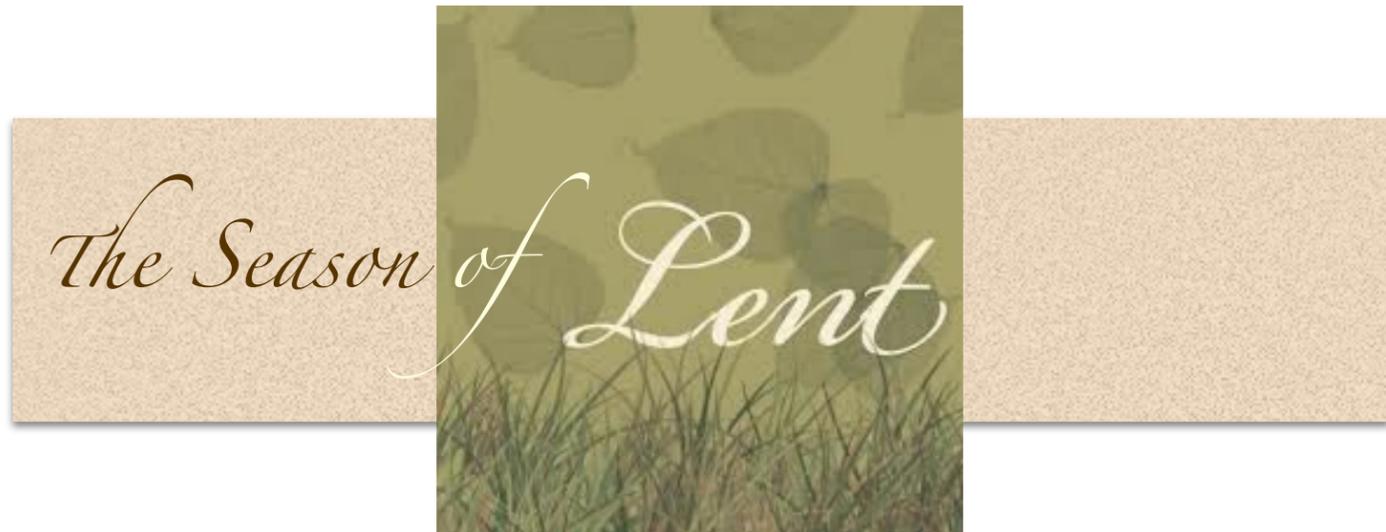


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**Watch our sermons
on our website!**



E-mail: office@wpdbc.org
Phone: 989-686-1360

Office Hours:
Monday thru Friday
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
(Closed for lunch noon - 1 p.m.)

- Pastor Rev. Matthew Schramm (ext. 204)
- Parish Associate
Linda Williams (ext. 203)
- Church Secretary
Judy Harrelson (ext. 201)
- Treasurer
Heather Heidman (ext. 206)
- Christian Education
Sandy Graves
Dana Schramm (ext. 208)
- Custodian
Harold Miller (ext. 205)

THE WESTMINSTER LOG

THE WESTMINSTER LOG

My friend Jeremy is a high school counselor in North Carolina. Recently, he shared a story about finding purpose in his work and undertaking a new project:

"About a year ago, I met with a senior and his father because the kid had failed a required math course and would not be eligible for most four-year colleges. Graduation also was in jeopardy. It was not a surprise but still a difficult conversation, mostly because both parent and kid (who, in a short amount of time, had become one of my favorites) looked so discouraged and defeated, and maybe a little ashamed. All of my affirmations about the goodness of the kid's personhood could not lighten their burdens. In that moment, I felt defeated, too.



Happy Valentine's Day

The father later sent an email to thank me for the meeting. "Joe's food is encouragement," he wrote. Those words stand out in my memory for two reasons. First, I immediately stopped reading and interpreted the father as saying that he would withhold food until the kid improved his grades, which made me contemplate whether I needed to call Child Protective Services in order to report a case of neglect. Second, I realized what he *actually* meant, and the sentiment made an impression. Throughout the remainder of the email, all the father asked of me was to encourage his son as much as possible, and I remember thinking to myself, "I can do that." It was such a simple, meaningful call to action.

