Heritage Sunday - September 18
175 Years of Faithful Service to Christ and Community

Grand Rapids was a small frontier village when twenty-two adults and a few children gathered at the home of Myron and Emily Hinsdill for a Sunday evening worship service on September 18, 1836. As they sat around the room on wooden benches, little did they know that the community of faith they were birthing would become such an important community to a small village that would become the largest city in West Michigan.

From obscure part-time pastors to notable clergy; from a small wooden framed church to a modified Gothic cathedral; from 22 members to well over 2,000 members; from one Congregational Church to nine Congregational Churches (having birthed every Congregational Church in Grand Rapids); from unity through division; from the Civil War to the War on Terror; from frontier times to the turbulent sixties to the age of mind-boggling technological advances; Park Church has survived and in many ways thrived.

Our past is a rich and glorious past. Park Church grew up with the city of Grand Rapids. In fact, in a number of important ways, Park Church helped shape the city of Grand Rapids. From Blodgett Hospital to the YMCA; from Pilgrim Manor Retirement Community to United Church Outreach Ministries; from Saturday Community Breakfasts to an impressive relationship with Palmer Elementary School; Park’s history is one of great success for kingdom building.

As we celebrate the past, though, several important questions come to mind: What about the present and future? How will God use this community of faith in the twenty-first century and beyond? Will the current and future members and friends of Park Church remain committed to their faith and to the Gospel’s call for love and justice? Will we continue to widen our welcome and truly become a metropolitan church?

One hundred seventy-five years of faithful service to Christ and community. May God give us the wisdom, courage, love, and faith to build on the past as we build for the future!

On the journey with you,
Rev. Petty
Upcoming Worship Services
The newly created Worship Planning Task Force made up of church members and staff is busy planning worship services for the Fall. This year, most Sundays will have a particular "theme." Here's a glance at upcoming worship services:

Sunday, October 2 - World Communion Sunday
Worship will feature an anthem by the Chancel Choir entitled, "Song of Unity" as well as two short choral pieces utilizing two Hebrew prayers that are chanted every Shabbat in blessing the Challah and the Wine. During Communion, the Chancel Choir, accompanied by acoustic guitar, will sing, "When the Poor Ones." Sanctuary Communion will be served by intinction. Allinder Ten will decorate the Altar.

Sunday, October 9 - Native American Sunday
Guest Preacher, Keith Titus
Worship will feature native drum, cedar and silver flutes, an Anthem by the Parkmeisters entitled “Morning Song” (in ancient Teknahannahmah, incorporating “Amazing Grace” in Cherokee), and an Offertory by the Chancel Choir entitled, “All Things Are Connected.” The liturgy will include Native American prayers and the sermon will present wisdom from Native American spirituality.

Sunday, October 16 - Gospel Sunday
Worship will feature the Chancel Choir singing a rousing anthem entitled, “He Never Failed Me Yet.” The choir will also sing an old favorite, “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” that includes an amazing piano accompaniment.

Sunday, October 23 - Mission Sunday
This worship service will spotlight some of our significant mission partners and will challenge us to continue our great tradition of being a “public church” – a church committed to love and justice in real, practical ways. We hope that some of our current mission partners will set up displays in Merriam Hall following worship.

Sunday, October 30 - Reformation Sunday
Reformation Sunday gives us the chance to celebrate the birth of our Protestant faith – not because it brought about a division within Christianity but because it allowed for new expressions of faith within Christianity. Reformation Sunday will feature a sermon about the church that is always reforming and Martin Luther’s great hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.”

Sunday, November 6 - All Saints Sunday
All Saints Sunday will feature a roll call of names as we remember Park Church members who passed from this life to life eternal and friends and family members outside the church who passed away over the years who folks would like to remember. A beautiful liturgy, music, and Sanctuary Communion will also be part of our worship experience. The new Chamber Choir along with the Chancel Choir will lead us with song.
The Congregationalist

Mid-Week @ Park

The Fall schedule is as follows:

- Dinner - 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. (Merriam Hall)
- Parkmeisters - 6:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. (Choir Room)
- Adult Christian Education - 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Spindler Dining Room)
- God Talk - 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Martenson Parlor)

Upcoming Adult Christian Education opportunities on Wednesday night:

**Bible Study - The Book of Romans**

*Instructor: The Rev. Dr. Scott Luthy*

The book of Romans is an extraordinary and eloquent masterpiece in theology. It was the first comprehensive theology of the young church. It was written before the gospels, and every other New Testament book in some way has to deal with Paul’s theology. Paul’s views on grace and the law were the foundation stones for the reformation. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin would later say that Romans changed their lives.

