

THE STAR

Stony Creek United Methodist Church

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors



Reed's Reasonings

You knew that I would start the New Year with a quote, but did you guess that it would be Yogi Berra? "Always plan your trip, otherwise you won't know when you get there." As we begin the New Year and think about changes we'd like to make this quote came to mind. I think too often we think that we'll just do it tomorrow, when the only day we have is today. The things that are important slip out of are mind and we focus on getting through another day. Stop it! To quote General Patton this time, "If you fail to plan you plan to fail."

There are four areas that we need to take into account in a balanced life: physical, mental, social, and spiritual. Most of us probably should exercise more and toss the leftover sugar stuff. We know how to be healthy physically. Many of us will grab a book, watch a DVD, or look up a TED talk or other video on the internet to challenge our minds. But most of us will let the other two, social and spiritual, slip on by. Ironically to put joy in our lives they are the most important. Why? Because they are eternal. Your physical body and your mind stay here in this world. Your faith and your relationships in faith are eternal. But they are also not as easy because they involve other people (and their schedules, personalities, and baggage). But it's worth it. Your relationship with Jesus matters most, particularly when you get to the end of life. Make sure that you have a relationship before you get there.

The most important resolution we can make is to be healthy spiritually. In the 1950s in observing his patients Dr. Maxwell Maltz noted that it takes at least three weeks to form a new habit. Other leaders from Zig Ziglar to Tom Peters to Jack Welch have echoed his words, often leaving out the "at least" part.

One of the things that trips us up in spiritual development is that we often hit "desert times" and think we have failed. Remember God doesn't ask us to be perfect, just faithful. Don't quit, try again.

Church attendance needs to become a habit. Once you come to church at least three weeks in a row you are in the habit of coming to church and missing a Sunday or two isn't a real problem. If you miss three weeks in a row your habit is NOT going to church and missing becomes a habit. Establish the habit in 2017 and don't let yourself break it. You won't believe the difference it will make in your life.

I don't have any promises to give you today, but God does. I can recommend spiritual suggestions but God has the perfect plan for your life (Jeremiah 29:11). A spiritual resolution I think God would suggest for us is this: Hurry up and wait.

If you are ready to take that next step try adding a daily devotion or scripture reading. In three weeks time you will be surprised how much a minute or two a day can change your life.

May God's Will, Grace, and Joy be with you throughout the coming year!

Pastor Reed

Think globally, act locally; and become the change you want to see in the world.

Thanks for all the gifts that I have received over the Advent and Christmas season. Some of them caused me to gain a couple of pounds, but I really enjoyed it.

January Event

2016

Chili Cook-off

At Stony Creek UMC



January 14, 2017, 5:00 pm

**8635 Stony Creek Rd.
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
482-0240**

***Come join us and enjoy some great chili
and fellowship!***



Bring your neighbors!



JANUARY 2017 BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Katrina Heiss
- 3 Robb Hudspeth
- 4 Brenda Banotai
- 8 Annalyse Banotai, #9
- 9 Sally Armstrong
- 9 Lola Roome
- 10 Rachel Bonds
- 12 Jill Hall
- 14 Louis Banotai
- 15 Caroline Wojtowicz, #2
- 17 Kristen Smith
- 23 Nolan Thayer
- 23 Will McCullough
- 26 Jenna Shoner
- 27 Tim Heiss
- 29 Easton Thelen, #1!
- 30 Midge Fahndrich
- 30 Linda Ishmiel

FEBRUARY 2017 STAR BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Linda Hudspeth
- 6 Jean Helzerman
- 6 Lyn Helzerman
- 9 Leon Errer

BLURB: For any corrections or discrepancies of birthdates, anniversaries or membership dates, please notify MCB Sue Adamski: 484-0108; ksprune@yahoo.com

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Jan. 4, 2017 JANUARY STAR MEMBERSHIPS

January 21 Diane Ray

January 25 Sally Armstrong

January 30 Donna Clark

FEBRUARY 2017 STAR MEMBERSHIPS

February 3 Leon & Laurel Errer

JANUARY 2017 STAR ANNIVERSARIES

None

FEBRUARY 2017 STAR ANNIVERSARIES

February 11 Kyle & Teresa Patton

In no way does this column intend to make it seem insignificant the faithfulness & labors of those Stony Creekers who are not members. All of us together make up the Stony Creek community.



