

Countryside Trinity Church

FROM THE PASTOR ---- REV. NATHANIEL ASPERGER

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

Lent is upon us, dear people of God. It is the time of the Christian calendar to reflect on our lives over the past year. I often talk about the Christian calendar because I believe it is a part of our spiritual heritage that is slowly disappearing. We spent a bit of time around Christ the King Sunday and Advent, talking about the start of our calendar. We have reached a purposeful time, for reflection leading up to Easter.

Lent is one of those seasons that people sort of just embrace when it comes, but not always purposely. An example of this is the process of giving something up for Lent. It is a pretty common thing but not always done with intentionality. The thing that is given up, or in some customs, the thing added to your life, is supposed to grow your faith in some manner. What do I mean? If I were to give up chocolate, it might be a great thing for my physical health. Giving up chocolate does not take away or add anything to my spiritual health. If, however, I was in the habit of watching YouTube on my phone or TV multiple hours a day, perhaps giving up YouTube would be good. I could replace the time on YouTube with reading the bible, praying, being in relationship with family or folks at church. There is difficulty, but the benefit is a greater opportunity or more time for my faith to grow.

The 40 days of Lent is purposefully designed for us to embrace discomfort in our faith. It is designed so that we wrestle with our sinfulness and with our complicity in the ways of the world. I often describe the time of Lent as a time for us to wander in the wilderness of our faith, like the Israelites, and like Jesus. It is a time to choose to be uncomfortable in giving up things of the world or adding faithful practices. Someone I know has chosen to pray specifically for elected officials during their lunch time. They sit and eat and pray over the names of politicians every day.

While you might not be interested in taking something new on, or giving something up, the time of Lent is still meant to be intentionally uncomfortable. The Israelites and many others in the Old Testament spent a lot of time walking through the wilderness. It was dangerous, it was uncomfortable, it was something that you grew from in the end. Whether Jeremiah, David, or Jesus, the experience was meant to be one that changed you in some way.

The challenge I give myself every Lent is to be uncomfortable in my faith. It might be sitting and doing deep reflection on how honest a Christian life I am living. It might be asking others to point out to me all the ways I am missing the mark in the 10 commandments or the beatitudes. It might be reading someone whose perspective is different than mine, or it might be living intentionally in some other way. I invite you to consider how you can be uncomfortable and walk in the wilderness of Lent with Jesus?

Grace and Peace

Pastor Nathaniel Asperger



UPCOMING LECTIONARY READINGS FOR MARCH

<p>March 1, 2026 Genesis 12:1-4a Psalm 121 Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 John 3:1-17 Or Matthew 17:1-9</p>	<p>The Lord says to Abram: I will make you a blessing to the nations. My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Consider Abraham; the promise of God depends on faith. Those who seek God’s kingdom must be born of water and Spirit. On a high mountain with Moses and Elijah, Jesus is transfigured.</p>
<p>March 8, 2026 Exodus 17:1-7 Psalm 95 Romans 5:1-11 John 4:5-42</p>	<p>The people thirst and quarrel; God gives them water from a rock. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, the rock of our salvation. Justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ. Jesus offers living water to a Samaritan woman at the well.</p>
<p>March 15, 2026 1 Samuel 16:1-13 Psalm 3 Ephesians 5:8-14 John 9:1-41</p>	<p>Samuel anoints David, the youngest son of Jesse, to be king. The Lord is my shepherd; I will live in the house of God always. Live as children of light; awake and rise, Christ will shine on you. Jesus heals a man born blind; Pharisees question him about sin.</p>
<p>March 22, 2026 Ezekiel 37:1-14 Psalm 130 Romans 8:6-11 John 11:1-45</p>	<p>In a valley of dry bones, Ezekiel has a vision of hope for Israel. Out of the depths I cry; the Lord has power to forgive and redeem. Set your mind on the Spirit, not the flesh; God will give you life. Jesus, the resurrection and the life, raises Lazarus from the dead.</p>
<p>March 29, 2026 <u>Liturgy of the Palms</u> Matthew 21:1-11 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 <u>Liturgy of the Passion</u> Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 31:9-16 Philippians 2:5-11 Matthew 26:14-27:66 Or Matthew 27:11-54</p>	<p>Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey; the people shout: Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.</p> <p>The Lord God helps me; who will declare me guilty? Be gracious, Lord; my enemies assail me; my life is in your hand. Seek the mind of Christ, who was humble, but exalted by God. After the Passover meal, Jesus is betrayed, tried, and crucified. [Abbreviated reading] Jesus is tried and crucified.</p>

