

# ON Broadway

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Newsletter

June 2015

Living with difference is not always easy for anyone—no matter the difference and who is different—difference is a challenge. The church is made up of many “differents.” When we attempt to make one the norm we usually hit roadblocks, walls, and various kinds of human emotions.

Learning to live with difference and different images of God in a fellowship of differents—also the name of Scott McKnight’s new book on the body of Christ - is our richest mature expression of love, the love of Jesus.

*Pastor John*

## Here’s the Right Way to Treat a Kid with Autism

(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting>)

There has been a big story in the news recently about a family being kicked off of a United Airlines plane due to a fear that the daughter with autism mom would disrupt the flight. According to reports, the non-verbal daughter was in the early stages of feeling hungry, and her mom knew she needed to eat to avoid a meltdown. But the only warm food on the plane was for the first class passengers. The mom pleaded with the flight attendant, explained her daughter had special needs, and offered to pay extra for the food. Finally the flight attendant accommodated the family only after the mother explained that if she didn’t eat, “she’ll be crying and trying to scratch in frustration. I don’t want her to get to that point.” The family received the food and the mom and daughter settled in for their flight. All was well.

Here is where that story should have ended.

Instead, the flight attendant told the plane captain, who decided to make an emergency landing and have police escort the family, complete with a calm daughter, off of the plane.

Other passengers, who were vocalizing their support of the autistic girl, who appears here calm and content, took video of the incident.

I am an autism mom. My TJ is 15. And this story makes me feel sick.

We recently had a similar experience that could have ended the same way for us, but at a restaurant, not on a plane.

And instead of what happened to this family, ours is a success story about people who show empathy, kindness, understanding and acceptance.

My family and I live in a small town. A few miles away from our home is my husband’s and my favorite restaurant: Loretta’s Fine Italian. We have been eating there for years. It’s a small restaurant, and Loretta makes the most delicious food. For years we placed special orders for Christmas Eve take out for our entire family, usually going to pick it up early so we can talk with dear Linda behind the bar as we wait. When TJ’s Occupational Therapy Center was fundraising, Loretta chose one night to donate 10 percent of every check earned to donate to our center.

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## Loving God, Serving People

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

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It's that kind of fantastic, local, family friendly place. And more importantly, we discovered, it is a TJ friendly place.

TJ was not having the most flexible of days when we decided to go out to dinner a few weeks ago. We were all sitting around the table when we got our menus.

Sometimes I call ahead to ask if burger and fries, TJ's favorite, are on that night's menu. If it wasn't on the menu, Loretta has been known to go to the market and buy just enough to make just for him. But this night I didn't call ahead. We didn't want TJ to always count on that special treatment. We wanted him to learn to be flexible with limited menu options. When we don't push him, he gets too comfortable and he doesn't learn. And some of the best advice I had ever heard once was "treat him like everyone else—that way he will know what to do to fit into society." It's an important skill for my boy with autism. For some, however, particularly for a child who is non-verbal, that's not an option.

When TJ saw that there was no burger, he started to get agitated. I said to him "Remember, sweetie, you can always order plain buttered noodles. And you get to add your own salt!"

I got a "Hrumph" and a furrowed brow. But we were still okay—he was holding it together.

When we placed our order with our lovely waitress, who didn't know us, I asked for TJ's plate to have no garnish. No parsley, no green anything on the plate, nothing but the buttered noodles. She smiled at our quirky order and brought it back to Loretta in the kitchen.

TJ sat there fuming. I could tell his anger was building. I asked him to take a deep breath. "NO!" he yelled. Everyone was looking at us, but that's nothing new. I explained to TJ that he was not allowed to behave like that in public and had to calm himself down. He wasn't happy about it, but he did it.

This was not our first rodeo.

A few minutes later the waitress returned. She said "Loretta said she can make TJ some chicken fingers and fries, if he'd rather have that. Would you like that?"

"YES! Thank you!" TJ again yelled. But now he was smiling. Beaming. You could sense his relief.

Loretta knew it was us. I assume it was the "no parsley nor garnish no nothing" that gave away our identity.

"Thank you so much," I said, "and please tell Loretta that we love her."

The waitress returned in a few minutes with some chicken wings, saying "Loretta thought you all might like these while you wait for your dinner."

It is so tough being an autism mom. And to be on the receiving end of such kindness, such understanding, almost brought me to tears. Loretta showed us once again that we were safe there, that her place was a place of acceptance and embracing TJ for who he is, good and bad.

This is the feeling that the Oregon autism mom should have received from the airline. It was a huge opportunity lost for them as an organization, in a time when one out of every 68 kids has autism. It was a time where national headlines should have read "autism acceptance is alive and well in the sky."

