



A Publication of **Muskegon County Cooperating Churches**

Convening the Community of Faith

to serve the needs of the people of Muskegon County for over 70 years.

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What's New at Cooperating Churches?

RECOVERY CONGREGATIONS

We are still recruiting congregation for this initiative. If you would like more information please contact our office or email us.

Think about becoming a Recovery Congregation. How can your organization help with the addiction problem in our community?

Recovery Congregations can provide spiritual and pastoral support. They can view addiction as a disease not a moral issue. They can embrace and support people in recovery, as well as their families. They can provide visible outreach in the community. They can disseminate recovery information. And, they can host recovery groups within their organizations.

See inside for more information.

Family Faith Fellowship Fair

Muskegon County Cooperating Churches presents the organization's first, and hopefully, yearly fundraiser on Saturday July 27, 2019. See the inside for more information.





Gleanings by Tom Wagner



Sabbath Freedom

Following college graduation I served about a year and a half as an intern at Brethren Historical Library & Archives, located at the Church of the Brethren denominational offices in Elgin, Illinois. In addition to working daily with the raw materials of history, the job gave me access to much current news and information from around the denomination and our ecumenical partners. I also became acquainted with many talented and caring volunteers and staff.

One of the perks of the job was that I could frequently hitch a ride with staff traveling to or through Indiana, allowing me to visit family and friends back home. These trips were good opportunities to get to know them better. Many had been seasoned pastors, while others had served on mission fields in Nigeria, India or Ecuador. These folks often had adventurous tales to tell. Being rather young, I had few stories of my own, but these companions often showed genuine interest in my background and future plans.

On one occasion while riding with an associate general secretary and her husband to a college homecoming, we began comparing stories of their Midwestern upbringings with my childhood in eastern Pennsylvania nearly two generations later. In spite of the age difference there were more similarities than we had expected, largely because Brethren Midwestern and urban congregations had assimilated to mainstream culture decades before many eastern congregations. While a few “plain” congregations remain to this day, most of my home church had shed the traditional Dunker wardrobe by the time I was born, with the exception of a few elderly members. Yet some lifestyle patterns persisted. My traveling companions reminisced about youthful conflicts over attending movies on Sunday afternoons, and wondered if I had encountered similar restrictions. I hadn’t. It simply never occurred to me make the request. Attending movies was rare for our household. There was no stated taboo, but it just never became a habit among us. I suspect it may have been a remnant from a time when “worldly amusements” were frowned upon. I’ve been told that one of my great-grandmothers would lecture my Dad and his brother about not playing ball on Sunday afternoons. In her mind, it was a time to sit and visit.

Personally I recall Sundays of my childhood as relatively relaxed days. Dad had the day off of work. We often did visit with relatives. Other times we might take long car rides while Dad listened to Phillies games on the radio. Many times we simply loafed around the house or yard. Of course we nearly always attended Sunday school and church, unless we were ill or the snow was too deep. That rarely happened. It’s a habit I’ve maintain throughout my adult life.

It is sad that our understanding of Sunday or Sabbath observance is so often dominated by a sense of restriction. There is a scriptural basis for seeing it as a regular opportunity for liberation. The version of the Ten Commandments found in Deuteronomy 5:6-21 gives YHWH’s deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt as rational for keeping the day holy. Indeed this day of rest applied not only to the Hebrews themselves, but to their servants, livestock and even foreigners in their midst. In Luke’s story about Jesus healing a bent-over woman in a synagogue on the Sabbath follows this theme (13:10-17). The Rev. Dr. Natalie Houghtby-Haddon points out a number of unique points about the story in her book *Changed Imagination, Changed Obedience*. Unlike other healings and exorcisms, Jesus declares the woman “freed” rather than healed. When the leader of the synagogue reprimands Jesus for breaking the Sabbath with this work of mercy, Jesus responds by pointing that his opponents release (untie) their oxen and asses for water on the Sabbath. Does not a woman, a daughter of Abraham no less, who has been bound for 18 years deserve to be released from her affliction? There are a couple of things going on here—a word play on untying beasts of burden and unbinding a captive woman in addition to making a greater point by use of a lesser example. It also may serve as a reminder of the Deuteronomy text including livestock in the day of rest. Houghtby-Haddon also hears the echoes of another Sabbath when Jesus declared a year of Jubilee at Nazareth in Luke 4:16-30. It was a promise of release to the captives, of good news to the poor of debt cancelation, of giving the soil its Sabbath rest and redistribution of land. This woman experienced that promise fulfilled in release from her long affliction. May each of us come to know Sabbath’s liberty, empowering us for the tasks ahead.



From Lily

Muskegon County Cooperating Churches would love to hear from you. If you have something you would like to share, please e-mail me at staff@cooperatingchurches.com or send it to me in the mail. Please include pictures and/or your organizational logo. Information is due into the office no

Muskegon County Cooperating Churches' Annual Fundraiser

Registration to participate in this event is listed below. **Details** of the event are listed on the next page. Please support us and join us in making this a memorable event.

Muskegon County Cooperating Churches presents

A Family Faith Fellowship Fair

Saturday, July 27th at Hackley Park
10 am to 3 pm

We are inviting your Faith Organization to participate.
Purchase a booth/space for the day for \$40.00
To register for a space call: 231-727-6000 or email:
office.mccc@frontier.com

Your congregation can sponsor an outdoor family program.
Examples of things your congregation can do:
Children's Games Bounce House Dunk Tank Worship Tent
Food Sales Hand-crafted Sale items
Church information table Face painting Provide music
Give-a-ways (Partner with Corporation and Businesses for donations)
AND any other family fun event of your making!