IMPORTANT

It has come to our attention that occasionally the doors have been left unlocked at the Church. Sometimes, they just aren’t shut tightly, and the lock did not catch. **PLEASE BE SURE** if you are the last one to leave the building that the doors are **ALL** checked to be sure they are locked. When you get outside, give them a tug to be sure the lock has caught and nobody can get back in without a key. **THANKS!**

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 \$35.00 per capita for 2026. 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 \$140.00. 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 \$35.00/member for 2026. 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.

PERSONAL NEEDS CABINET

Our Personal Needs Cabinet is outside to the right side of the West End Door. If you wish to contribute, here is a list of items needed:

- Tooth Paste/Tooth Brush
- Mouth Wash
- Hair Comb &/or Brush
- Paper Tissues
- Wet Wipes
- Bandages/First Aid Kit
- Rain Poncho
- Chapstick
- Cotton Swabs
- Ziploc Bags
- Feminine Products
- Shampoo/ Conditioner
- Bath Soap Hand Sanitizer

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.

CTC CHOIR

TALK WITH DAN GROOM IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING. WE'D LOVE TO HEAR YOUR VOICE.

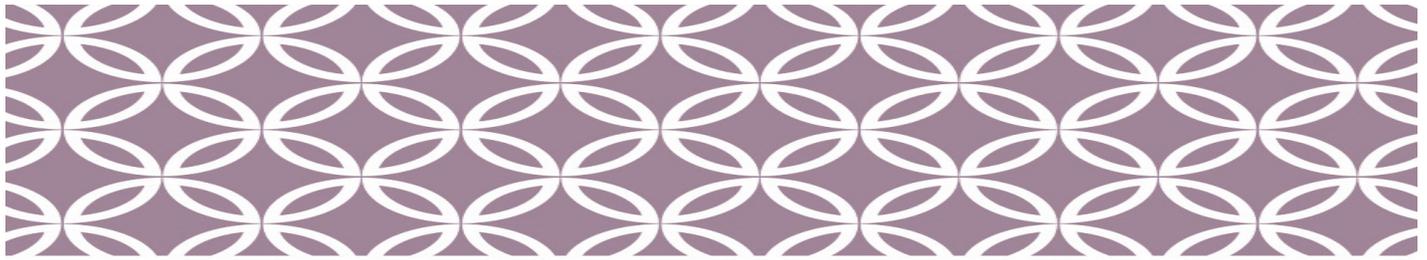


SAGINAW COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

**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.**

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH: in February we were joined by our Boy Scouts who assisted in the Worship Service. On February 8th, we celebrated Souper Bowl Sunday and had the pleasure of Major Chords for Minors who joined us for the worship service and performed two songs for us.

Our Missions for March will be the Easter Food Cards and One Great Hour of Sharing. Please mark your donations accordingly.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Session has decided that for all Worship Services the doors will be locked fifteen minutes after the start time of the service and will remain locked throughout the service. If you know you are going to be late getting to the church, please call (989) 793-0125 and let us know so we can watch for you. **SO, FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP DOORS WILL BE LOCKED AT 10:45 A.M.** These items may change as needed and as weather indicates. Thank you for your help.

SERVICES BEGINNING AT 4:30 P.M., DOORS WILL BE LOCKED AT 4:45 P.M.



We received our Kroger Community Rewards donation in the amount of \$31.21. If you shop at Kroger for anything, food, prescriptions, gas, etc. and have not selected Countryside as your Charity, please consider doing so. See Kathy for assistance.

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CTC



THE NEXT CTC WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION MEETING

SATURDAY, MARCH 14TH
BEGINNING @
11:30 A.M

WE HOPE YOU CAN
ATTEND!



DIAL 2-1-1 FOR HELP!