I'm not saying that the entire world needs to bend to accommodate us and our kids. What I am saying is that if we are handling our autistic kiddos, as us parents know how to do, a little empathy, kindness and acceptance goes a long way. Sometimes it is the difference between a hugely positive experience and a hugely negative experience. That's how fine a line it is.

So next time, if you happen to see a kid having a meltdown in the market, and a tearful mom trying desperately to calm down her child, instead of scowling and judging her as a bad parent, how about an understanding smile? It could really make a difference.

PS: As for lovely Loretta's, they are sadly closing their doors after serving our community for so many happy years. But not without huge thank yous and hugs (and flowers—shhhh!) from us. But lucky us, Loretta and Linda live in town, so we still get to tell them we love them, every chance we get.

(Lauren Swick Jordan blogs at *I Don't Have a Job.*)



Please come and celebrate the completion of our building project with us on Sunday, June 14! There will be a 10:00 service of dedication, followed by a lunch prepared by

the deacons and some fellowship groups. Set up will be in the fellowship hall, but if you would prefer to sit outside, please bring your own chairs or blankets. Also, to cut down on waste, we ask that you bring your own table service. After lunch people will be able to tour the additions, and there will be an activity for children to help them get to know the building. We hope you'll join in the fun!

## Children and Asthma

*Barb Okonkwo, RN, FCN*



Because asthma is one of the most common chronic disorders in childhood I thought it might be helpful to talk briefly about what it is, what the signs and symptoms are, and how to manage or control it.

Asthma is a disease of the airways, the tubes that carry air in and out of our lungs; in asthma the inside walls of these airways become sore and swollen. Because children have smaller airways than adults, asthma can be especially serious.

Some of the childhood asthma signs and symptoms include:

- wheezing—a whistling sound when they breathe out
- chest congestion or tightness (my kids used to tug at or rub their chests when they were young and having difficulty with their asthma)
- coughing especially early in the morning or at night
- chest pain—often in younger children
- trouble breathing—at rest or with exercise
- slow feeding or shortness of breath during feedings may be evident in an infant
- decreased desire to run and play in a toddler—due to breathlessness

Although they vary from child to child, asthma symptoms are usually a reaction to one or more stimuli or “triggers.” These can include:

- allergens such as pollens, mold, animal dander
- irritants like air pollution or cigarette smoke
- weather—cold air or changes in the weather
- exercise
- infections—the flu or common cold

Sometimes symptoms can occur without a trigger. But taking steps to avoid known triggers is an important part of controlling asthma.

It is also important to recognize symptoms that require emergency treatment. For children under five years old this would include:

- gasping for air
- breathing so hard that the abdomen is sucked under the ribs
- trouble speaking because of restricted breathing

An asthma emergency in children over five might present like this:

- persistent cough or wheezing
- significant shortness of breath
- no improvement in breathing after using a quick relief inhaler
- leaning forward in a sitting position to breathe
- unable to speak without gasping
- peak flow meter reading in the red zone

Even though asthma cannot be cured it can be managed with a variety of approved medications. The type and combination of medications and devices that a physician prescribes depends on the severity and frequency of flare ups, the child’s age and activity, and sometimes the cost of the medication may be factored in.

A critical part of managing asthma is knowing what triggers your child’s symptoms and taking steps to avoid or reduce exposure to those triggers

- understanding the different types of medications and how they work
- learning to recognize and record the signs and symptoms of worsening asthma
- knowing what to do when asthma worsens

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## AACRC 2015 High School Graduates

Leanne DeVries, Michael Dekker, Lindsie Egedy, & Sophia Bryson



**Special Offering—June 14**  
**Nardin Park Community Church/Community**  
**Assistance Program—Detroit, MI**  
**Vacation Bible School—August 3-7, 2015**

*by Cathy Green & Char Larsen*

Many of us are familiar with the Community Assistance Program (CAP), which is at Nardin Park Community Church (NPCC), because of the Holiday Meal Program we participate in each fall. In addition, we have also collected used clothing for distribution through CAP. Even during VBS, the clothing distribution program continues with Josephine Collin's son, Michael overseeing. This church, originally a combination of RCA/CRC congregations, struggles in a neighborhood that continues by faith alone. They have seen and continue to see hard times and yet do not give up.



Another important part of the ministry at Nardin Park is VBS which is held each summer. Since 1991, Nardin Park Community Church and the Community Assistance Program (CAP) have combined efforts to offer a 5-day Vacation Bible School for neighborhood children/youth. Since that time, a number of things have changed in the neighborhood, the teaching staff, and there are fewer supporting churches. But there are faithful servants at NPCC and they feel called to this Outreach Ministry. And one thing that has not changed and that is how the kids love to sing, and move, as they sing! You never quite know how many kids there will be so you truly have to be flexible. From pre-school through high school, students appear eager, wondering, questioning and always looking for someone who cares about them.