Since that email, I've had this idea floating in my head. There's a lot about my job that is challenging; often I feel like I don't know what I'm doing or whether I'm making a difference. What I do know is that I can provide encouragement to every student who walks into my office. I'm hoping that this new project will help me do that a little bit better and a lot more intentionally."

In the 42nd Psalm, the writer calls out in despair to God, longing for deliverance and hope in the midst of trial, saying, "My tears have been my food day and night." It's a line that has always stood out to me for its rich imagery; that in our darkest days, it can seem that the only thing sustaining us is our anguished yearning for God, a desperate hope that somehow, God will not abandon us.

How much more beautiful would our days be if we were to take a page from Christ's book and "feed the hungry" at every opportunity? And, what a simple thing it is to remember that for so many in the the world, encouragement and hope are the food they need! Words of kindness and love cost us nothing, but are often exactly the gift that is needed the most.

So it is that we have a simple, meaningful call to action: Seek out our neighbors who survive on their tears, and feed them love and encouragement. May we remember that this month as we celebrate love, and always, as we seek to share the love of Christ with a world so very hungry.

See you in church!

Pastor Matt

- INSIDE -

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
<p>Happy Birthday to...</p> <p>Gloria Bublitz Florie Wright Richard Case Richard Hebner Richard Talbot Gerald Wachowiak Joyce Wachowiak</p> <p>William Auger Margaret Belknap Robert Hanson Ruth Hankinson John Young Mary Lou Higgins Donna Horn Ann Morse</p>	<p>1</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Bay Chorale Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Deacons</p>	<p>2</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts and Hands 6:00 p.m. Personnel 7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150</p>
<p>7</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m. Worship Service 11:45 a.m. Annual Meeting of the Congregation / Souper Bowl Caring 3:00 p.m. Club 345 5:30 p.m. Youth Group</p>	<p>8</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Bay Chorale Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Finance Meeting 6:30 p.m. Small Group 7:00 p.m. Family & Fellowship 7:30 p.m. Stewardship</p>	<p>9</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts and Hands 1:00 p.m. Lions Board 7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150</p>
<p>14</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m. Worship Service 11:45 a.m. Fellowship Time 3:00 p.m. Club 345 5:30 p.m. Youth Group</p>	<p>15</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Bay Chorale Rehearsal</p>	<p>16</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts and Hands 7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150 7:00 p.m. Session Meeting</p>
<p>21</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m. Worship Service 11:45 a.m. Fellowship Time 3:00 p.m. Club 345 5:30 p.m. Youth Group</p>	<p>22</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Bay Chorale Rehearsal</p>	<p>23</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts and Hands 12:00 p.m. Spirituality of Aging 1:00 p.m. Log Crew 7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150</p>
<p>28</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m. Worship Service 11:45 a.m. Fellowship Time 3:00 p.m. Club 345 5:30 p.m. Youth Group</p>	<p>29</p> <p>6:30 p.m. Small Group Meeting 7:00 p.m. Bay Chorale Rehearsal</p>	

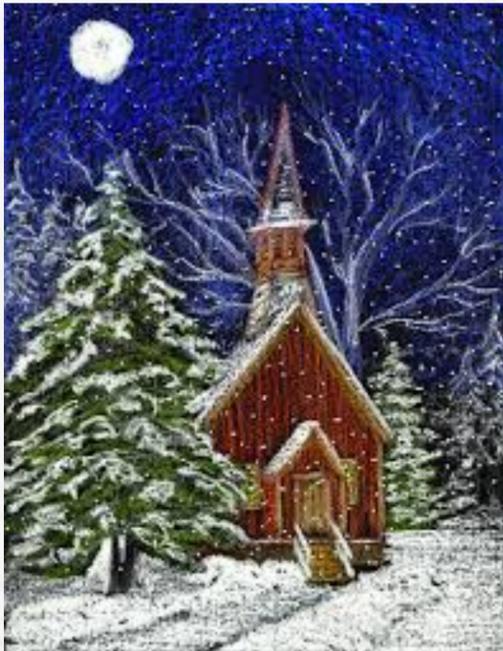
Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>3</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Property 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice 7:00 p.m. Mission P'Ship</p>	<p>4</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 7:00 p.m. PW Board</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>10</p> <p>1:00 p.m. Disability Network 5:45 p.m. Bay City Fireworks 6:00 p.m. Worship Committee 7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship Service 8:00 p.m. Spiritual Growth</p>	<p>11</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>17</p> <p>6:30 p.m. Lenten Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Choir Practice</p>	<p>18</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 1:00 p.m. Esther Circle 1:00 p.m. Lydia Circle 6:30 p.m. Humane Society 6:30 p.m. Deborah Cir.</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>24</p> <p>6:30 p.m. Lenten Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Choir Practice</p>	<p>25</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 5:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry 6:30 p.m. Hannah Circle</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>



