
Robbins' Herald



Signs of New Life by Pastor Peggy Katzmark

Spring is here and we are seeing new signs of life. The spring flowers are showing their colors. The grass and weeds are greening up. New baby lambs and other animals are being born. I had a mother robin hatch her eggs outside my office window one year, pretty amazing. The egg is a great symbol of new life.

The egg is widely used for Easter, a time of new life. We color eggs, hide them for a finding game. We form chocolate into the shape of eggs, etc. But, where did the Easter bunny come from? Maybe you've heard tales, bunny tails? Many years ago, I was in Paris for spring break with my high school French Club and noticed they had chocolate chickens to go with their Easter eggs. Now that makes sense! Did we Americans get our symbols mixed up? But, of course, new baby bunnies are also a symbol of spring and new life.

Yet, it made me wonder. Have Christians mixed up their symbol of new life? How can a cross symbolize new life? Holy week, explains how the cross became a symbol of new life in Christ. On Palm Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem to shouts of praise. The following day Jesus cleared the temple's outer prayer room of merchants and money changers. This infuriated some people who were already angry with Jesus. During the week, Jesus taught in the temple sharing stories of what heaven is like. Thursday Jesus had a last supper with his closest friends and by Friday noon he was hanging on a cruel Roman cross to die. Hardly an indicator of new life!

God, however, is awesome! On the first day of the week we find both an empty cross and an empty tomb. Jesus' amazing love for us was horrifically displayed on that rugged cross and now we have reconciliation and new life through him. What are the signs of this new life you ask? "Love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)." These are the signs of new life growing in you through the power of the Spirit.

Look around you there is new life! You too can experience new life in Jesus Christ!

Mission Emphasis: April

Henderson Settlement in Frakes, Kentucky

There was not the usual activity around Henderson Settlement in 2020. Work Camp was closed so all the volunteers from churches around the nation were not filling the volunteer dorm. Many churches, like Robbins, were not holding services and events to raise money to support the ministries at Henderson Settlement. Henderson had to make some painful decision to furlough some of the staff and make cuts in programs. They are grateful that they ended 2020 without having to borrow funds to keep the Settlement in good financial standing and enter 2021 with enough cash to be reasonably optimistic that they can weather the lean months of January, February, and March. Jim Knight the Executive Director is grateful for the spiritual and financial support they have received .

They have opened the registration for work camps for this summer and fall. I wish Robbins could go again. I would like for all of you to experience being a part of this United Methodist Mission, established and originally funded by the United Methodist Women across the nation.

News from Henderson includes receiving a RV mobile dental vehicle from Rock Solid Ministries and Central UMC, Richmond, IN. Financial support has paid off 48% of the \$28,100 for the New Holland Vermeer Hay Roller. Once this is paid off, hopefully this summer, they will gather the resources to purchase a Hydraulic Fence Post Driver with a Rock Spear. Living on a mountain makes digging post holes for the fences around the farm, very difficult.

There are numerous other programs at Henderson, but not enough space to describe them all. I will lift up one more which Robbins folks helped in its infancy and that is the Greenhouse. On our last mission to Henderson we built a covered porch for the locals who came to pick up the plants they ordered. Several of the women also helped clean out the dead plants in the one original green house, after the flower and vegetable season, and prepare the soil for the next spring planting. You would not believe how this program has grown. They have new green houses with watering systems. The community can receive seed, starter plants and instruction in how to start their own gardens. The interest in having home gardens has grown during the Covid 19 pandemic. The locals are more interested in eating healthy having tasted what they could buy at the several locations for their farm markets. The school children come to the green house to buy a flower in a planter or cup for their mother on **Mother's Day. The Greenhouse Operation has expanded so much,** Casey Smith needs help. If you would like to spend this summer in the beautiful, peaceful hills of Kentucky send her an email missadv2@hsumc.org. If you are interested in visiting or volunteering at Henderson Settlement or a local missions such as Youth Haven, Lansing Habit for Humanity resale store, Lansing City Rescue Mission or Cass Community in Detroit, let a member of the Mission Commission know.

Thank you for supporting Henderson Settlement in April. God promised to bless the giver.

