

The Arbor Vine

Ann Arbor District of The United Methodist Church
Rev. Mark E. Spaw, District Superintendent



JULY 2016

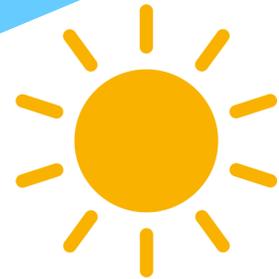
It's a Dog Day
Afternoon at the
Ann Arbor
District
Picnic



Saturday
August 13
12:00 pm—3:00 pm
Tecumseh UMC



Rev. Spaw is
cooking hot dogs

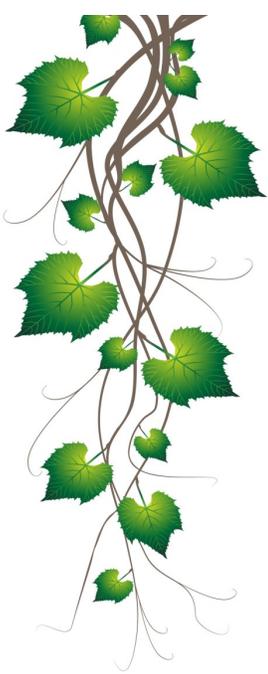


Bring a dish
to share

Live Music!

Meet the new
pastor's on our
district.

No Agenda.
Just Fun!



Spaw's Paws

Some thoughts from your D.S., Rev. Mark E. Spaw

CHOOSE TO UNDERSTAND

For all that has taken place over the last months...in our denomination, our communities, our nation and God's world I thought I'd share some inspired words...bits...pieces; snippets one might say, from a sermon preached on June 19, 2016 at Ypsilanti First United Methodist Church. Written and preached by senior pastor, Rev. Bri Desotell, my prayer is that these inspired thoughts and poignant snippets might move you. I don't care which direction, I just hope you will move. I offer this sermon asking understanding, not agreement...it's what Jesus sought! —Rev. Mark E. Spaw

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There have been too many times when I've been 'too busy' to celebrate with people, 'too busy' to help them—and when I've been all too ready to let them know what an inconvenience they are to someone as important and preoccupied as me.

There have been too many times when I've assumed I know what other people need, rather than listening to their stories or allowing them to be true to themselves.

And I am afraid that there have probably been too many times when people have wailed away from me feeling unwelcome, unwanted, unworthy—when they came eager and left disheartened, and the worst part of it is, I'm not even sure I ever even noticed.

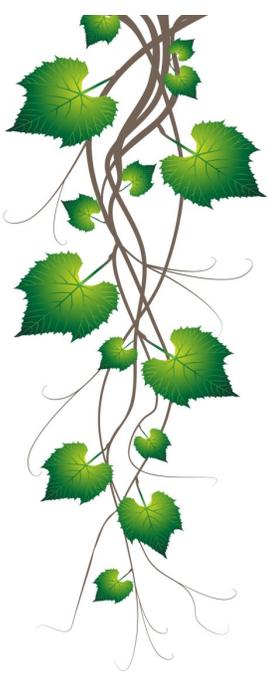
What a difficult week this has been, hasn't it? Last Sunday, as we gathered at Annual Conference, with United Methodists from all over the state—as we gathered to hear reports from General Conference, to be reminded that once again, the church is so divided on issues of inclusivity and sexuality that the very best our allies could do was maintain the status quo a little bit longer—as we gathered in that place, news was breaking out of Orlando. And as one of our General Conference delegates reported, sadly, heartbreakingly, and honestly—that everything has a season, and this year, it just wasn't the time—I couldn't help but wonder: if this is not the time, when is?

And what has been so heartbreaking this week has been watching how even this, this tragedy, this opportunity to come together, to be united for the sake of moving forward—even this has been leveraged and used and abused to divide allies and drive us apart.

"It's not about guns," my gun-toting friends say. "It's a heart problem, not a gun problem." And I agree. But it is awfully hard to legislate what's in a person's heart. And friends, there is no place, no place, in our communities for assault rifles; there is no place in our homes for weapons of war.

"Guns don't kill people," they say. "People kill people." I agree. But people with guns, people with certain types of guns, they tend to kill a lot more than those without. It's hard to mow down a hundred people in minutes with a knife or a rock.

"Guns don't kill people," they say. Okay. Then let's talk about what does—let's talk about a culture that regularly fosters the kind of terror and hatred that shapes hearts in such a way, that moves us to such a place, that people chose to kill people, in these horrific and heartbreaking ways, again and again and again.



