

# ON Broadway

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Newsletter

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## Opening the Doors—Come On In

*Pastor John*



A few weeks ago today we received a call from the New Awakenings Alcoholics Anonymous group. This group, with a long standing history here in North Ann Arbor, was looking for a new home. Their former meeting place, the Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church building, was being sold.

After some discussion with their representative we decided that giving them space fell within our desire to be a community for the community. Beginning August 29 the New Beginnings meeting will find space to meet in room 19 every morning (Monday through Friday) from 6:30 to 7:30 a.m. Yes, that's a.m. I first got it incorrect.

We welcome this new addition to our ministry and know that they, with us, will experience God's grace, mercy and healing, as we move forward together.

If you have any questions, please ask me.

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## Loving God, Serving People

Building a community loved and changed by Jesus,  
loving and changing the world for him.

## 2016 Washtenaw/Ann Arbor CROP Hunger Walk

*Barbara Fichtenberg*



CROP Hunger walks are community-wide events sponsored by Church World Service. The Washtenaw/Ann Arbor Walk is organized by the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ). Churches, businesses, schools and others work together to raise funds and awareness to end hunger in the U.S. and around the world. More than 1,600 walks take place across the U.S. annually. Typically, 75% of the funds raised are used by Church World Service and its partners for global projects ([www.cwsglobal.org](http://www.cwsglobal.org)) while the remaining 25% is used to support needs within the local community. The organizations receiving support from this year's walk include:

Avalon House  
Growing Hope  
Community Action Network  
Packard Health  
Emmanuel House  
SOS Community Services  
Hope Clinic  
St. Andrew's Breakfast Programj

You are invited to join the 42nd annual Washtenaw/Ann Arbor CROP Hunger Walk which will take place on **Sunday, September 25, 2016 at Trinity Lutheran Church, 1400 West Stadium Boulevard, Ann Arbor**. Registration begins at 1:00 p.m. and the Walk starts with a send-off service at 2:00 p.m.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in this event. You will be able to choose between a one-mile route or a five-mile route. It's a great intergenerational opportunity to serve. Families can walk together, with babies or young children in strollers or wagons. In addition, it's a wonderful way to bring people of faith together in a unified Christian witness to the world which so often sees division among Christians.

If you are unable to participate in the Walk, you can still play an important role by pledging your financial support to one of our walkers.

There will be sign-up forms in the bulletin on Sunday, August 28 for you to indicate your willingness to walk or support a walker. There will also be a CROP Walk table in the fellowship hall on September 11th and 18th for additional sign-ups.

Barb Fichtenberg is serving as the recruiter for AACRC this year. If you have any questions, please contact her at [bfichtenberg@hotmail.com](mailto:bfichtenberg@hotmail.com). Thank you in advance for your support.



This is for our dog friends and all others who need a smile today.

An older, tired-looking dog wandered into my yard. I could tell from his collar and his well-fed belly that he had a home and was well taken care of. He calmly came over to me, and I gave him a few pats on his head; he then followed me into my house, slowly walked down the hall, curled up in the corner and fell asleep.

An hour later, he went to the door, and I let him out.

The next day he was back, greeted me in my yard, walked inside and resumed his spot in the hall and again slept for about an hour. This continued off and on for several weeks.

Curious I pinned a note to his collar: "I would like to find out who the owner of this wonderful sweet dog is and ask if you are aware that almost every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap."

The next day he arrived for his name, with a different note pinned to his collar: "He lives in a home with six children, two under the age of three. He's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?"

## Gray Matters

*Roy Glover*

Gray “really does” Matter. For those unfamiliar with Gray Matters, the group began last fall to provide growth and fellowship opportunities for the large number of seniors who attend our church. From the feedback we’ve received this past year, the group seems to be meeting a real need.

Here is a list of the topics the group covered this past year:

09/09/15: Luke and Merling Tsai  
“Raising Our Son with Autism”: A Family’s 40-Yr Journey

10/14/15: Dirk Evans  
“Hard of Hearing - Easy Listening”

11/11/15: Our Church Veterans  
Celebrating our Veterans on Veteran’s Day

12/09/15: Roy Glover  
“An Afternoon at the Opera” Mozart’s The Magic Flute

01/13/16: Jim Homan  
“Thriving/Surviving in the Digital World”

02/10/16: Ross Weener  
Youth Ministry Program Update

03/09/16: David Learned  
“The Need for Judicial and Corrections Reform”

04/13/16: Trevethans and VanZomerans  
Hymn Sing and Cummings Needs

05/11/16: Bob and Susan DeVries  
“Living Fully in the Fourth Quarter of Life”

06/08/16: Chris Van Ee  
“Forensic Engineering: Case Studies from my Work”

07/13/16: Vander Yachts Host Picnic  
at Half Moon Lake

We are pleased to report that plans for the upcoming year are off to a great start. Here is a list of the speakers and topics that have been confirmed through December.

