



# BRANCHES



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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**November-December Issue**

**2020**

**BRANCHES** is published 6 times a year by **Muskegon County Cooperating Churches (MCCC)**  
120 W. Apple Avenue, Muskegon 49440

**MCCC** is a non-profit ecumenical organization serving all faith congregations in Muskegon County

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## What's Happening at Cooperating Churches?

### Mobile Food Pantries:

To schedule or for information  
call Kasey at 231-727-6000.

### Recovery Congregations:

Red Project Presentation  
November 17 at 7 pm .

### Membership Fee:

Please send in your membership fee.  
Organizations: \$50/Individuals: \$25  
Mail in to: MCCC, 120 W. Apple Ave.  
Muskegon, 49440.

### Weekly Blasts from MCCC:

Every Thursday we will let the churches and faith communities know what is happening in the area. If you are not in our data-base and would love to know, send us a request in an email.

### Peace and Justice Committee:

Pause and Pray Prayer Vigil  
Every Thursday at the stage in Hackley Park  
At 4:30 pm



*Writings by Tom Wagner*



### *Incarnation Incognito*

I suppose we all have read stories in which the hidden identity of one or more characters contributes significantly to the narrative. While the device can serve sinister intent, more often I recall benevolent uses from works I read in high school. Three that especially come to mind share the common thread of powerful or influential individuals who choose to briefly sojourn incognito so as to better understand their society and in turn seek to change it.

In *Ivanhoe*, a romanticized tale of medieval chivalry by Sir Walter Scott, the identity of the Black Knight remains a mystery through much of the story. Early on he intervenes in a tournament on behalf of the title character and later takes a key role in storming Torquilstone Castle. While the author drops a few clues concerning the character's true identity, including an eye witness report to Prince John that his brother has returned from the Crusades, only among Locksley's (Robin Hood) band of thieves does the knight fully disclose that he is indeed Richard I, King of England. Richard's experiences, largely among his Saxon subjects, allows him to better understand the injustices that had brought his realm close to civil war in his absence.

Mark Twain, on the other hand, aims his satirical wit at both the Age of Chivalry and his own Gilded Age in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Well into the story, disguised as commoners, the Yankee (known as "the Boss") and King Arthur explore the state of the kingdom. The Boss' hidden agenda for the adventure is to expose Arthur to the cruelties of the society over which he presides, so as to grease the way to social reform and technical advancement. Indeed the two suffer slavery and come close to being hung before their dramatic rescue by knights on bicycles. Unfortunately the Boss' dream of reform and a republic die in the conflict created by Lancelot and Queen Guinevere's indiscretion.

The third book that comes to mind is the expose *Black Like Me*, in which white, southern author John Howard Griffin darkened his skin, shaved his head and traveled through the deep south as a black man for several weeks late in 1959. Griffin noted in his preface that he originally planned the project "as a scientific research study of the Negro in the South". Instead he chose to make a far more personal and moving statement about racism by publishing a journal of his own experiences. Local reaction, when his project became public, forced Griffin's family to leave their hometown.

These storylines recently came to mind as I re-read John 1:1-18, the prologue to John's Gospel. The poetry powerfully summarizes Jesus' mission, particularly in the line, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us..." (v. 14). In the life of Jesus, God walked in our shoes, lived in our skin, became one of us. From that unique position he offers reconciliation and issues the invitation "Follow me." An earlier line reflects the relative obscurity of the incarnation. Neither the world or his own people recognized him (vv. 10-11). The event could be described as incarnation incognito. Consider that Luke and Matthew report only a short list of folks privy to the significance of Jesus' birth: Mary and Joseph, perhaps Elizabeth and Zechariah, the shepherds, the elderly Simeon and Anna, the Magi and inadvertently Herod and advisers. Later stories from Jesus' active ministry indicate that even his most loyal supporters failed to fully understand his mission. For instance, John the Baptist sent messengers from his prison cell asking, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus replied, "Go tell John what you hear and see..." ailing bodies are healed, the dead are raised and good news is shared with the poor (Matt. 11:2-15). Though other clues appeared along the way, full disclosure came by means of the double action in Jesus' death and resurrection. In that event God was most revealed to humankind. In the light of the Christ event we are unmasked for who we are, but more importantly, we are allowed to see who we might become. We are offered the opportunity to live differently.

Continued on the next page

Muskegon County Cooperating Churches would love to hear from you. If you have something you would like to share, please e-mail us at: [office.mccc@frontier.com](mailto:office.mccc@frontier.com) or send it to us in the mail. Please include pictures and/or your organizational logo.