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Spaw's Paws (Cont.)

Some thoughts from your D.S., Rev. Mark E. Spaw

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Let's talk about the language we use. Let's talk about all the "us" versus "thems" that contributed to this tragedy: when one of our leading presidential candidates tells us all Latinos are criminals, when we are told that all Muslims are terrorists, when we are told that transgender men and women are predators, when we are told that gays and lesbians are abominations bringing down the wrath of God on this world—we can't be surprised when someone takes that message seriously; when someone takes all that in, and decides the only thing he can do about it is open fire.

Our nation is guilty. Our church is guilty. Our denomination, which still has official language declaring some people as 'incompatible' with Christianity—our denomination, which has ordained women for fifty years but still has many churches who say, "Don't send *us* one" - our denomination, which divided over slavery, which became "united" only by sweeping racism under the rug, which talks the language of unity but walks the walk of division—our denomination guilty.

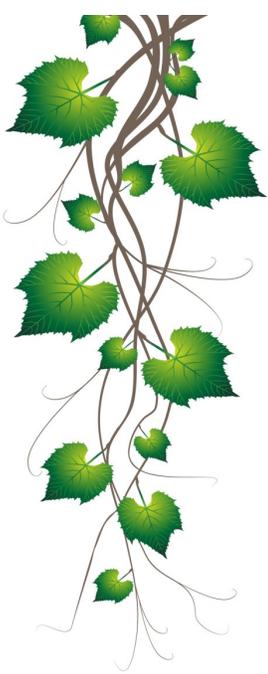
And even this church, for all that we get right, we're not there yet. We say "Everyone is welcome"- but our front doors are locked, and every time I see someone trying to get in, I wonder how many other people have come knocking, looking for hope and grace and community here—and inadvertently or not, we've ignored them, we've hurt them, we've sent them away.

I don't want to build walls anymore. I am tired of standing, fingers in the cracks, trying to hold up barriers I don't even believe in any more. I am tired of playing bouncer for the church; I am weary of trying to determine who's allowed in and who we have to keep out. I'm done.

So I stand here today to say, I'm sorry. I'm sorry for the ways this church has failed. I'm sorry for the ways this nation has failed. I'm sorry for the ways that I have failed, too, to truly be pastor and servant of all. I'm sorry. I'm sorry for being silent too many times. I'm sorry for crossing the street, for changing the channel, for talking over you instead of leaving room for you to speak. I'm sorry for your grief. I'm sorry for your fear. And inasmuch as I am able, I promise, from now on: I'll stand with you. When you are afraid, I'll walk with you; when you are not being heard, I'll advocate for you, and more than that, as much as I'm able—I'll do what I can to let your voice be heard more than mine. When the world tries to talk you out of who you are and what you hold dear—I'll help you trust yourself. I'll cry with you; I'll rejoice with you; and even though I might still get it wrong, I will do my best to show God's love to you.

Friends, I believe in grace. I believe that God still has room for me, and definitely believe that God's grace is big enough for you, too.

If you are straight,. God bless you. If you are gay, God love you. If you are transgender, I don't care where you pee, and I don't think God does either. If you're lesbian, if you're bisexual or queer—you are welcome here.



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Spaw's Paws (Cont.)

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CHOOSE TO UNDERSTAND

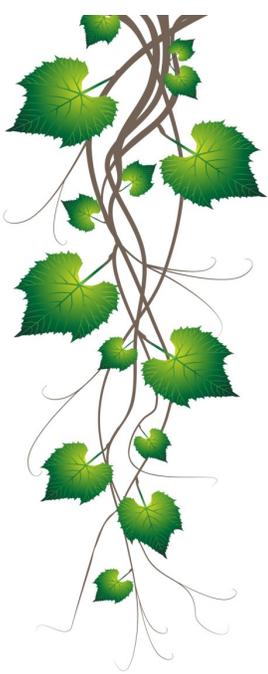
It's not enough for the church to be silent any more. There are plenty of our fellow Christians who are taking this opportunity to shore up their walls, to make sure everyone knows that this is violence—it has to do with Muslims and Latinos and Queers; it doesn't have anything to do with us.