The Staff of Stony Creek UMC would like to say Thank You! Your Christmas gift was generous and appreciated and made us feel valued and loved. You are a great Congregation to serve.

Tammy, Teresa and Rich, Katy and Pastor Reed

Reed's tweets

I have long prayed that God would send us wisdom and insight. I now add to my prayer that we might be humble enough to hear.

“Ships are safe at the dock. But that's not what they're made for. You're safe keeping your faith private. That's not what you're made for.”

“God will work through your actions to fulfill his purpose. Whether your works are like Judas, or your works are like John.”

God's gift in Christ is yours, do you appreciate how precious that gift is? Why are you waiting to accept it?

Sacrificial giving makes no worldly sense. But we are to think like Christ, not the world. When we act like him, he shines through to the world.

“As we leave Christmas behind, remember it all started with Mary's yes to God. Will God get your yes this year? He's waiting for you.”

STONY CREEK UMC
Committee on Lay Leadership Report 2016

Key: **Bold-New this year**

CHURCH COUNCIL

Chairperson: Jason Neal
Secretary: Barb Makarewich
Lay Leader: Bob Hall
Finance Chair: Doug Thayer
Stewardship Chair: Al Fillion
Treasurer: Gilda Chie
Financial Secretary: Sharon Scott
Trustee Chair: Louie Banotai
SPRC Chair: Kathy Heiss
Nurture/Mother Care Bear: Sue Adamski
DAC Lay Member: David Mongson
Membership Sec: Fonda Heikka
Health Committee Chair: Shirley Ellicott
Worship: Teresa Brtva
Mission and Outreach: **Available**
Witness and Hospitality: **Available**
Education: Reed Swanson
Pastor: Reed Swanson

STAFF PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Pastor Reed Swanson

Chairperson: Kathy Heiss

Class of 2016

Kathy Heiss
Shirley Ellicott
Penny Sibert

Class of 2017

Belinda Husse
Dorothy Neumann
Sandy Dapprich

Class of 2018

David Mongson-DAC
Bob Hall - Lay Leader
Available

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairperson: Elected by Trustees

Class of 2017

Steve Fracassa
Louie Banotai
Open
Ex-Officio: Pastor

Class of 2018

Mike Mickel
Ryan Ward
Chris Zavicar secretary

Class of 2019

Dan Shoner
Ken Husse
Jim Chie

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Doug Thayer
SPRC Chair or their rep
Trustee Chair or their rep
Treasurer: Gilda Chie
Financial Secretary: Sharon Scott
Lay Leader: Bob Hall
Stewardship Chair: Al Fillion
DAC Lay Member David Mongson
Council Chair: Jason Neal
Member at Large **Available**
Pastor: Reed Swanson

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Fonda Heikka chair
Dorothy Neumann
Pastor Reed
Available

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Barb Makarewich
Shirley Ellicott
Bev Berry
Virginia Davis Brown
Available

WORSHIP

Available - At Large Member (Optional)
Teresa Brtva-Praise Band/Worship Coordinator
Katy Bunyea Volunteer Substitute Choir Director
Teresa Brtva-Praise Band
Tammy Thayer-Accompanist
Barb Makarewich-Communion Steward
Dave & Barb Makarewich
Church Decoration

PERMANENT ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Three to five members on renewable five-year terms.