Gleaners continued. . .

There is a story Leo Tolstoy told about Martin the Cobbler<sup>1</sup>. One late night Martin heard a voice calling his name and saying, "Look out into the street tomorrow, for I shall come." The next morning as he set about his work, the cobbler watched out his window. First he saw an aged veteran shoveling snow from the walk. Martin invited him in for warm tea and conversation. Later he noticed a woman with an infant poorly dressed for winter weather, so he invited her to come warm up by his stove. As they spoke, Martin discovered that the woman hadn't eaten since morning. So he set bread and soup before her and played with the child while she ate. He also learned that she had pawned her shawl the day before. So he found an old coat with which she could wrap herself and the baby. Still later in the day, Martin watched a boy steal an apple from an old woman peddler. When the woman grabbed the thief by the hair and began scolding him, Martin intervened, suggesting that the boy ask forgiveness and the woman forgive him. In addition he bought an apple from the woman and gave it to the boy. That evening Martin heard footsteps. When asked who was there, he heard "It is I". He then saw a vision of each person he had helped that day. His Bible happened to be open to the passage, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matt 25:40). Indeed the incarnation still comes to us incognito. Will we recognize Jesus when we meet him?

*Tom Wagner is a former pastor in the Church of the Brethren (Dunker) and serves MCCC as clerk and archivist. He can be contacted at [gleanertw@hotmail.com](mailto:gleanertw@hotmail.com)*

MUSKEGON  
MUSEUM OF ART  
Muskegon Museum of Art  
296 W. Webster Ave., Muskegon MI 49440

MEDIA CONTACT:  
Marguerite Curran  
mcurran@muskegonartmuseum.org  
Museum Office 231.720.2571

[muskegonartmuseum.org](http://muskegonartmuseum.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 16, 2020



**Muskegon Museum of Art Festival of Wreaths**  
New Wreath Walk event takes MMA's Festival of Trees outside and downtown  
November 24 – December 6

Muskegon, MI, Oct. 16, 2020 —The Muskegon Museum of Art's annual holiday event, the Festival of Trees is making some adjustments. This year, in consideration of community health, the MMA staff and FOT volunteer committee decided to spread the holiday spirit into downtown. The MMA, collaborating with downtown businesses and organizations, is organizing a new version of the annual holiday event – **Festival of Wreaths** – a wreath walk event that people can enjoy from the sidewalk or street from November 24 through December 6, 2020.

#### About Festival of Wreaths

According to MMA Assistant Director Catherine Mott, "The Festival of Wreaths will work two-fold, inspiring the holiday spirit and encouraging people to walk and explore downtown Muskegon." Each participating downtown business or organization will host a designer wreath provided by the MMA in a window facing the street or sidewalk from November 24-December 6. The MMA will also have a small gallery display of decor during the run of the Festival. The MMA will provide a walking map with the location of all the wreaths in both a printed and digital version, accessible via a QR code. The QR code will be printed on signage and available at [muskegonartmuseum.org](http://muskegonartmuseum.org). Printed maps will be available at the MMA store and at participating businesses starting November 24.

#### Hot Cocoa Hop Special Event

On Saturday, November 28 (Small Business Saturday), the MMA will host a Hot Cocoa Hop, serving free hot cocoa in the MMA parking lot from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. The event will encourage participants to check out all the wreaths and to shop at and visit local downtown Muskegon businesses and attractions. Wreath Walk maps will be available at the event. The MMA galleries and store will be open 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on November 28. The MMA is located at 296 W. Webster Ave., in downtown Muskegon. Visit [muskegonartmuseum.org](http://muskegonartmuseum.org) for more information.

The Festival of Wreaths presenting underwriter is Howmet Aerospace.

# # #



Muskegon Responds to the Needs of Our Neighbors!

The 41st Annual Muskegon CROP Hunger Walk took place (virtually!) on Sunday, October 4, 2020.

At least 14 congregations stepped up to the challenge of this unusual year!

Each group did their own Walk - some completely virtually, and some in person at their own locations.

Thru Oct. 22, \$5,150.00 has been directly contributed online - our best online amount ever!

If you haven't yet contributed, and would like to, please check out this link:

<https://www.crophungerwalk.org/muskegonmi>

We're still collecting physical pledges.

