

Big Rock Congregational Church Atlanta Michigan

A Community of Grace

# CHIPS

Off the Big Rock



## September 2025

### **"Seasons With God"** **By Michelle (Shelly) Grant**



We are approaching the Autumn season. I don't know about anyone else, but this is my favorite season by far. I love the cool, crisp air. I also love how God paints all of the beautiful colors this time of year.

Our God is a wonderful artist. "He has made everything beautiful in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Just as the seasons change, so do our seasons with God. Is there anything He is trying to teach you during this season in your walk with Him?

During each season in our walk with God, He may be trying to teach us something, but we have to truly listen as to what that may be. No matter what season we are in with God, they are all beautiful. Each season with Him will help us grow in Christ. Until the Lord calls us home, we will continue to have many different seasons with Him and continue to grow stronger in our faith in Jesus Christ. (Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV) "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:"

### **Pastor of BRCC:**

Dr. Keith Jones

### **Moderator:**

David Bradley

### **Deacons:**

David Bradley  
Gail Fehr

### **Trustees:**

Judy Hoffman  
Lynn Scharer

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

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

*Philippians 4:13  
(NIV)*

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

989-785-2062, [bigrockchurch@gmail.com](mailto:bigrockchurch@gmail.com), <https://>

# Missions News

By David P. Bonanza

CCCC Member and Minister at Mission of Grace Church



The future American church that thrives will be a global church!

God has brought the nations to our doorstep through immigration and global movement. The mission field is no longer only overseas—it is across the street, in our neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. Scripture reminds us that God’s heart has always been for all nations (Gen. 12:3; Matt. 28:19), that we are to love the stranger among us (Lev. 19:34), and that Christ has broken down dividing walls (Eph. 2:14). The



future American church that thrives will be a global church, reflecting the heavenly vision of every tribe, tongue, and nation worshipping the Lamb (Rev. 7:9). Thus, our call is clear: to welcome, love, and disciple the nations God has already placed in our backyards. A thriving American church will embrace its identity as a global family of God — multiethnic, multilingual, and united in Christ. The “mission field” is not only across the ocean but across the street! ~ DPB

## Thank You form RON & SHIRLEY HAMILTON

We want to say a big “thank you” for the special sendoff that was held at the conclusion of the annual gathering. We are encouraged by the love and support that we received as Ron’s term as Conference Minister ends. We also received numerous cards and personal greetings and value each expression of appreciation.

We know that a special group of people were responsible for the planning of the event. Thank you for your hard work: Susan Moody, Kerstin Turner, Scott Nice and Greg Wilcoxon. And thanks to Scott Nice and Paul McPheeters for the personal “roast” and “toast” that you shared.

We are very grateful for the gift of money to be used on a special vacation or event as we begin our retirement. This will be well used for some planned several “breakout” events and travel that we have planned for the coming months. Also, we love the portrait of the Split Rock Lighthouse on the North Shore of Minnesota. This area is one of our favorite vacation destinations and the picture will be a constant reminder of this treasured place.

This event played an important part in our desire to “end well” as we conclude our work for the CCCC. Ron counts it a joy and privilege to have served in the roles of Director of Church Multiplication and Conference Minister since 2007. Shirley has enjoyed her work in the office since 2012. We pray for the Lord’s special blessing on the Conference in the future.

## Letter from Harriet Smith

Hi Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The theme for Cru25, our national staff conference, in Milwaukee was...



### GOD IS ON THE MOVE!

It was super encouraging to hear story after story that underscored this theme. the following are a few examples.

