

EXPRESSIONS

CHURCH IN THE HILLS PC (USA)



There's a story in Judges chapter 7 about a battle when Gideon was judge in Israel. It has made a lasting impression on me and my journey of faith. The Israelites are about to attack the Midianites, but God tells Gideon they have too many soldiers. God says a victory would cause the soldiers to think they won the battle rather than giving God credit. Therefore, God gives Gideon a plan to whittle down the soldiers from over 22,000 to just 300. In other words, God puts the Israelites in an impossible position so that when victory comes, they will know that it was God's victory. This story and many others try to teach us the same lesson. God wants us to learn to trust him rather than trust our own strength and resources.

Church in the Hills has been declining in membership and financial giving for a couple of years, and the future appears uncertain. We've also experienced the retirement of Lisa as office manager, and this causes more anxiety about our future. Regardless of how things appear, God is still with us and the Holy Spirit is moving in important ways. Bible Study attendees and those attending the study of Native Americans have, without question, grown in faith. Our Worship seems more enthusiastic with people commenting regularly about feeling the energy. We have been blessed as a congregation and that blessing is the promise of God's presence with us. If God is with us, why do we worry about our future and a few difficulties? This is the very problem I've been preaching about for months. When trouble comes, people lose faith. We look at worldly and material things and we think God has somehow left us because we are no longer as blessed as we once were. Instead of thinking this is a crisis, we should embrace the opportunity to trust God. The story of Gideon teaches us that God wants us to live in faith rather than trusting our own strength.

It's no secret that I lack some administrative leadership skills. I'm not a worthy financial planner or business administrator but God clearly called me to be pastor of Church in the Hills, and the congregation confirmed God's call by their support. The Holy Spirit comforted me when I was anxious about becoming a solo pastor which would multiply the administrative responsibility. The Spirit's comfort came in the words, "Do it your way and don't try to be anyone else." Soon after I started, I was faced with our office manager's resignation. I prayed that God would provide a person with the gift of administration so that my shortcomings would not be a burden. Lisa Luxton was the answer I was hoping for. I can testify that God provides, and his provision comes through faith. I encourage you to pray and seek God's provision for us even if the situation looks impossible. In fact, the worse it looks, the more glory God will get when the victory comes.

The peace of Christ be with you!

David Ramage

Step Back in Time with an Evening of Story, Music, and Art

Put away the electronic devices for an evening and immerse yourself in a timeless tale of love, marriage, and shipwreck—brought to life through spoken word and classical music.

Join us for a captivating performance of *Enoch Arden*, the dramatic poem written in 1864 by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Narrated by Pastor Chris Lane, with musical interludes by pianist Dr. Michael Coonrod and cellist Jean Merce Coonrod, this unique event combines literature, live music, and visual art. Framed lithographs from the original Tennyson edition will be displayed on stage, offering a visual complement to the performance.

Meet the Artists:

Pastor **Chris Lane** discovered the power of the spoken word early in life through dramatic readings. After earning an undergraduate degree in theater, he pursued a Master of Divinity at Boston University. For over 40 years, he has served as a United Methodist pastor across Michigan, most recently in Traverse City.

Dr. Michael Coonrod, pianist, has devoted more than five decades to teaching and performing classical music. He recently retired from Interlochen Arts Academy after 46 years on the piano faculty and has performed in China, Italy, Poland, and throughout the United States.

Jean Merce Coonrod, cellist, has taught cello for over 50 years and performed with the Traverse Symphony Orchestra for 38 years.

Event Details:

 **Thursday, September 11th**

 **7:00 PM**

 **Church in the Hills, 6401 Shanty Creek Rd, Bellaire**

 **Tickets available at the door: \$10 for students, \$20 for adults**

Don't miss this rare opportunity to experience *Enoch Arden* as it was meant to be heard and seen—through stirring narration, beautiful music, and evocative imagery.



Jan Lemmer	01-Sep
Ron Lynch	02-Sep
Dale Dobbrastine	10-Sep
Bonnie Smith	11-Sep
Lindsay Eggers	13-Sep
Donna Grill	15-Sep
Carol Spellman	15-Sep
Annabelle Henley	16-Sep
Amelia Hoyt	19-Sep
Ann Schwandt	29-Sep
Bill Washburn	29-Sep

New T-Shirts/Mugs

The Mission Committee has purchased a supply of newly designed CITH T-shirts for use on various projects: Rubber Ducky, Closet to Closet, CROP Walk, etc. (See the picture with the Rubber Ducky article. Thanks to Terrie Ramage for the design.). There are different sizes so people can wear them over other clothing, if desired. We've already had people request to get one to keep. If you're interested, the cost is \$15 (put Mission T-Shirt in the check's memo line). Please specify size, from adult small to 2XL. Deadline is September 14.

The Deacons have also ordered new coffee mugs with the same pattern as the t-shirts. Many of the older mugs have lost their design but are still quite useable. Watch the bulletin for details on what will be happening to them.

As part of a way for us to SEEK · LOVE · SERVE each other and God, the Membership Committee is featuring members and friends of CITH in our newsletter with some fun Q&A. We encourage you to take the time to read and get to know members and friends of the Church in the Hills family!

Janet Siekmann

What is the most spontaneous thing you have ever done? Ziplining at a summer camp at the encouragement of our high school son!

What are you currently working on to improve yourself? Not to compare myself to others.

What is the first life changing moment that comes to mind? Gave myself to Christ at age 36 after husband died by suicide.

How do you wish to be remembered? Fiercely loved my family.

What is your love story? Been married to Rem, high school sweetheart, for 31 years.

Name your most memorable experience while traveling. Snorkeling in Maui and British Virgin Islands.