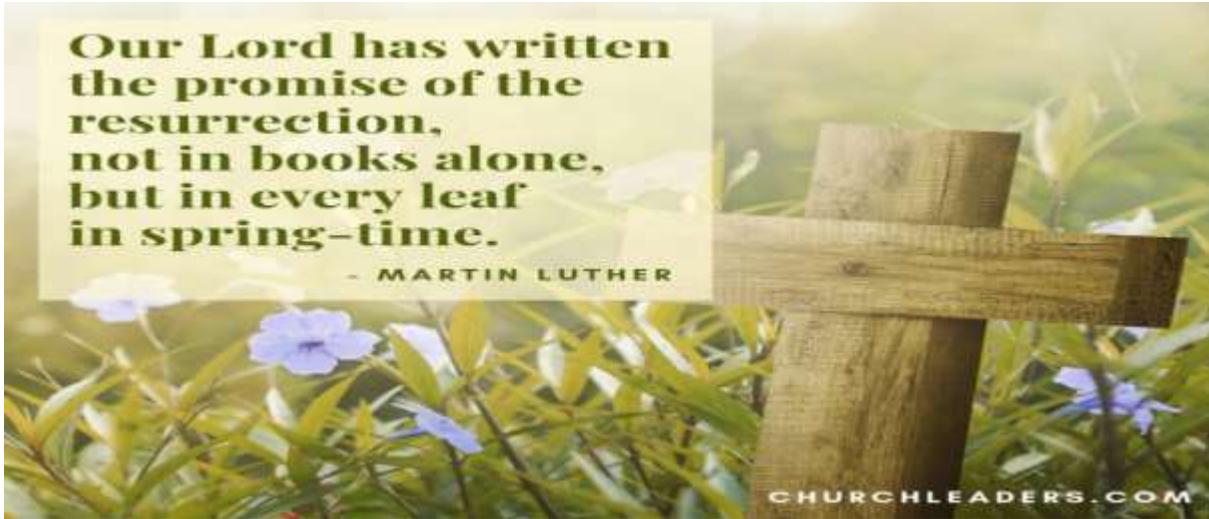
Mission Commission: Dave Minger, Chris Kemper, Ruth Bailey, Pastor Peggy and Judy Herriff

Mission Emphasis: May

Heart and Hands

. In the past two years we have switched our support to Ingham County Rural Family Services because H&H suggested another service may have more of a financial need. From my conversation with the current director, Becky Ridler, she shared that they will always be glad to accept financial support. The Lansing Food bank supplies most of their food needs. They are excited and grateful for their new walk-in freezer and cooler which I understand sits outside. I asked Becky if their census had increased during the Covid 19 pandemic. She said no, just the opposite. I shared likewise for CCAG census last December. She felt the reason was that those receiving increased Covid 19 support, was using the stimulus money to buy food. She encourages their clients to use the financial assistance for other needs and still come to Heart and Hands for food.

The January 2021 Heart and Hands Annual report is on the next page.



**Our Lord has written
the promise of the
resurrection,
not in books alone,
but in every leaf
in spring-time.**

- MARTIN LUTHER

CHURCHLEADERS.COM

HEART AND HANDS, INC. ANNUAL REPORT-JANUARY 2021

Friends and faithful supporters:

This year marks 39 years that Heart and Hands has compassionately assisted Eaton Rapids community members in need. While COVID-19 caused our year to look much different, our mission to feed our community was still as strong as ever. Your faithful support has helped us assist families who live below the poverty level and are experiencing food hardships. With your support, Heart and Hands had the privilege of helping ...

1502 households, 47 new families, & 109 new individuals with food and personal hygiene items (averaging 125 families per month).	4,628 Eaton Rapids area residents (1,798 children and 2,830 adults)
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This year, Heart and Hands received . . .

3,378 pounds of food, household products, personal hygiene items, and fresh produce.	\$18,500 in grants and \$25,000 in Meijer "Simply Give" gift cards
\$67,045.30 from churches, businesses, organizations and individuals.	More than 3,000 volunteer hours to keep our food pantry running smoothly.

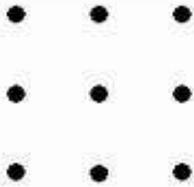
We are happy to share that in May, we were able to purchase a stand-alone walk-in freezer and cooler. This addition to Heart and Hands allows us to buy more items such as meat and dairy in bulk and gives our clients a more consistent selection of cold and frozen products to choose from. In December, we were also able to expand our single door entrance to a double door, making Our operations more efficient while also making it easier for us to receive food orders from The Greater Lansing Food Bank

WE ARE OVERWHELMED by your continued support and generosity toward this great work. Because of you, Heart and Hands stands ready to reach our community & neighbors facing hardship. Please know that your contribution, in each and every form, is truly making a difference in the lives of many Eaton Rapids residents.

Thank you again for your generous support!

Becky Ridler, Director
Heart and Hands
9220 Kinneville Road, P.O. Box 217
Eaton Rapids, Michigan 48827
Telephone: 517-633-7104
Email: Heartandhandsinc@gmail.com

OUTSIDE THE BOX



Use a pencil to draw **four** continuous straight line segments which go through the middle of all 9 dots **without** taking the pencil off the paper.