So how is this different from our VBS? Many of these kids come from one-parent homes and many are

being raised by a grand-parent. They don't have all the opportunities that many of our children take for granted. To them to be able to use some nice crayons is a treat or to have someone just sit down and talk - just to them alone makes them feel special. Many of these kids have seen and experienced things which we can't even imagine. So remember these children/youth and pray that the seeds will be sewn through VBS that will grow and bear fruit.

As the students are occupied with classes throughout the morning, Josephine Collins, Director of CAP, along with a few helpers, will be busy preparing the noon meal for everyone at VBS. This is a highlight for the kids and for some it might be their main meal for the day. You will again be given an opportunity to be part of this Outreach Ministry in Detroit. On June 14th a Special Offering will be taken to help with expenses related to VBS and the noon meal. Know that lives will be blessed through your prayers and this financial support, as well as your donations of clothing which continue to be needed. They all are most appreciated!!

The prayers of many people have been evidenced, over the years, in the way things have come together, even when it seemed as though there might not be enough hands to do all that needed to be done. But God promises to be faithful and He has supplied every one of the needs along the way. Continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ at the Nardin Park Church and for all those involved in the preparations for VBS 2015.

*“You can know that a promise is a promise  
when God gives one to you;  
You can know God's Word is a certainty,  
what He says is always true.  
In the past, in the present, in the future,  
God's Word is still the same;  
You can put your trust in a promise—  
when it's given in God's name.”*



## Breathe—Summer Bible Study

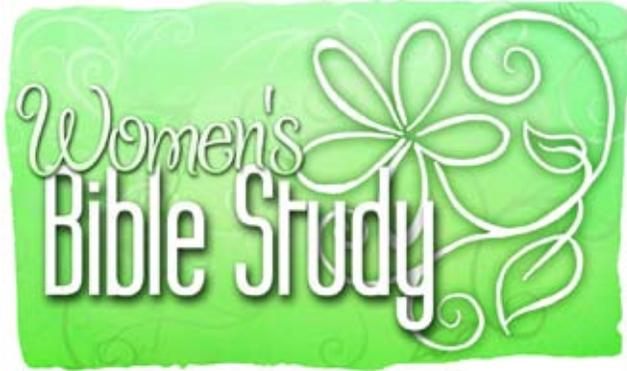
Tuesday, 9:30– 11:30 • June 30–July 28

(if there is enough interest for an afternoon session we will meet from 1:00-3:00 pm)

Please sign up: [bjokonkwo69@gamil.com](mailto:bjokonkwo69@gamil.com)

Priscilla Shirer is the author of this study; it includes 5 sessions of teaching by Priscilla Shirer with 4 weeks of homework in a reflective, journaling format. One of the greatest challenges among women in our culture is taking time to stop and cease from all the activities and busyness and just breathe. We are in bondage to busyness. We constantly strive to complete the limitless to-do lists that hinder us from experiencing all that God has for us. We miss the moments because we rush ahead to the next thing. By neglecting time for tranquility, serenity, and repose, we limit our Christlikeness and miss out on some of God's greatest gifts. It is time for us to breathe and build margin into

our lives for God. In the Old Testament, God instituted principles and laws that would transform the Israelites' mindset. He didn't just want them legally free; He wanted them to be able to walk in the freedom and enjoy it. So God gave them many gifts, including boundaries in which to enjoy those gifts. Sabbath was intended as a gift, and it is still a gift to us today. If you are weary, worn out, and exhausted the concept of Sabbath will change your life.



## 2015 School Supply Rescue & Recycling Project



It's hard to believe that Faith school in Kanpon, N. Ghana is already 8 years old! This congregation was the force (and funds) behind the building of this school and continues to support it in various ways. A couple years ago we found out that the school had little to no school supplies for the children. Then the

Lord led us to the annual "school supply rescue and recycling project" here in Ann Arbor. Last year was our first year participating in this project and what a blessing! We were able to gather used books and supplies from the South Lyon schools. With the help of many volunteers we sorted, packed and shipped 31 boxes to Kanpon.