Class of 2018

Fonda Heikka

Class of 2019

Dan Shoner

Class of 2020

Jerry Shulke

Class of 2021

Bill Myers

Class of 2022

Virginia Davis-Brown



CALENDAR FOR JANUARY 2016

January 1		New Years Day
January 1	9:30 a.m.	Worship
	10:45 a.m.	Fellowship
January 6		Epiphany
January 8	9:30 a.m.	Worship
	10:45 a.m.	Fellowship
	11:00 a.m.	Burning of the Greens
January 14	9:00 a.m.	VCI
January 14	6:30 p.m.	Chilli Cook Off
January 15	9:30 a.m.	Worship
	10:45 a.m.	Fellowship
	11:00 a.m.	Sunday School
January 22	9:30 a.m.	Worship
	10:45 a.m.	Fellowship
	11:00 a.m.	Sunday School
January 26	6:30 p.m.	Finance Committee
January 26	7:30 p.m.	Church Council
January 29	9:30 a.m.	Worship
	10:45 a.m.	Fellowship
	11:00 a.m.	Sunday School

Let's See What Is Coming Up

January 8th, Burning of the Greens: There will be a January burning of the greens and pizza. This will take place directly after church.

January 14th, 5:00 – 6:30 pm, Mark the date! **Chili Cook-off**

Come warm up, beat the winter blahs and join us for the annual Chili Cook-off! Saturday, January 9th. There are six chili pots entered. Come judge and vote for your favorite. Good food and good fellowship will be had by all. Let us know if you will be coming so that we can make sure to have

enough tables set up to accommodate everyone. There will be enough variety for everyone to find something they like and enough fellowship for everyone to feel welcome.

February 11th Chris Cakes The flying flapjacks return!

On February 25th we will visit the Cass Avenue Mission center in Detroit to serve them lunch. There are signup sheets are on the bulletin board for food and volunteers and volunteers that can go to the mission on that day.

March 1, Ash Wednesday Service 7 pm, start the season of Lent with us as we remember the path that Jesus walked and take the mark of ashes.

Nine Things I Will Teach My Sons About God

“I want to teach my sons that it’s okay to doubt God, have questions and not completely understand everything God does. God is big enough to handle our doubts, our questions, and our concerns.”



By Jarrid Wilson

My wife and I recently welcomed our second child into the world and we couldn’t be more excited. I can’t say that I’m a perfect parent, but I can say that both my wife and I try our hardest show our kids that they are loved, cherished and always welcome to come to us if they need something. There a lot of things about parenting you can’t really prepare for, which is what makes the journey that much more fun. But while my wife and I still have many years of parenting experiences, failures, and victories ahead of us, there are a few things I’ve already decided I will make sure to teach them about God.

1. It’s okay to have doubts.

Growing up I was always indirectly taught by others to never question God’s ways, nor should I doubt his existence and all-mighty power. But the older I became, the more questions I had about God. It was as if doubting was sought as complete disbelief, which in my case was not true at all.

The act of doubting is part of our human nature and an indirect connection with the fall of man. Doubt has been embedded into our inner-being as humans. It’s a natural state. My doubts actually kickstarted my campaign towards becoming closer to God. A lot of things didn’t seem to make sense to me, and my doubts

are what led me to begin studying more. Studying God's Word more brought me closer to him, and being closer to him gave me peace and understanding about who he was.

I want to teach my sons that it's okay to doubt God, have questions and not completely understand everything God does. God is big enough to handle our doubts, our questions, and our concerns. He's not afraid of them. He wouldn't be God if that was so. I don't want my boys to be afraid to question what's happening or wave their fists a little. God can handle it. I want to teach my sons to let it all out and get honest with God about what they're really feeling. Why? Because I trust God to combat their doubts with pure and vibrant understanding.

2. God works in his ways, not ours.

If God answered all of our prayers the way that we saw fit, our world would be one scary place to live in. Just like any loving parent in this world, God seeks what is best for his children and will constantly contradict our expectations for our own benefit. He knows what's best and his ways will always be grander than our own. I want my kids to learn that we must let go of our plans and instead grab hold of the will of God. I know this concept is easier said than done, but it will always be worth it in the long run.

