New Consecration Sunday is coming soon! Please mark your calendars for a time of teaching, praying, and stewardship. New Consecration Sunday (NCS) is a stewardship program that teaches giving as a spiritual discipline. Spiritual Disciplines deepen our relationship with God and helps us to realize that giving is a blessing that returns to us more than we can imagine.

"Honor the Lord from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine."

Proverbs 3:9,10

August 20th will be our kick-off Sunday with teaching and a testimony about giving as being transformational.

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The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

**(John 2:20-22)**

**Spotlight on Missions**

The August Spotlight on Missions is ‘Stand Down for Homeless Veterans’. This event helps provide homeless veterans with medical and dental checkups, access to showers, haircuts, food, clothing, shoes, and blankets. Homeless veterans are also invited to sleep over at this event. It’s an event where veterans can have contact with agencies such as Veterans Administration, Social Security, Legal Aid and many others. Usually, the time between setting up an appointment and actually meeting with an agency can be six to eight months; at the Stand Down, veterans can get appointments set up and even talk to someone about services that same day. A representative from Stand Down will speak at worship on August 13 to give us more information about this event.

During the month of August, we will also have a collection box in the narthex for items that can be distributed to veterans at the Stand Down. There will be a list of needed items located by the collection box. Thank you for any donation you can make to help our homeless veterans.

**NOW initiative**

Mark your calendars now & be watching for more information to come soon!
Yarn Ministry

We are in need of knitters or crocheters. Lessons and yarn are available. There is currently a need for us to make hats for Vets and scarves and hats for children. We currently meet the 3rd Monday of every month at 10 a.m., but we could change the date or times. Please call Pat Montieth at 309-523-2427 if interested, or if you have any questions.

Announcements

- **Discipleship Group** Both Sunday morning discipleship groups, adult’s and children’s, will continue to meet through August at 9:15 a.m.. Fall Children and Youth Discipleship Group Kick Off will be **Sunday September 9th**.
- Have a student (in 7th-12th grade) who is ready to dig deeper in their faith, learn more about the United Methodist Church, make a profession of faith and become a member of PB First UMC? Let Pastor Jim or Pastor Becky know! Confirmation class will be starting in the fall! More information coming soon!
- **Christmas Traditions** needs homes for the Home Tours, and is also looking for one or two people to take responsibility for the Home Tours. Please also keep in mind articles that can be donated for the Silent Auction.

Upcoming Events

- **Sunday, August 13th**
  Have your children bring your backpacks to worship on Sunday August 13th during worship so we can pray them up for the new school year.
- **Sunday, August 20th**
  Join us for a Pancake breakfast before worship. Donations collected will go toward the 2018 Youth Summer Mission Trip.
Periodically while preaching you will hear me say that a particular phrase in the bible is a “life changer”. When I use that phrase it is not flippant, melodramatic, or a generalization. For instance, in Genesis 3:9 God asks the question “where are you?”. In John 5:6 Jesus asks “Do you want to be made well?”. I’ll end with this last reference (although the list is much longer) because it is the crux of this writing. In Luke 7:44, Jesus asks his dinner host “do you see this woman?”. First let me give you some contextual framework. In Jesus’ day, there were certain people who were “unseen”. Woman, children, and slaves were considered to be unseen people, without status or class. In the social structure of the day they were invisible. Yet, when the disciples were arguing on the road about who would have the seat of importance in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” (Mark 9:35 NRSV).

So if current Jewish culture saw woman, children and slaves as the unseen or “the last”, why was Jesus saying that in the kingdom of God they were to be considered “the first”? One reason was because Jesus had a heart for the unseen. But even more important than that was because the scriptural teaching said they were to be cared for and watched over, not discarded or cast aside. No wonder the Jewish leaders saw Jesus as such a threat. They had created a culture that had elevated the leaders to a privileged status. Rather than teach the Law that was written by those who had come before them, they were creating a new set of laws that had no grounding in their faith tradition. So what conditions created this ungodly cultural norm?

For one, there was no accountability. None of the Jewish leaders that we know of were lifting up sound biblical teaching. It’s very easy just to leave out certain details that don’t support your behavior. After all, who was going to know and if they did know they probably weren’t strong enough to challenge you. Everyone else is doing it so why shouldn’t I do it as well.

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Another reason and the one I want to focus in on is that one a path is established it is very hard to get off. I can recall the sign on the unpaved road that said, “Be sure to choose your rut wisely. You will be in it for the next 100 miles”. My heart tells me that most of these Jewish leaders probably started out with the best of intentions to teach God’s Law and follow his decrees. But as time went on they drifted off God’s path until what they were doing had nothing to do with God and everything to do with themselves. And who ends up suffering and getting hurt? It’s the last; the unseen, the invisible.

