



SEPTEMBER 2025 CTC CONNECTIONS

Countryside Trinity Church

FROM THE PASTOR ---- REV. NATHANIEL ASPERGER

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

I sometimes find myself sitting and reflecting on our world. Often it seems that one cannot look very far without getting inundated with negatives. Newsflashes, updates, constant squawking on the TV. (I do not like most news programs in case you were curious). The reality is that negativity sells, viewership and engagement is higher with negative news. It is where the money is, and you can see it in the number of negative news, edgy TV programs, and storylines that follow conflict almost without fail.

In my doctoral program we have been studying some new research about how negativity impacts our mental and spiritual selves. The general consensus was a 3:1 ratio, you need three positive things to happen, to cancel out one negative thing. That in itself seems sort of manageable, if you turned the news off or did not look at your phone, or changed the subject in a conversation after that one negative thing. Recently it was changed to a 5:1 ratio, so five positives to one negative. However, in the research an instructor shared is that the ratio is more realistically 7:1. You need seven good things to offset one negative...that makes things a bit more difficult. How can an individual manage to find enough positive things to offset the explosion of negatives in a day? Inflation, tariffs, government overreach, military control, wars, disease, endless legal cases being covered, debt, taxes, all the world politics, and that list does not necessarily include all the things happening around us in our communities.

The reality is that the negatives change how our brains function. Negativity on our TV's, screens and elsewhere release cortisol for instance, which is the body's primary stress hormone. The constant influx of cortisol from the barrage of negatives in our lives can affect the part of the brain responsible for fear, memory and executive functions. In short, it makes us anxious, irritable, negative, grumpy, and it can affect our ability to think.

In Japanese Culture, there is a practice of "1000 little thanks". There are different names for it depending on who you ask. The basic idea is that all throughout your day, you intentionally express your gratitude for every small thing. Not just the big moments, but every small thing. An example would be expressing your gratitude that you have a chair you like to sit in, or that your vehicle got you around without issue. This practice of "1000 little thanks" is a great exercise in gratitude, something that is an important part of the Christian faith. It is all over the Bible, Abraham, Noah, David, the Psalms, Romans, the Woman at the well, most of the pastoral letters, there is gratitude expressed from the Triune God, and the cloud of witnesses represented in the Word.

As we think about the chaos of the world, and as we think of the beauty around us despite the chaos, I invite you to try out this practice of Gratitude. If it seems a bit daunting, there is another great option that Andrea and I do daily, where we talk about the 3 things we are most grateful for in the day. These can be simple, they can be the biggest best things in your day. I use both practices,

working to highlight the little things throughout my day, and the 3 things that stand out at the end of the day. I invite you to give one or both of these things a try.

The reality for us as Christians, is that we have much to be thankful for. Our eternity is sealed in Jesus Christ. Our Peace and Hope come from the Lord. These are but a few of the "big" things that we receive as active participants in our faith. If we want to be Christ-like, if we are working to be different from the ways of the world, gratitude is a great place to look. I am sure we can all think of that person or group of people who stand out because they are always so, kind, helpful, generous, complementary, etc. That is what we are called to be as Christians! We are not guaranteed happiness, but it is not hard to find joy when you are full of gratitude.

I try to write a small list of things I am grateful for in my journal; you do not have to do this. The practice of making a list, however, is helpful when you have a bad day, to look back and be reminded of the blessings in your day. I hope you will consider a practice of gratitude for a week or a month and see how it impacts all the negatives in the world around us all.

May the Lord bless you and keep until we meet again.

Grace and Peace

-Pastor Nathaniel

GENESIS SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 7, 2025

Hope you can all come and celebrate with us following worship.

- **Taco Bar Lunch**
- **Cake Walk**
- **Fun and games for all**
- **Sunday school officially begins**
- **Choir returns**
- **Fellowship and Fun**



YOUR SESSION AT WORK

MINUTES TAKEN BY CAROL VAN ARSDALE, CLERK OF THE SESSION, AUGUST 17, 2025

The Session meeting was opened with a prayer by Pastor and Moderator Nathaniel Asperger.

Minutes of Stated Session meeting of June 22, 2025, meeting was not available.

Deacons: Report: Ron Platt reported:

	June	July
Beginning Balance:	\$557.12	4459.06
Income:	\$63.00	\$117.00
Expenses:	\$161.06	\$117.77
Ending Balance:	\$459.06	\$458.29
Cake Fund Balance:	\$155.00	\$159.00

Clerk's Report: The Membership Registry update is complete.