Be Creative-choose activities which best represents your organization!



Muskegon County Cooperating Churches presents

A Family Faith Fellowship Fair

Saturday, July 27 at Hackley Park
10 am to 3 pm
Free Admission

Bring your family for a day of fun, games, food, items to buy, free give-aways, and an opportunity to meet & talk with area faith organizations.



Expand your Parenting Skills at the **NURTURING PARENT CLASS**

Join us for this FREE 10-week series for parents! Classes will cover topics such as discipline, communication, child development and problem solving. This fun and informative class is for parents with kids of any age!

WHEN: Every Tuesday, July 9 – September 10
10:00am–12:00pm

WHERE: Arbor Circle – Muskegon Services
1060 W Norton Ave, Muskegon, MI

TO REGISTER: Contact Kevin Figurski at (616) 396-2301
or by email at kfigurski@arborcircle.org

Childcare is not provided for this class



*Recipients of substance abuse services have rights protected by state and federal law and promulgated rules. For information contact Title Carriers at ttcarriers@arborcircle.org or 616-396-2300 or the Bureau of Health Systems, Division of Licensing and Certification, Substance Abuse Licensing Section, Recipient Rights Coordinator, P.O. Box 30664, Lansing, Michigan 48909. This program is supported by a grant from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services/Bureau of Community Based Services, Office of Recovery Oriented Systems of Care, through Lakeshore Regional Entity. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of MDHHS/DOHSC or LRE.



Practice being a strong family at the **STRENGTHENING FAMILIES 10-14 PROGRAM** Attention, families with 10-14 year-olds!

Strengthen relationships and build communication during pre-teen years. Join us for this FREE 7-week program! We will offer separate sessions for parents/caregivers and pre-teens/teens (ages 10-14) before joining together for a family session. A free family meal and free childcare for siblings (ages 1-9) are provided.

WHEN: Every Wednesday
June 19th - August 7th, 2019
11am - 1:30pm

WHERE: 11am - 1:30pm
Cardinal Elementary School
2310 Marquette Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49442

TO REGISTER: Contact Arbor Circle Ottawa Services at
(616)-396-2301



Recipients of substance abuse services have rights protected by state and federal law and promulgated rules. For information contact Title Carriers at ttcarriers@arborcircle.org or 616-396-2300 or the Bureau of Health Systems, Division of Licensing and Certification, Substance Abuse Licensing Section, Recipient Rights Coordinator, P.O. Box 30664, Lansing, Michigan 48909. This program is supported by a grant from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services/Bureau of Community Based Services, Office of Recovery Oriented Systems of Care, through Lakeshore Regional Entity. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of MDHHS/DOHSC or LRE.

Recovery Congregations

Muskegon County Cooperating Churches has received a grant from Muskegon County Public Health to certify 5 Muskegon congregations as Certified Recovery Congregations.

The Recovery Congregation Initiative:

- Partners with faith-based communities to increase outreach and build recovery pathways.
- Provide an educated, welcoming, and supportive place for individuals struggling with substance abuse issues so that they may find help and hope on the pathway to recovery.

If your congregation is interested in learning more about this initiative or if you are interested in becoming a Certified Recovery Congregation, please contact Lily Marx at the MCCC office. The phone number is 231-727-6000, Call to set up a time for a presentation to your leadership to consider a partnership with MCCC on this initiative. Leave a message if no one is in the office at the time of your call, and we will return your call, as soon as we can.

Email: office.mccc@frontier.com



A Memorial Bench has been placed in the Heritage Memorial Gardens at 545 W. Western Ave in downtown Muskegon across from the Amazon Building in honor of Kryssis Bjork.

Kryssis Bjork was a friend and Board Member of Muskegon County Cooperating Churches.



Her social activism on peace and justice issues have had a great impact on this community. She is remembered fondly by many.

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!

We would not exist without your generous support. Contributions have been received during the last 2 months from the following individuals, churches and organizations.

Prince of Peace Catholic Church
Sacred Heart
Nancy A. Waters
William Boelkins
First Presbyterian

Bill Page
Salvation Army
Our Savior's Lutheran Church
McGrath Memorial Congreg.

HenryKay Ostrom
Thomas Tuori
Martha Giacobassi
Bridge Bible Church

Love, In The Name of Christ
Bernadette Glover
Mount Zion, COGIC
Church of the Brethren

Child Evangelism Fellowship of Muskegon County is hosting a BBQ Dinner on Saturday, July 27, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, at Baptist Church, 84 S.

Come and enjoy wiches, hot dogs,



Sheridan Drive Baptist Church, 84 S. Sheridan Drive.

pulled pork sandwiches, coleslaw, chips, and

more! A freewill offering will be taken to help fund summer ministry needs. Call the CEF office with any questions. (231-733-2200)

Calendar

- June 17-August 2: Club 188, Mount Zion Church
- June 19-August 7: Strengthening Families, pg.4
- June 27 to July 27, Registration for the Family Faith Fellowship Fair, pg.3
- July 9 to September 10, Nurturing class, pg.4
- July 25-5 pm MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
- July 27-10 am to 3 pm, Family Faith Fellowship Fair, pg.4
- July 27-BBQ Dinner, Child Evangelism Fellowship of Muskegon, 1 pm to 3 pm, pg. 6
- August 22-Deadline for submissions to the September/October Branches' issue.
- August 22- 5pm MCCC Board of Director's Meeting

