



# WESTLAKE NEWS

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## *Investing in the Eternal: A Tribute to My Mother*

If you were to ask anyone what immediately comes to mind when you mention any given month, you would get a variety of answers from holidays, anniversaries, birthdays, to special events that occurred or are scheduled to occur in that month. So what comes to mind for April: Easter, spring break, taxes due on April 15, the April showers that will bring May flowers?

Yes, I admit that all of those come to mind, but more important to me is April 14. On this day, we celebrate the sheer delight of the first breath of life on earth of our oldest daughter, Leticia, who turns 37 this year, and the first breath of heaven of my mother, who went to be with the Lord at age 80 in 2000. I offer this April newsletter as a tribute to my mother.

She stands out as one individual (among many) who God greatly used to impact my

faith. Her life growing up was anything but easy. Born in 1920, she was an only child. Her parents divorced in 1930 in an era when divorce was not common. Her parents were divorced for 10 years, got remarried, were married again for 10 years, and then got divorced once again. (My grandfather then went back to the Netherlands and married his first cousin). One would not exactly describe this as a stable family situation.

Being only ten when her parents first divorced, one might expect that she would have lived with one of her parents, or at least gone back and forth between the two. But this was not the case. Her mother battled mental illness. In those days, they simply sent them away to be hospitalized in an insane asylum, which was her residency a significant part of her adult life. Her dad (my grandfather), well, he was what some described as a “*real piece of work*”. He was

known as “*Wild Bill*” in the conservative Dutch community of Pella, Iowa.

Although both of my mother’s parents went to church most Sundays, separately during their divorced seasons, together when married (when her mother was not hospitalized), her dad did not exactly demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit. He often was known to try to get my grandmother’s attention by yelling, “Hey woman!” I can’t say I ever enjoyed spending a whole lot of time with him, as I never seemed to do anything right in his eyes. Love is not a word that ever comes to mind in thinking of him.

From the time her parents were divorced for the first time, to the time my father proposed to her, she lived in 17 different homes: friends, relatives, pastors, and everything in between. Amidst the instability of home life, and being raped as a teen, she persevered; she even played basketball in high school and went on to become the valedictorian of her 1937 high school graduation class of 26 in Eddyville, Ia. Although she had a \$500 scholarship to attend Central College in Pella, Iowa (which was a lot of money in that day, with college tuition significantly lower than today), she opted to get a certificate to teach country school, and taught until she and my father were married in 1940. (Married women did not teach country school in those days, at least in Iowa).

Married life was not exactly easy, but she was determined to make things work. My parents were one week shy of being married 51 years when my dad passed away. Further,

hating the loneliness of being an only child, she compensated by giving birth to 8 of us children. I was the last one, and I doubt delivering a 10lb. boy was a piece of cake.

We never had a lot of money, but *I would not trade my growing up years for anything*. We always had food on the table, clothes to wear, and a place to call home (although my bedroom in the winter felt like camping in the wilderness as it was not unusual for the temperature to drop below freezing); faith in Christ and church provided the guiding principles to live by, and having fun together was built into the fabric of family life. Friends and neighbors were welcome at any time. There was always a place at the table. My folks were never able to own a house until in their retirement (as my mother inherited the home her dad built, upon the death of my step grandmother), but wherever we resided, she made it “home.”

My mother started working outside the house when I began school; I recall her packing and carrying huge crates of chickens at a poultry processing plant, and cooking at the local college and the nursing home that would years later become her residency before her death while battling Alzheimer’s. During her life she faced also faced other health challenges: bi-polar mental illness, three bouts of cancer, open heart surgery, and various other surgeries, two of which were related to 5 hernias being repaired.

Amidst all of the challenges, she demonstrated a profound love for her Lord, as did my father. When I did her funeral, I

summarized her life with the theme of “Securities and Investments.” Plain and simple, her security (and identity) was in Christ; her investment was in people, and the work of the kingdom. No matter where she was, her purpose was to love and serve people; if a door opened to share the hope that was in her, she walked through that door. Her focus was not on the temporal, but the eternal.

When she would come home from work, she seldom talked about the actual work itself; rather, she shared about the people she worked with, the things for which she was praying about for them, and the needs she was seeking to meet on behalf of them. Her life was all about ministry, and making an impact on others.

She tirelessly planted, planted, and planted

seeds of faith; watered, watered, and watered them with grace and love; and experienced the joy of the harvest (at times from her own planting and watering; at other times from where others had planted and watered). She always felt that we could accomplish more for the kingdom, if it didn’t matter who got the credit. In numerous writings I have been challenged with the question, “How many people will be in heaven, because of me (us)?” “What legacy are we leaving and how will we be remembered?” While none of us can ultimately take credit for anyone being in heaven, I know that countless lives were truly impacted for Christ through my mother. Amidst her flaws, like we all have, I am so indebted for the example she set.