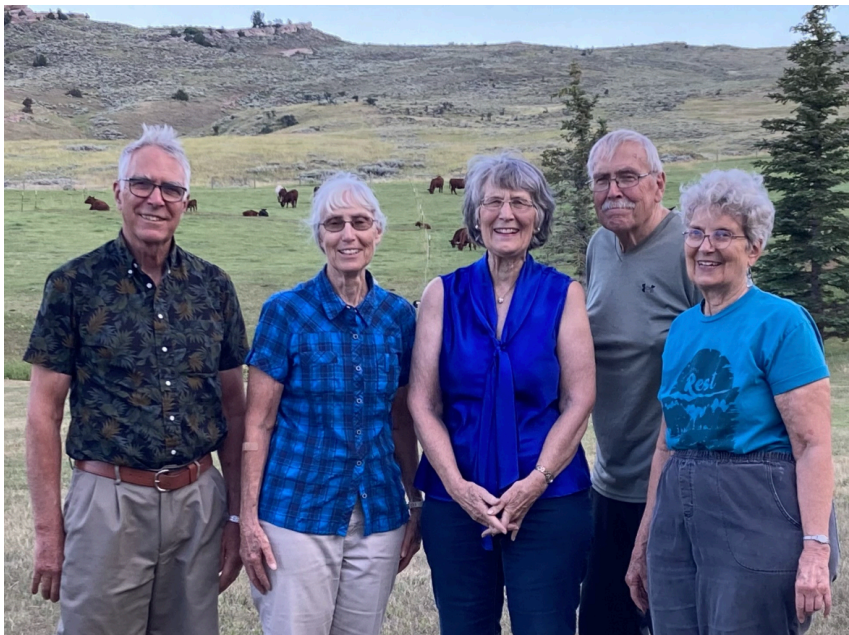
- More students in Ukraine joined staff this year than any other nation!
- Even after spending four years in prison for proclaiming Jesus, nine of our South Asian staff members have resumed doing ministry and have seen over 1000 baptisms!
- Jeff (not his real name) from East Asia was studying in Paris. He was praying and seeking God as he had not found any other believers when suddenly he met our staff and students on a Bridges summer mission, ready to help him grow and share Jesus with the nations in Paris.

Another highlight for me was to hear from our new President, David Robbins, and his wife, Meg (pictured above). The following are a few of his quotes that encouraged me to keep pressing on toward Jesus.

- "Ministry is not just about being servants of God; it's about being lovers of God. It's out of this love that everything flows."
- "We will never meet God in revival unless we have first met Him in our brokenness."
- I pray that our future is defined as a movement of people who keep falling in love with Jesus."

### WHEELCHAIR RIDE LEADS TO SALVATION

When I left Milwaukee a day early to make it in time for the Smith family reunion, I asked for wheelchair assistance. A sweet young woman named **Sarai** (who will soon begin her studies as a dental hygienist) took me to get my luggage and recheck in on a different airline. In the process of the ride, I shared the gospel with her and she decided to surrender her life to Jesus. I have been texting with her and she said, "Thanks to you I'm on a new journey in life."



### FAMILY LIFE

It was a blessing to be with my siblings and 50 other family members at the Smith family reunion in Lander, Wyoming, where my sister Janet and her husband Win live. That's their cattle in the background. From left to right the five siblings are Peter, Janet, Margaret, Martin and Harriet. I stayed on for another week after the reunion, helping Janet pick raspberries and catching up on rest.

### PODCAST

I was asked to be interviewed for the first of a series of monthly podcasts that Bridges

is doing for staff members to get to know each other better. It's called "**Bridging the Gap.**" [Click here](#) when you have about 23 minutes and want to hear more of my life story from Michigan to the nations. (Cont. on next page)



## THE BEST IS YET TO COME

When Cru started in 1951 as Campus Crusade for Christ it was preceded by a 24 hour prayer chain expressing our dependency on Jesus. This fall our national campus ministry (of which Bridges is a part) is initiating a **40 day 24 hour prayer chain from August 23-October 1**. You can be a part of it as well should the Lord led you. To sign up you can [navigate to the website](#) to choose a time and day(s) to pray. Ask God for a mighty move of God this fall on the college campuses among the students and faculty across America. From the start of this ministry Bill Bright's invitation was "Come Help Change the World" and he believed that the best place to start was with college students. Soon the slogan became "Win the campus Today, Win the World Tomorrow." Let's believe God together that **the best is yet to come**.

One last thing: [This video](#) describes the personal impact of Campus Crusade for Christ (now called Cru in the USA) over the last 74 years. I hope it encourages you. I am certainly grateful for you and how you have linked arms with me to help change the world.

