

# ON Broadway

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Newsletter

November 2017

## Worship at AACRC

*Pastor John*

On September 8, 1991, the Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church began to worship in two services—what we now call the 8:45 and the 11:15 services. In the late 1980's and early 1990's the Christian Reformed Church was heavily influenced by Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. Money was made available to churches to send a team of members to Willow Creek to observe and learn and then come home to implement in each individual church's own unique way the principles of having a "seeker service." A seeker service was a service leaning heavily in the direction of making the worship service easily accessible to people who had never or had not for a long time, attended a worship service. The ultimate goal was to bring people to Jesus and have them become disciples of Jesus. That emphasis can be found in the notes from Pastor John Suk, which we've reprinted below.

We note what Pastor Suk wrote because much of his encouragement then can be applied to our current situation as we enter a reset year, a year in which we will worship weekly in one service.

### **From the Pastor's Corner: Big Changes Are In the Wind!**

On September 8 our congregation is in for a jolt! Different worship times! Different kinds of worship services! Different people in church with us! It will be a whirlwind, exciting time. How are we going to grow through it? I have a few suggestions.

**First:** We need to remember why we agreed to move ahead with having a second, different service. It had to do with more than a full sanctuary. It has to do with mission. When we decided to go with a second, different service, we committed to reaching out to new people as well. Our hope is that with two different worship services we will expand with potential number of people who would be interested in attending one of our worship services. Keeping the big picture clearly before us will help us to overcome what tendencies to have to major in minor inconveniences.

**Second:** We need to commit ourselves to accepting these inconveniences with a gracious spirit. without grumbling. "Be patient, therefore, beloved ... do not grumble against one another so that you may not be judged" (James 5:7,9). Many, many people worked hard and long to prepare for our move to a busier, fuller Sunday morning at our church. Let's do everything we can to encourage them. "Therefore encourage one another and building each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11).

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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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**Three:** Make suggestions. Your ideas and insights are valuable. If you see something that could be done better, and especially, if you're willing to help our congregation do it better, tell us and help us.

**Four:** We need a sense of humor. The changes will go over much better if we can laugh about some of the inevitable snafus that we're going to face. When the apostle Paul said that we should rejoice in the Lord, he wasn't talking only about being able to rejoice even in the most difficult of times- Paul was talking about rejoicing always.

**Five:** Pray. For visitors. For members in our church willing to reach out to them with hospitality. For all those musicians and singers at both services who have invested much time and effort in order to present to God a sacrifice of praise. For the pastors who desire to reach newcomers with the word in a compelling manner. For the Spirit to be present, opening hearts.

**Six:** Be prepared to work at worship. Worship doesn't happen simply because the right tunes are being played or because church was full or because the minister was engaging. Worship happens when you, personally, commit yourself to do the work that is required to bring a precious offering to God. "I will not offer to God a sacrifice that cost me nothing," King David once said. If you come to worship prepared to work for God's sake, God will make sure, in turn, that his Spirit will work true praise in you.

Exciting times are just around the corner for our church. Let's grow together through it, and praise God on account of it.

Pastor Suk

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## Grazing Peacefully

*Anita Beem  
North Hills CRC, Troy, MI*

On our recent visit to the Emerald Isle, we saw hundreds of rock walls throughout the country breaking up the deep green pastures on the hillsides. Within those rock walls were often hundreds of cattle – but even more woolly sheep, always grazing peacefully in green pastures – thousands of them. I found it impossible to see these idyllic scenes without remembering that God "owns the cattle on a thousand hills," and He graciously provides for them all.

Maybe because we don't often see pastures with grazing sheep in Michigan, the Irish pastures filled with thousands of sheep really made an impact on me. There were so many sheep, and all of them grazed peacefully day after day, even in the daily sporadic rain showers. Of course, Scripture came to mind about sheep too. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures" (Psalm 23:1-2). Or from John, "I [Jesus] am the gate for the sheep....whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture" (10:7, 9). Whether they were eating or resting, the sheep we saw were peacefully enjoying the pastures– including the couple of lambs playfully romping with each other one day. What a picture!

