

Big Rock Congregational Church Atlanta Michigan

A Community of Grace

CHIPS

Off the Big Rock



November 2023



Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!

1 Chronicles 16:34

Well, November is here. It is that time of year again when we start hearing calls to be thankful. These calls to be more thankful don't just come from churches. The entire unbelieving society around us is suddenly trying to be thankful. Christians and non-Christians alike get caught up in being more thankful. What is interesting, though, is that God, who is truly the Giver of all good things, is often nowhere to be seen in all of this "thankfulness." For example, Fall is the time when all kinds of Thanksgiving themed movies start popping up. There are romantic movies on the Hallmark channel about being thankful for all the "little things in life." You know the type: a man and woman have a chance encounter and suddenly become more thankful for the little things in life like orange tipped leaves on trees. But, as a Christian, do you know "who" is absent in all that thankfulness for the little things? God is absent (even though God is the maker of those trees).

Another example is a practice Christians and non-Christians alike will do around the Thanksgiving table. Families will often take turns going around the Thanksgiving table saying what they are thankful for. Some of the responses from little children are adorable. A five-year-old may be thankful for their pet rabbit. Very cute to be sure, but is God given credit for making the rabbit? When it comes to the adults, they may offer more thoughtful observations. A husband may look at his wife and heap praises of thankfulness upon her as she blushes, but sadly, God is not mentioned even in the slightest as the One who gave them marriage in the first place. A kind grandmother may be thankful she recovered from a recent illness, but she fails to attribute that good fortune to God who is the healer of all. Where is God when we consider being "thankful" this time of year? Is He the source of your thankfulness or, like the unbelieving world, is He absent? God doesn't have to be absent. He wants to be involved in every aspect of your life and your giving of thanks. God is the One who tipped the trees with bright oranges and to Him we can give thanks. God is the One who gave us our bunnies and to Him we can give thanks. God is the One who gives us marriage and preserves our health and to Him we can give thanks. Most importantly, it is God who chose to redeem us, to buy us back from the Fall into Sin for all eternity through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and for that we can give thanks to God every single day!

By Edward Brimenstein

Pastor of BRCC:

Pastor Keith Jones

Moderator:

Gail Fehr

Deacons:

David Bradley
Nancy Mantz

Trustees:

Judy Hoffman
Wayne Isbell

We exist to worship God, to share His love that all might be saved and to become more like Jesus Christ our Lord.

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

*1 Thessalonians
5:18*



Missions News

October-December 2023
Vol. 28 no. 4

The Fentons

SERVING IN NEW ZEALAND



A LAST-MINUTE OPPORTUNITY FOR MINISTRY

Two days before a community fundraiser for cancer support, Lisa was asked to be one of the main speakers and share her experience. After confirming that she could share *all* her story, she accepted the invitation and spoke to nearly 75 people about how the Lord had brought her through her first cancer journey.

Because she alluded to her second cancer experience, the organiser asked her to speak again after a short break to share that part of her account as well. And even though the second

cancer story was more difficult, Lisa lifted the Lord again as the One who got her through it.

Following her talk, one attendee bought the only copy of her book she had with her, while many others wrote down the details of how to order her book. The organiser asked Lisa if they could get together for lunch to discuss more of what Lisa had said.

We are so grateful that our Father gave Lisa that opportunity to glorify

Him and put into the hands of many people a clear presentation of His gospel message.

Please pray for continuing open doors to share the much-needed message of salvation in our country.

Lisa's updated book, **My Gift of Cancer**, is now available as a Kindle download. It can be found on Amazon by searching either the title or Lisa's name.

Please leave a review so others can find the book as well.



CHURCH MINISTRY LEADERS' RETREAT

We were able to host another ministry retreat for five national pastor and missionary couples. The day before the retreat, Lisa tested positive for Covid. The couples all asked her to still come (one wife saying the only reason she comes is to talk with Lisa!), and by mid-week, Lisa was able to join the group. Thank you so much for your prayers for the retreat. Below are some of the comments from the attendees:



"We look forward to this with excitement and leave knowing that our batteries have been recharged."