God's plans are perfect because God himself is a perfect Lord. He himself is the almighty assurance of life, guiding us towards the greater good of life; His will. Although God is faithful in his answering of prayer, we cannot expect him to answer every prayer to our exact measurements. Faith is trusting God even when things don't make sense, and that includes a prayer that we feel may be unanswered or at the wrong time. I want my kids to understand that God works in his perfect timing and not ours.

3. There will be people who disagree with you.

Lord willing my kids will choose a personal relationship with God, not everyone is going to understand why they chose it. There are people in this world who will disagree with their decision to follow Jesus, and there are even people in this world who are killed because of this controversial faith. But although we may find opposition, I want my children to remember that God will always be by our side to provide us with comfort and peace.

Temporary acceptance from the world will never be able to outweigh the importance of eternal acceptance from God. Although they may be mocked and ridiculed, they can stand tall knowing God's love is on their side regardless of the opposition that faces them. Their destiny is in the hands God, not the opinions of man.

4. God is perfect, but his followers are not.

Growing up I had a lot of resentment towards God, but what I failed to realize is that my resentment was due to the actions of some of his followers, not him. Not everyone who claims to love God is perfect, but we can always rely on God for perfection inside and out. We're human. We make mistakes. We aren't always going to do things right. I want my sons to learn how to separate their frustration towards Christians from that of God, understanding that he doesn't always have perfect followers.

I want my kids to understand the difference between God, the perfect creator and his creation, and the imperfect who have a great need for a perfect savior.

5. You're always welcome home.

No matter how lost you and I may get in this life, God has an open door policy that always provides us with an opportunity to come back home. God's love always has vacancy. We've all made mistakes, but the beauty of the cross is that Jesus died for them. All of them. Your sins have been wiped clean, and your heart has been renewed by the grace of Jesus himself. Your mistakes do not define you. Your failures don't have to haunt you. Your mishaps don't need to be accounted for. God forgives you for your mistakes, even if you have yet to forgive yourself

God forgives you for your mistakes, even if you have yet to forgive yourself of them. I want my kids to know that he is always welcome back into the arms of God, no matter how dark their life ever may become.

6. Church is people, not a building.

I want to teach my sons to re-think the way culture has defined the definition of church, as it is not simply just a building that one attends on a weekly basis but instead who one is on a daily basis. I want my boys to take ownership of their faith and be a living example of Christ. We are the church, and we are called to reflect the image of Jesus in our everyday lives.

When we take this reality to heart, every aspect of our lives then becomes a mission field, a space to worship in, and a realm to shine our light in. The world is our canvas and the Holy Spirit wants to use us to create a masterpiece known as The Great Commission. I want my sons to see the church as more than just what cultural-Christianity views it as. I want them to see the beauty of God's church being practiced through everyday people like themselves.

7. Theology matters because God matters.

I desire for my sons to understand the importance of theology, their comprehension of God, and knowing why they believe what they believe. Yearning to know more about God will come naturally as they grows deeper in relation with him, and taking the time to study God's Word through a theological mindset will help open their heart and soul to a much deeper appreciation of his being.

Theology alone will not suffice, and nor will passion by itself. I want my sons to see the seriousness of learning more about the God that I pray they choose to call, Lord. Theology matters because God matters.

8. Life isn't always going to be easy.

The Christian life isn't always going to be easy or without trial, but God's promises us he will be alongside us the entire way. So many people think that just because they believe in Jesus means everything is going to be flawless and perfect. This really isn't the case at all. You may have a relationship with Jesus, but this doesn't mean life is going to stop moving forward, tough circumstances are going to cease to exist, and rough times will never be a possibility.

