



JULY 2025 CTC CONNECTIONS

Countryside Trinity Church

FROM THE PASTOR ---- REV. NATHANIEL ASPERGER

Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ!

I sat and tried to write this article several times, I wrote several articles, all of them seemed like the wrong thing to write on this occasion.

So, let us start from the top.

I have been rather troubled this year with much that has happened. I have been someone to call or to reach out to when others have been troubled, saddened, hurt or struggling with something for much of my life. I suppose that is the pastoral presence of the Spirit on me in some form. Much of this year has been people around our state and country who I have been acquainted to, or had the privilege of calling them friends, reach out for prayers and guidance. In many of the conversations this year it has been things like, "I am burned out", worry, dread, anguish and fear. From migrants, LGBTQIA+ peoples, pastors, atheists, white, people of color, elderly, young and many people in-between. There is an overlying heaviness in people's whole lives, spiritual, mental and physical heaviness; in the form of anxiety, stress, health issues and questioning. Mental and physical health issues perhaps are the easiest to relate with, we all have something in ourselves that relates to those areas. The questioning, the spiritual side of things I want to consider for a few moments together.

There is a lot going on in our country, and our world. Shortly before sitting to write this article, Israel and the US, have attacked Iran. For many of us, this seems the start of a new cycle of wars in the middle east, like Desert Storm, 9/11, the war on terror, and many other operations and conflicts. The Russo-Ukrainian war continue, as does the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Syrian civil war, the continent of Africa has a dozen or so conflicts ongoing, as well as Myanmar, Yemen, and Turkey. We have seen unprecedented storms like Helene and others in the Midwest leave peoples lives overturned, as well as the fires in the Palisades amongst others. The US is ever more divided over...well everything. Politically we are supercharged to fight either to defend one idea, or another.

The questions I have sat with others over, and even myself, are deep ones. Why is God allowing this? Why can people not see the hurt they are causing? Why are my family so bought into this cause? Why has this friend disowned me? There are many more, but I hope you get the idea. It would seem to me that the underlying question is where is love? Perhaps it does not seem like it, but I believe there is a question about genuine love in many of those questions. Why does God not love us enough to step in? Why are people willing not to love some people? Why is my family withholding love from me? Why does my friend no longer love me?

I have been chewed out, cursed at and downright told I am an idiot from people this year at an alarming rate. Often, I am advocating for civility, understanding and grace, from a place of love in those situations.

I want to assure you the Triune God loves us all in more ways than I can fathom. I cannot state that enough. It might not always feel like it, with blatant disregard for life, and hate in so many of the actions around the world today. John 3:16-17 says, "for God so loved the world that they sent their one and

only son to save it. They did not send him into the world to condemn it, but to save it through him". At times, we want a physical savior like the Jewish people did in Jesus' time. At times we want to give up freewill, to ask God to step in. In love, God maintains our freewill, though their Spirit might convict us strongly. The Savior came to save us in the long-game, the end of times and to step in would be to the destruction of some, which John says he did not come to do.

The actions and accounts of Jesus are always done in love. The teachings are all based in love and loving correction. The rest of the Second Testament of the Bible all lean on that teaching. I promise you, that in all that is going on in the world that the Word and action of God promise us they will love us forever. Even though it may not seem like it in the chaos of all our realities, the little mercies and the light of God persist in the hardest of times.

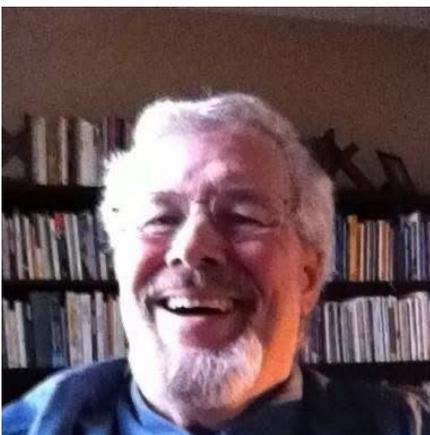
2 Thessalonians 3:3 says, "But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one." It might not be always in the ways we want it, but God faithfully loves us in all times. In the book of Jeremiah and Lamentations both, Jeremiah speaks of the promise of God, even when all hope for a life the Israelites wanted was gone, and they marched into exile in chains.