Congregations needing to turn in "real" or physical donations can mail them (checks only, please!) or drop them off to:

Kasey Rose  
Gravis Law  
120 W Apple Avenue  
Muskegon MI 49440

As always, our work benefits Church World Service and our 4 local partner agencies:  
AgeWell Services' Meals-On-Wheels  
Community enCompass' Community Garden/Urban Farm

Mission for Area People (MAP)'s Healthy Choice Pantry

Saturday Breakfast at First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

THANKS to Everyone for being involved in

**3-in-1 ANNUAL SALE**

**Friday, November 13  
from 9 AM – 5 PM**

**&**

**Saturday, November 14  
from 9 AM – 1 PM**

♦Inside "yard sale"

♦Bazaar items with a special \$10 sale table

♦Delicious baked goods  
(pies, cookies, brownies & more)



A **BBQ lunch** will also be available for \$5.00  
(Eat in or take out)



**First Congregational Church**

3212 Pontaluna Road ~ Fruitport

(just across from Edgewood Elementary School)

Questions?? Directions?? Please call (231) 865-3822

## "Pause and Pray"



Muskegon County Cooperating Churches is introducing an opportunity to "Pause and Pray" beginning on Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 4:30 pm and every Thursday at the same time through the end of the year 2020, excluding holidays.

Faith organizations and the public are invited to meet in Hackley Park for approximately 20 minutes each week to participate in a **prayer vigil** for our community, our country, and our world. We live in unsettling times resulting in anxiety and concern, in many of us, about the future. This is an opportunity to participate in prayers for calm and peace, prayers for social justice, prayers those who have had grave losses due to the pandemic, and prayers for our future.

Masks and distancing (even though we will be outdoors-for the safety of all.

Area Pastors and Church leaders will lead the prayer vigil each week.

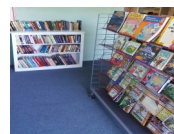
Church Leaders: If interested in leading a prayer vigil call our offices (231-727-6000) or the Rev. Lily Marx at (231-670-5911).



**Lakeside Baptist Church**

"The Clothes Closet" at LBC. We are open to anyone who needs clothing, all items are free. Shoppers are welcome to visit every 30 days. During the pandemic our clothes closet is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday by appointments. We schedule in half hour increments between the hours of 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Shoppers may call Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to make appointments.

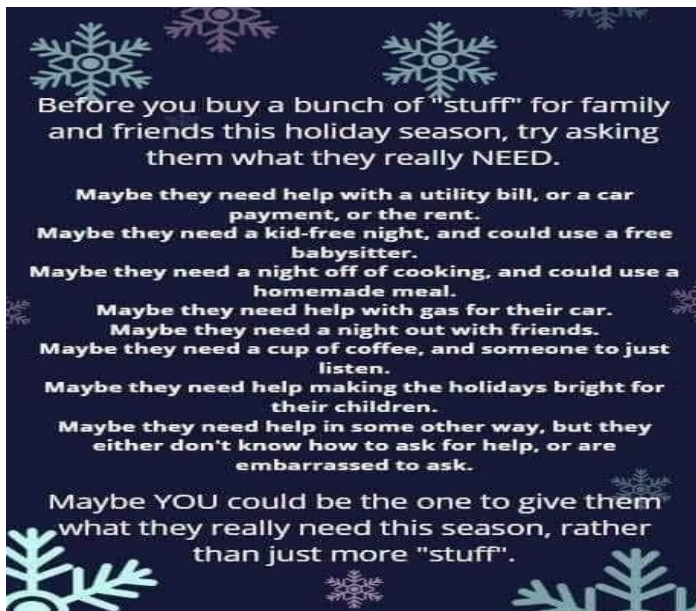

We do not require proof of income or identification.




## First Baptist Sesquicentennial

Attention: First Baptist Church of Muskegon will be celebrating its Sesquicentennial (150 Years) on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 10:30 AM. We have planned a special service to commemorate all of the years that we have been serving our Lord and Savior. If you or your family has had any affiliation with FBC, then we would be honored to Worship Christ with you. Please bring any pictures of loved ones or memorabilia that would help to show how far and wide God's love has been spread across the Earth because of God's blessings on FBC. You may join us at 1070 S. Quarterline. For More information, Call 231-773-5476.



Beginning October 19th, for  
Muskegon Public School kids age 13  
& up



Bethany Church would like to host up to 10 children, ages 13 and up, to assist in the virtual learning process. Our learning lab will be open from 8:30-12:30 Monday-Friday. We are located at 1005 Terrace Street in the McLaughlin neighborhood and have fast wifi and a clean, socially distanced and learning friendly environment. We also have pastors and volunteers on hand to help kids with school work! Please contact Jill Young ASAP, at 231-286-1256 or [jill@bethanychurchmuskegon.org](mailto:jill@bethanychurchmuskegon.org), if you are interested in reserving a spot for your learner.