September: Harvey and Audrey Stob will share details about their recent mission trip to Nicaragua.

October: A representative from the MMAP (Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program) will talk and answer questions about available health care plans for seniors.

November: Steve Postema, Ann Arbor’s City Attorney, will talk about his life on the job.

December: A Musical Group from South Lyon will help prepare us for Christmas by playing seasonal music on their “ancient instruments.”

This year we again plan to meet at church on the second Wednesday afternoon of each month, from 1:30 to 3:30. Our intent is to continue to divide each meeting into two parts with 45 minutes devoted to the topic of the day and 45 minutes devoted to goodies, coffee and good fellowship. You should know that Gray Matters do not engage in “age discrimination.” Non-seniors are welcome to attend any of our meetings, particularly if the topic is of interest or if you’re just looking for some good fellowship and wonderful refreshments.

Please see this brief article as your personal invitation to join us for another great year of growth and fellowship. If you have questions, would like to be on our group email list (and are not already) or have suggestions for future meetings the steering committee would be happy to hear from you.

The Steering Committee:

Beth and Ray Dykstra  
Marilyn and Roy Glover  
Gladys and Jack Thonus



### September 11 Special Offering

K–12<sup>th</sup> Grade Christian School

Tuition Assistance Fund

## VBS News from Nardin Park Community Church - Detroit, Michigan “Jesus . . . The True Superhero: Savior, Protector, Provider” - August 1 – 5, 2016

*“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” (Psalm 119:105)*

*Tim & Char Larsen*

It is hard to believe that over twenty years have passed since Nardin Park Community Church (NPCC) and Community Assistance Program (CAP) joined hands in 1993 to offer a five-day Vacation Bible School Program! Countless lives have been touched over the years—children, youth and adults. In the beginning days, there were volunteers from Troy CRC and River Terrace CRC, although they no longer participate. Nardin Park is thankful for the faithful and ongoing financial and music support which AACRC has provided. Both are needed and most appreciated! Over the years, some changes have been more visible than others but then some things have hardly changed. The neighborhood from which the children/youth come has changed dramatically and you wonder ‘what’ has happened to all those people who use to live in the area. Empty houses, burned out houses, graffiti on the building and the list could go on. But praise the Lord . . . some things do not change like the eager anticipation of the kids (preschool through high school) who are eager to sing, participate in the activities of the morning along with the faithful staff and together enjoy a noon meal before leaving the church.

The 2016 VBS Theme Focus was for the students to understand their potential in Jesus Christ. They were challenged to set spiritual, emotional, and physical goals that would help in building their relationship with God and others. Students had the opportunity to learn the qualities needed to be a superhero for Christ, including hard work, compassion, faith and boldness. (Eph. 6:11) Worship, witness, praise, protection and work ethic were the daily lesson subjects this year.

Each morning included: an opening time of singing, prayer and a brief meditation; class time and music classes for various age groups; a closing time with more singing. The Scripture theme was from Ephesians 6:11: “Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” You should have heard the kids sing that chorus (as well as the verses)—Scripture that they will carry with them for always!! Some of their other favorites included: *I am the Resurrection and the Life, Father Abraham, Step by Step, What a Mighty God* . . . to name just a few. Music continues to be a high point of VBS for all ages. The list of songs is long—many with a direct Scripture reference. There’s clapping and movement and hearts full of praise and we pray that the Word will be hidden in their hearts—for a lifetime!

At the closing time, each class briefly shared about the lesson of the day and a prayer would be given by one of the students (even the very young!) or Pastor Morris. The students were then dismissed by class, for their noon meal which Josephine Collins (Director of CAP) had prepared. Although VBS is over for another year, the work at NPCC is on-going.

