

Mayflower Notes...

Mayflower Congregational Church

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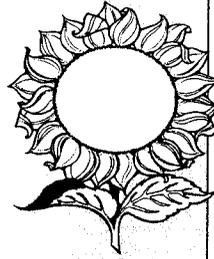
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Dr. Rick Martin

Pastor

*Dates to remember in
May..*



May 1

Communion

May 8

Mother's Day

May 14

Second Saturday Supper

May 15

*Newsletter item deadline
June/July*

May 15

Music Sunday

May 29

Advent House Lunches

May 30

Memorial Day

From the Prudential Council...

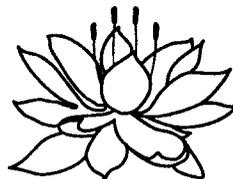
Enclosed in the newsletter you will find a Ministry Survey and a Pastoral/Employee Evaluation form. Please take the time to thoughtfully fill these out and return them to the church office no later than May 15th. Your input will help aid in directing the future of our church. Thank you!

HEAD USHER -

Naida Kenyon

OUTREACH FOCUS -

Food Bank



From the Pastor's Desk

LITTLE FOXES



Song of Solomon 2:15

Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.

When the vineyards are beginning to grow their grapes, first the flowers appear. Little foxes evidently like the taste of these grape flowers, so they run around the vineyard eating them. Thus the grapes never develop, which causes ruin in the vineyard business.

It is not always the big things that cause ruin. 9.0 earthquakes and tsunamis cause ruin, obviously, and it takes years to recover; if recovery is possible at all. Most of us will never face a tsunami, but there are little things that, left unchecked, will bring about ruin just the same. One – of many – little foxes is attitude: positive vs negative: seeing the glass ½ full vs seeing the glass ½ empty: counting your blessing vs rehearsing your lack/losses.

God is blessing Mayflower Congregational Church! We have children in Sunday School. We are meeting budget in rough economic times. New faces occasionally drifting in for services and activities. God hears and answers our prayers, and a few miracles pop up from time to time. We are able to reach outside our four walls and help with mission projects at home and abroad. Mayflower Church is having a positive effect on many people – God touching and changing the lives of people through us. We are blessed.

Yet, as pastor, I know there are “issues”. Any church that has people has “issues”, for people have “issues”. Always has been, always will be. The little foxes run around and nibble on the flowers ruining the harvest. We'll deal with the “issues” (mostly privately), while focusing on the blessings of God; thankful for what God is doing at Mayflower Church.

I Thessalonians 5:20

In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

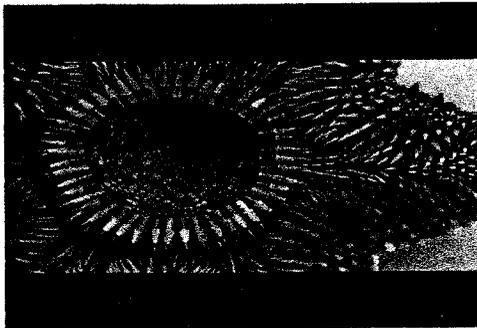
vs I Corinthians 10:10

Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. One is a little fox causing ruin. One is the will of God. Which attitude is prevalent in your life?

LAY LEADERS MISSIVE

I Hope the Easter season continues to be glorious for all of you. Jesus rising from the dead proves what he said: "Because I live, you also shall live." Through the worst the best rises up to proclaim Victory full of hope and love.

The following article appeared on my e-mail and I hope it speaks to you as it did to me (plagiarism is my friend!).



These are made from pencils.

A PENCIL MAKER TOLD THE PENCIL 5 IMPORTANT LESSONS JUST BEFORE PUTTING IT IN THE BOX :

- 1.) EVERYTHING YOU DO WILL ALWAYS LEAVE A MARK.
- 2.) YOU CAN ALWAYS CORRECT THE MISTAKES YOU MAKE.
- 3.) WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS WHAT IS INSIDE OF YOU.
- 4.) IN LIFE, YOU WILL UNDERGO PAINFUL SHARPENINGS, WHICH WILL ONLY MAKE YOU BETTER.
- 5.) TO BE THE BEST PENCIL, YOU MUST ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE HELD AND GUIDED BY THE HAND THAT HOLDS YOU.

We all need to be constantly sharpened. This parable may encourage you to know that you are a special person, with unique God-given talents and abilities. Only you can fulfill the purpose which you were born to accomplish. Never allow yourself to get discouraged and think that your life is insignificant and can not be changed and, like the pencil, and always remember that the most important part of who you are, is what's inside of you.