Yes, thank you for your desire to store up eternal treasures through your partnership with me in the gospel,

*Harriet*



## Operation Christmas Child



I know Christmas is four months away, but shopping for the shoeboxes has been going on for months. Before you go out and purchase an item for the Women's Fellowship boxes, please check out the inventory list on the white board in the fellowship hall. There is also a list of ideas for the boxes and items that can not be included.

There is a website that you can go to and build a shoebox that will be sent to countries who have strict customs and regulations. [https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-](https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline/)

[christmas-child/buildonline/](https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline/)

Women's Fellowship has decided to pack 20 boxes. If you would like to help with the \$10 shipping and Greatest Journey materials please see Joanna or Gail on how you could help.





## BREAKTHROUGH FAITH

2025 Annual Gathering

August 4-7, 2025

The Florida Hotel - Orlando

Here is the link to listen to the sessions of the annual gathering. There is also a link on the page to listen to the various breakout sessions that were recorded.

God bless  
PK

<https://www.cccusa.com/ag25/>

If you click on the link above, it will take to a page that has the plenary sessions with James Chung

- The Spirituality of Generations
- The Dynamics of Breakthrough
- The Balance of Breakthrough

If you click on the word Here, you will be able to listen to 13 breakout sessions

- Strange New World: Characteristics of our Post-Christian Culture
- Applying the Gospel to Modern Cultural Issues
- Engaging Your Church with the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution
- Fanning the Flames of Faith
- Glorifying God by Believing His Promises
- Help For Preaching the Prophets Igniting Your Men's Ministry
- Igniting Your Men's Ministry
- Introduction to the CCCC
- Leading for Less Conflict and Greater Unity - Keith Jones
- Strategies for Effective Interim Ministry
- The Alignment Discipleship Process
- The Mystique of Multiplication
- What's Worldview Got to Do With It?

## CE&D Update



**Adult Sunday School:** Join us on **Sunday mornings at 9:15.** We will continue our study of the book of Isaiah with video from DTS, taught by Dr. Bramer, reading from Isaiah, and discussing it.

**Bible Study:** Pastor Keith will be starting a Bible Study group beginning in September. We will be meeting on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 5:30 in the fellowship hall. We are planning on our first meeting in September to be an outside meeting and bonfire cook out. *(weather permitting)*

**Library:** Even though the library is not up and running, you can still check out books to read. There will be a sign out sheet available on the center peninsula on a clipboard. We have planned a work day for September 24th after breakfast and prayer.

**Children's Sunday School and Children's Church:** Michelle and Juli will continue with Children's Sunday School at 9:15 using the study *Attributes of God for Toddlers*. Marilyn and Melanie will lead the Children's Church during September. Children's Church will continue to use the TrueWay Kids and Bible Stories for the Young curriculum on stories from the New Testament.

**Prayer Breakfast** will continue to meet at 9:00 in the fellowship hall on Wednesdays. Join us after for prayer. If you could make breakfast on Wednesday, please sign up on the sheet in the kitchen.

**Next Meeting of CE&D** will meet on **September 18th** at 4:30.

## Women's Fellowship News



**W**omen's Fellowship would like to thank those who were part of the Flea Market in August and donated to the Women's Fellowship fund. The money will be used to support outreach activities. It was a fun time of fellowship in the sun and the rain. Thank you Cathy I. for the delicious homemade pita bread and the olive oil dip, it came at the perfect time to give us energy to finish up the afternoon.

We would like to thank Nancy M. for her work the past two years leading Women's Fellowship and want to welcome Joanna S. as leader of the fellowship. We will continue to meet on the first Wednesday of the month after Prayer Breakfast.