Spending time praying for each other

"This retreat is a MUST for pastors and wives. I am renewed, refreshed, and encouraged to continue our work in ministry."

"This retreat is truly rejuvenating to my wife and I. It provides us a safe place to process our year in ministry with peers we know and trust."

CHURCH PLANTING AND SUPPORT

We rejoice to share with you our church continues to grow both spiritually and numerically. Please pray as we disciple and strengthen believers, "who shall be able to teach others also."

At the same time, we have been blessed to serve in sister churches to support them while their missionaries are away. Thank you so much for your prayers for these opportunities to strengthen the Lord's family.

ANOTHER GRANDCHILD ON THE WAY

Yes, we're getting to that point in life where we get to share this again. Our daughter, Ashley, and her husband, Ezra, will be bringing a second grandchild into our family sometime in February. Please pray for a healthy pregnancy and delivery.

SABBATICAL

Finally, I would appreciate your prayers during my upcoming sabbatical where I will be hiking the length of New Zealand on Te Araroa, NZ's "Long Pathway." Please pray for ministry opportunities since many who undertake this kind of journey are very open to learning more about "spirituality" and faith. Pray for gospel opportunities. Please pray also for the church leaders who will be looking after our church plant while I am away. I will be staying in contact with them periodically, but pray for their spiritual strength.

Thank You!

We are so grateful for your faithful support and co-labouring with us here in NZ.

Kurt & Lisa Fenton

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Hastings, NZ 4122
krfenton@icloud.com

Sending Church
Calvary Baptist Church
1380 S. Valley Forge Rd.
Landsale, PA 19446



Missions News

Hi Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It's the season for Fall Retreats and perhaps you have had a chance to participate in one as well. I pray this finds you doing well and enjoying the change of seasons.

A VOID IS FILLED

Several weekends ago I went to a Women's Retreat for the Spanish-speaking church I'm a part of. My roommate for the weekend was a lady from Mexico named **Angela**.

That first night as we got to know each other I discovered that Angela had a huge void in her life. Those were her exact words. I knew that the only one who could fill that void, especially after being involved in a cult for 14 years, was Jesus.

So I shared the gospel with Angela and she **surrendered her life to Jesus** that first night. We've been communicating back and forth since then and I can tell that she is a transformed woman. She has a hunger to grow in Christ and God is definitely at work in her life. Praise God with me for our new sister in Christ and please pray that she will keep growing in Him.

WORLDWIDE DAY OF PRAYER

It was so appropriate on the most recent Worldwide Day of Prayer for Cru to have as their theme. "The Battle Belongs to the Lord" from 1 Chronicles 20:15b. I planned and oversaw the Austin area celebration of the day and we fought in pray for many different needs in our ministry and personal lives. I didn't sleep well the night before, but after it was over I slept for nine hours and even did a 50 minute walk in my new neighborhood, rejoicing at God's victory.

Bridges' Fall Retreat

Now I'm ready to head out to another Fall Retreat, this time with Bridges International. Our National director, Trae Vacek, and the new missions' pastor for Hill Country Bible Church (my home church), Andy Rodriguez, will be speaking and we are expecting 200 international students from 45 nations (up from 128 a year ago). When you add in the Bridges staff members, volunteers and children the total comes to 300.

People are coming from many locations in Texas as well as a group from Northern Louisiana. So please pray for safety in the travel there and back as well as some great conversations in route. Ask God to meet students where they are at and take them to the next step spiritually.

I will be helping with registration and will also be part of the prayer team. All of this is possible because of your faithful participation with me via your prayers, encouragement and finances. Most gratefully yours,

Harriet



The CE&D and Missions committees will be participating in the **October 31st** Trunk or Treat held in Briley park from **5 until 8**. We will be handing out candy, tracts, and a list of upcoming events at Big Rock. You are welcome to come and join in the fun.