231-722-8000

[askus@hackleylibrary.org](mailto:askus@hackleylibrary.org)

316 W. Webster Ave. Muskegon, MI, 49440

**November/December Events with Hackley Public Library**

**Visit [hackleylibrary.org](http://hackleylibrary.org) or HPL's Facebook page for even more events!**

**All Ages Programs**

**Folias Duo – “Live from Home”**

**Virtual Music Performance on Facebook**

**4:00 pm, Sunday, November 8**

Flutist Carmen Maret and guitarist Andrew Bergeron of the Folias Duo. Classical

music. Enjoy this LIVE performance on the Hackley Public Library Facebook page at 4 pm on Sunday, November 8! All ages welcome to enjoy. Free.

**Youth Services/ Teen Programs**

**Take and Make Crafts for Kids and Teens!**

Thankful Trees and Friendship bracelets, Jingle Sticks and Reindeer Hot Chocolate! Hackley Library has different craft kits for kids and teens to enjoy during the months of November and December. Free.

**Story Book Reads on Hackley Library's Facebook**

This holiday season, enjoy stories about Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa during special Story Book Reads on Hackley Library's Facebook page.

**Facebook LIVE and In-Person Story Time**

**10:30 am, November 5, 12, 19 / December 3, 10, 17 -- Toddler Story Time**

**10:30 am, November 6, 13, 20 / December 4, 11, 18 -- Preschool Story Time**

Registration is required by calling **231-722-8014**. Everyone present, including children 2 and older, must wear a face mask covering their noses and mouths.

**\*Please Note\*** On Thursday and Friday mornings, the Youth Services Department will be closed for browsing between 10:00 and 11:00. Holds pick up will still be available.

**Adult Services Programs**

**Hackley Crafts - Scrabble Ornaments**

**6:00 pm, Monday, December 7**

Virtually learn how to make Scrabble Ornaments on the Hackley Library Facebook page! Registration with a valid email address is required, limited to 20 people. Registration opens November 7. Free.

**Left to Write – Online Writing Prompts**

**2:00 pm, Every Wednesday - Posted to Facebook**

A creative writing group called Left to Write! Online, with prompts over Facebook. Once the library is hosting programs inside the library, we will have a special meeting to read over what you've written at home. Free.

<https://www.hackleylibrary.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/HackleyPL/posts/>

**\*Since MCCC was unable to fit all the information in this edition, please contact the library if you need more information on any of these programs.**



316 W Webster Ave • Muskegon MI 49440 • p 231-722-8000 • f 231-726-4724 • [www.hackleylibrary.org](http://www.hackleylibrary.org)

# the grand rapids Red project

## Of Muskegon

A Virtual Presentation to the Faith Organizations and  
the Public of Muskegon County

Tuesday, November 17 at 7 pm

Join us for this presentation on the Red Project

Who are they and what do they do in our county?

The goal of the program is to recognize addiction, the problems associated with addiction and provide the tools and education necessary to help people begin to recover while protecting their health the best they can.

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83357462423?pwd=dWpLOkRlW05ZWsrMmF4Z1Rlamlpdz09>

Meeting ID: 833 5746 2423

Passcode: 941721

One tap mobile

+13126266799, 83357462423#.....0#, 941721# US (Chicago)

+19292056099, 83357462423#.....0#, 941721# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 833 5746 2423

Passcode: 941721

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83357462423?pwd=dWpLOkRlW05ZWsrMmF4Z1Rlamlpdz09>

Sponsored by



## UPDATE

Holiday Breads and Pastry is a joint venture of Holiday Breads and Annunciation Orthodox Church to provide breads and pastry for the Christmas holidays. The monies received will benefit the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies-Muskegon & community agencies and programs supported annually by Annunciation Church.

The group is currently working on advertising dates, times, place, procedures for buying and paying for orders, pickup, and buying on site on the Saturdays scheduled for pick up. We will also work out plans for mailing orders to folks throughout the country.  
So stay tuned!

**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.

Lebanon Lutheran

Covenant Community Church RCA

Empowered Kids

Nancy A. Waters

Muskegon Church of the Brethren

Mary C. Payne

William Boelkins

Harbor of Grace Lutheran

Irma L. Buckner

William Paulson

Robert Vanderlaan

Dale T. Ertzinger

Sacred Heart

Thomas Tuori

First Presbyterian Church

Bill D. Page

Barbara M. Davis