer field may be cursing their grass for not growing. It is a matter of perspective. If you're trying to grow it, it grows too slow. If you're charged with cutting it, it grows much too fast. We can see the same divide in our scriptures.

In the Bible, grass is often used as a symbol of impermanence and struggle. The psalmist writes, "As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, and its place acknowledges it no longer" (Psalm 103). The prophet Isaiah writes, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40). The Gospel of Matthew includes, "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you?" (Matthew 6).

On the other hand, there are passages that praise grass as a gift from God and a sign of new life. Psalm 104 writes, "He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so that he may bring forth food from the earth. 2 Samuel describes God's chosen one as, "like the brightness after rain that brings grass from the earth" (2 Samuel 23). Job includes, "You will know also that your descendants will be many, and your offspring as the grass of the earth" (Job 5). Isaiah says, "Then you will see this, and your heart will be glad, and your bones will flourish like the new grass" (Isaiah 66).

Which is it? Is grass a symbol of renewal, resilience, and life? Or, is grass a symbol of impermanence, decay, and destruction? It depends on your perspective. Imagine a conversation between someone who cuts grass and someone who grows grass for a living. They can talk about the very same thing but they can understand it totally differently. They might become frustrated with each other. If they really listen to each other, they might learn to see a familiar object in a new light. That's true with issues far more important than watching the grass grow.

Last month, Greensburg UMC co-sponsored a conversation on race led by the organization Dinner and a Fight Dialogue. My hope for that conversation was a lot like our imagined conversation about grass. We're all familiar with race and its impacts in society. Even though we're talking about the same thing, because of our backgrounds, we often understand it in very different ways. We often assume other people are behaving irrationally. When we have a chance to really listen and hear about their experiences, we sometimes find that there is just another perspective out there we needed to hear. When we put those perspectives together we get a fuller picture. When we work together, we get one step closer to a more just and loving world. As we read in Isaiah 44, "I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring, and My blessing on your descendants; and they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water."

Blessings,

Rev. J. Harlen Rife

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Abby Kuwatch
Lennon Lawson
Shannon Miller
- 4 Jan Babbo
Madison Lawson
- 7 Amanda Sopher
Lydia Corle
- 8 Clarence Moore
- 10 Carol Moore
Kristina Rossiter
- 11 Alyssa Laterza
LB Keller
- 12 Tim Jones
- 17 Kristen Booth
- 20 Sam Rife
- 21 Connie Leonard
- 23 Maylee Lawson
- 24 Jeff Layat
Margo Holmes
- 25 Connor Prater
- 26 Jack Wood
Sharley Greer

**MAY
ANNIVERSARIES**

- 2 Chuck & Eileen Cowgar
- 16 Nick & Amanda Sopher
- 18 John & Lori Myers
- 21 Craig & Carolyn Chaffinch
- 25 LB & Shelly Keller

BED BRIGADE UPDATE—PRAISE THE LORD!!

Saturday, April 22nd was an amazing time. Thirty-six or more individuals gathered in our gym to build 34 complete frames, additional parts, clean mattresses and have great fellowship. Given the weather, I was confident we would be able to build the frames, but skeptical that we could deliver the beds. However, once again God provided. A new family of volunteers offered the use of their large box trailer (held 14 units easily), another volunteer used his

ingenuity to keep 4 units dry in his pick-up, and a trusty regular fit 2 units in his SUV. Off we went around 11am to deliver 20 complete sets to six families in need. Could have delivered more but we were short on bedding.

Thanks to everyone who has helped make so many individuals and families enjoy a restful sleep, if you are keeping count, that make 95 beds delivered to date! Our next build will be in July, possibly 22nd or 29th, SAVE THE DATES!

I praise God for the Bed Brigade Team, every individual and all the support provided to this mission. Please pray for this mission. May we all have the grace, strength, and resources to continue to better meet the needs around us.

Dick Stratton, Chair

p.s. Just received another request this morning. Family of 6 kids requesting 3 beds.