# Current Project List

- Janitor's closet
  - Needs light sanding before sheet installation, caulking
  - Acquire & install new faucet
- Bathroom
  - Need topcoat of joint compound before sanding to paint
  - Needs glue stripped from floor before proceeding
- Ice storm cleanup
  - ~~Around barn & youth house~~
  - Tops on ground back along windbreak
  - ~~Sticks in lawn~~
  - ~~Remove stumps at parsonage~~
- Outdoor painting:
  - Doors
  - Yellow safety posts
- Big Rock Park
  - Lawn mowing: ongoing
  - ~~Branch cleanup~~
  - String trimming
  - Spray Roundup to reduce trimming
  - Transplanting daylilies
    - ~~Dig & plant remainder~~
    - Water
  - ~~Fertilize daylilies & lilacs~~
  - Sign repair/repainting
  - Additional dirt so care easier & safer
  - Remove old stump at top of hill
  - Kill/Remove scrub trees from ditch banks
- Library
  - Shelve and organize books (ladies working on this)
- Church & Parsonage lawn & landscape
  - Lawn mowing: ongoing
  - Personal lawnmower repair
    - Fertilize lawn?
    - Weed control?
  - ~~Fertilize trees & shrubs~~
  - ~~Insecticide on lawns: completed~~
  - ~~Spray Trees & Shrubs with insecticide~~
    - ~~Tent caterpillars & beetles~~
  - String trimming around church and parsonage
  - Weed flower beds
- Siding removal & replacement
  - Parsonage siding repair
    - Waiting on crews
- Photo directory
  - On hold
- Background checks
  - New company & new forms
- Church office
  - Clean
  - Organize
  - Re-file older documents
- Kitchen Door Awning
  - Support repair/replacement
- **Remove cement blocks from front stoop**
- ~~Rebuild border around front bed~~
- ~~Trim back suckers on front trees~~
- ~~Remove dead plants (e.g. rose bushes)~~
- Remove or reset black plastic borders
- Raise ground & install plastic, cement pavers in back corner
- Freshen mulch
- Clean walls of car port
- Psi wash back wall of parsonage
- ~~Replace dryer vent at parsonage~~
- ~~Replace front spigot @ parsonage~~
- Repair/replace 2 leaking faucets in parsonage
- Parsonage deck
  - Replace rotting boards
  - Psi wash
  - Stain or seal
- Picnic pavilion
  - ~~Cleaned & prepped for use~~
  - ~~Tables & chairs brought from barn & cleaned~~
  - ~~Grill brought up from barn~~
  - ~~Fill propane tanks~~
- Move fire pit
- Change banners/Put away Lent & Easter Deco.
- Change to green paraments
- Switch in men's room
- Speaker switch in nursery
- Wasp nests
- ~~Open nursery window~~
- ~~Spread mulch under swingset~~
- Est to replace broken basement windows
- Est for generator cutoff connection
- Sewer line clean & repair





## Birthdays and Anniversaries



Nancy M.	9-6.	Wayne & Cathy I.	9-11
Elora D.	9-8	Curt & Juli B.	9-16
Keith J.	9-12	Don & MaryAnn M.	9-19
Curt B.	9-19	Pat & Joanna S.	9-19
Prabhu D.	9-19		
Melanie S.	9-25		

## Choir News



**S**ing to God! Sing praises to his name. Exalt the one who rides on the clouds. For the Lord is his name. Rejoice before him.

*Psalm 68: 4*

Choir will begin work on Thanksgiving and Christmas music on September 11th. We would love to have you join us as we fellowship and work on the music for these special services.

## Upcoming Events

<b>August 31st:</b>	Annual Reports due in the office
<b>Sept. 10th:</b>	First Bible Study at 5:30 with a cook out
<b>Sept. 21st:</b>	Annual Meeting following worship service and 3rd Sunday Pot-luck
<b>Sept. 26-28:</b>	41st Elk Festival
<b>Oct. 25th:</b>	Kelly's Card Making Retreat at the church

# Car Care Corner.

By Gabriel Secrist



## Car Care Corner Conclusion

Ask someone which is the best car and you may hear "The Bugatti Veyron" with over 1000 horsepower from a 16 cylinder engine in a W configuration, as two V8 engines on one crankshaft. Another would proudly point to their electric Chevy Bolt family car. The best in any of these cases will be dependent on many factors and considerations.

Is there an ultimate best available? How could we know?

The only way is to get to the heart of the matter, the primary reason for wheels.

For the purpose of conduct legitimately expected of those capable of meaningful function to the point of contribution to society, personal transportation is a necessity. It is part and parcel to freedom and opportunity in a vast and spread out world that moves at a rapid pace. To do our parts as individuals, we need dependable vehicles or access to them.