Operation Christmas Child

Samaritan's Purse shares millions of shoebox gifts with children around the world through Operation Christmas Child. Each shoebox is a tangible way for a child to know about God's greatest gift, Jesus Christ.

After receiving the shoebox gift, children can then take part in *The Greatest Journey*, where they learn more about the Bible and God's love for them.

Through Operation Christmas Child, Samaritan's Purse is sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with millions of boys and girls in more than 100 countries each year. Many of these children have never before received a present or heard the true meaning of Christmas until they open a gift-filled shoebox from a person like you.

Fill a box of Christmas Joy for a girl or boy this Christmas season. The boxes will be in the front foyer (under the table) along with directions on how to fill it. This is a wonderful way to help spread the gospel of Jesus to the world. If you would like more information on filling a box, you can go to <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/> or just ask Gail or Marilyn for more information. The national collection week for the boxes is the third week of November 13th-19th. We would like Big Rock boxes in by **Sunday, November 12th** so we can get them to the collection center on time.

CE&D Update



Adult Sunday School: Come join us on **Sunday mornings at 9:15** we just finished DTS lessons on the book of Haggai and will begin the study Historical Background of the New Testament.

Small Groups: Small group continues their study of the book of James, Faith /Works by Matt Chandler. They will be meeting on November 8th and 29th (*this is a change of date due to Thanksgiving*) at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall. We would love to have you join us in this study.

Library: The library is still in need of volunteers to help sort books that have been moved to the youth house. Books and DVD's are still available to check out.

Children's Church - This month will be the team of Gail and Michelle.

SunShine Kid's Club has begun and the children are studying stories from the book of Genesis this month. Thank you to the leaders and the people who have given of their time and snacks for these children. If you would like to donate snacks for the club, please see Gail or Marilyn.

Prayer Breakfast - Meet with us as we fellowship, pray, and have breakfast every Wednesday at 9:00 am. If you could help make breakfast, please sign up on the sheet in the kitchen.

Elk Festival: Thank you to Lynn, Michelle, Cecilia and Nancy for your help with the Elk Festival parade and booth. It was a fun weekend.

We will be handing out candy and tracts at Trunk-or-Treat in Briley Park on Oct. 31st from 5 to 8. Come on by and visit us. We also have a 2024 calendar card to hand out to the adults that come by.

Next Meeting of CE&D committee: Thursday, November 16th after choir

Choir News



I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.
Psalms 69:30

Come join the choir as we prepare for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We meet at 5:30 on Thursdays and would love to have you join us.



Birthdays and Anniversaries



Seth H. 11/16

Tony & Dixie B. 11-23

Women's Fellowship News

We will be packing for Operation Christmas Child on November 1st at our monthly meeting. If you are purchasing items for the Women's Fellowship boxes, please put them on the blue table in the blue room and mark off what items you purchased for the boxes on the list on the white board in the fellowship hall.

If you would like to help with the filling of shoe boxes, you can join **BRCC Women's Fellowship packing** on **November 1st at 10:30**. You can also help with packing of boxes at the **Full Gospel Church** on **November 3rd and 4th from Noon to 5 pm**

Upcoming Event



Oct. 31st:	Trunk-or-Treat in Briley Park 5-8pm
Nov. 1st:	Operation Christmas Child packing day @ Big Rock 10:30
Nov. 19th:	Community Thanksgiving @ Full Gospel 5:00 pm
Nov. 21st:	Stampin' Up Party @ Big Rock 4:00 pm (see invitation on next page)
Dec. 3rd:	Advent Begins
Dec. 3rd:	Christmas Decorating Party 4:00 pm
Dec. 6th:	Cookie Making Day 10:30 (Women's Fellowship)
Dec. 17th:	Christmas Cantata and Annual Christmas Dinner 10:30 am
Dec. 21st:	Longest Night Service 7:00 pm
Dec. 24th:	Carols, Candles and Communion 7:00 pm
Jan. 7th:	Un-decorating Party 4:00 pm




Come
Join us

give thanks


What : stampin up Party
Where : Big Rock Church
When : November 21, 2023
Time : 4:00 pm
Hosted by: Catherine Kirby + Michelle Gandy
\$10.00 for 2 cards (If you place an order, the cards are FREE)

Lite snack provided




Community Thanksgiving

On Sunday, November 19th the Full Gospel Church will host the Community Thanksgiving Service at 5:00. This will be followed by a pot luck dinner. Meat and potatoes will be furnished. We are asked to bring a side dish or dessert for the meal.