Wherever you are in your life, your health and your discipleship walk, know that God will always love you, even if it is a heavy and dark time. Know also that your pastor is here, and I am always willing to sit and listen, and to pray and offer what I can from the Spirit.

May the Lord bless you and Keep you till we meet again.

-Pastor Nathaniel.

MEMORIAL – TOM CUNDIFF:



There will be a Memorial Luncheon for Rev. Tom Cundiff at the Trillium Banquet Center, 7415 State Street, on Saturday, July 26 at 12 noon. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Nancy Cundiff at nkcjewel@aol.com by July 10.

UPCOMING LECTIONARY READINGS FOR FEBRUARY

<p>JULY 6, 2025 <u>Semicontinuous</u> 2 Kings 5:1-14 Psalm 30 <u>Complementary</u> Isaiah 66:10-14 Psalm 66:1-9 Galatians 6 (☺)1-6)7-16 Luke 10:1-11, 16-20</p>	<p>Elisha tells Naaman to wash in the Jordan; he is cured of leprosy. O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; my soul praises you.</p> <p>Rejoice with Jerusalem; I will bless and comfort her, says the Lord. Make a joyful noise to God; come and see what God has done. Bear one another's burdens; in this way you fulfill the law of Christ. Jesus appoints seventy, sending them out as laborers into the harvest.</p>
<p>JULY 13, 2025 <u>Semicontinuous</u> Amos 7:7-17 Psalm 82 <u>Complimentary</u> Deuteronomy 30:9-14 Psalm 25:1-10 Colossians 1:1-14 Luke 10:25-37</p>	<p>Amos has a vision of the Lord standing by a wall with a plumb line. God stands in judgment, giving justice to the poor, weak and lowly.</p> <p>The word is near to you, in your mouth and heart for you to observe. Lead me in your truth, O Lord, and teach me; you are my salvation. To the Colossians: we pray that you lead lives worthy of the Lord. The Great Commandment and a good Samaritan: who is my neighbor?</p>
<p>JULY 20, 2025 <u>Semicontinuous</u> Amos 8:1-12 Psalm 53 <u>Complimentary</u> Genesis 18:1-10a Psalm 15 Colossians 1:15-28 Luke 10:38-42</p>	<p>The end has come; the Lord condemns those who prey on the needy. Why do you boast of your evil? God will uproot and destroy you.</p> <p>Three visitors appear to Abraham; soon Sarah will have a son. Who may abide in God's tent? Only those who do what is right. Christ is the image of the invisible God; now the mystery is revealed. Mary sits and listens to Jesus, while Martha is busy with many tasks.</p>
<p>JULY 27, 2025 <u>Semicontinuous</u> Hosea 1:2-10 Psalm 85 <u>Complimentary</u> Genesis 18:20-32 Psalm 138 Colossians 2:6-15 (16-19) Luke 11:1-13</p>	<p>The Lord commands Hosea to take a wife and have children. Will you be angry with us forever, O Lord? Show your steadfast love.</p> <p>Abraham intercedes with the Lord to spare the city of Sodom. I give you thanks, O Lord; though I walk in trouble, you deliver me. Live your lives in the faith of Christ; do not let anyone condemn you. Jesus teaches the disciples to pray, and teaches them about prayer.</p>

LET'S GO GREEN!

The Deacons have proposed the formation of a Green Committee to explore and implement ways for our church and surrounding community to become more environmentally responsible and sustainable in accordance with our faith's call to stewardship of God's creation.

The Session/Council has approved the formation of a Green Committee and authorized the Deacons to oversee the initial formation and member recruitment.

The Goals of the Green Committee:

- * Assess our current practices.
- * Educate and raise awareness.
- * Recommend sustainable practices.
- * Engage with the community. * Lead by example.