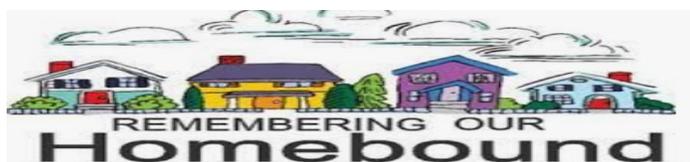
2-1-1 is a Health and Human Services Hotline for Northeast Michigan. "Non-Emergency" assistance is available by calling 2-1-1. To talk to a trained professional about hundreds of health and human services available, call 2-1-1. Staff are trained to assist those in need with referral for food, housing, utilities, childcare, emergency shelter, clothing, legal aid, literacy, transportation, substance abuse, senior issues, disability, health care, and much more.



We at CTC are keeping the doctors and hospitals in business lately. *Get well wishes* to Pastor Nathaniel who had a total hip replacement on February 15th and he is home recuperating and doing well. **PHEW IT'S BEEN PRETTY BUSY THESE PAST COUPLE MONTHS!**

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CTC

SESSION COUNCIL	DEACONS
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
Class of 2028 Carol VanArsdale Becky Pequignot Bethany Scovill	Class of 2028 Pat Denno Ronda Otway Duncan Redfield



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 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.

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CTC

IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER



BEFORE HEADING OUT THE DOOR, CHECK WJRT EITHER ON YOUR COMPUTER, PHONE OR TELEVISION AND CHECK THEIR SCHOOL CLOSING LINK. WE WILL REPORT ANY CLOSINGS TO THEM AS SOON AS WE MAKE THE DECISION TO CLOSE.

Pack your lunch each Wednesday and bring it to church for fellowship and Bible Study. We will have a special service for you can. Together with the church. NOTE: Pastor Nathaniel is currently in the hospital for surgery on Monday, February 16th – so the service will be postponed starting on February 18th until further notice.

Temporarily on hold until Nathaniel returns from his surgery.



CTC Directory: It's that time of year again, please give Kathy any changes or additions for the 2026 Directory. If you didn't get your picture taken last year and want to have one taken for the 2026 directory, let Kathy know. We will schedule a day or two for pictures. A form to update your information is on the table in Fellowship Hall. Thank you.

REMAINING LENTEN SCHEDULE @ COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH

2nd Sunday of Lent, March 1st - Worship at 10:30 a.m.

3rd Sunday of Lent, March 8th - Worship at 10:30 a.m. – Soup Luncheon

4th Sunday of Lent, March 15th – Worship at 10:30 a.m.

5th Sunday of Lent, March 29th - Palm Sunday– Worship at 10:30 a.m. Soup Luncheon

Maundy Thursday, April 2nd – Worship at 4:30 p.m.

Good Friday, April 3rd – Worship at 1:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 05 – Worship at 10:30 a.m.



THOMAS KENNEDY: Please keep the family of Thomas Kennedy in your thoughts and prayers. Tom passed away in January and was cremated shortly thereafter. Internment of his ashes will be at the Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly Michigan. It was established in 2005 serving as a final resting place for veterans and their eligible family members.



BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Roger Scovill
- 5 Pastor Jane Young
- 6 Angie Mitchell (Organist)
- 8 Mark VanArsdale
- 9 Matthew Davis
- 9 Aaron Plater II
- 10 Victoria Parker
- 11 John VanArsdale
- 12 Jackie Williams
- 13 MariAnne Vega
- 22 Michelle Martinez
- 26 Leore Bethune

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Ron Platt
- 2 Elaine Miner
- 3 Carol VanArsdale
- 9 Sandy Redfield
- 22 Chong Ladner

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Lysithea Evans M=Alexa Mahan
- 4 Jeanne Krugielki
- 5 Nancy Erndt
- 5 Evon Little
- 12 Kathy Loviska
- 12 Matthew VanArsdale
- 13 Dallas Williams

- 17 Andrea Asperger
- 19 Debra Davis

BIRTHDAYS MAY

- 1 Gwen Henderson
- 4 Joshua Gonzales
- 5 Sue Smith
- 6 Marcia Lacker
- 18 Doris Ruth
- 21 Seth Diggs
- 24 Katlyn Hanson
- 26 Charles Ohmer
- 26 Lore Woodke
- 28 Sue Paterson

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 11 John & Leore Bethune
- 12 John & Carol VanArsdale
- 25 Sarah & Tony Gonzales

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 6 Chad & Karla Parker
- 21 Vincent & Michelle Martinez

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

None Known

Countryside Trinity Church

4690 Weiss Street

Saginaw, Michigan 48603

(989) 793-0125