Because of the changes in the neighborhood, many students came from a distance by van or cars. Some former students, now off to college or married, stopped in during the week to say ‘hello’ and maybe sing a few songs with us. In spite of the odds, some of these students excel and are shining examples of what is possible when He leads and guides . . . step by step. They love to share good news with us . . . like receiving a *full-ride* college scholarship or going off to Paris for graduate study in communications. There is a loving concern for all ages and respect is shown to all. We are thankful to be part of the journey of this Family of God as we have reached out over the years to the children/families at Nardin Park. It is by faith alone that this church continues to be a light amidst darkness that surrounds it. The ministry of CAP still reaches countless people and Josephine Collins, along with her son Michael, are vital to this program. Although we do not know what lies ahead for this church family, relationships have been made, memories linger in the minds of both students and teachers! Remember to pray for Pastor Morris along with our brothers and sisters in Christ at NPCC as they do follow up with children/youth and parents that have been reached through VBS. Their work is difficult and for many people in the Nardin Park neighborhood, each day is a challenge but they move on trusting in the Lord! May the seeds that have been sown grow and blossom as this church continues to reach out and share His love to those in need.

*Put on the whole armour of God,  
Put on the whole armour of God. Put on the whole armour of God,  
That you may stand against the devil and his wiles. Take your stand  
with truth as your belt. Take your stand with truth as your belt.*

*Song from Ephesians 6:10-17)*

## Former Prisoner Becomes a Messenger of God

Maija Kaldjian

This summer, so full of suffering for the countless refugees of our world, has heaped treasure after treasure to many of us. How can we ever return proper thanks to the Giver of all good things?

One way is, perhaps, by sharing.

I cannot share the great gifts of books I have received—the long—longed—for commentaries of both Testaments that Marilyn gave me, or the amazing new biography of the inklings (*The Fellowship* by Philip and Carol Zaleski) that my granddaughter Marni brought me.

But I can share the core of an article that gave me tremendous joy, in a recent magazine (Elama = Life) published by the Finnish Bible college. A friend I have had since I was 6 years old faithfully sends it to me.

It is the story of a lay preacher, 70 years ago, who studied for years in the college taking courses in lay volunteer verger work, theology and soul care.

He had a hard childhood. When he was eight—years old, he began to use alcohol. When he was nine, he killed a person when drunk. He spent years in jail for other crimes. After suffering his punishment of seven years in Finland. He left for Sweden because of his alcohol and drug problem.

There he heard about the Agape Home, which gave him therapy, and where he found faith. Earlier he had blamed society for his problems—now he saw that he himself had to change.

When one of the Agape staff prayed for him, talked as they drank coffee, and Pentti Olkkonen surrendered himself to Jesus. He felt light. Things did not change overnight—but change they did. He had to examine his life and saw that he needed to apologize and ask for forgiveness.

He had to decide what he wanted of life. Many others had gone to the Bible College from Agape, and he saw that they had studied and began a new life, and began to do parish work. That gave him hope.

He had read through the Bible several times in the prison, but only after he believed did he begin to understand it. Now he reads the Bible regularly.

The Bible College had a confirmation camp in Israel where he could see the tomb of Jesus, and he understood better what Jesus meant to him. He knows that his survival is a miracle, for he had been close to death several times, and had lost many friends.

Everyday gives him reason to wonder and to give thanks.

In the morning he folds his hands and asks for a blessing. At night he gives thanks. Every day is a gift.

He is now traveling around Finland and Scandinavia sharing the good news of the Gospel. He also explains the dangers of narcotics if asked.

“I visit often prison, confirmation camps, and schools. I lecture at the Bible College, preach in churches and give communion. I go wherever I am asked. I am like a tramp and barking dog.”

He especially values prison visits.

“That is my place, I tell the prisoners that there is an opportunity for them, for I was once one of them.”

The young are especially important. Older people must be there for them, and not blame them. They need good examples. Many young folks have thanked me for telling them about the dangers of drugs, and about the power of Jesus Christ, and the Love of God.” Olkkonen emphasizes that .... is not worth it. If people are not taught about sin, they will not understand what grace is. Law and Gospel go hand in hand.”

“When I speak in church or elsewhere, I ask the Holy Spirit to fill me and give me the right word. In my own strength I am nothing.”

“Life is continuous study. It’s after school the studying really starts. There are always new things to learn the Lord shows the way.”

## Coffee Break Begins September 13

*Katrina Brehob*

**Coffee Break is a wonderful opportunity for all women to join a small group and meet new friends, while learning more about God and his wonderful love for us!**

There are many groups to choose from. Some offer an in-depth, mature Bible study, while others provide a place to learn about Jesus and Christianity for the first time. We also have groups with easy English discussions. There's a group that's just right for you or someone you know!