Again this year Matt Admiraal has contacted the teachers in the South Lyon school district and they are

eager to continue to participate in this project. Below is a notice from Ginny Rezmierski, the coordinator of the project:

*"Hold the dates of Thursday, June 25, Friday, June 26, and Saturday, June 27 9:00-5:00, for a day of mission service—the 2015 School Supply Rescue and Recycling project. Come for as many hours or days as you can and work as long as you want. Enjoy the fellowship, snacks and service of the many volunteers at the Rezmierski's garage—1050 Elmwood Drive, AA.*

*This is the annual project to distribute the school supplies and books that are still valuable but no longer used by Washtenaw County elementary schools and donate them to eager students and teachers in schools in the Philippines, Ghana, Romania, and this year also in Hamtramak, Michigan.*

*If you can count and sort crayons, pencils, and pens, if you can sort text books and story books, if you can fill shipping boxes with assorted supplies or put tape on the boxes, you can help. Please pass the word and bring a friend. The more hands, the shorter and more fun, the task."*

Please contact Godwin or Barb Okonkwo for questions or additional information. we'd love to see a good turnout for this event ... (last year we were able to finish sorting and packing by Friday afternoon).

## Habitat for Humanity 2015 House of Faith

### April 10, 11, 17 & 18 Volunteer Days

by Marian Ijzerman

After a bit of a blustery start to our first volunteer day, the weather on the remaining days was picture perfect. Sunny skies brought warm spring temperatures that added to the overall enjoyment of the workday. Working side-by-side with volunteers from First Presbyterian Church, volunteers spent their days working on a variety of projects that included cleaning up yard waste and demolition debris, removing old fencing and exterior siding, replacing rotten house boards, installing windows and blueboard, painting trim and waterproofing basement walls. After a morning of hard work, our volunteers were treated to a delicious lunch prepared by our lunch volunteers. All the day's events were captured in photos courtesy of our photography volunteers. All photos have been posted on the church website. Thank you all for blessing the Walker Family through your gifts of time and talent on the 2015 House of Faith project.

### April 10 Volunteer Team:

**Lunch:** Ann Van Zomeren & Jackie Waldyke

**Labor:** Tom & Claudia Larson, Mike Cuffle, Veena Kulkarni, Trek Ciaravino & Adrienne Madias (friends of Veena)

**Photography:** Dave Cummins



### April 11 Volunteer Team:

**Lunch & Snacks:** Ruth Mieras, Marilyn Cummins & Merling Tsai, Susan Roelofs

**Labor:** Harvey Stob, Al Vegter, Wayne Van Zomeren, Nancy & Joe Skurka (friends of Marian), Larry Van Kirk & Larry's friend Bob

**Photography:** Dave McLaughlin



### April 17 Volunteer Team:

**Lunch:** De Anna Stephenson & Rachel Kim

**Labor:** Mike Cuffle, Roger Verhey, Harvey Stob, Joe Skurka, Jen Boes & Tim Johnson

**Photography:** Muriel Learned



### April 18 Volunteer Team:

**Lunch:** Norma Verhey & Jason Wang

**Labor:** Jim Steenstra, Larry Gruppen, Tom Stermer, Barb Fichtenberg & eight international friends: Zhihai Huang, Na Guo, Liming Ma, Shengchun Zhang, Lin Liu, Jeremy Lu, Da Liu & Shaung Jiang



## Follow Up to Recent Adult Ed Presentations on Aging Gracefully

Below are some interesting and helpful websites for those of you who might want to further explore some of the issues/topics raised in the recent adult ed series on aging gracefully. These are not in any special order:

- **www.drkernisan.net**—Dr Leslie Kernisan is a board certified geriatrician with a special interest in the education and empowerment of those caring for older adults. Many helpful articles available on her website and her blog. (ex. “choosing wisely: 5 treatments you should question)
- **www.nextavenue.org**—PBS sponsored website with articles in wide ranging areas of interest to older adults (ex: [www.nextavenue.org/article/2015-04-4-myths-about-brain-health-and-how-to-stay-sharp](http://www.nextavenue.org/article/2015-04-4-myths-about-brain-health-and-how-to-stay-sharp))
- **www.helpforalzheimersfamilies.com/dementia-support-network**—great resource for those dealing with memory loss in family members, live chat for questions, support for caregivers
- **www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/being-mortal**—an excellent hour long documentary featuring Dr. Atul Gawande, author of Being Mortal, in which Dr Gawande explores the intersection of life, death, medicine and what matters most in the end
- **www.nihseniorhealth.gov**—health and wellness information for older adults from the National Institutes of Health
- **www.livingathomevillage.co**—a grassroots effort to build communities that support aging in place—coming to Ann Arbor/Ypsi summer 2015
- **www.uofmhealth.org/ACE**—Acute Care for Elders (ACE) is an inpatient service dedicated to providing the best possible care for older adults through the University of Michigan and St Joseph Mercy hospitals
- **www.alzheimers.med.umich.edu**
- **www.pbs.org/wgbh/caringformomanddad/**—very good documentary of several families caring for aging parents

Please send to:

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Deadline: the 18th of every month

Sunday Morning Worship Services

8:45 & 11:15 am