Three books that I’ve read lately speak to this very issues yet the outcome is very different than the one I’ve addressed. The books are *Irresistible Revolution* by Shane Claiborne, *With Head and Heart* by Dr. Howard Thurman, and *God’s Economy* by Jonathon Wilson Hartgrove. Each one of these writers tripped over or saw in their path to institutionalized church work destitute people. They were homeless, hungry, sick people who had become the unseen of our culture. Rather than stepping over, around, or moving to the other side of the street they engaged the people they saw and not just momentarily but every day.

Is this your story? Do you see the unseen? Everything in scripture points to the fact that we must, for therein lies the kingdom of God.

17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’ ” 20 He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” 21 Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

(Mark 10:17-21)
Church Family Special Days

Birthdays

1 – Lauren Johnson  
3 – Izzy Tegeler  
(Happy 11th)  
3 – Janet Price  
6 – LaRay Smith  
10 – Henry Johnson  
11 – Elizabeth Paxton  
12 – Kenny Houzenga

13 – Michelle Simms  
14 – Dee Mitton  
15 – Kay Basham  
16 – Sandy Dopler  
17 – Melissa Battern  
20 – Phil Foster  
31 – Bev Smith  
31 – Kyle Stuart

Anniversaries

18 – Lon & Jan Chaney 24 – Pastor Don & Carol Robinson
21 – Jeff & Deb Reig 25 – Dan & Nadine Priebe
22 – Kevin & Myndi O’Shea 30 – Dan & Shelley Vermeulen

Bookworm Club

Aug. 10- “Standing in the Rainbow”  
By Fannie Flagg
Sept. 14 -“My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She is Sorry” by Fredrik Backman
Oct. 9- “Same Kind of Different as Me” by Ron Hall & Denver Moore
Meetings are 2nd Mon. 1pm, Church Lounge. All are Welcome!
This mission team had a great experience serving, learning, and loving others in the Superior, Wisconsin community. THANK YOU for your prayers and financial support. We are excited to share more about our experience during worship soon.

Fall Bible Studies

Start planning now to deepen and strengthen your relationship with God through studying the Bible and faith issues with a small group.

We’ll be offering

Disciple II (for those that have completed Disciple 1)
Sticky Faith (5 sessions, for parents)
Christianity and World Religions (8 sessions)
And the Wednesday morning study will continue.
The Wednesday night youth ministry at Port Byron First UMC has ended. For the month of August leaders will be praying and preparing for a NEW youth ministry called GROW that will launch Wednesday, September 6th. GROW will be a ministry that focuses on giving middle and high school youth a place to Gather to form Relationships with each other, ministry leaders and Jesus.

In addition to building Relationships, GROW will give youth an opportunity to be more intentional about Outreach in the community and beyond and Worship. Please be in prayer for the leadership that we may be used in mighty ways by God to show youth the love and grace of Jesus. Pray that lives will be transformed and that youth will be eager to shine the light of Jesus in this community and in their schools and that they will rise up as leaders for the Church.

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Fall Mission Trip

Sept 23, (or possibly 24)-Sept 30, 2017
Baton Rouge, LA flood repair
Over 60,000 homes in East Baton Rouge Parish flooding in 2016. There are many elderly and disabled persons who need our help to get their homes repaired.
Cost: $250-300
Please let Pastor Kathy know if you are interested!

50 Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split.  
(Matthew 27: 50,51)
United Methodist Women

There is a Mini-Mission Study Day at Geneseo 1st UMC on Saturday, August 19. The topic is Missionary Conferences of the United Methodist Church in the United States. Fellowship begins at 8:30. Lunch is $10. Reservations must be in by August 14 to Jan Corsaro 309-944-7238. It is so nice when district events are so close to home. Let's have a carload attending! If you have questions, call Nancy 523-2151.
The next meeting is Thursday, August 24, at 1:30 at the church. Pastor Kathy is giving the lesson. As always, all women of the church are invited to join us.

New Thermostats

You may have noticed by now that there are new thermostats in the church. Because of the increase in our utilities costs, the Board of Trustees have decided to install new wireless thermostats. These thermostats will be preset to come on during times when the building is being used and will be set to a specific temperature. Our hope is that with these new thermostats we can lower our monthly utility bills which have been rising steadily over the past months. The thermostats will be locked out so it will be important to make sure the office is aware of any meetings being held at the church. Each week the thermostats will be programmed for the scheduled meetings listed on the calendar. The advantage to a wireless thermostat is that if a meeting or gathering does come up unexpectedly, the thermostats can be programmed remotely by contacts that will be posted at each thermostat. Also remember to fill out a building use form for any meeting or gathering that is not a regularly scheduled event. Make sure to include on the form which area of the church you wish to reserve. As we continue to work towards good stewardship and keep our spending in line with our annual budget, please be patient as we work out the bugs of this new process. If you have any questions, please get in touch with Pastor Jim or one of the church Trustees.