

Peace Talk Fall 2019

Salem United Church of Christ, Wanatah, IN

Calendar of Events

9/4 Search Committee meets @ 6:30 pm

9/8 Grandparents Day, Church Picnic and Pastor Victoria's last Sunday as Salem's 24th pastor

9/10-Prayer Shawl meeting @ 9:30 am

9/15-Sunday School begins 9:00 am -9:45 am and Council Mtg. after worship

9/27-Scarecrow Festival Pork Chop Meal by Salem UCC

9/29-Worship at Scarecrow Square at 10:00 a.m. (No worship or Sunday School at Salem UCC.)

10/6- World Communion Sunday with pew communion

11/3- Totenfest with pew Communion and Daylight Savings Time ends

11/10- Veterans Day Sunday, 6:00 pm Budget, Calendar, Cabinet Meeting

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH OFFICE...

After serving Salem UCC for about five years as our church secretary, Deb Smoker stepped down this past March. Deb was recognized on May 12, 2019 (Promotion and Youth Sunday), for her leadership in our Sunday School program with a Carrie Newcomer CD that we picked up for her at a concert in Elkhart. On Graduation Sunday, Deb was given a bookmark (along with all the other "graduates" moving on to new adventures). Later, Deb was thanked by our church Council with a gift card for dinner at Olive Garden. We are grateful for the many years of service that Deb has given to Salem UCC.

After some months without a church secretary, our trustees began to search for a secretary (from either inside or outside of our church family, as there are pros and cons to either option). After some more weeks passed, our trustees hired Kristina ("Kris") Bertsch as our new church secretary. Kris lives with her sister, Andrea, in LaPorte, and she also works part time at Burger King in Valparaiso. Kris already has many office skills, as she worked in a law office previously. She also is willing to learn and grow with this secretarial position.

At the present time, Kris works in our church office on Wednesday mornings from 9 am to 12 noon, and on Friday afternoons from 3 pm to 5 pm. Typically, the worship bulletins for Sunday now are printed late on Friday afternoons for the most up-to-date news. In addition to typical office tasks, Kris will also take out the recycling every-other week, and pick up the mail regularly at the post office.

Thank you, Deb, and welcome on board, Kris! It has been my pleasure to work closely with both of you!

Show Mercy and Grace to all! *Pastor Victoria S. Ubben*



Kris is a life-long member of the United Church of Christ. Pictured to the left is Kris attending the 2018 Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC. Once again, she represented Salem UCC as our lay delegate.

Dear Salem UCC,

How quickly our three years together have sped by! Over the course of our shared ministry together, we have tried some new things and we have been able to sustain our church. I especially have appreciated your support of and your openness to supporting the **Society of St. Andrew** and also **Growing Hope Globally** and other mission-related projects what we have tried out over our time together. Highlights of our ministry together certainly would be: **(1) the Palm Sunday Passion Production** on March 25, 2018, which was Salem's Two-Act musical and dramatic production that engaged a very large number of our church family; and **(2) the 150th Anniversary of Salem United Church of Christ**, which also engaged a very large number of our church family (including many from our past who came back to celebrate).

We as a congregation have helped to nurture Melissa Smoker as she pursues ministry with our faithful prayers and our offerings from our Student Fund. Melissa will be assigned a new UCC mentor from the Northwest Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC as she continues her ministerial education.

Joe and I are grateful for the time that we have shared with you. Our ministry has called us to serve the Native American population right here in the southwestern part of the U.S.A. My final Sunday with you will be on Sunday, September 8, and our moving van will arrive at some point that next week to move us out of the Salem parsonage. Please keep in touch! Our new mailing address after mid-September will be: **280 Loma Entrada, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501**. As is customary for ordained clergy in the UCC, once we settle in at our new church, my ordained ministerial standing will be transferred from the Indiana-Kentucky Conference to the Southwest Conference of the UCC. Other ways to reach us are: **219-299-4572** and find us on Facebook at "**Victoria S Ubben**" (be sure to include the "S" for "Smith"). My Salem Church email address will be discontinued and you may use my personal email address that travels with me when I move: VSubben@gmail.com.

Please join us for worship on Sunday, September 8. Chris Birky (whom many of you know) will begin his interim ministry at Salem on September 15. The following Sunday, Mark Roeda from South Bend will fill our pulpit. The following weekend is Scarecrow Weekend (worship at Scarecrow Square), then Chris Birky will be back at Salem on October 6 to officiate at our communion table on World Communion Sunday. Meanwhile, Salem's Search Committee will continue to move forward with the search for a Salem UCC' 25th permanent ("called and settled") pastor.