Blessings,  
*Pastor Roger*

**CURRENT ELDERS**

**Class of 2018**

Frank Crookes  
Tara Dolbee

**Class of 2019**

Charles Eppright  
Truman Smyth

**Class of 2020**

Jody Owens (Clerk)  
Sara Paulson  
Gary Gammons  
Jean Smith

**CURRENT DEACONS**

**Class of 2018**

Kerri Comai  
Karen Patterson  
Ceci Porter

**Class of 2019**

Kathy Powell

**Class of 2020**

Eleanor Shelley  
Shirlee Burlingame  
Thera Good  
Donna Lang  
Linda Morcombe



**Please remember** the following members of the congregation in your daily prayers: Jack Hungerford, Marian Jewett, Art and Pat Wickert, Richard Phillips, Larry and Susan Gregory, Grace Taylor, Bill Lang, Tom Lightbody, Roger Cowles, Paul and Martha Yunker, Frank and Bev Crookes, Jill Grandia, Charlotte Flickema, Lorraine Wonderly, Barb Hoyle.

## April Celebrations

### Birthdays

- 4 Clark Maddox  
Dick Phillips
- 9 Sharon Hungerford
- 11 Wilma Paulson
- 12 Michael Bishop  
Kerri Comai
- 17 Robyn Gerber
- 19 Ann Stovall
- 23 Tom Lightbody
- 25 Michele Young
- 28 Terrie Gammons

### Anniversaries

- 6 Jack & Sharon Hungerford
- 27 Mike & Laura Bishop

## DEACON NEWS FOR MARCH

Christ Has Risen! He has Risen Indeed!  
The Deacons would like to remind everyone that the same power that brought Christ from the grave lives in each one of us through the Holy Spirit living within us. We each have the Holy Spirit's power to shine brightly for Christ to our church family and our community. We would like to thank Mark and Kathy Powell for the delicious Easter breakfast that we shared and also thank you to everyone who brought in breakfast goodies. What a wonderful time of fellowship. Our Cards for College Kids mission has wound down for the year with the sending out of Easter cards. If you feel led by God to continue this card ministry on your own, please see Kerri for addresses for our college kids. Be looking forward to a possible return of potluck BBQ after worship service, as another way to fellowship with each other. Stay tuned for more info.

Love, Kerri

## Mission & Communication Update

Many of our mission projects focus on hunger relief. During April, we have an opportunity to assist our Lakeview Food Pantry. For every donation made to the Food Bank of South Central Michigan and designated for the Lakeview Food Pantry, there will be an additional 10% added to the Lakeview Food Pantry account. The Food Bank can provide 6 meals from every dollar donated so the Lakeview Food Pantry can really benefit from the 10% additional donation. For more information, visit the Food Bank website at [www.foodbankofscm.org](http://www.foodbankofscm.org).

## WESTLAKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FINANCIAL SUMMARY

February 28, 2018

### OPERATING BUDGET

	MONTH	YTD	BUDGET
INCOME	8,620	35,841	134,121
EXPENSES	14,604	30,168	171,771
INCOME VS EXPENSES	(5,985)	5,674	

The PW mission projects for April are:

- Knick Knacks to be used at the Marian Burch Facility for bingo, game prizes, or birthday gifts.
- we will continue working on blankets and dresses.
- Bibles and Christian books are needed for The Haven of Rest

We encourage you to wear something orange (either clothing or a ribbon) on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of every month. This will help bring awareness to the fight against human trafficking.

## **DATES OF PW EVENTS:**

### **June 12, 6:00 p.m. Tri-Church Salad Supper**

Westlake is the host this year so we want to encourage every woman to come and enjoy the program and salads. If you are willing to provide a salad for this event please sign up on the sheet on the PW window. Jody Owens is presenting.

### **June 5-8 Ladies' Day at Gull Lake Ministries**

Our church group goes on Thursday, June 7. Chrystal Hurst is our speaker and JJ Heller is our music leader. Crystal will encourage us to **"keep it all together"**. Cost is \$25.00 for the day with lunch included

### **May 5th is Church Women United Friendship Day**

We will be honoring 4 women from Westlake as Key Women in our Church: Kerri Comai, Sharon Hungerford, Nancy Chapin, and Kathy Powell. All women are invited to attend. Our theme is "Reaching for Wholeness in Gratitude for God's Presence." Our prayer service centers on the role of Christian Women in addressing the social needs of hunger and poverty, especially in children.

**DO YOU LIKE TO SEW, KNIT, CROCHET, OR CUT UP?????**

We are continuing the project of dresses and sani-panties throughout the year for the children in our mission fields. If they do not have the correct clothes to wear, the government will not allow them to go to school and so many of them do not get any education.

We are also continuing the project of making baby blankets for the Early Childhood Development organization. Every child born in Calhoun County is given a basket from this organization and it contains a blanket and other items to be used for a new baby.

We can always use:

- people,
- material (flannel and cotton material with objects printed on it for our blankets and sani-panties),
- thread and yarn,
- pillow cases for our dresses,
- financial help to buy supplies.

We have not set a sewing day, but if you are interested, contact Shirlee Burlingame for more info as there may be something you can do at home. We thank you for your support as every contribution does help.