Because of this pot luck, we will not be having our usual 3rd Sunday potluck at Big Rock. Please join in the sharing of the bountiful life that God has given to us.

Big Rock Congregational Church 8258 M-32, PO Box 683, Atlanta, MI 49709

989-785-2062, bigrockchurch@gmail.com, <https://www.bigrockchurchatlantamichigan.org/>

Prayers, Praises & Blessings - November 2023

Daily:

Pastor Keith, Marilyn, and family
Big Rock Leaders
Big Rock Congregation
The Ministries of Big Rock
Missions of Big Rock
SonShine Kid's Club
Our School District, staff & students
Local, State, Country & World Leaders
CCCC Conference (National & Local)
Persecuted Church
First Responders in the community
Maupo H. & Aleina B. (World Relief Y-
Malawi women)
Sari (Compassion Child)
Lord, give us boldness in our witness and may
our people be willing to obey the Great
Commission and take Your gospel
outside the walls of the church
building. Acts 4:29, Matt 28:19-20
That God will be glorified in all things done at
BRCC

Military:

Curtis B.
Michael C.
Cabria C.
Rachael L.
Beto V.
Megan R.

Missionaries:

Jeremy, Joy & family
Robert, Terry & family
Kurt, Lisa & family
Harriet S.
Susan S.
Caleb C. and family

Homebound:

Theila H.
Jean S.
Harry T.
Rose Mary K.
Bruce A.
Gaye K.
Elaine & Richard V.

Prayers for Healing:

Pastor Keith
David G.
Ritch H.
Jan F.
Jim G.
Joshua K.
Paul K.
Pat and Joanna S.
Jerry & Bob (Brothers of Joanna S.)
Asher
Jessica D. & family
Naomi
Don S. (July's cousin)

Prayers

David and Marilee G.
Nancy M. and Family
Sam M.
Owen M.
Jessica M. and children
Amy J. and family
Shelly
Milo

Praises & Blessings:

For the many servants that God has provided
in this congregation
For our church family
For a pastor and family that are so dedicated
to our Lord and this church
For our Prayer Warriors
The health of the congregation
The technology to broadcast our service to
those at home and overseas.

>>> November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 Sunday School 9:15 Sunday Service 10:30	30	31 Trunk-or-Treat Briley Park 5:00-8:00	1 Breakfast/Prayer Time 9:00 Women's Fellowship	2 Board Meeting 4:00 Choir 5:30	3 OCC Packing Day @ Full Gospel noon-5pm	4 OCC Packing Day @ Full Gospel noon-5pm
5 Sunday School 9:15 Sunday Service 10:30 Communion	6	7 SonShine Kid's Club 2:50-4:30	8 Breakfast/Prayer Time 9:00 Small Group 5:30	9 Choir 5:30	10	11 Veterans Day
12 Sunday School 9:15 Sunday Service 10:30	13	14 SonShine Kid's Club 2:50-4:30	15 Breakfast/Prayer Time 9:00 Shepherd's Meeting	16 Choir 5:30	17	18
19 Sunday School 9:15 Sunday Service 10:30 Community Thanksgiving 5:00	20	21 SonShine Kid's Club 2:50-4:30	22 Breakfast/Prayer Time 9:00	23 	24	25
26 Sunday School 9:15 Sunday Service 10:30	27	28 SonShine Kid's Club 2:50-4:30	29 Breakfast/Prayer Time 9:00 Small Group 5:30	30 Choir 5:30	1	2