I intend to engage your mind, so I am starting with a puzzle that, when I first saw it, I don't think I was able to solve. It turns out that I was placing limits on my own thinking, but I'm not putting myself down excessively here; probably most of us do that sometimes.

What is a church? Specifically, what is Robbins United Methodist Church? And now, some of you are being cautious, because it's Dan who is asking this question. Maybe you first thought of the building at 6419 Bunker Road – something like a box, or connected arrangement of boxes, and you might be looking up at the title and getting suspicious. Then is the church something other than the building?

An online dictionary calls church “a building used for public Christian worship.” That can't be the whole answer. Christian thought has long held that there was church before any set-aside building was built; and outdoor public worship services can exist, and be inspirational. Besides, the church building does not stop being a church when a church committee meets in it, nor when a 4-H club does.

As for the church committee, it is doing the church's work, and if it does the same work outside the walls of the building, I don't believe it stops being the church. Such work can even be considered a practical extension of worship, in which we serve, honor, and proclaim the Kingdom of God – within the walls or without. And if a member of the committee carries out an assignment from the committee, that action is part of the committee's work, and therefore, the church's work.

I would carry it further: When people work outside the organizational structure of the church – serving, honoring, and proclaiming the Kingdom of God while serving those whom God loves – I see that as being part of the church, while being outside its walls. This is God's church, outside the box.

This is personal to me. During the pandemic, Judy and I are being more conservative than average about being with other people. We are away from the church *building* for months at a time. Are we less a part of the church? Judy maintains a church-based prayer chain on the Internet; I am on the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. We continue to worship through an Internet connection; we practice online giving; we consider ourselves part of the Kingdom of God and this local church. On behalf of us and others less well-connected, please consider us as part of the fellowship.

This pandemic has been going on a long time, so isn't it rather late to be making a pitch for considering the physically-absent as part of the church? Yes it is, but I have heard hints of things going on at church to make these ideas more real. Using an improvement in our financial situation, Robbins is considering getting a stronger Internet connection, and doing things with it. Some of those things will be to give members better means of connection to the church; but some will be for reaching out to those not yet connected to our church. Look for more details on this in the newsletter and other announcements.

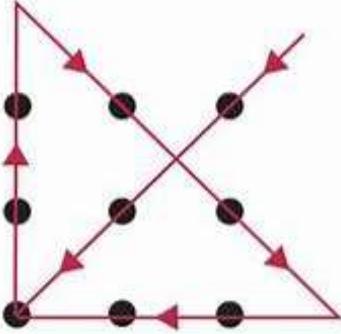
Let's pause for a moment. Some of our members and prospective members have no Internet connections or poor ones. I do not think the Kingdom of God should be restricted to the best-connected. I don't have all the answers, but I think they might involve advertisements, telephone calls, and even the mail. (Do some people still have the patience to produce old-fashioned letters? It could be a ministry.) As it becomes safer for people to get together, visits and appealing social events put on by the church could be part of the outreach. Whatever the means, though, the way of love must include ways of reaching people who don't have as much as most of us, whether money, or connections, or health.

Then why did I make a point of bringing up Internet improvements? I did so because hearing about that reminded me that the church is not just a building, and we need to emphasize that. As you look at this solution to the puzzle, maybe you're thinking it's cheating, because it goes beyond the square formed by the nine dots. (It's OK, I had formed that "box" in my head when I first encountered this puzzle.) If you think so, read the original statement of the puzzle again. This solution fits, but you can only see it if you let yourself "think outside the box."

For many months, a team at Robbins has worked to discover a vision for Robbins, and I think a part of that has had to be discovering what "boxes" have needlessly narrowed our thoughts. The "boxes" of love and truth still hold, but who knows what boxes (limits) we don't even know we have in our heads.

Consider the puzzle, where some of us had a mental "box" bounded by the nine dots, even though we didn't *consciously* make it a limit. And so it goes: We hold some mental boxes without even knowing it. That's why I have an issue with the instruction, "Don't assume," because we don't even know what we are assuming.

So what boxes do we break out from? Two such boxes are (1) the idea of church as a *building* only, and (2) the idea of church as the *organization* only. Nor is the Church only the local church, or only the denomination. Also, the fellowship should not be "boxed in" by who has what kind of Internet service (which could be another mental box), or other material things. The fellowship *is* those willing to be disciples with us to serve God and people on this earth, and enjoy God and each other eternally



I guarantee that I got this far with my article before an e-mail came to me, announcing a chance at a Zoom (Internet) course, titled “Get Unstuck.” It’s April 17, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., \$15. If you have Internet connection, use <https://michiganumc.org/laity/laity-events/>, and scroll down to it.