The committee would consist of 5 - 7 volunteers from the congregation who are passionate about environmental issues. Ideally, it would include a mix of ages and backgrounds, including at least one member of the Deacons and the Session to maintain alignment with church leadership.

As steward of God's creation, we are called to live responsibly and intentionally in our care for the environment. In recent years, growing environmental concerns--climate change, resource depletion, pollution--have prompted churches across the country to examine their ecological footprint. We believe our church has both the opportunity and the obligation to lead by example in this area.

If you are interested in being a part of the Green Committee, please contact Ronda Otway or Dan Groom for additional information.

We believe that creating a Green Committee affirms our church's mission to be faithful stewards.

GET INVOLVED!



Express yourself and your faith by joining the worship, music, or usher team today.

There are so many meaningful and fun ways to get involved, and there is something for everyone to do and **YOU** are needed for CTC to continue to grow and move forward. If you are interested in becoming a worship helper, singing in the choir or have any questions about how you can help, please speak with Darren Woodke or Dan Groom. If you can occasionally usher, talk with Pat Denno or Ron Platt.

Choir Practice

CHOIR IS ON SUMMER VACATION. WE WILL RESUME IN THE FALL. TALK WITH DAN GROOM IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING OR DOING "SPECIAL MUSIC" DURING THE SUMMER.



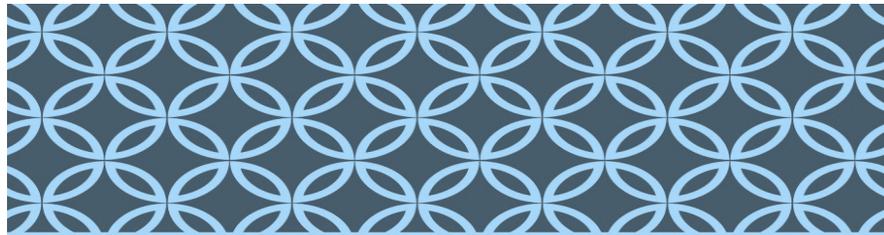
Join the Choir...
You'll Be Glad
You Did!

SAGINAW COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

**SENIOR CENTER
ACTIVITIES: THERE ARE
MANY CENTERS IN THE
SAGINAW AREA OFFERING
CONTINUING WEEKLY
ACTIVITIES FROM
DANCING AND EXERCISE
TO CARDS. I HAVE PLACED
THE DECEMBER
NEWSLETTER FOR THE
COMMISSION ON AGING
ON THE TABLE IN
FELLOWSHIP HALL. YOU
CAN ALSO GO ONLINE TO
VIEW A LIST OF EACH
MONTH'S ACTIVITIES.**

**GO TO
WWW.SAGINAWCOUNTY.COM
AND HOVER ON THE TAB
"COMMUNITY
RESOURCES" AND THEN
CLICK ON THE DROP-
DOWN ITEM "COMMISSION
ON AGING". LOOK FOR
UPCOMING EVENTS AND
THERE WILL BE A LINK FOR
SENIOR CENTER EVENTS &
ACTIVITIES. CHECK IT OUT
- THERE ARE SOME FUN
ACTIVITIES THAT
CONTINUE THROUGHOUT
THE YEAR.**

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CTC?



**MISSIONS SUPPORTED BY
COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY
CHURCH**

**HOW DO I
CHOOSE?**

At CTC we support many different Missions through "Special Offerings" including **One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost/Strengthening the Church, Peace & Global Witness/Neighbors in Need** and **Christmas Joy/Fund** as well as our "Missions of the Month" throughout the year.

It is not necessary to contribute to each of the Mission's CTC supports. If you are able and wish to do so, we invite you to select those missions you are most passionate about and donate to them. Any contributions you make are greatly appreciated. **THANK YOU.**

PER CAPITA DONATIONS

As church members we are reminded annually that we must pay a per capita tax to our denomination. This money usually goes toward paying expenses at the higher level than our own immediate church. Since we are a two-denomination church (Presbyterian and United Church of Christ), we receive two bills for per capita. . The denominations base the total per capita on the number of members that the church reports. Also, please bear in mind that since we are two denominations, all of our membership statistics that are submitted to the two denominations annually are divided in half. For instance, if we have 100 members, the report to each denomination will be 50 members. The Presbytery bill for us covers 50 members, so it is actually to our benefit. We also receive a bill for a lesser amount from UCC based on 50 members.