List of our NEEDS: New Twin XL Sheet SETS which include pillowcases, Twin XL Mattress Covers that enclose the mattress and zips, Bed Pillows, Blankets, Notes of Encouragement for the recipients, Sandpaper disks for 5" orbital sanders (grit 120 or so), individuals with electric drills, power drivers, sanders, and/or a willingness to learn to work and fellowship at our next build, Monetary donations for lumber and any needs we may need or are short on.

**THANK YOU TO GUMC !!! FROM PLCC FUTURE LPN'S (MARCH MISSION)**

Thank you to all who donated items, cash or gift cards and/or made cards with inspirational messages for the LPN students! Over 300 items were donated along with 45-\$15 gift cards, and a card of encouragement. The items were delivered in early April and we just received 21 thank you cards from the students. The messages ranged from simple "Thank you" to "Your thoughtful gifts and kind words warmed our hearts and encouraged our spirits," "Thank you so much for your donation. That was incredibly kind of you all to think of us!," "Thank you so much for your kind words of encouragement and the gifts. They are appreciated more than you know. God Bless!," and "Thank you so much! I appreciate your donations because at the moment I really needed them. You made my year!!" One student included this Bible verse, "A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great." Proverbs 18:16. Thanks to all who helped make this such a meaningful and successful endeavor.



FAMILY AND CHILDREN MINISTRY—**GUM CLUB -**

What a year it has been! We have learned so much about the love of Christ for us! The children now know how to use their Bibles to look up our verse each week. We have played many new games and made many new friends! We have had 24 kids come to G.U. M. Club throughout the year!

We will end our year on Sunday, May 21st, but we still have Stellar VBS to look forward to at the end of July!

Thank you for all of the love, prayers, snacks, juice, other donations and support!!

Miss Amy, Miss Beth, Pastor David

**LOVING HANDS PRESCHOOL—11TH ANNUAL TRIKE-A-THON**

On May 8th and 9th, 2023, Loving Hands Preschool will be having its 11th Annual Trike-A-Thon to raise funds to purchase new equipment and supplies for the preschool. Our goal is to have a fundraiser, where the children are actively participating and involved in raising the money for their school.

If you are interested in helping support the school, call the office or pick up a pink form outside the worship areas. The children will be very appreciative of any donation you are able to give. Thank you!

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL— REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE**

Need some space? Launch kids on a cosmic quest where they'll have a blast shining Jesus' light to the world. Stellar rockets kids on an out-of-this-world adventure that's light years of faith-building fun.

Preschoolers 3 years old up to friends entering 6th grade are welcome to join us for an out of this world week July 30th—August 3, 6-8pm. Online registration is available now. Scan and register or contact Miss Amy at ad-vorak102@gmail.com. Volunteers can talk to Amy.



Greensburg UMC

2161 Greensburg Rd,
North Canton, OH 44720

330.896.1936
www.greensburgumc.net

NOTICE: NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL BE A "SUMMER EDITION"

Ongoing Fellowship Opportunities

Saturdays - Walking Group meets at 9am by office entrance

2nd Tuesdays - Dementia Support Group meets from 6-7:30 in the library (directed by Chaplain Billy Kremer & Anita St John of Homestead Hospice)

Wednesdays - Choir meets at 7:30pm in sanctuary

3rd Thursdays - United Women in Faith meets at 3:30pm in the library

Girls and Boys Scouting Opportunities - call office for details

Bed Brigade and Green Good Neighbors too!

Check the church calendar at
www.greensburgumc.net

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION -

It's that time again! We award small scholarships to graduating high school seniors headed to a post secondary or trade school. If you're a graduating senior or parent of one, go to the website and look for the application. It will be available no later than April 1 with a deadline of May 14. Don't miss out! With high college costs every little bit helps. For questions email Ann Hartong at Hartongs@aol.com.



United Women of Faith - meets on the third Thursday, at 3:30 in the library most months.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY— 9AM TO 1PM / TUESDAY AND THURSDAY—9AM TO 3PM

IF YOU NEED TO STOP BY THE OFFICE, PLEASE CALL AHEAD!

330.896.1936