Of course, we know that we are called the sheep Jesus shepherds. We are the sheep He brings to quiet pastures and allows to feed on all He provides for us. As the farmer leads his sheep from one pasture to another, so Jesus leads us if we will follow. As ridiculous as it would be for a sheep to choose not to enter the pasture which is ripe for grazing, so it would be for us to ignore the peaceful pastures Jesus offers to us.

But what are those pastures into which Jesus leads us? Life in them sounds so peaceful. And yet we know well that life for Jesus' sheep can be quite chaotic and full of upheavals and disappointments. What does it mean, then, to be in the pasture that Jesus owns when you get a diagnosis you don't like or your child acts out or your job is disheartening or family relationships are strained or you face criticism, and so on?

The John passage makes it clear that Jesus Himself is the answer to all these questions. Get to know and trust Jesus, following His leading into His pastures, and His pastures will bring all that His sheep need to endure life and its uncertainties. As simplistic as it sounds, even during the rains, peaceful grazing is possible through Jesus – through Him alone. Hopefully you have experienced and know this yourself at heart level and understand something of what this all means. If not yet, remember that His pastures are always ready. He opens the gate.



## Children and Worship at Glacier Hills

Mary Admiraal

On a crisp, fall Sunday morning, the children that attend our regular Sunday school ministry went off site to lead worship at Glacier Hills Senior Living Community in Ann Arbor. They were supported by their music directors, teachers, parents, friends of the Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church faith community, and the senior residents.

During the worship service, the participants read responsively a poem, *How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts?* The words reminded them that God's Word is truth, a guide from age to age everlasting. Then the children sang familiar Scriptures set to music reminding us of God's love, God's protection, and God's goodness. Using music and art, each class had an opportunity to practice the "holy habit" of sharing the scriptures they have studied while attending Sunday School over the last six weeks. Our very own Don Postema led us in hymns of the faith that tells us about the Scriptures as "Wonderful Words of Life" and a sure foundation that bids us to tell the "Old, Old Story of Jesus and His Love" with boldness. Our time of worship ended with a prayer to help us put God's word in a place of importance on our journeys of faith and help us strive to understand God's Word better.

It was a joy to see children in worship. The Ann Arbor faith community and Glacier Hills residents were blessed by their expressions of thanksgiving, hope, and joy.



## On a Children's Disaster Services Mission

Jack & Gladys Thonus  
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In

middle of September we packed our suitcases to be ready to deploy. We received "the call" on Thursday, September 14 at 9:00 PM. Working via telephone and computer final details were completed and we got to bed at 2:00 AM. Our 8:30 AM flight from Detroit Metro to Orlando went well. Upon arrival we were taken to a Red Cross in-processing center. We slept in a nearby hotel filled with displaced persons and their numerous dogs. And so the adventure began! We were sent to a Red Cross shelter set up in a community center in Estero, just south of Fort Myers. Here we joined a CDS team that had deployed prior to Erma arriving in Florida. Our first week we were blessed with wonderful housing – a beautiful home owned by a gentleman from Canada. 5 of our team completed their 2 week mission and a new team arrived and they had already made new housing arrangements. Jack and I also had other housing arrangements – local residents offered their "grandmother suite" at their home in a gated community. We did get one day off from our 2 week mission. What were our days like? We were provided a very spacious room at the community center. Various toys were set around in several play centers and we had a reading center. The goal is to help children adjust to the disaster through play. We even had a rocking chair donated from a local source. Jack was the "check-in man", Mr. T. Parents signed the children in and out. The parents and children also were given matching "bracelets." It was a blessing to see the tension in the parent's eyes disappear when they saw how happy their children were, going to "their room."

Children's Disaster Services is a ministry of the Church of the Brethren. We initially got involved with CDS when Gladys followed up on a notice from World Renew (then CRWRC) that training was open to people from other denominations. It is now open to anyone, 18 years of age or older, who is willing to be trained and adhere to the standards. As we got closer to retirement Gladys needed to get re-certified. Jack decided to get certified so that we can volunteer together.

CDS also provides service at FEMA Resource Centers. The FEMA centers are set up to give displaced persons an opportunity to meet with representatives from various government and non-government agencies which could provide assistance to people to re-establish their lives. Since parents often bring their children along when visiting these FEMA centers, CDS is there to provide childcare while the parents meet with agency representatives.