With this in mind, the Session has approved a request to be made to the members to pay \$30.00 per capita for 2025. Just a gentle reminder that the per capita is per member, not per household. So, if you have four people in your household that are members of Countryside Church, you are asked to pay for all four people a total of \$120.00. In order to defray the expense of the per capita, the Session is asking that members assist the church by paying their own per capita of \$30.00/member for 2025. We do not want to put a hardship on anyone, but these bills must be paid whether our treasury gets help from the members or not. There will be an envelope marked "per capita" in your box of contribution envelopes that you will be receiving in the next few weeks that you can use.

The Session appreciates your help in this matter.

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CTC?

CTC WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

**THE NEXT
WOMEN'S
ASSOCIATION
MEETING WILL BE
SATURDAY, JULY
5TH AT 11:30 A.M.
HOPE YOU CAN
ATTEND!**



COUNTRYSIDE HISTORIC COMMISSION

The Session is considering the formation of a new Historic Commission for the purpose of compiling an up to date "History of CTC". If you would be interested in working on this commission, please let Pastor Nathaniel know.

Thank you.

SUMMER NURSERY CARE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

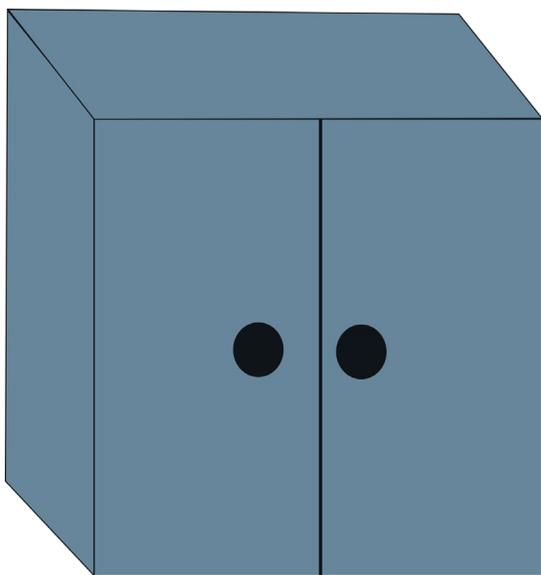
Sandy Redfield will be retiring soon, and we congratulate her and wish her the best going forward. In light of that happening, and the possibility of her traveling to visit family, there may be times when she will not be here on a particular Sunday or Sundays. Therefore, we are looking for volunteers who would be able to fill-in when she is away. Please see Sandy if you are interested in helping.

CTC'S TELEPHONE SYSTEM

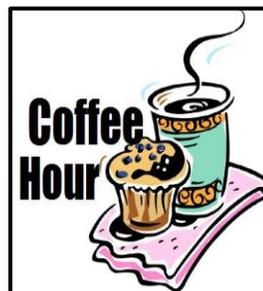
We are experiencing some issues with our telephone system, due primarily to the age of the wiring and currently, all calls are being forwarded to Pastor Nathaniel. Please bear with us as we attempt to rectify the issue.

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CTC

IN SEARCH OF: Session is looking for a cabinet to be used to hold miscellaneous toiletries, personal items, and possible canned items which will be placed in our Parking Lot area for the community to take as needed. Our members and friends may donate items, and our Christian Outreach Committee will oversee the mission going forward. If you have something you think might work, please contact Kathy in the office at 989 793-0125. Thanks.



Facebook Prayer Group: Don't forget we have a Facebook Prayer Group on our FB Page. It is a private group where only those who are invited can see the messages posted for those in need of prayer. If you are on Facebook and would like to be invited, please call Kathy in the office so she can invite you to join. If you would like to add someone to the prayer list, please contact Kathy in the office to do so.