Even though Jesus never said life would be easy, he did say he would be there for you in your times of need. The message of The Gospel isn't that life will be perfect, but that in its imperfection we have a perfect and flawless Savior.

9. Not everything has a black and white answer.

When putting our lives in the hands of God, we must be ready to not understand everything that God does, why he does it, and how long he will do it for. Some things only have one answer; to trust God even if it doesn't make sense. It may seem like a shallow and cliché response, but it's actually quite the opposite. Trusting God amidst our confusion is a spiritually deepening experience.

God won't always give us clear and crisp directions. I want my son to trust in God for that in which he cannot see or comprehend with his own mind. I want my kids to use God as their compass in life, directing them every step of the way.

Great exploits

Colorado pastor Mike Paulison, who's made many mission trips to Haiti to build and maintain an orphanage, shares about prayer's power:

"On one trip, we were bringing large items that could've been problematic, because in Haiti customs officials often make up their own rules. We urged our prayer-support team back home to be praying as we went through customs. But when a storm delayed our flight from Miami for two hours, the schedule was off. We encouraged one another, saying at least prayers had been lifted. Later, on the plane to Haiti, I noticed I'd made a mistake on the schedule. It was off by exactly two hours. The supporters were actually praying the very moment we landed in Port-au-Prince!

"In line at customs, we watched officials opening luggage. But by the time we got to the front, the inspectors were gone, and we were allowed to walk into the country. We experienced firsthand the promise in Daniel 11:32b (NKJV): 'The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.'"

Preparation for worship

New year, new day and, always, new life in Christ. Thank you, Lord!

As the wise men followed the star to you, Jesus, may I follow your Word and encounter you in my life. Amen.

“Amazing grace — how sweet the sound!” Thank you for the undeserved gift of salvation, Lord God.

On this winter morning, Jesus, help each of us feel the warmth of your love and share it with others.

Lord, I lay before you everything that concerns me today. Free me to rest in your embrace. Amen.

Words of welcome

Welcome to worship in this new year of our Lord 2017! Please greet one another in the spirit of Christ.

Welcome to worship, Christian education and fellowship at _____ Church. May God bless our time together.

Brothers and sisters, grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus. Welcome to this time of worship.

“This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24, ESV). Welcome!

Here we learn what is good and what the Lord requires of us: justice, mercy and walking humbly with God (Micah 6:8). May you find blessing and inspiration as you hear God’s Word today.

- “Resolution One: I will live for God. Resolution Two: If no one else does, I still will.”
—Jonathan Edwards
- “Never trust anyone completely but God. Love people, but put your full trust only in God.”

- “Laughter is the sun that drives winter from the human face.”
—Victor Hugo
- “I know nothing except what everyone knows — if there when Grace dances, I should dance.”
—W.H. Auden

The new year is an opportunity to sort out the useless tasks and plan for the important; to review the failures and resolve to be successful; to take an inventory of causes and pledge life to purpose and service. These being done, the new will truly be new, different and better.
—C. Neil Strait

Lessons from a snowman



- It's okay to wear white well after Labor Day.
- Simply hanging out in your front yard can be fun.
- Accessories don't have to be fancy or expensive.
- We're all made mostly of water.
- You know you've "arrived" when a song is written about you.
- So what if you're a little bottom-heavy?
- Don't get too much sun.
- Sweating too much can be disastrous!

God's promised spring

Like winter, some seasons of our faith journey feel cold, barren, devoid of life. Will renewal ever come? Will spring flourish again in our heart? Yet the world bears witness to God's power to bring new life where all seems lost.

In the early 1990s, the St. Louis neighborhood of South City deteriorated sharply due to a stagnant economy, population decline and crime. Then Bosnian refugees started settling there. Thousands of people renovated abandoned houses and other buildings; they started businesses and brought skilled labor back to the neighborhood. As the area returned to life, the refugees experienced renewal, too — hope in place of discouragement, opportunities where none had existed, peace instead of war, life replacing death.