Winter 2016 Communion Servers

February

Randy Thibo
Sandy Thibo
Kaye Walker
Pat Horning
Betty Lunger
Tom Majcarzak
Dawn Reszke
Marilyn Bechtel
Sue Armstrong
Bill Auger



March

Jack Gustafson
Len Petroff
Sheryl Petroff
Diane Grabke
Candy Green
Donna Tetil
Pati LaLonde
Nancy Swantek
Judy Randall
Joy Hebner

Condolences

Prayers of the congregation are extended to the family and friends of Diane Hoff.

Diane passed away Wednesday, January 20, 2016.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Building Improvement Fund

November Balance:
\$20,105.42
December Income:
\$3,081.00
December Expense:
\$532.52
December Balance:
\$22,653.90

Operating Fund

December Income:
\$44,393.96
December Expense:
\$44,443.86

Major Repairs Fund

\$24,741.88

Donate online at
www.wpcbc.org



Thank you to Pastor Matt for your support and care for Steve's family. They were comforted by your message of hope and kindness.

Thanks also to all of the "Kitchen Angels" for the delicious luncheon; it was greatly appreciated.

-- Jan & Bonnie Scheddel



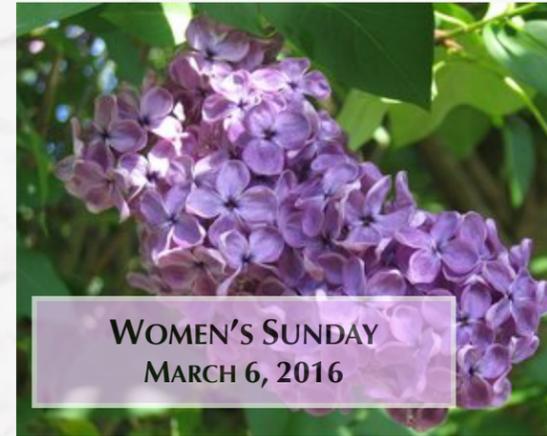
Thank you to everyone for your cards, visits, and prayers while I was in rehabilitation.

I wasn't able to return home to Lloyd and Karen, so I am in Shields Comfort Care Assisted Living and Memory Care. I am far from my family in Bay City, but very close to my daughter, Sue, and her husband.

-- Carmen Schoeppach

Attention Women of Westminster

The WOWs are singing for **Women's Sunday, March 6, 2016**. Plan on attending the following choir rehearsals:



Sunday, February 7, 14, 21, 28
9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, February 24 & March 2
To be determined

For more information, please call Wendy Tally (892-2693) or Dawn Auger (894-0426).

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION AND SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation is **Sunday, February 7, 2016** in Fellowship Hall immediately following the worship service. Plan to stay after this short meeting for the Youth Group's annual **Souper Bowl of Caring** luncheon and **Bake Sale**.



Started by a youth group in 1990, Souper Bowl of Caring works to mobilize those looking to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Super Bowl football game.

Participants give 100% of their donation directly to the local hunger-relief charity of their choice. Since its inception, \$100 million has been donated to local communities.

Proceeds from the Westminster Souper Bowl of Caring will go toward the WPC Food Pantry, which provides food to individuals and families in our community.



Volunteers are needed **Monday, February 29 and Tuesday, March 1** in the kitchen and Fellowship Hall. Westminster is hosting the Presbytery meeting on March 1 and will serve the meeting participants lunch. Volunteers are needed Monday to help prepare food, and volunteers are needed Tuesday to help set-up, serve lunch, and clean-up. Please contact Jena Windiate at 989-450-3650. Thank you!