Please consider hosting a coffee hour following worship service. There is a chart on the Bulletin Board in Fellowship Hall – check for available dates if you can be a coffee hour host. For those who would like to help, but don't think they would be able to handle it – help is always available. Check with Kathy Loviska, and Marcia Lacker. Thank you.

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CTC?

SESSION COUNCIL	DEACONS
Class of 2025 Darren Woodke Becky Pequignot Bethany Scovill	Class of 2025 Pat Denno Ronda Otway Duncan Redfield
Class of 2026 Roger Scovill Kathy Loviska Chuck Davis	Class of 2026 Dan Groom Paige Pequignot Lori Halase
Class of 2027 Sidney Diggs Debbie Davis Sandy Redfield	Class of 2027 Lynne Groom Jackie Williams Ron Platt



John & Leore Bethune Traditions of Saginaw, West, Formerly New Hope Valley	Dawn Curtis @ Home	Floyd & Lois Krzak Floyd @ Hoyt Nursing Home Lois @ Home
Avis Leach Roosevelt House/Hemlock	Marilyn Leffler Traditions of Saginaw, West Formerly New Hope Valley	Marie Lemmer Wellspring Assisted Living
Fern Evon Little Swan Haven Manor	Elaine Miner @ Home	Elaine O'Keefe Great Lakes Rehab

Our Homebound members and friends would all love to hear from you. Please drop them a card or give them a call. Their contact information is in the Church Directory.

THINGS TO DO IN SAGINAW/BAY AREA



Downtown Saginaw Market

203 South Washington Street

Saginaw, Michigan 48601

Telephone: 989-758-2500

SUMMER SEASON MARKET HOURS:

May 21 - October 31, 2025

Wednesdays and Fridays, 10am-3pm

Saturdays, 10am - 1pm

The Saginaw Eddy Concert Band
Joseph Radtke, Conductor
Invites you to join us for our
Season 99
2025 Summer Concert Series
Sundays at 7 p.m.

June 15th	July 13th
June 22nd	July 20th
June 29th	July 27th
July 6th	August 3rd

FREE ADMISSION and PARKING!
At Jolt Credit Union Event Center
Across from Dow Event Center
300 Johnson St, Saginaw, MI
For more information visit saginawedyband.org

Exultate Deo Presents -A Patriotic Concert to Celebrate the Founding of our Nation

When: July 6

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Where: Trinity Episcopal Church, Center at Grant Street, Bay City, Michigan



BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS JUNE

- 2 Michael Groom
- 3 Eric Smith
- 10 Aleigha Jackson (M=Ainslee Mahan)
- 11 Robert Bortner
- 11 Dana Hansen Cooper
- 19 Kitty Blehm
- 20 Marilyn Leffler
- 30 Darren Woodke

BIRTHDAYS JULY

- 2 Elaine O'Keefe
- 5 Dawn Curtis
- 11 Graham Parker
- 13 Jean Bortner
- 18 Sidney Diggs IV
- 23 Bobby Diggs
- 24 Zayden Evans (Alexa Mahan)
- 24 Dick Mallette
- 26 Nathaniel Asperger
- 29 Holly Furlo
- 30 Lynne Groom
- 31 Rachael Barerra

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Taylor Hansen (M=Dana Woodke Cooper)
- 4 Marianne Bird
- 5 Daniel Groom
- 8 Chad Parker
- 8 Rylan Hanson
- 10 Randy Jacob
- 13 Kyle Redfield
- 15 Ainslee Mahan

- 15 Aubree Mahan
- 21 Karla Parker
- 21 Casey Redfield
- 31 Jim Lorenz

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Becky Pequignot
- 3 Rob Halase
- 5 Charles Davis
- 8 Lindsey Groom
- 13 Louis Diechman
- 14 Michael Patrick Groom
- 17 Lois Krzak
- 20 Liz Saperstein
- 25 Thomas Kennedy
- 29 Tom Ladner
- 30 Vincent Martinez

ANNIVERSARIES JUNE

- 11 Rylan & Katlyn Hanson
- 21 Edward & Lori Halase
- 29 Ronald & Jean Anne Miller