When our faith is challenged by despair, lost dreams or an uncertain future — when God's promises feel as dead as winter — real-life renewal stories are signs of spring. They testify to the resurrection God has in store for us.

Washed clean

Your morning shower can do more than cleanse your body. Retired pastor Norman Neaves takes time to remember his baptism daily.

“As the water is pouring down on me, I reach up and get water all over my hand. Then I close my eyes and make the sign of the cross on my forehead. ‘I have been baptized in Christ,’ I say to myself quietly. ‘This day belongs to him. I am called to be Jesus’ representative whatever I am doing and wherever I might go. Give me the grace, Lord, to represent you well and with integrity.’”

Taking a stand

Cowardice asks the question: Is it safe? Expediency asks the question: Is it politic? Vanity asks the question: Is it popular? But conscience asks the question: Is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular — but one must take it simply because it is right.
—Martin Luther King Jr.

Free refills

God's kingdom is like free refills at a restaurant. Wait — what?!

Jesus used common, everyday items to explain the kingdom of God; we can too! The kingdom is like free refills. Still thirsty after one soda or coffee? Get another — no charge. In fact, the kingdom of God is better than free refills because you don't even have to pay for the first glass.

It's like having a parent buy you a favorite meal when you're young. You sit back and savor it without the price crossing your mind. That's okay, because the generous giver loves you and wants to be with you.

Sure, that's simplistic, but so are Jesus' parables. Overanalyze them and they may fall apart. But ponder the single point each makes, maybe get a chuckle and an a-ha! out of it, and that parable has done its job. So grab another free refill — of your beverage and of God's love!

—Heidi Mann

Ignite!

It is with Christians as with burning coals. If these are scattered apart, one after the other, they are easily extinguished. But, when collected together, the fire of one preserves that of the other, and the glowing coals often ignite others that lie near.

—August Francke

Undaunted

The year just past was wracked with violence, racism and political rancor. We long to fix these problems, but how? We may feel as frustrated as the church board member who spouted, “We’ve already tried prayer. It didn’t work!”

Those words might resonate today, yet things aren’t always what they seem. We can’t see God behind the scenes crafting a new reality, but Scripture promises it. And though our prayers won’t undo earthly death, they surround the grieving with strength and love. We can’t “solve” sin, but our prayers can bring communities together and spur us to look out for one another.

The Jewish Talmud states, “Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Do justly now. Love mercy now. Walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.” In this new year, may we be undaunted in doing what we can. It might not seem like much, but things aren’t always what they seem.

Bible Quiz



In Matthew 13, to what does Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven?

- A. A farmer sowing seed
- B. A mustard seed
- C. Yeast
- D. Hidden treasure
- E. A merchant who finds a pearl
- F. A fishing net
- G. All of the above

“The Wise May Bring Their Learning”

The wise may bring their learning, the rich may bring their wealth,
And some may bring their greatness, and some bring strength and health;
We, too, would bring our treasures to offer to the King;
We have no wealth or learning; what shall we children bring?

We'll bring him hearts that love him; we'll bring him thankful praise,
And young souls meekly striving to walk in holy ways;
And these shall be the treasures we offer to the King,
And these are gifts that even the poorest child may bring.

We'll bring the little duties we have to do each day;
We'll try our best to please him, at home, at school, at play;
And better are these treasures to offer to our King;
Than richest gifts without them — yet these a child may bring.

—Anonymous

Christian Symbol

Three Chests

Sometimes called “three arks,” this image represents the gifts the Magi brought to the child Jesus: gold, frankincense and myrrh (Matthew 2:11). Because Scripture lists three gifts, the legend arose that there were three wise men. But the biblical account doesn't say how many travelers visited the Holy Family.

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**Sunday Services, Worship 9:30 A.M.,
Fellowship 10:45 A.M.
Sunday School 11:00 A.M.**