Volunteers Needed!



The Season of Lent

Ash Wednesday
February 10
7:00 p.m. Worship Service

Maundy Thursday
March 24
7:00 p.m. Worship Service

Lenten Bible Study
Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.
Begins February 17

Good Friday
March 25
7:00 p.m. Worship Service

Palm/Passion Sunday
March 20
10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Easter
March 27
8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Worship Service

Lenten Bible Study

Beginning Wednesday, February 17 at 6:30 p.m.

"Be Holy"

By Brian Coulter
Illustrated by Bess Reynolds

"Lent is a holy journey with God, but what does it mean exactly to be 'holy'? In *Be Holy*, *Presbyterians Today's* new Lenten devotional for 2016, pastor and author Brian Coulter has penned a series of brief daily reflections, paired with a short, ancient form of praise and petition called a breath prayer, to explore what holiness means for Christians today. He invites us to receive from God this blessed gift that makes our lives more compelling, more enjoyable, and more faithful. Bess Reynolds's original artwork brings this holy Lenten journey to life. Perfect for congregations, families, and individuals, *Be Holy* provides a Scripture reading, meditation, and prayer for each day of Lent."

Presbyterians Today / 2016 Lenten Devotional



Dear Friends,

December 31, 2015

On behalf of the countless survivors who come to Bay Area Women's Center for assistance, we would like to thank you for your most generous donation of \$500.00.

Because of you, hundreds of local families are moving forward with hope. Thank you again for encouraging our mission to eliminate domestic and sexual assault.

Jeremy J. Rick
Executive Director

Lynn Weaver
Director of Development



Dear Westminster,

December 16, 2015

We sincerely appreciate the kind and generous donation from Westminster Presbyterian Church for the pre-school play area at Nate Doan Park. We're deeply concerned with the recent incident of vandalism that caused significant damage to the new play features. Unfortunately, that's a condition we regularly struggle with in providing public services. We do not believe however, that these thoughtless acts should deprive park users of recreational opportunities. In that regard, we've placed an order for new play equipment to replace the two musical features that were recently vandalized. Your contribution in the amount of \$250.00 will assist with that purchase.

Please extend our thanks and appreciation to the Westminster Presbyterian congregation for their continuing assistance. Nate Doan Park is indeed fortunate to have a good neighbor, and we're grateful for your support to provide quality recreational experiences for the children of our community.

Best wishes for a safe and enjoyable holiday.

Sincerely,

Darwin Baranski
Parks, Buildings & Grounds Manager
City of Bay City, MI



Club 345 participants preparing chili for the February 7 Souper Bowl of Caring.





Dear Friend of Literacy,

January 7, 2016

The Literacy Council of Bay County would like to thank you for your check for \$500.00 dated December 22, 2015. Your generosity will allow us to purchase materials, train more tutors, and carry on our mission of helping the people of this community learn to read.

Your donation shows that you care about improving the quality of life for those who need our services. When these learners take advantage of our services, they become productive members of our community, and that benefits all of us.

The Literacy Council, its board members, tutors, and staff wish you a happy and healthy 2016. Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

Kathy Rayner,
Executive Director *Literacy Council of Bay County*

Dear Westminster,

January 13, 2016

Each year thousands of caring people partner with United Way to enrich the lives of those in need. Please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your 2015 donation of \$400.00.

Last year, the dollars collected in Bay County helped with the success of the Back to School Clothing Program. We provided over 1,250 area youth with a new outfit, undergarments, sock, and shoes for the new school year.

Staff and volunteers at the United Way of Bay County thank you for your continued support and generosity in helping us **LIVE UNITED**.

Best Regards,

Marybeth Laisure
CEO/Executive Director



Dear Generous Congregation Members & Reverend Schramm,

On behalf of the Bay Human Services Collaborative Council, I would like to convey our sincerest gratitude for your commitment to and generous monetary support of the Bay Human Services Collaborative Council.