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

- 28 Charles & Irene Ohmer

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 Andrea & Nathaniel Asperger
- 17 Dallas & Jackie Williams
- 29 Darren & Joann Woodke
- 29 Duncan & Sandy Redfield

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

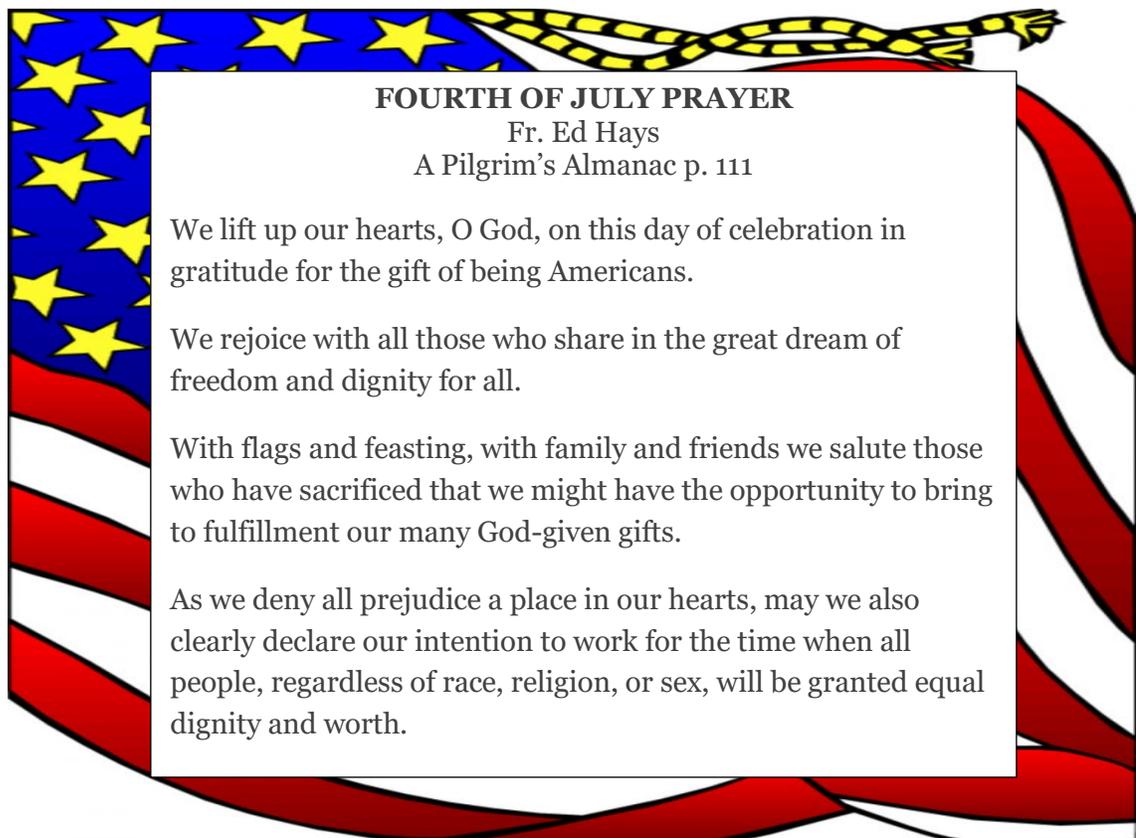
- 20 Sidney & Kermit Diggs

Countryside Trinity Church

4690 Weiss Street

Saginaw, Michigan 48603

(989) 793-0125



FOURTH OF JULY PRAYER

Fr. Ed Hays

A Pilgrim's Almanac p. 111

We lift up our hearts, O God, on this day of celebration in gratitude for the gift of being Americans.

We rejoice with all those who share in the great dream of freedom and dignity for all.

With flags and feasting, with family and friends we salute those who have sacrificed that we might have the opportunity to bring to fulfillment our many God-given gifts.

As we deny all prejudice a place in our hearts, may we also clearly declare our intention to work for the time when all people, regardless of race, religion, or sex, will be granted equal dignity and worth.