I am thankful to so many of you who have enhanced our ministry together. Please continue to pray for Joe and me and our family – as we share continue to pray for you!

Grace and Peace – *Pastor Victoria S. Ubben*

Farewell Picnic

Join us as we bid farewell to Pastor Victoria who has led us for the last three years. On Sunday, September 8, after the service we will celebrate with Victoria and Joe at a Farewell Picnic. Meat, table service, drinks, and dessert will be provided. Please bring a salad, vegetable or hot dish to share.

Sunday School News!

The Christian Education Board met on Tuesday, August 6, and agreed that our Salem Sunday School program for the 2019-2020 year will begin with children who are enrolled in kindergarten through high school. (Based on some feedback from some Salem parents, we hope to have a nursery class for preschoolers *next year*: 2020-2021.) We hope to have three classes this year. Our classes will be: Kindergarten – 3rd grade, 4th – 7th grade, and 8th-12th grade. (There is no confirmation class this year.)

We will purchase easy-to-teach curriculum for all teachers with workbooks for each student enrolled in our program. We are looking for more teachers to take turns in our teaching rotation. Please contact the church office at 733-2639 if you can volunteer.

As usual, we will have a “Welcome Back” picnic on September 8 after worship. However, **Sunday School begins on Sunday, September 15, at 9:00 am – 9:45 am.** Sunday School will be held on September 22; no Sunday School will be held on Scarecrow Weekend (September 29).

Thank you in advance for volunteering to support our Sunday School program!

150th Anniversary Books

The front and back covers for Salem’s 150th Anniversary Celebration books were misprinted by Shutterfly. The wording was to be printed in blue, not white. Shutterfly has now given us the misprinted books, rather than destroying them. The misprinted books will be \$10.00 each. The inside pages are correct. The proceeds from sale of misprinted books will be used to pay for books given to our four former ministers, Pastor Victoria, office copy, Wanatah Library, and a copy for our future Pastor. This error will enable families to purchase these history books for children and grandchildren at a reduced rate. Books will be given to Salem’s shut-ins to enjoy.

Please see Drelah or Marlene to purchase a misprinted book for \$10. There are two correct copies at \$25 still available to purchase.

Vacation Bible School News! – submitted by Keri Parks

We had a fun day at Vacation Bible School at Salem Church on July 30. Our theme was “God Calms.” We saw a skit, did workshops, sang songs, made a craft, played games, and had lunch together.

After Bible School, Youth Fellowship members went to Zao Island for a field trip to play mini-golf and games.

Youth Fellowship will be starting this fall. Kids in 1st grade and older are invited to join us. We will let the kids know when we have more information about upcoming meetings and events.

(Thanks to Jim Manhart for building the cardboard boat for VBS.)



A Pastoral Letter after El Paso and Dayton

*Rev. Chad R. Abbott
Conference Minister, Indiana-Kentucky Conference*

Here we are looking back on a week in our country that ended in deep violence at the hands of hatred and guns. There is still yet so much to be learned about what happened and why in both El Paso and Dayton, and yet there is enough known to move us towards prayer and action. The individual in El Paso, TX drove nearly 11 hours to a community that was not his own to admittedly attempt to commit a racially motivated crime. While mass shootings and their aftermath are complex, there is no room for racially motivated violence in our country and yet here we are. We have been here before and will likely be here again.

I do not have an answer for our ongoing challenge of mass shootings and violence. I believe the causes are vast, wide, and complex. However, I do not believe that any movement towards a more just world without violence will happen without addressing the hatred behind why a man would drive 11 hours to murder people he does not know. I am reminded of a quote I read recently from Thomas Merton. He says, *“We will not save what we do not love. It is also true that we will neither love nor save what we do not experience as sacred.”* Church, we have a theological tradition that speaks to this very reality of seeing and experiencing all persons as being of sacred worth. We have language and liturgy for speaking to this in transformative ways. We all will share differing opinions on gun laws and how they interact with these outbursts of violence in our society. Additionally, we will differ on to what extent mental illness, video games, or Hollywood is to blame, if they are to be blamed at all. We should be addressing each of these issues of causation and more, but regardless of our opinions on these complexities, I hope we can agree with Merton that we will not save ourselves from hatred and gun violence until we can begin seeing the sacred in each other.