If our goal is to function optimally, it would behoove us to seek the vehicle which most closely aligns with our highest values.

If I value service, I will strive to ensure consistency therein, because what good is service that can't be trusted? And cars are expensive, so I will seek which is built to the highest standards of workmanship. I am prepared to spend more for a greater value to acquire what is most worthy of my expenditure in order to achieve the service I anticipate.

I will learn what is required to maintain the equipment for a maximal service life, and be diligent in the duties I embrace as a responsible owner and operator. This includes research in advance of actions as well as a readiness to make a mess and clean it up right away.

With these in hand, the tenets and principles of a true car care enthusiast, one can develop the experience required to evaluate products by their engineering and design through proper understanding of intended operations and optimal use case scenarios. By interactive experience and courageous exertion, these manners of thought will guide one to the very best of whatever they seek.

Education comes from the continuous humility to accept that there could be a better way, a greater good, a superior option, or a deeper truth.

One who values many miles at the speed limit over turning gas into noise enjoys his car much longer and for less money. And I will save you some time by telling you that I drive and maintain two Toyotas with which I am well pleased, but by now you understand there is much more to it than that.

Study accumulates benefit when we put learning into practice.

# Prayers, Praises & Blessings - September 2025

## Daily:

Pastor Keith, Marilyn, and family  
Big Rock Leaders will serve with wisdom and discernment  
Big Rock Congregation  
The Ministries of Big Rock  
Missions of Big Rock  
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)  
Smooth out the rough places in my life  
Mould my life to be a living example of the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit  
Revive my prayer life O Lord.  
Pray for the new BRCC budget

## Military:

Curtis B.  
Michael C.  
Cabria C.  
Rachael L.  
Beto V.  
Megan R.  
Andrew H.  
Uriah P.

## Missionaries:

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

## Homebound:

Theila H.  
Bruce A.  
Gaye K.

## Prayers for Healing:

David G.	David B.
Jan F.	Michelle G.
Jim G.	Joshua K.
Paul K.	Pat & Joanna S.
Allen P.	Naomi & Dick R.
Ricky J.	Jamie S.
Jerry K.	Monica
Esther R.	Jerry Z
Sarah R.	Jessica D. Mother-in-law Rajini
Kay L.	Asher
Pat F.	Martha C.
Steve T.	Sara Q.
Ann M.	Janessa B.
Peggie O.	Cindy
Esther H.	Miranda
Sonya	Don B.
Josh S.	
Tanya	

## Prayers in General:

Jessica & Prabhu D. & Family  
Taylor and Family  
Burk Family  
Jim Z. (*Jail Ministry*)  
Bill H. (*Jail Ministry and health*)  
Nancy M. (*new position in township*) & Family  
Amy C. & family  
Shelly G.  
Dixie, Tony, and Cecilia  
Becky H. & family  
Kim W.  
Rebecca  
Tanya & Juan

## Praises & Blessings:

For the free gift of salvation  
For God's unconditional gift of love  
For the beauty that the changes of the season brings  
Kim's car  
For the grace that will rest upon us



# >>> September

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31 Praise Team 8:30 Sunday School 9:15 Worship Service 10:30	1 Labor Day	2	3 Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Women's Fellowship 10:30	4 Board Meeting 4:00	5	6
7 Praise Team 8:30 Sunday School 9:15 Worship Service 10:30 Communion Sunday	8	9	10 Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Missions Meeting 10:30 Bible Study 5:30 followed by a bonfire cookout	11 Choir 5:30	12	13
14 Praise Team 8:30 Sunday School 9:15 Worship Service 10:30	15	16	17 Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Shepherd's Meeting 10:30	18 OE&D Meeting 4:30 Choir 5:30	19	20
21 Praise Team 8:30 Sunday School 9:15 Worship Service 10:30 Annual Meeting 12:00 PotLuck after Meeting	22	23	24 Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Library Work day 10:30 Bible Study 5:30	25 Choir 5:30	26 Elk Fest 5:00	27 Elk Fest 10:00
28 Praise Team 8:30 Sunday School 9:15 Worship Service 10:30	29	30	1 Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Women's Fellowship 10:30	2 Board Meeting 4:00 Choir 5:30	3	4