

# *The Newsletter*

*Saugatuck United Methodist Church*

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Dear Saugatuck UMC Friends,

As I write this Lake Michigan is up 5" above the 1986 record, and over 100 lakefront homes are at risk in Allegan County alone. Erosion caused by the high-water level has been, and continues to be, devastating. Just last week the Mary Ann Curtis home on Lakeshore Dr. in Pier Cove had to be torn down to avoid it falling into the lake.

This situation is projected to get worse as we go forward through this year causing more and more destruction as it does. In times like this we need to stay grounded in our faith and supportive of our community in whatever way we can.

For many lakeshore residents (like most of us) their home is their single largest asset. So, losing that (since flood insurance typically does not cover erosion-related claims, and many are left with a mortgage on a home that no longer exists) may mean losing absolutely everything from a financial perspective.

As devastating as that can be it's important to remember that the losses being suffered are not only financial, they also have an enormous emotional impact, and potentially a spiritual one as well.

I remember just after our daughter turned 4 there was a Spring thaw combined with a week of rain that caused the creek, running between our apartment building and a field in which we liked to play, to rise and spill extensively over its banks. One day we found her standing near the water looking across to the now distant field sobbing. She was throwing rocks into the water in an attempt to stop its spread. When asked why she was crying she said "God promised he wouldn't send another flood." Not only was she upset over not being able to go play in the field, she thought God had not kept his word which crushed her heart. I'm sure there are many homeowners suffering from these current high waters feeling the same way.

The entire situation can be overwhelming. We feel so sorry for those being affected; please be sure to keep them in your prayers.

When disasters, such as this, come into our lives it's critical to have a faith built on Christ, the solid rock. He, and his love of us, are the only things that we can count on regardless what happens.

On a separate topic, in January SUMC had a couple of changes on the Administrative Board.

- After 15 years as Treasurer, Bill Lint, has retired so he and his wife would have more time to travel. On behalf of the entire congregations I'd like to thank Bill for his terrific dedication and service.
- Tom Tiffany has agreed to take over the role of Admin Board Chair in addition to continuing to guide the Trustee Committee. Thanks, Tom, we look forward to your leadership.

On Sunday February 2<sup>nd</sup> we will finally start our winter Sunday school (2 weeks late) studying the book of Malachi (the last book in the Old Testament). Please join us, it should be quite interesting.

Additionally, if you'd like to discuss your thoughts on the upcoming General Conference and the potential schism in the United Methodist Church, we'd love to hear from you. As mentioned in last Sunday's message, we want to know what each of you is thinking. Regardless what changes may come, remember God is in control and he is good...all the time. It's our job to simply seek his will and follow where he leads.

In Christ, Rick & Sherry