We will spend seven weeks exploring the book of Romans and rediscovering the historical Paul, the one credited with having made Christianity a world religion. Today there are some 2 billion Christians in the world. Although they are divided into 33,000 denominations, all use Paul and portions of Romans to build their theological constructs. Romans has been used and abused. Often Paul has been misunderstood. We hope to explore this book in-depth, and gain a deeper understanding of Paul’s radical grace in Jesus Christ.

9/14/11 I Introduction to Paul
- Chapter 1:1-17

9/21/11 II The wrath of God on Jews, Gentiles, and All
- Chapters 1:18 - 3:20

9/28/11 III The righteousness of God apart from the law, through faith.
- Chapters 3:21 - 4:25

10/5/11 IV Righteousness and conformity to Christ
- Chapters 5:1 - 8:39

10/12/11 V God’s righteousness in Israel’s history
- Chapters 9:1 - 11:36

10/19/11 VI The shape of righteousness
- Chapters 12:1 - 15:13

10/25/11 VII The reason and occasion for the letter and conclusion with greetings.
- Chapters 15:14 - 16

**God Talk on Wednesday Nights**

*Facilitator: The Rev. Kyle Carnes*

God Talk is a relational, conversation-based space for those intellectually and faithfully curious about our Christian faith. Each gathering utilizes a different set of resources whether they are written or spoken, digital or analog, secular or faith-based, all to create a theological conversation that is relevant to our personal and collective experiences today. Each week can stand alone from the weeks around it. You can come to one and not feel like you’re lost because you missed the previous week. You might have missed out, but you won’t have missed the point. The point is to study and discover what faithful living looks like in this time and place. We want you to be a part of it. Just show up!

God Talk will begin by utilizing Brian McLaren’s book, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that are Transforming the Faith*. Books are $10.00 and may be picked up at the church office. It is also available for download to your Kindle for $9.99!


**Church History - The Reformation**

*Instructor: The Rev. Todd Petty*

November 2, 9, 16

Immediately following Reformation Sunday (October 26), this three-part Church History Series on The Reformation will examine some of the tensions that existed in the church that led Martin Luther to write and then nail to the door of The Castle Church at Wittenberg his Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences (1517). This series will also highlight some of the reformation trends outside of Germany, namely in Switzerland (under the influence of John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli) and England (under the influence of the Puritan Movement - a rich part of our Congregational heritage).

**Bible Study - The Book of Colossians**

*Instructor: The Rev. Maurice Fetty*

November 30 and December 7, 14, 21

Join Rev. Fetty as he examines various Advent-like texts from Colossians. Rev. Fetty will offer this Bible Study on the following Sunday mornings, too: November 27 and December 4, 11, 18.

**A Faith Journey Continues**

The updated history of Park Church documenting the last twenty-five years, written by Debra Moore, local historian, is nearing completion. For almost a year, church staff and leaders from all ministry teams have played an active role in the telling of this story, and we are eagerly anticipating its publication.