This year's CROP Hunger Walk will take place on Sunday, September 28th at 2:00 p.m. The walk starts at the Forest Home Township Building in Bellaire. Registration begins at 1:45.

The CROP Hunger Walk is a community-wide event sponsored by Church World Service and organized by local volunteers to raise funds to end hunger. The CROP Walk honors the call to improve the quality of life of people suffering from poverty and hunger, both locally and globally. 25% of the funds raised remain right here to support local food banks, with 75% helping with disaster relief and self-help projects in more than 80 countries. Participants will be raising awareness and money to change the world in real and measurable ways.

Church World Service has worked for nearly seven decades with one goal--building a world where there is enough for all. Please join us this year by donating your time and resources to keep this goal alive.

Connie Brigham will be collecting donations after church each Sunday including the Sunday of the walk. Any checks should be made out to "CWS".

Thank you for your willingness to help!

Rubber Ducky Parade

Members and friends of Church in the Hills participated in the Parade. Thanks to Bryan Eggers for pulling the Coat Shed. This was also the inaugural event for CITH's new t-shirts. We had a great time, and the rain held off until the parade was over!



Labor Day Laughs

Take a break and enjoy this work-related humor!

- My first job was in an orange juice factory. I got canned because I couldn't concentrate.
- When I couldn't hack it as a lumberjack, I got the ax.
- I wasn't suited to being a tailor.
- Working in the muffler factory was too exhausting.
- I was a banker ... until I lost interest.
- I realized there was no future in being a historian.
- Any way I sliced it, I couldn't cut the mustard at the deli.
- I studied to become a doctor but had no patients.
- My job at the coffee shop was always the same old grind.
- When I worked as a plumber, the tasks were too draining.
- I was hired at a gym but wasn't fit for the job.
- Finally, I got a job at a bakery; I kneaded dough!

JULY FINANCIAL CORNER

Church in the Hill's financial summary through July is shown below.

Total Income: \$164,764
Total Expenses: \$139,512
Net Income: **POSITIVE** \$25,252

July's net income was a positive \$27,637 but included a one-time contribution of \$30,287 from the Bellaire Youth Center project as a result of that project not going forward. Without that contribution, the net income would have been negative \$2,650.

We still have two projects looking for funding. We talked about the "Church Video Monitor Project" back in June with expected expenses of \$10,000. The newest project is one that has been discussed for some time and that is to stain the outside of the church and repair necessary trim work for \$13,500. That project is in final planning stages and hopefully will be completed yet this fall and is titled "Stain for the Saints". We are encouraging folks to donate to those two very worthwhile projects either through on-line giving or by check with project name on the memo line.

2 Corinthians 9:7 states "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

As always, the Finance Committee appreciates our church family's contributions!

SEPTEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 LABOR DAY OFFICE CLOSED	2 BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM WORSHIP/MUSIC 3:30 PM	3 CHOIR 3:30 PM	4 MENS RAP 9:00 AM FINANCE 2:00 PM	5 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	6
7 WORSHIP SERVICE 10:00 AM	8 DEACONS 10:00 AM	9 BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM	10 SESSION 10:00 AM CHOIR 3:30 PM	11 MENS RAP 9:00 AM	12 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	13
14 WORSHIP SERVICE 10:00 AM	15 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	16 BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM	17 CHOIR 3:30 PM	18 MENS RAP 9:00 AM	19 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	20
21 WORSHIP SERVICE 10:00 AM	22	23 BIBLE STUDY 10:00 AM	24 CHOIR 3:30 PM	25 MENS RAP 9:00 AM	26 PASTOR ON STUDY LEAVE	27 PASTOR ON STUDY LEAVE
28 PASTOR ON STUDY LEAVE WORSHIP SERVICE 10:00 AM CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AFTER WORSHIP MISSION 11:00 AM	29 PASTOR ON STUDY LEAVE	30 PASTOR ON STUDY LEAVE				

CHURCH IN THE HILLS
A Presbyterian Community of
Faith and Friendship in Christ
6401 Shanty Creek Rd
PO Box 319
Bellaire, MI 49615
Phone: 231-533-6001

OFFICE E-MAIL:
office@churchinthehills.org
WEBSITE:
www.churchinthehills.org

Service of Worship: Sunday 10:00 AM
Children's Program: Sunday 10:00 AM

OFFICE STAFFED
Tue – Thu, 9 AM – 1 PM

Church in the Hills is a member of the
Presbytery of Mackinac
The Synod of the Covenant
The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The fall congregational meeting will be held
after worship on Sunday, September 28th

Rev. David Ramage: pastor@churchinthehills.org
Clerk of Session: Mary Ann Waara 231-350-0067

ELDERS

Class of 2025

Paul DeLange	231-377-7333
Lindsay Eggers	989-992-5514
Ron Lynch	231-631-5368

Class of 2026

Bev Dickinson	248-217-9393
John Kerr	248-770-5923
Ken Salo	231-944-9972

Class of 2027

Linda Bicum	231-322-2281
Cynthia Tschudy	231-544-6167
Mary Ann Waara	231-350-0067

Director of Music

John Dickinson	248-990-6846
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Reverend Mr. Donald E. Gordon, Pastor Emeritus

DEACONS

Class of 2025

Judy Heimbuch	440-242-7352
Colleen Jordan	231-670-6888
Sarah Juntune	231-676-3996

Class of 2026

Barb Antosik	602-509-2051
Pat Hallberg	231-533-6006
Janet Siekmann	513-315-8760

Class of 2027

Tammy Hickman	231-350-0090
Patty Moore	616-681-2450
Terrie Ramage	231-392-1704