A reminder that outdoor clean-up, paint-up and renewal will take place April 30th starting at 10AM. We need everyone possible to help keep our property proud. Bring implements if you have them. Thanks. Have a blessed Spring.

Rog

SELF-CENTERED OR GOD-CENTERED

At different times throughout our lives, we all make the choice whether to serve ourselves or to be a servant to others. If we make a practice of putting ourselves first, we will spend life joyless and empty, wondering why fulfillment escapes us.

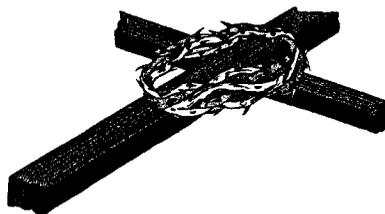
Even though God never abandons us, we can elect to turn away Him. God wants the best for us, and His best for us is that we deny ourselves and follow Him. If we focus only on our earthly possessions and make it our top priority to take care of ourselves only, we push God out of our lives. Putting our own interests first, we become selfish and self-centered.

The Apostle Paul wrote that as people redeemed by God's mercy, we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices. He further said in Romans 12:1-2, "*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will*". Paul revealed the secret of the transformed mind to the Galatians. "*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me*" (Galatians 2:20). Joy comes into our lives when God, instead of self, is the object of our love and worship. It was joy, stated the writer to the Hebrews, that compelled Jesus to endure the Cross (Hebrews 12:2).

The Stewardship life is a life dedicated completely to God through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus said that if we would follow Him, we "must deny [ourselves] and take up [our] cross and follow [Him]" (Matthew 16:24). The reward outweighs by far the sacrifice, for Christ promised in Matthew 6:25, "*Whoever loses his life for Me will find it*". Martin Luther said, "If anyone would rap at the door of my heart and ask, 'Who lives here?' I would answer, 'Martin Luther once lived here. But Martin Luther has moved out and Jesus Christ has moved in.'" When Jesus has permanent residence within us, He can use us to build His kingdom among men.

Through God's grace, we are transformed into "new creatures" willing to live a life that honors Him with our lives and resources. God's love and generosity are seen through us as we recognize the opportunities God places before us to share our time, talent, and treasures in the building up His kingdom.

Ron Chewning
Stewardship Advisors



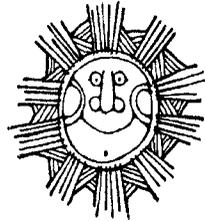
As our church year winds down to our slower summer months, I would like to take some time to thank the many people who helped make our Sunday School a success this year. As always, teachers Ann McClelland and Linda Wheeler deserve a round of applause for their dedication to the Sunday School program. I certainly couldn't do it without them!

We were blessed to have an amazing amount of guest speakers this year, who made our Sunday School more interesting. Thanks to Roger Kennedy and Fred Lowe for providing interesting and exciting presentations in March and April. April Fuller will be speaking to our kids in May on being a woman in the military.

I am always looking for people who have a skill or talent they would like to share with our kids. Please call me at 517-749-2416 or email me at canfielde@michigan.gov if you have ideas you would like to share.

Now, get outside and enjoy that beautiful Michigan spring weather!

Liz



Music Musings

Reaction to Rowdy Rodents

An advantage to being in the staff loop is that I was able to read Pastor Rick's article that you are reading in this newsletter. I did not know that the "little foxes" imagery was from the Bible! It is good to learn new things, every day. His article was meaningful and it was applicable to me! (a Lowe household expression is "truth hurts, don't it, dear...").

There are moments when we just react or overreact to the bits of this and that in life, or we just worry, as Jesus knows. We lose our right perspective, our Christly view. We trouble ourselves with something; our hearts are weary. That is surely a flashing sign that we need to turn around and find another way. What is the big picture, the God picture? What are we here to do? Fred was taught, succinctly, "to love and serve the Lord." Not a bad answer. Yet, we need a lifetime to achieve the answer.

Thank you, Pastor, for teaching us about the little foxes. Help us to shoo them away, and to till the soil for your good work. Amen.

Heartfelt thanks to those who sing and ring throughout the school year, and to those who fill in at other times. We will conclude our regular season for adult choirs on May 15. There will be many weeks of special music in the summer months. Please consider sharing your artistic talents with us. We also enjoy dramatic readings.

Blessed Be the Name
Chrisann