We hope to have it ready for sale in the near future. A limited number of copies will be printed, so you will want to get your order in early. Price and ordering information will follow.

~~~ Your Anniversary Committee
The Congregationalist

Lection Reflection

Readings for September 18 (175th anniversary):
Exodus 16:2-15; Psalm 105:1-6; Philippians 2:1-30; Matthew 20:1-16

Readings for September 25 (15th Sunday after Pentecost):
Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32

The epistle readings for the last two weeks in September are both from Philippians. Rather than discussing either of the passages in depth I would like to take this opportunity to talk about Paul and his letters and to discuss the nature of New Testament epistles in general.

The earliest information that we have about Paul in Acts refers to him by his given name Saul. Saul was born in Tarsus in Asia Minor, the present-day Turkey. Saul was born a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin. By his own description early in the first chapter of Philippians, he was circumcised on the eighth day, as was expected of observant Jews. As an adult he was a Pharisee and an eager persecutor of the upstart sect of Christians. At some point not too long after the crucifixion and the resurrection, Paul was traveling to Damascus and had an encounter with the risen Christ. He was struck blind and dumb by this event. His companions took care of him for three days after which he recovered his senses and emerged a very altered man.

Whereas his tenacious personality had been dedicated to the defense of Judaism, he became early Christianity’s greatest and most prolific apologist. He traveled missionary journeys throughout much of the known world, founding churches and encouraging his fellow Jews to accept Jesus as the Messiah. As time went on he expanded his efforts to include the Gentiles.

There are 21 epistles in the New Testament, 13 of them written by or attributed to Paul. Of the letters that are attributed to Paul, seven are assumed to have been actually written by him. The tradition in the first century was for disciples of a well-known figure to write in the name of that person. For a long time it was assumed that the Greek language in which the New Testament is written was a kind of specialized, holy language reserved for use in works of theology. The finding of a large number of writings of common events, such as personal and business letters, revealed that the New Testament writings were in the same style and the same language as these every day documents. The Greek used is called koine Greek. That means common Greek. The style of Paul’s writings also follow the common pattern of the letters of that time. Usually he starts off with a blessing, most commonly, “Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is usually followed by a greeting from Paul and naming of the recipients of the letter. Often he follows this with a statement of gratitude to God for the church in this particular place. The letter may include personal greetings to people he knows in that place. If the church to which he is writing is having problems, he will deal at length with suggestions about the problems. Taken together the letters form a picture of life in the early church and give us much information about Christian theology. Paul ended his letters with further words of blessing and often included information about pending visits to the church by Paul or his disciples.

Prayer: To our God and Father the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

--- C. S. Lewis

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Music at Mid-day Fall Schedule

Sept. 20 - Jim Metzler, organ
Sept. 27 - Jeff Dwarschuis, classical guitar
Oct. 4 - Mark Loring, organ
Oct. 11 - Mark Kahny, piano
Oct. 18 - Chris Dekker, organ
Oct. 25 - Deborah Wyndham, piano
Nov. 1 - Jeffrey Roland, organ
Nov. 8 - Phil Fletcher, piano
Nov. 15 - Helen Hawley, organ
Nov. 22 – ma non troppo (instrumental trio)
Nov. 29 – Peter Kurdziel, organ
Dec. 6 – Grand Rapids Christian High School Chamber Chorale
Dec. 13 – East Grand Rapids High School Madrigal Choir
Dec. 20 – Phyllis Miner, harp; Carol McNally, organ

NEW DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN’S MINISTRY HIRED!

Dear Church Family,

As vice-moderator it is my pleasure to announce that the Personnel Committee, with the approval of the Trustees, have hired Gloria Eckert as our part-time Director of Children’s Ministry. Gloria will begin with us on September 6th. Below is a summary of Gloria’s responsibilities:

- Oversee and manage the Christian Education program for children (birth to grade five), helping them and adult lay volunteers develop a genuine and lasting relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- Coordinate and communicate Christian Education program with other staff and lay leaders.
- Facilitate meaningful relationships between our children and adult professional and lay educators/leaders.
- Recruit, train, equip, and empower adult lay volunteers in the Nursery, Toddler Room, and Worship Centers.
- Prepare all classrooms and curriculum as needed.
- Order supplies as needed within budget.
- In conjunction with the Church Office, help maintain an up-to-date data base of names, addresses, and phone numbers for children, adult lay volunteers, and parents.
- Develop effective communication programs for children, adult lay volunteers, and the congregation.
- Attend necessary workshops, etc. for continuing education purposes as time and resources allow.
- Attend weekly staff meetings.

Please welcome Gloria when you see her and let’s make this a great year for our children.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

- Paul Kelly, Vice Moderator

New Director of Children’s Ministry Hired!
Read It Again, Sam!

This area is reserved for changes or updates in material previously published in the Congregationalist. Some material will be repeated either in part or in its entirety due to its importance in the life of the church.

Are You Having Fun Yet?

Do you know that there is a group of Red Hatters at Park? Red Hats at Park is open to women 50 years of age and up who like to have fun and wear purple clothes and red hats; OR, if not yet 50 and would like to join in the fun, you wear lavender and a pink hat. It is not necessary to be a member of Park to join in with us even though most of us are members of Park. If you would like more information, or would like to have your name added to our e-mail/snail mail list send your information to Gail Bickel at gaillyturn@sbcglobal.net or call me at 243-4183 or see me at church.