The course description includes the following (emphasis mine): “*Get Out of That Box!* Discover new potential. Unleash new possibilities. Think new thoughts. Create a new future. Let’s think about how

we can think about opportunities in a new fresh way and not just rush to go “back” when the landscape is ripe for change and forward motion!”

So the course and I agree that it’s time to get out of some mental boxes. And it’s spring, time to spend more time outside the comfortable “box” that is my home. And maybe the church should be doing some of its work outdoors – but I admit, I don’t have all the ideas in the world, and I hope my church friends have some. And when we get together, by whatever means, we might build ideas together that none of us could do separately.

I remember when a team was formed to help Robbins United Methodist Church find its distinctive and sacred vision. COVID-19 disease and restrictions might have slowed this team, but I think it is ready to bring new light to our church just as spring and Easter are bringing new light to our lives. This team might not only have ideas, but help all of us with ideas.

Two more boxes could be mentioned: One is “We’ve done that.” This box means that nothing we have done and stopped should be brought back. Times changed, but maybe times have changed again, and a former practice might be brought back, modified as needed, and restored. Another box is “That hasn’t been tested.” That box means that if something hasn’t been done, we shouldn’t risk starting it. Maybe we should – and know what we’ll do if it doesn’t work immediately. Neither worship of the past nor avoidance of the past should be absolute. Consider the ideas with prayer and discussion.

Here I am, *advocating* fresh thoughts about advancing the Kingdom of God where we live, but *not* having a lot of detail about how to do it. I like my mind, but it’s not nearly enough. By the grace of God, add what you can, and let’s come out of the pandemic cave roaring. We follow One Who came out of the tomb (Ultimate “box”?) triumphant. Let’s be Easter people.

Dan Ellsworth

ROBBINS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2021

Present:

Richard Bailey – SPR Chair; Amy Henderson – Finance Chair; Judy Herriff – Missions & Service Facilitator; Carol Huntington – Lay Member to Annual Conference, Hospitality; Pastor Peggy Katzmark – Nominations & Leadership Development, Disciple Training Chair; Ted Kilvington – Church Council Chair; Kelly Lyon – Trustees Chair; Beth Mosko – Worship Chair; Alma Weber – Memorials Chair; Jean Brown – Recording Secretary

Devotions:

Rich Bailey offered devotions by exemplifying paddling in white water and going over rapids, ending up under water, unable to make it back out of the backwash and being thrown a rope to be pulled out. A crisis may need a throw-rope. Volunteers read from four bible passages referencing how Jesus calmed the waters: Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25; John 6:16-21. In the storms of life, reach out to Jesus and he will drop a line on you and he will pull you out.

Ted Kilvington then opened the meeting in prayer.

Judy Herriff moved to approve the February minutes and Carol Huntington seconded; the motion carried.

Finance:

Amy Henderson distributed the Treasurers Report ending February 28th, which still shows a healthy General Fund. She indicated that expenses were down last month but would be higher in March because the building insurance of \$2,600 will be due. Judy Herriff questioned the amount carried in the Youth Fund budget, but it was decided to keep it open in the hope youth activities/events will pick up again. Pastor Peggy noted that the Discretionary Fund is up. In addition to cash donations, which the Fund denotes, gift cards (food, gas, etc.) have also been donated and recorded.

Trustees:

Kelly Lyon had no report. Pastor Peggy brought to the Council's attention that two lights have not been working on the west side of the property overlooking the parking lot but are being billed for. She took it upon herself to call the electric company to come fix them. She decided it will be necessary to only replace one, which will cut the bill in half.

Missions:

Judy Herriff had no report.

SPR:

Rich Bailey reported that SPR has begun discussing the technical and digital media position. They are working on a job description for that position. The transition of Pastors planning is started but he is waiting to hear from Rev. Dr. Jerome DeVine on the progress of finding the new Pastor. Their next meeting is on March 18th. There will be no meeting in April since Pastor Peggy will be on vacation.

Memorials:

Alma Weber had no report for Memorials but has sent a few cards out for Congregational Care.

Lay Member to Annual Conference/Hospitality:

Carol Huntington reported that she and Pastor Peggy are registered for Annual Conference, which will be virtual this year. Judy Herriff mentioned she is also registered as an equalizer member. For Hospitality, she will be sending out a few Easter cards.

Worship:

Beth Mosko reported that the Worship Committee met last week and made good progress, with plans set through June. They will meet again on March 23rd to finalize Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday.