Meanwhile, during the morning session, members' children are enjoying the loving care of our staff in the nursery, in Little Lambs or in Story Hour. Little Lambs and Story Hour classes provide time for kids to hear Bible stories, make crafts, play and sing. (This year, no formal children's classes will be provided in the afternoon. However, children are still welcome to come and stay with their mom in her group.)

Through the years, many women and children have enjoyed their time of fellowship and learning at Coffee Break. We hope you will join us!

**Dates:** Tuesdays; Sep 13, 2016 – Apr 25, 2017

**Times:** 9:30 – 11:15am OR 1:15 – 2:45pm

**To learn more or register:** [AACRC.org/CoffeeBreak](http://AACRC.org/CoffeeBreak)

### **What are we studying this year?**

To start out the year, two of the small groups are planning to learn about Jesus by studying a gospel book during their meetings. These will be easy to understand, yet rich studies that will help you grow in your knowledge of Jesus.

The rest of the groups will begin the 13-week curriculum, "Experiencing God" by Blackaby, Blackaby and King. If you are looking and longing for something more in your relationship with Jesus and want to explore with other women what it means to experience God, and know and do his will, we hope you will join us! Together we will be learning to recognize God's work around us; how he pursues a continuing love relationship with us that is real and personal. We will explore how we can listen to God speaking, struggle with how to respond in faith and action, and realize the joy of obedience.

Sign up today at [AACRC.org/CoffeeBreak](http://AACRC.org/CoffeeBreak)!



## Health Ministry News

Barb Okonkwo

Authors Devries and Zonnebeslt-Smeenge state that it is “ironic that everyone knows and is interested in the birth process. This process is surrounded by all kinds of voluntary and often mandatory education classes--future mothers learn how to breathe properly during delivery; future fathers learn how to coach and encourage their wives during delivery; and both learn about the proper feeding and bathing of newborns and the regulating of their sleep patterns.”

But where is the education for dying? Do we know how to approach this equally important event on the opposite end of life that is as inevitable and irreversible as birth?” (*Living Fully in the Shadow of Death*, p. 15) The authors state that being aware of the inevitability of death is a good thing; that in order to live a richer and more complete life one must at some point “look death squarely in the face, understand it, and reconcile ourselves to its inevitability.” (p. 14)

One of the ways in which we can look the inevitability of death “squarely in the face” is to plan ahead. However, most Americans, due to fear of talking about death, fail to plan ahead and so do what families have always done--conventional funeral and burial. This is in spite of the stated preferences of most Americans for natural burial. In Ann Arbor there are few local options for those who prefer and alternative to conventional funerals and burials. This is beginning to change as people become educated about natural death care options and green burials.

On October 8th, Health Ministries will be hosting a morning seminar (8:30am–12:30pm) where Marilynne Rush will talk about natural death care at home and green burials. Along with this we will have a panel discussion about advanced care planning presented by a team from St Joseph Health System.

Marilynne will talk about how the benefits of home funeral and green burial include personal expressions of grief in a relaxed and loving atmosphere, the love and honor that only family members can provide, inclusion of the family and the community, and an easier grief journey for those involved. She will also talk about how green burial is better for the environment.

Please join us for a most informative morning. (for more information contact Barb Okonkwo at [bjokonkwo69@gmail.com](mailto:bjokonkwo69@gmail.com))

## Friendship Ministry

Roy Glover

This fall Friendship will begin its long-standing ministry (20+ years) to special needs young people and adults. Friendship was begun by a church family whose autistic son needed a place where he could feel loved and appreciated for who he was and for the unique way that God had gifted him. Today the ministry numbers more than 45 friends and 25 staff. We meet at church on the first and third Thursday evenings of each month for a time of singing, Bible study, birthday celebrations, joke telling, puppet theater, small group support and, of course, refreshments. Special activities include a Christmas Holiday Potluck, a Friendship inspired Worship Service and an End-of-the-Year Picnic. This year we plan to study lessons that focus on God’s instruction for Right Living: The Ten Commandments.

Friendship is always on the lookout for new teachers who have a heart for sharing God’s love with an extraordinary group of His children. And to encourage you in your thinking about this possibility, our teachers will readily admit that their involvement in Friendship brings them more joy and renews their end-of-the-day energy in a way that can’t easily be described in just plain words. So if you’re looking for a way to liven up your life, and at the same time experience the joy of serving some very special members of God’s family, then maybe you should consider giving Friendship a try.

If you have questions about the ministry please give either Wayne Van Zomeren or Roy Glover a call. Or just drop in for a look see on any one of our meeting nights. But be prepared to be smiled at, even hugged, once or twice. It goes with the territory.