Our next event will be on Wednesday, September 21, when we will be carpooling from the church parking lot to go to the Bear Lake Inn in Muskegon for lunch and then to downtown Muskegon for a tour of the Historic Hackley and Hume homes. Please contact me if you are interested or would like more information.

FLU SHOT CLINIC

Flu Shots will again be available to our church members and friends on Sunday, October 2, before and after worship. Both the spray mist and injection form of the vaccine will be available. We will provide information regarding cost and exact times for the clinic in the following weeks. See Mary Heth if you have questions, or you may call her at 443-5820. Please call the church office if you wish to receive the vaccine. We need to have an approximate number for the clinic.

Pilgrim Manor Gala

This year’s Annual Gala will once again be held at Noto’s Old World Italian Dining, 6600 - 28th Street SE on Thursday, October 20, 2011 beginning at 5:30 p.m. Park Church is a proud “Underwriter” sponsor. If you would like to attend this year’s Gala and support a wonderful event that raises money for “Compassionate Care” (a fund designed to help Pilgrim Manor residents who have depleted their own financial resources), please call Pilgrim Manor directly at 458.1133. Tickets are $75 per person. All proceeds from the dinner, raffle, and silent auction benefit “Compassionate Care.” Hope to see you there!

MATERIAL AID LUNCHEON SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 12

The Annual Material Aid Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, October 12 at 12:00 PM. Reservations need to be in to the church office by Monday, October 10. The cost of the luncheon is $6.00. The program this year will be Dr. David Kutsche speaking on his experiences during a medical mission trip to the small mountain town of Sequin, Haiti. Please bring a wrapped gift for assembling school or health kits. Cash gifts are also needed for shipping the goods to Church World Service or to buy any missing items that should go in the kits.

Some of the most-needed items include:
• 12 inch metric rulers
• 70-count spiral notebooks
• blunt scissors
• boxes of 24 crayons
• hand-held pencil sharpeners
• hand towels (approx. size 16” x 28”)
• wide-toothed combs
• nail clippers
• bath-size bar soap
• toothbrushes and diapers

Your gifts of supplies for the school or health kits or a cash contribution will enable us to provide assistance to Church World Service.

“Who can separate his faith from his actions, or his belief from his occupations? Who can spread his heart before him saying, ‘This for God and this for myself, this for my soul, and this other for my body?’ All your hours are wings that beat through space from self to self. He who wears his morality but as his best garment were better naked.”

—Kahlil Gibran
A Response to Homelessness; GRACE’s Congregational Partnership Program

Walking with an individual or family through the Congregational Partnership Program is one way a Park Church member can help end homelessness in Kent County.

The program, managed by GRACE, supports the Coalition to End Homelessness, a community collaborative implementing Kent County’s 10-year Vision to End Homelessness.

The major emphasis is keeping people in housing instead of managing homelessness by sending people to shelters. Its focus is on rental housing, not home ownership.

Homelessness should not have to be a way of life for anyone in our community and, more importantly, people are actively seeking assistance with housing.

Of the thousands of Kent County households assessed for this program in 2009, only 18 percent required immediate shelter - the vast majority actually needed assistance with finding or maintaining affordable housing.

As a Park Church participant, you can join a small team being trained to meet need and prevent homelessness, one partnership at a time.

Learn more about how to become a partner. Contact members of the Mission Leadership Team (Colleen Czarnecki, Bill Streeter, Doug Rubingh & Sandra Davis) or the church office staff.

In Our Prayers

Ted Baehler, Charlie Barthel, Ellen Bristol’s mother Faye Bristol, Gloria Broadbent, Stan Davis, Mary Jane Franklin, Pat Glaza, Amy Lodenstein, Carolyn Reifinger, Jo-an Riegling, Judy Smith, Chuck and Sally Wilson, Tom Wilson, Sally Wood, Miriam Vanderwal and Val VanZomeren.

Fast Forward to These Dates

- **Wednesday, September 21, 2011** - ArtPrize Begins!
- **Sunday, October 2, 2011** - World Communion Sunday
  
  A creative and inspiring celebration of communion with our family and the family of faith around the world.

- **Sunday, October 9** - Native American Sunday
  
  The Rev. Keith Titus will be our guest speaker as we use Native American spirituality and music to draw us closer to the Creator of all.

- **Thursday, October 20** - Pilgrim Manor Gala

- **Sunday, November 6** - All Saints Celebration

- **Sunday, November 13** - Stewardship Sunday

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!
**Full-Time Staff**
The Rev. Mr. Todd A. Petty, Senior Minister (ext. 11) - tpetty@parkchurchgr.org
The Rev. Mr. Kyle A. Carnes, Associate Minister (ext. 12) - kcarnes@parkchurchgr.org
Gene Gess, Business Manager (ext. 13) - ggess@parkchurchgr.org
Lisa Smith, Administrative Assistant (ext. 18) - lsmith@parkchurchgr.org
John Ott, Custodian and Food Service (ext. 26) - custodians@parkchurchgr.org

**Part-Time Staff**
Philip W. Pletcher, Director of Music (ext. 29) - ppletcher@parkchurchgr.org
James R. Metzler, Organist & Associate Director of Music (ext. 24) - jmetzler@parkchurchgr.org
Gloria Eckert, Director of Children’s Ministries (ext. 14) - geckert@parkchurchgr.org
Carol McNally, Music Associate - Assistant Organist and Organ Scholar
Cheryl Wells, Music Assoc. - Director of Carol Choir
Mandy York, Music Assoc. - Director of Park Singers
Marty Butler, Program Staff Assistant - mbutler@parkchurchgr.org
Delores Davis, Custodian and Food Service
Mark Kelly, Custodian
Rachel Creamer, Custodian

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