The HSCC chooses those topics that do not have the easy answers. As you know, our citizens and community face issues such as substance use disorders, health care needs, transportation challenges, homelessness, poverty, hunger, child abuse and neglect, and so much more. The goal of the HSCC is to work together to improve how we respond to needs in our communities so that families, children, individuals and older adults do not merely exist or survive, but truly thrive. Our faith communities are such a critical partner to our community succeeding in achieving that goal. Your generous contribution to that goal bears out in your work to end hunger through Food of Faith, your food pantry, your help to those in need, and the generosity of you, Rev. Schramm as you give of your time and talent to help us achieve our goals as an organization and community. The Westminster Presbyterian faith community is truly incredible.

Sincerely,

Trisha Charbonneau-Ivey, BA, MSHL
Interagency Collaboration Coordinator



New Opportunity for Growing in Faith & Fellowship

*Out of the Skin, Into the Soul:
The Spirituality of Aging*



There are so many ways to speak of aging...growing old, growing wiser; not the golden years but the rusty years. Or we read all sorts of boring statistics and categories of aging — middle-age, young old, old old. All either depressing or uninspiring.

Rather, I prefer one woman's take on aging..."Well, there are all these ashes in my life, and I figure underneath somewhere there must be some embers!"

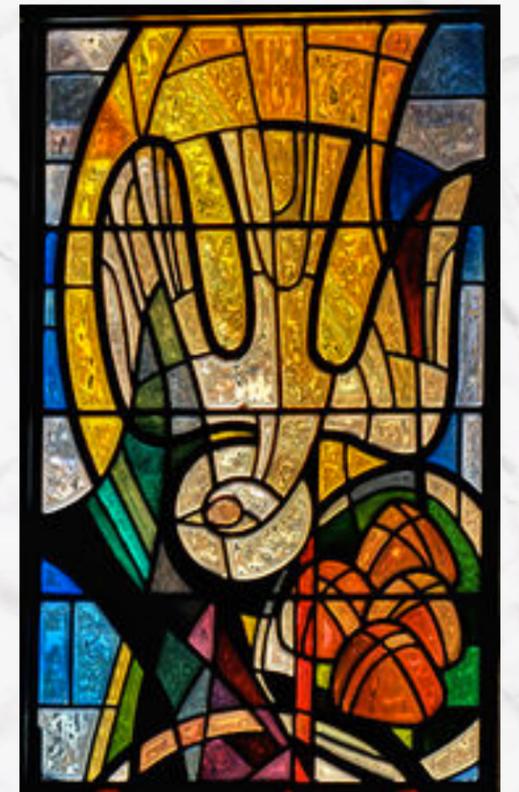
So begins the book by Doherty and McNamara who have written, *Out of the Skin Into the Soul*. I read their book several years ago and have continued to reflect on the stories. Some of the stories are children's stories — *A House for Hermit Crab* and *Frederick*, both with universal, ageless themes. Others are the stories of seniors — senior/seasoned/experienced adults who are "vibrant, searching, witty, gracious human beings." From childhood on, our lives are stories. Our story is an unfinished plot, beginning with our past and continuing into the uncharted future.

Abraham Heschel writes that these "second half" years are not only formative, but transformative: "The potential for change and growth is much greater than we are willing to admit...it is an age of opportunities for inner growth...enabling us to attain the high values we failed to sense, the insights we have missed, the wisdom we have ignored...formative years rich in possibilities..."

No registration necessary —
simply make your presence;
bring a lunch; beverages provided
Any questions, please see or call Pastor Linda

So **come join us** on a journey of possibilities. We will meet monthly on the **last Tuesday of the month (February 23, March 29, April 26, May 24)** over a brown bag lunch at **noon**.

Our focus will be two-fold — every other month exploring aging as a spiritual journey through readings, film, and discussion. And then in February and April focusing on some of the practical aspects of aging through use of materials from Thrivent and information about community resources here in Bay City.



Michael & Rachel Ludwig

Mission Co-Workers Serving in Niger

“A Church Rebuilding”

How does “a church destroyed” recover from tragedy? Our partners in the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Niger (EERN) have responded by following God’s call to become “a church rebuilding.” They’ve discerned the need to focus on two areas: rebuilding their houses of worship and rebuilding relationships with their communities. Recently I had a special chance to experience firsthand the hope being lived by this “church rebuilding.” I traveled with some church leaders to encourage churches in the Zinder region of Niger, where persecution of Christians has traditionally been the strongest and where not many Westerners travel these days. This region has not experienced the active conflict with outside terrorists that the eastern region of the country is undergoing. However, it was hit hard last January by the riots over French religious cartoons, during which three EERN churches there were burned along with other Christian homes and businesses.