So.....Church.....What are the sermons we need to preach? What are the liturgies and rituals we need to write? What are the hymns that must be sung? What is the art that must be sculpted or painted? What are the essays and poetry that must be written to give voice to this sacred life that lives within every human being and for which never deserves violation by harm or hatred? I know many of you to be wise and discerning enough to create such a sacred expression and our world needs to see and hear it now more than ever. I look forward to hearing how you are engaging in creating a more just and safe world for all.

My prayers and the prayers of all of our staff in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference are with those impacted by such violence.

**Salem United Church of Christ is sponsoring the
Annual Scarecrow Festival
Pork Chop Dinner
on Friday, September 27
at Wanatah School
from 4:30pm to 7:00pm
Advance Dinner Tickets are \$10***

Tickets will go on sale at the church office and from members and friends of Salem around Sept. 1st.

Dinners are \$12.00* at the door.

Dinner includes pork chop, potatoes and green beans, apple sauce, roll, homemade dessert and drink.

Extra Chops are \$4.00*. Presold dinners must be picked up by 6pm, NO refunds.

*** A portion of each pork chop sold will help Salem provide complimentary tickets to patrons of the Supplementary United Food Pantry.**

Members and friends ~ Your church needs your help to make this Annual Community Event a success. Sign-up sheets to work will be at church in the coming weeks. Salem would like all members to sell at least 10 tickets each and help promote the dinner via email and social media. This annual event has been sponsored by Salem for 19 years and has been part of the community's activities during the Scarecrow Festival for all 25 years. Salem has strengthened our community outreach in recent years by offering complimentary dinners to Food Pantry patrons.

**JOIN SALEM UCC FRIENDS FOR A
BRANSON CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE**

November 20-23, 2019

Tentative, depending on 30 travelers by Labor Day

Must Register by September 1st with \$200 deposit

\$599 per person, double - \$749 single room

Trip will include Round trip Motor Coach Transportation,

3 nights at the Lodge of the Ozarks,

All tips, taxes, luggage handling, snacks, water on bus

3 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners

Oak Ridge Boys Concert, The Brett Family Christmas Show,

"The Miracle of Christmas" at Sight and Sound Theatre,

Dinner Cruise & Show on Branson Belle on Table Rock Lake

Dolly Parton Christmas Stampede Dinner Show

Tour College of Ozarks with included lunch at Keeter Center

Drive thru "Gift of Lights"- Shopping in Historic Branson

Dinner at Lambert's, home of the throwed roll on way south

Leave Salem 7:30 am 11-20-19, Return 9:00 pm 11-23-19

More info or questions: Marlene Mitzner, 219-733-2731

Email marlene@thej-mart.com

CROSS AMERICA: James Wagoner shared the following story with Pastor Victoria which was used as a children's message at Salem UCC on June 30, 2019. Here is all the information that you need to get involved, visit the facility at 840 Daniel Drive in Kokomo, IN, or donate to this mission cause on your own.

Terry Merrell reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small, aluminum cross.

Its inscription reads, "Romans 10:9." The Bible verse is at the crux of what Cross America is hoping to do — save souls.

"I've always loved that verse because I'm kind of a simple guy," said Merrell, who is founder of the new Kokomo nonprofit organization that's looking to mail crosses to every home in America.

"The verse says, 'If you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and you believe in your heart that God raised you from the dead' — and I like this last part — it says, 'You will be saved.' And I just love that simplicity."

"Though the message is simple, it's not one that everyone has access to hearing, he said. Through your upbringing, your location or other limitations, he said, everyone's access to hearing God's message in a church might not always be fair."

"But grace is fair," he said as a smile crossed his face. "Grace is available to everyone."

And spreading the message of God's grace and His salvation was placed on Merrell's heart nearly five years ago.

"The idea came from the Holy Spirit," he said. "The Holy Spirit would give me these visions, and when I traveled for business, I could see there are so many good people in America that just don't know how to get to Heaven."

So that's what Merrell is going to do. He's going to tell 114 million households how to get to Heaven.