Council Chair:

Ted Kilvington reported that the Vision Framing is now complete, noting that it took eighteen months rather than the planned six due to COVID.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor Peggy reported that she has received another letter from the BSA outlining their current status. There is nothing to do, but she would like someone to keep the file on all correspondence received in the event something will need action in the future. Ted Kilvington will keep this file.

Pastor Peggy received a statement for the Endowment Fund, which shows a market value of \$139,737.90 as of February 28th. The United Methodist Foundation of Michigan has an annual rebalancing program which automatically invests 65% into the stock fund and 35% into the bond fund.

Pastor Peggy and Kim Katzmark met with the Trustees and noted several items that will need attention as we transition Pastors. Plus, the following items will need to be addressed:

- Education Coordinator
- Facebook/Social Media
- Camera and Sound Board
- Website

She will be putting our core values and Mission Statement on the site and deleting outdated information

Rich Bailey volunteered to help with the website

- Membership

It was suggested to have Robin take over this task; Rich will look into it and the hours required

- Sign out Front

Discussion followed whether to have a meeting in April since Pastor Peggy will be on vacation. Rich Bailey made the motion not to have a meeting in April and Kelly Lyon seconded; the motion carried.

Judy Herriff closed in prayer.

Action Items:

Rich Bailey – Look into having Robin keep track of membership.

Next Council meeting: Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 6:30 PM, in the Fellowship Hall

Devotions: Beth Mosko

Serving in the Military

This information is shared to encourage you to lift these service persons in prayer and make contact with them if you are interested. Mission Commission; Chris, Peggy, Dave, Ruth and Judy

Cullen Henderson continues to train for the Infantry while stationed in Upper New York. He was able to get some leave time to spend with family, after Christmas. It was very cold there during the winter and he had to walk a distance to his work assignment. He does have his computer now so he is on Facebook. Mom, Amy, said he is making friends although everyone stayed inside out of the cold as much as possible. No mailing address



Zac Whitford is in the Navy, stationed in Diego CA. He is training to be a boat operator for the Navy Seals. He is in the third section of his training which involves everything about the boat. He has to learn how to load and unload the gear, drive, basic medical response, man the guns on the boat and make emergency mechanical repairs. Upon completing this 12 week course he will be required to pass a test of written material, physical fitness and everything he has learned since joining. Remember Zac in your prayers for his safety and success.

Lieutenant Colonel Erin Sturgell continues her service at the Airforce Academy in Colorado Springs Colorado. She is a physical therapist and keeps very busy, especially during these Covid 19 times. She enjoys relaxing with her cat and dog on the weekends.



Update from Erin's dad, Bruce, early in March: "I just learned some news last week from Erin. Effective August 25th of this coming summer, Erin is being transferred to Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio. She will become the Medical group Flight Commander. She already has good friends stationed there and although she has no desire to leave the Academy, feels pretty good about that destination. So, until mid-August, she will continue at the Academy.



Petty Officer 1st Class, Julie Sommer, Lives in El Cajon, CA, in the San Diego area. Julie continues to teach Sonar classes for the Navy. She is looking forward to the completion of her service time in December. Julie misses being able to enjoy her favorite weekend activity of rock climbing. The Covid restrictions ROM (Restriction of Movement) restrict her to a fifty mile radius of the base. If you would like to write to Julie her address is: Petty Officer 1st class, Julie Sommers, 612 N. Pierce St. El Cajon CA. 92020.





Robbins United Methodist Church

6419 Bunker Rd.

Eaton Rapids, MI 48827

Contact information:

Church Office: 517-663-5226

Website: www.robbinsumc.org

Office Hours: Wed – Thurs, 10-2

Email: robbins@robbinsumc.org



A P R I L Birthdays

Cooper Lyon	04/01
Joanie Noble	04/02
Lisa Campbell	04/02
Clark Campbell	04/06
Cathy VanderMolen	04/10
Jo Glasgow	04/11
Brenda Matteson	04/13
Leigh Furgason	04/16
Sue Vogel	04/20
Joshua Schnepf	04/22
Faith Sharp	04/27
Damin Harris	04/30

M A Y Birthdays

Ryan McGhan	05/04
Gabriel Towsley	05/06
Darlene Whitford	05/07
Paytin Harris	05/10
Charlotte Elizabeth Towsley	05/12
Andrew Verstraete	05/17
Mike McGhan	05/19
Alex Henderson	05/21
Peggy Katzmark	05/22
Quentin Henderson	05/23
Judy Herriff	05/27
Beth Mosko	05/29
Sherry Brown	05/29
Cullen Henderson	05/31