Inside the crumbling Zinder church a little encouragement is given by the scorched shape of a cross on an empty wall.

Now, almost a year later, these churches are still in the beginning phases of rebuilding. In Niger’s second-largest city, Zinder, we visited a large church building standing in twisted and crumbling ruins. The shape of a cross randomly scorched into the sidewall serves as testimony to the powerful way God is able to work even amid tragedy. We listened to and prayed with the pastor who had been trapped in his office as rioters tore down the perimeter walls and set fire to church buildings. He recounted how his prayers for



rescue had been answered even as the rioters beat on the outside office door and put fire through the windows. Eventually his motorcycle’s gas tank exploded in the entryway, which scared off rioters long enough for him to get out the door and through a break in the wall. The congregation has started its rebuilding, with support from another partner church, by putting better walls around the church property, and it has rebuilt the office and a large meeting room that’s now functioning as a sanctuary. The guard living at the compound still gets occasional threats at the gate, but he’s praised by the pastor for unflinchingly using these as a chance to tell bystanders about the saving grace he has received in Jesus.

The congregation in the small town of Mirriah is in worse condition—its mudbrick church structure was completely knocked down, the pastor’s house burned, and many food and construction supplies destroyed. The congregation used to get their water from their neighbors and split the cost of electricity with them. Now, though, they’ve found the neighbors to be much less neighborly. They’re now getting the cold shoulder because neighbors are worried about becoming targets themselves for helping Christians. But the church is persevering, making plans for how to re-engage the community and re-establish their worship space.



The new pastor, a national church leader, and the old pastor stand on the rubble of the Mirriah church.

Donations from PC(USA) churches and individuals helped the congregation begin to reconstruct the church in November. These contributions will help to provide a water source for drinking and for making cement blocks, and to establish a private line for electricity. The church decided to use some of these relief funds to purchase a grinding machine as a way to re-engage the community. Everyone in the community has to grind millet for their staple dishes either by pounding it into flour or by finding the few places like this that operate a grinding machine. So not only will this start a small business for the church to help it pay for its water and electricity, but it also gives the neighbors a reason to come visit the church and restart relationships, seeing the church as a place that is providing something positive.

Another aspect of Mirriah’s rebuilding story came unexpectedly from an old man who spent most of our conversation with the church leaders sitting quietly on the edge of the circle. In the 1990s he went to Nigeria to look for work. Through relationships there he came to faith in Jesus, and then came back home to find his wives and family rejecting him for it. But still he continued to grow in faith and became an evangelist in a neighboring town, where he started this church. Eventually the church became an EERN congregation and the district sent them a new pastor. Now in his 70s, this man continues to share the Good News of Jesus in the area while he lives in a small mudbrick room in the corner of the church property. His hope is also to be a part of his church’s rebuilding by restarting his local Christian radio program, which had been dropped by the radio station because of fears after the riots and lack of finances. But as several of the members had come to faith through it, the church feels it’s another important part of getting back to directly reaching out to their community.

Our family is grateful for God’s abundant provision for us, especially when we see the difficulties of the Christians around us. We feel privileged to accompany them in this time when there is so much potential for reaching out and rebuilding relationships that share the wholeness Christ brings to individuals and communities. Amid our joy and learning, it’s still a struggle for us to be renegotiating the cross-cultural differences of living with the family of our guard as we approach the dry season and figuring out how to share scarce water between two families. But we’re continuing to put together more language capacity and have had several family

dinners when even our children were making sentences with vocabulary they’re learning. We praise God for your support and prayers for our family, work, and colleagues.

Thanks for being part of this relationship with our EERN partners as they rebuild houses of worship, rebuild relationships with communities, and build further on their opportunities to give glory to God while sharing the Good News of Jesus’ love.

Michael & Rachel Ludwig



The president of the EERN, the pastor from Zinder, and another church leader stand in front of the new church gate.



Rev. Michael and Rachel Ludwig serving as Mission Co-Workers in Niger since 2014.