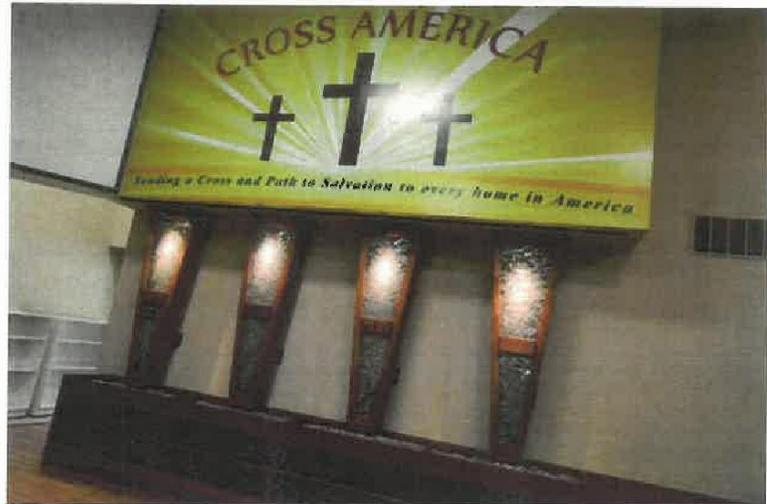
THE MISSION

Merrell readily admits that the idea of mailing crosses to every ZIP code in the United States might sound a little crazy. He also admits that's part of the reason why he didn't answer the call to do so right away.

"There was about a year of wrestling and trying to come up with all the reasons why it wouldn't work, hoping that calling would go away," he said. "First, you gotta ask yourself if you're crazy. Let's be honest, there's 114 million homes. Really?"

After talking with his wife and learning she would happily support him in the mission, he still worried what others might think but began moving forward nonetheless.

He started the process of applying for a nonprofit status quietly and didn't tell a lot of people.



Cross America will open March 17 to begin their mission to send a cross and the word of God across the United States. Herald Photo/Jim Hunt

How to get involved

- **VOLUNTEER** Stop by the Cross America facility at 840 Daniel Dr. and help package crosses in envelopes. There is no need to schedule a time, just show up. Opportunity is open to individuals, groups, and businesses alike. Hours are 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- **SPONSOR A ZIP CODE** All money given to sponsor a ZIP code goes 100 percent toward the cost of the cross, stamp, and envelop in the selected location.
- **PRAY** If you are willing to commit to praying for the organization, you can choose a day in Cross America's prayer team calendar. Contact the organization to sign up.
- **DONATE** Cross America is a non-profit organization and all tax-deductible donations go toward buying and mailing more crosses.

To get involved, contact Cross America by visiting www.crossamerica.net or by calling 765-780-3090.

"You're worried somebody is gonna think you're crazy," he said. "That's the sinful part of me, I guess, because I shouldn't care."

The Holy Spirit prevailed and led him to where Cross America is today — on the verge of opening a 21,000-square-foot facility at 840 Daniel Drive, located across from Menard's on Ind. 931.

A COMMUNITY EFFORT

The facility will have its grand opening on March 17. On that day, they'll stuff their first envelope with a cross and the Roman Road's prayer, which is a collection of verses in the Bible chapter of Romans that offers a clear and structured path to salvation. It will also include contact information for Cross America and encouragement to seek out a church in the recipient's community.

They'll be delivered via U.S. Postal Service, and it will all start with the 46901 ZIP code right here in Kokomo.

From there, Merrell said, individuals and organizations can sponsor ZIP codes of their choice.

"There are ZIP codes that are as small as 8 or 9 people in Alaska, and that's only a few dollars," he said. "Or you can do one in New York and that would be a lot."

They'll track their efforts on a 24-foot map that covers an entire wall of the main room. The map displays every ZIP code in America. Each completed ZIP code will be colored red until the country is covered, with the timeline of such an accomplishment not being known. The map will also be displayed on their website.

"The estimated cost per mailing is still being hammered out," said Crystal Sanburn, executive director of Cross America. Adjustments are continually being made to decrease the cost per piece, but all will be ready to go by the March 17 opening."

All of the envelope stuffing will be done in the Cross America facility, and the main room is designed with that purpose in mind.

Upon entering, you first notice the 400,000 small aluminum crosses that spill down from above through four nearly floor-to-ceiling wooden wall sconces into large wooden bins.

Volunteers will scoop out crosses from the bins with provided baskets and settle in at one of many large tables to go about stuffing envelopes.

All are invited to help, Sanburn said.