Year to date:

Baptisms:	1
Deaths:	3
New members in 2025:	4
Current membership:	88

Communion served in July	45	Average attendance in June	44
Communion served in Aug.	36	Average attendance in July	41

Presbytery/Denomination Report: The next Presbytery meeting in Sept. 16 at Fairgrove Presbyterian church. Pastor Nathaniel plans to attend.

Building and Grounds: The church phone system does not work. All calls are being forwarded to Pastor Nathaniel's cell phone. Please be respectful of his family time and limit phone calls to those hours except for emergencies. A plan forward is needed immediately. The parking lot will get some repair for the large holes.

Finance and Stewardship: A financial review of CTC budget has been completed.

Christian Outreach: Thank you notes were received from several of our monthly missions.

Personnel: Asher Neville has been hired for this position of Media Manager effective August 1, 2025. He will work 5 hours a week including Sunday morning worship services. One of his first projects will be to create a digital tour of our church building and grounds to be placed on our CTC webpage.

Spiritual Life: Genesis Sunday is Sept. 7. Lunch after the service will be a taco bar. Games and a cake walk will be the entertainment. Please plan to attend. Please consider helping by providing cake/cookies/money for the cake walk.

Nominating: No report

Pastor's Report: Pastor Nathaniel will be on a Study Leave Sept. 14-20 and a Vacation Leave Nov. 9-15.

New Business: The Session adopted an Antiracism policy and a Sexual Misconduct: Child (and vulnerable adults) Protection and Harassment Policy.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned with prayer from Pastor Nathaniel at 2:15 P.M. Next Session meeting Sept. 21, following church. Genesis Sunday: September 7.

UPCOMING LECTIONARY READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER

<p><u>September 7, 2025</u> <u>Semicontinuous</u> Jeremiah 18:1-11 Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 <u>Complementary</u> Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Psalm 1 Philemon 1-21 Luke 14:25-33</p>	<p>At the potter's house, God says: Like clay, the people are in my hand. O Lord, you have formed me; I am fearfully and wonderfully made.</p> <p>Choose life and prosperity or death and adversity; obey the Lord. Those who delight in God's law will prosper like trees by the water. Paul writes to Philemon about Onesimus: welcome him as a brother. Speaking of towers and battles, Jesus explains the cost of discipleship.</p>
<p><u>September 14, 2025</u> <u>Semicontinuous</u> Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28 Psalm 14 <u>Complementary</u> Exodus 32:7-14 Psalm 51:1-10 1 Timothy 1:12-17 Luke 15:1-10</p>	<p>God warns that a fierce wind of judgment will lay waste to the land. Fools say there is no God; there is no one who does what is right.</p> <p>Seeing the golden calf, God's wrath burns hot, but Moses intercedes. Have mercy, O God; I have sinned against you; wash me clean. Christ came to save sinners; God's grace has overflowed for me. Jesus tells the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin.</p>
<p><u>September 21, 2025</u> <u>Semicontinuous</u> Jeremiah 8:18-9:1 Psalm 79:1-9 <u>Complimentary</u> Amos 8:4-7 Psalm 113 1 Timothy 2:1-7 Luke 16:1-13</p>	<p>My joy is gone; my heart is sick; is there o balm in Gilead? The nations have defiled your holy temple; deliver us, O God!</p> <p>The wealthy pursue their own interests and trample upon the poor. Blessed be the name of the Lord, who raises the poor from the dust. Instructions on prayer; there is one God, and Jesus is our mediator. The story of a dishonest manager; you cannot serve God and wealth.</p>
<p><u>September 28, 2025</u> <u>Semicontinuous</u> Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15 Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16 <u>Complimentary</u> Amos 6:1a, 4-7 Psalm 146 1 Timothy 6:6-19 Luke 16:19-31</p>	<p>Buy the field at Anathoth; houses and vineyards will one day return. The Lord says: Do not fear; I will deliver those who call on my name.</p> <p>Those with idle and comfortable lives will be first to go into exile. Do not put your trust in princes; God does justice for the oppressed. The love of money is the root of evil; be rich in good works instead. Jesus tells the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Hades.</p>

CTC HAS GONE GREEN!

The Deacons continue to work on the transition at CTC to "Go Green". Supplies are being changed from plastic to paper and biodegradable materials and regular meetings have been established as they move forward with this project to become more environmentally responsible and sustainable in accordance with our faith's call to stewardship of God's creation.

The Goals of the Green Committee:

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

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.