Friends, I want to say that it has *everything* to do with us. And it's time to do better. It's time for the walls to come down. If you have a voice, use it; if you have power, use it; if you have a choice, choose love, choose hope, choose mercy and grace. Choose it today, loudly and in no uncertain terms. And then tomorrow, when the pundits keep talking and the emotions start to fade—choose love all over again.

May God give us eyes to see one another as God does: as beautiful, fragile, powerful, complex, beloved, kindred souls. May peace prevail on earth—and may it begin with you, and with me.

Oh God, forgive us. For all the times when we've been silent when we should have spoken up, forgive us. For all the times when we've spoken when we should have kept still, forgive us. For all the times we have made idols out of our guns, for the lives we've sacrificed on the altar of our own personal security—Lord, have mercy. For the ways we've judged one another, the ways we've tried to define one another, for the ways, as individuals and as your church, we have failed to love as generously and graciously as you do—forgive us. Forgive us. We are sorry; we are filled with sorrow today. Help us Lord. Help us to be the people you long for us to be. Help us to speak truth; help us to be hope; help us to love, and to make your love visible, in the bleeding and broken world. In the name of Christ, God-with-us, we pray; amen.





DISTRICT NOTICES

CHURCH CONFERENCE DATES POSTED ON DISTRICT WEBSITE

The church conference season begins in September. The church conference schedule will go out next week. Once you receive the schedule please add that date and time to your church calendar.

HIGH FIVE Q2 FORMS NOW AVAILABLE ON DISTRICT WEB SITE

The 2nd Quarter High Five forms are now available on the website. Please turn them in to the district office by July 31.

HOW LONG DO I KEEP CHURCH RECORDS?

Please look under documents on the Ann Arbor District web site to find information on how long a church should keep some of its records.

NORTH LAKE UMC ICE CREAM AND CLASSIC VEHICLES

An Ice Cream Social & Classic Vehicle Show will be held at North Lake United Methodist Church on July 9 from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm. There will be ice cream, hot dogs, classic vehicles (including a 1958 Air Stream trailer), and a bounce house – all for free. The church is located at 14111 North Territorial Road in Chelsea. For information please call Jo Page at 734-355-3391.

THRIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

High School youth finishing 9th, 10th and 11th grade can attend Lake Louise Methodist Camp and Retreat Center for the THRIVE Youth Leadership Academy to learn about themselves as followers of Christ and church leaders. Session is July 19—July 23. Contact Bridget Nelson at bnelson@detroitnconference.org to nominate a student to attend. Churches will be asked to help students with the \$260.00 cost.

OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE GUEST SPEAKER ~ DR. PEIRRE DIAMBA MANYA

Board of Global Ministries missionary, Dr. Pierre Diamba Manya, will be in the Ann Arbor District August 4 through August 11. Dr. Manya is the coordinator of health and medical services of the Central Congo Episcopal Area in the Democratic Republic of Congo. To schedule Dr. Manya to speak at your church contact Roberta King garyandroberta@sbcglobal.net 734-662-8020

LUNCHEON WITH GUEST SPEAKERS LARRY AND JANE KIES

The Missions Group and the United Methodist Women of Ypsilanti First UMC invite you to attend a luncheon on July 15 at 12:30 pm to hear Larry and Jane Kies share their experiences as missionaries assigned to Africa University. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to help ensure adequate food and beverages. There is no charge to attend the luncheon but an opportunity to support Larry and Jane is available. Contact: Morris Taber (734-662-9880) morris@taber.net

Ypsilanti First UMC (734-482-8374) fumcypsi@fumcypsi.org

JULY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Tom Tarpley
 - 2 Chris & Cathy Butson
 - 3 Cathy Rafferty
 - 4 Betsy Bentley
 - 5 Amy & Eric Triebwasser
 - 6 Jamie & Taek Kim
 - 6 Pam & John Beedle-Gee
 - 8 Julie Zimmerman
 - 8 Linda & Jim Tuttle
 - 10 Tom Zimmerman
 - 10 Susan Norton
 - 10 Kristen Parks
 - 10 Andy & Sarah Baek
 - 11 Linda Tuttle
 - 15 Pat England
 - 18 Barbara Dawes
 - 19 Donna Galloway
 - 20 Pam Beedle-Gee
 - 21 Sherry Foster
 - 23 Chris Beaudoin
 - 28 James Kummer
 - 28 Pat & Lisa England
 - 30 Marsha Woolley
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Ann Arbor District Office
of the United Methodist Church

900 S. Seventh St. Suite 1

Ann Arbor MI 48103

Return Service Requested



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