"It's a great opportunity for team-building and fellowship," she said. "We are a community fellowship facility. We want everybody in here. Come in, grab a coffee and stuff some envelopes."

Don't want to stuff envelopes? That's okay, too, Sanburn said.

"You don't have to stuff crosses when you come here," she said. "That's not a requirement. The goal is also to enjoy friendship or fellowship time with someone."

ROOM TO BELIEVE

The Cross America building was once home to a skating rink and has been completely restored and remodeled. And the details put into the remodeling process are important to the organization's mission.

The space is meant to be inviting and encompassing of all senses, Sanburn said.

"God has provided this for some reason," she said. "We believe that when you walk through our facility, the Lord will work on your heart to minister to you in some way."

There's a 400-seat auditorium that churches are encouraged to reserve for hosting off-site Sunday services.

"Our hope is that they stay and maybe use our catering kitchen for some kind of fellowship with their own church family and then after that they stay for a service Sunday, which means they help us with our ministry of stuffing crosses," Sanburn said.

The auditorium stage features a baptism pool as well as a tomb that symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There's a sculpture of Thomas kneeling before Jesus at the facility's entrance. Meant to be touched, the sculpture bears Jesus' scars from crucifixion and a longing look in his eyes. Nearby you'll find a mural of the First Supper, which plays a role in Merrell's personal salvation story.

All these details play a part of the organization's effort to make the story of Jesus real to those who enter and to impress upon them the need to seek salvation.

"It basically conveys what's so important about your faith," Sanburn said. "It helps you see why you need salvation."

There's also a 120-seat event center available for rent and the Doubting Thomas cafe, which will serve coffee and food. Its four conference rooms can be reserved for meetings at no charge by any group, business or organization, religiously based or otherwise.

"No one is here to Bible beat anybody," she continued. "We are simply here to allow you to see what's been shown to you and you make your own decision and to let the Holy Spirit work in your heart."

FOLLOWING HIS LEAD

Sanburn said she isn't afraid to use the phrase "I don't know." It's one she's used a lot lately as they're undertaking something that's never been done before.

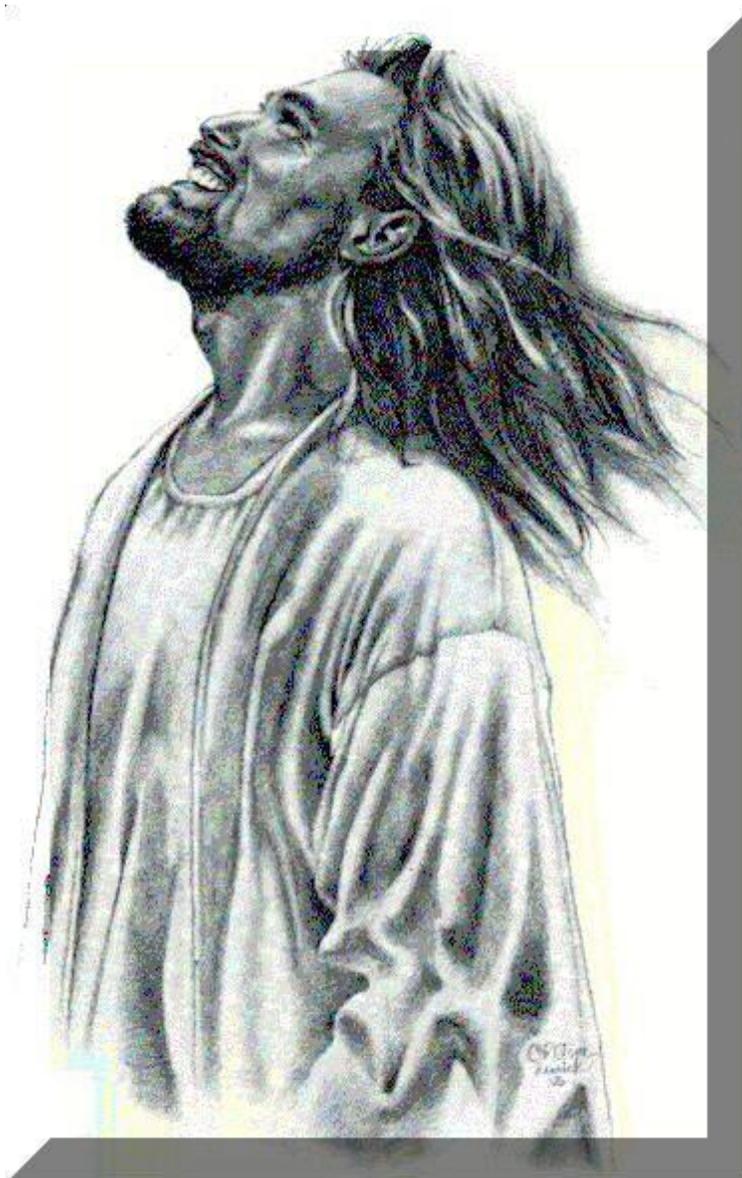
"I don't know what kind of impact this is going to have on people," she said. "But we believe it's going to be good whatever it is because our heart is right and we are simply being obedient to God's call. Once you're obedient to God's call, after that, God takes over. We are confident in that."