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 WILL RESUME SEPTEMBER 7TH.
TALK WITH DAN GROOM IF YOU ARE
INTERESTED IN JOINING OR DOING
"SPECIAL MUSIC" DURING THE SUMMER.

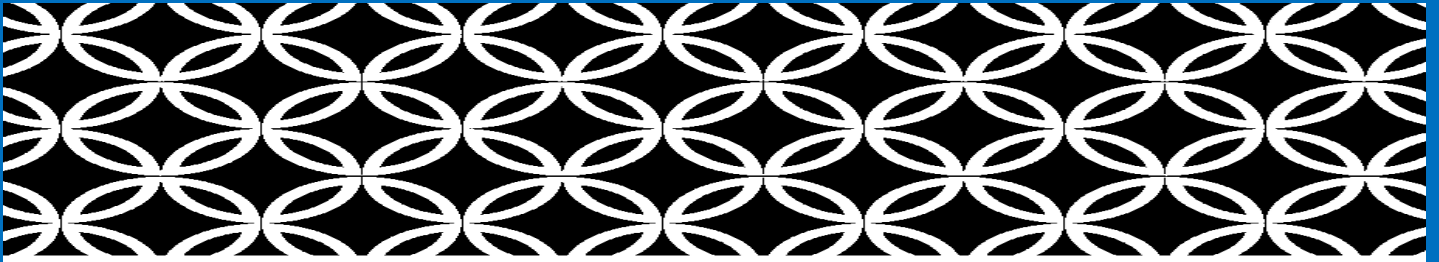


SAGINAW COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

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, SEPTEMBER 13TH AT 11:30 A.M. WE HOPE YOU CAN ATTEND!



KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

For the period between May 1, 2025, to July 31, 2025, CTC has earned \$32.58 in rewards from Kroger. If you have not done so yet please link your Kroger Rewards Card to CTC and after that every purchase you make at Kroger will earn CTC a monetary benefit. If you need help doing so, see Kathy.



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.

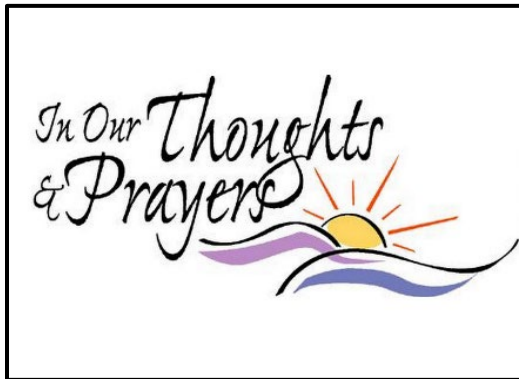
SUMMER NURSERY CARE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sandy Redfield has retired! We congratulate her and wish her the best going forward. Considering her retirement 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



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.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

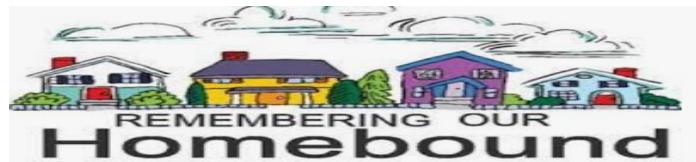
The CTC Green Committee will be meeting on the first Sunday of each month following worship.

The Deacons will meet on the second Sunday of each month following the worship service.

The Session meets on the third Sunday of each month following worship service.

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	Lois Krzak @ 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.



BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

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

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Zachary Plater
- 2 Drew Pequignot
- 2 Dan Groom
- 3 Joseph Ruth
- 5 Mary Longstreth
- 8 Karen Blankenship
- 11 Jerry Paquette
- 13 Ethan Parker
- 13 Charlotte Armstrong
- 14 Mike Yusaf
- 14 Tania Yusaf
- 16 Randy Groom
- 17 Elizabeth Jacob

- 19 Christopher Davis
- 22 Jean Anne Miller
- 22 Pat Denno
- 25 Ezra Yusaf
- 25 Aaron Plater
- 26 Ashley Huizar (Hanson)
- 27 Marie Lemmer
- 29 Scott Jacob
- 29 Lori Halase

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Paige Pequignot
- 3 Sam Nolan
- 8 Duncan Redfield
- 9 Stephanie Plater
- 10 Katherine Asperger
- 12 Jacob Plater
- 16 Pervez Yusaf
- 19 Martin Bethune
- 19 Bethany Scovill
- 21 Ronald Miller
- 22 Jacob Groom
- 22 Lucas Gonzales
- 28 Avis Leach

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

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

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 20 Sidney & Kermit Diggs

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

None Known

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

None Known

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