CDS provides its own materials to operate these childcare centers. Every team that is sent has a Kit of Comfort which includes games, toys, books and other materials for the children. We now have a kit which can be shipped out to wherever it is needed even if we do not deploy ourselves.

If anyone is interested in becoming a part of this ministry there is a workshop scheduled to be held in Northville, November 10 & 11, at Ward Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Please contact Gladys or Jack for more information.



## The Story of Stephen Ministry

*Marian Ijzerman*



Stephen Ministry—where did it all begin? It dates back to 1974 when Kenneth C. Haugk, a pastor and clinical psychologist was pastor of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri. Fresh out of seminary, his strengths and heart were in caregiving ministry, and he was looking forward to making a positive impact on his congregation and community by providing pastoral care to all those experiencing divorce, grief, hospitalization, discouragement, and other life difficulties.

Very quickly, though, he found that the needs for care by far exceeded that which he alone could provide. He faced one of a pastor's greatest frustrations: seeing people slipping through the cracks because their urgent needs were going unmet. In November 1974, he discussed the situation with two seminary friends over a cup of coffee. The conversation turned to Ephesians 4 and "equipping the saints for the work of the ministry." Haugk realized that God didn't intend for pastors to monopolize ministry. Rather, God gave all his people gifts for ministry and one of

his roles as pastor was to equip others to use their gifts in ministry.

Haugk returned to St. Stephen's with a plan. In the coming months he recruited nine laypeople who had the gifts and heart to do caring ministry. He then used his combined backgrounds in theology and psychology to develop a training program in Christian caregiving. By March 1975 the nine were commissioned as "Stephen Ministers." Their first care receivers included a widower, a blind person, a young woman with cancer, a truck driver forced to retire early, and an inactive member struggling with faith issues.

The impact was immediate. People began receiving the focused Christian care they needed. Fewer people were slipping through the cracks, and Haugk found he had more time to perform his other pastoral duties. The Stephen Ministers were surprised by the spiritual growth they encountered as they saw God working through them to bring love and healing to others.

The story would have ended there, had not two of the Stephen Ministers cornered Haugk on a hot May morning after worship services. "This is good stuff," they said to him. "We're not going to let you go until you promise to bring this ministry to other churches!" Still wearing his vestments and perspiring from the heat, Haugk gave in and agreed to find a way to bring Stephen Ministry to other churches.

In November 1975 Haugk and his wife, Joan, founded the not-for-profit Stephen Ministries organization and began bringing Stephen Ministry to other congregations. It spread like wildfire. Ann Arbor CRC is one of more than 12,000 congregations from more than 170 Christian denominations across the U.S., Canada and 29 other counties that now have a Stephen Ministry. More than 600,000 laypeople have received Stephen Ministry training. More than one-and-a-half million people have had a Stephen Minister to walk with them, providing one-to-one Christian care during tough times. And that is the mark of God's doing, because finally the story of Stephen Ministry is a million stories and more of caring ministry.

## Washtenaw/Ann Arbor 2017 CROP Hunger Walk

*Barbara Fichtenberg*

On Sunday, October 15, Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice hosted the 43rd annual Washtenaw/Ann Arbor CROP Hunger Walk. ICPJ has managed this historic walk since 1975 and has raised a total of \$3.2 million.

CROP Hunger Walks are community-wide events sponsored by Church World Service and organized by religious groups, businesses, schools and others to raise funds to end hunger in the U.S. and around the world. More than 1,600 walks take place across the U.S. annually.

Seventy-five percent of funds raised will be granted to Church World Service and their partner agencies while the remaining twenty-five percent will be granted to various local hunger and poverty relief organizations. This year's recipient agencies include: Avalon Housing, Community Action Network, Emmanuel House, Growing Hope, Hope Clinic, Packard Health, SOS Community Services, and St. Andrew's Breakfast Program.

We had 26 walkers from AACRC this year, who braved the unpredictable, windy weather to walk either a 1 mile or a 5 mile route. We were blessed to see the sun peek out during our walk and never needed our umbrellas! You can see our walkers in the photo below (minus the Schult family). We are so thankful to our sponsors. Together, our AACRC team raised over \$3,000, which surpasses our \$2,500 from last year. Kudos to Jim and Lillian Kuiper who have walked in 42 of the 43 walks!