Merrell said they aren't kidding themselves about the success rate of such an undertaking.

"We have to be realistic," he said. "We realize that not everybody who gets one of these crosses is going to drop to their knees and accept Jesus Christ."

But because they truly believe they're following God's leading, they believe that at least one in every 100 will have an impact.

"It may open the door for someone," he said. "We just want people to go to Heaven."



Happy Birthday!

August Birthdays:

8/3- Brian Bagnall
8/4- Joe Ubben
8/8- Elizabeth Reinke
8/9- Andrew Batzka
8/10-Jill Brown
8/11-Riley Charlesworth
8/12-Linda Stultz
8/17-David Homan
8/19-Bill Cromey
8/22-Ray Charlesworth
8/22-Matt Smoker
8/23-Ann Weinkauff
8/23-Anna Bagnall
8/23-Mike Holtz
8/27-William Homan
8/27-Tammy Homan
8/28-Jacob Smoker
8/30-Penny Shotts
8/31-Janet Ballinger

September Birthdays:

9/1- Victoria Ubben
9/2- Kylene Lambert
9/3- Joe Smoker
9/4- Andrew McCormick
9/4- Peggy Wilinski
9/7- Norman Werner
9/8- Jeff Shotts
9/8- Dara Guse
9/10-Carol Marks
9/11-Marlene Mitzner
9/11-Dana Kane
9/15-Zachary Grieger
9/17-Ruth Carnell
9/19-Claudette Cairns-Boyd
9/21-Melissa Grieger
9/21-Brooke Bos
9/23-Carol Benkie
9/23-Jeff Mitzner
9/24-Don Berger
9/25-Shirley Espravnik
9/27-Bernell Grieger
9/27-Emily Grieger
9/27-Zachary Parks
9/29-Becky Pierce

9/29-Paul Bailey
9/30-Dale Bagnall

October Birthdays:

10/3- Alden McCormick
10/5- Jennifer McCormick
10/5- Ron Carnell
10/11-Tony Galbreath
10/12-Kelli Smoker
10/12-Helen Steinke
10/13-Jason Randall
10/14-Roger Hutton
10/14-Janet Maupin
10/16-Diane Fike
10/16-Susie Mack
10/17-Kyle Lippold
10/19-Charles Homan
10/19-Jennifer Vorkapich
10/21-Elwood Grieger
10/23-Amber Bos
10/23-Sharon Bailey
10/27-Mitchell Brown
10/27-George Walter
10/30-David Pozil
10/30-Calen Poort

Anniversaries!

August Anniversaries:

8/7- Jeff & Penny Shotts
8/9- Steven & Diane Fike
8/12- Mike & Talytha Holtz
8/13- Joe & Victoria Ubben
8/14- Tim & Missy Grieger
8/15- Brain&Christina McMahan
8/20-Gene & Kathryn Rice
8/23-Steve & Amber Bos
8/24-Jeff & Andrea Mitzner
8/25-Tim & Donna Brown

September Anniversaries:

9/1- Adam & Tricia Werner
9/4-Gordon & Claudette Boyd
9/9- Richard & Eileen Land
9/10-John & Peggy Wilinski
9/12-Steve & Linda Stultz
9/13-Kelvin & Dana Kane

9/14-Jeremy & Jill Brown
9/14-Linda & Terry Werner
9/25-David & Anna Bagnall

October Anniversaries:

10/17-Gerald & Carol Benkie
10/26-Paul & Carolyn Homan

We apologize for any errors to the list, please let the office know to make sure the list can be corrected. Thank you