



Gull Lake United Methodist Church

8640 Gull Road, Richland, MI 49083
(269-629-5137) www.gulllakeumc.org

TRAILBLAZER

July 2026

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July Sermons & Scripture

July 5: "How Close is Hope?"
John 21:1-7
Holy Communion

July 12: All We Need is Love
Series
"Everything – Love = Nothing"
1 Corinthians 13

July 19: Joan Bosserd-
Schroeder Preaching
Scripture TBD

July 26: "Love Does Not
Demand Its Own Way"
Scripture TBD

WELCOME PASTOR RON!

Connections & Conversations with Pastor Ron

You're invited to sign up for a time to attend a small meet and greet with Pastor Ron and his wife Penny. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know them in a relaxed and welcoming setting. Meetings will be held after fellowship hour unless otherwise noted and will last 60–90 minutes. Snacks will be provided, and we hope to see you there! Please feel free to sign up for a time that works best for you.

Available Time Slots:

Time Slot 1: Sunday, July 12

Time Slot 2: Sunday, July 26

Time Slot 3: Saturday, July 25 @ 3:00 PM

Time Slot 4: Sunday, August 2

If you are unable to sign up during worship, please call the church office to reserve a time slot.

A Message from Pastor Ron: 30 Birds

- A friend of mine recently shared an old Sufi story told by the Persian poet Farid ud-Din Attar called *The Conference of the Birds*.

The world had become dangerous and disordered. The birds were frightened. They felt leaderless. Everywhere they looked they saw confusion, conflict, vanity, greed, and instability. So they gathered together to decide what should be done.

The hoopoe bird, the wisest among them, told the others they must go in search of the great Simurgh, the divine king they believed could save them.

- *The journey would be difficult. To find the Simurgh, the birds had to cross seven valleys: the Valley of Search, the Valley of Love, the Valley of Knowledge, and the Valley of Detachment. Each valley took away another illusion. Some birds turned back because they preferred comfort. Others were overcome by fear. Some got distracted by beauty or status. Some could not let go of their ideas about themselves.*

- *The journey slowly unraveled them. By the end, only thirty birds remained. Exhausted and transformed, they finally arrived before the Simurgh expecting to encounter a great divine being waiting for them in glory.*

Instead, they found a mirror.

In that mirror they saw themselves.

“Simurgh,” in Persian, means “thirty birds.”

- The birds began their journey looking for that person who would change everything and make their world “right” again. It is a tendency we all have. You see it in sports when they fire the coach thinking this will turn the team around. You see it in politics when we blindly believe an individual has all the answers to all our problems. The thirty birds did not find the world they expected. They found themselves, changed by the journey.

- It’s a story about the transforming power of community and the power of taking the journey together. It seems to me that in our increasingly divided world we need to learn the lesson of the thirty birds and agree to fly together and see where this journey takes us next.

- The story fits in what we call the wisdom traditions. Wisdom reminds us that real change happens in relationships. The Spirit does not come to people who keep to themselves and cling to certainty. It moves through communities that can listen, grieve, let go, and change together.

- That does not mean community is easy. The birds lost a lot on their journey: their illusions, their attachment to status and comfort, their certainty, and their dreams of control. Real change usually costs us something, and sometimes it costs a lot.

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In the church year we are moving into what is called Ordinary Time following Pentecost when the Spirit of God comes to abide in us. The idea is that life with and in the Spirit is now ordinary...the usual, the expected way to live and be in our world.

Johnny Rivers sings a song with the line, "The only thing that's permanent is change." Well, ordinary doesn't mean the same, instead it means we get to travel on a journey together. Will things change? Of course, that is life. Change is ordinary. But with the Spirit guiding us as we travel together, we know we will get to a better place.

The lesson of the thirty birds for me then is this:

1. Look in the mirror
2. Travel in a flock...we are better together (community)
3. We are a community of faith changed by the Spirit
4. Expect surprises and live with anticipation
5. You have to stay on the journey in order to get to your destination

Let the journey to a new place begin today. Can't wait to be with you July 5th!

Summer Sermon Series

What the World Needs Now













We live in a time when anger and divisiveness rules the airwaves and social media. The way of the world doesn't seem to be working. Followers of Jesus were called the "People of the Way." Can the church show the world a better way to live and be in community?

Can we move past the anger and the rancor and come together again as a people of faith? Of course we can! The answer is to focus on what Jesus and the Bible say is the most important thing: Love.

Join us in this series where we talk about what love looks like and how we can begin to heal ourselves and our world by modeling all you really need: LOVE.



JULY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9 am Wednesday Walkers 	2 10 am Positive Perks 	3 Office Closed 	4 Richland Independence Day Parade
5 10 am Worship Service Communion	6 6:30 pm Ministry Cluster	7 7 am Breakfast Group 10 am Care Team 	8 9 am Wednesday Walkers 10 am Finance Meeting 	9 10 am Positive Perks 10 am Puzzling 	10	11
12 10 am Worship	* 13 6:30 pm Trustees 6:45 pm Women at the Well	* 14 7 am Breakfast Group <u>NO Missions Meeting</u>	* 15 9 am Wednesday Walkers 6:30 pm Gov. Board 	* 16 10 am Positive Perks 	17	18
19 10 am Worship Joan Schroeder Preaching	20	21 7 am Breakfast Group	22 9 am Wednesday Walkers 	23 10 am Positive Perks 10 am Puzzling 	24	25
26 10 am Worship	27	28 7 am Breakfast Group	29 9 am Wednesday Walkers 	30 10 am Positive Perks 	31	

* Kelly Out of the Office July 13-16

Next Month - WATW for August: August 17 at 6:45 pm

UPDATED OFFICE HOURS:

For the *summer only*, there will be no office hours on Thursdays. Kelly will still be available, so please feel free to reach out to her directly by calling her cell phone or personal email.



NAME TAGS: We're excited that Pastor Ron's first Sunday is July 5! Throughout July, please wear your name tag on Sundays to help Pastor Ron learn names and get to know our church family.



Mission needs 4 **pop-up canopies** for the July 4th activities. If you are willing to share yours, please contact a member of the mission team.

FREE CAR SHOW DURING THE 4TH OF JULY PARADE

Dust off your car and bring it to the car show. Display your ride and enjoy watching the 4th of July parade at the same time. Classics, customs, muscle cars, trucks, and all special interest vehicles are welcome. The car show is free to participate in, so come celebrate Independence Day with the community. We hope to see you there!

We will also have the church open to the public for restroom use and the parking lot for any attendees.



MISSIONS

Our mission of the month for July will be a reverse offering.

We are collecting **cereal** for the mobile home park in July. Please leave your donations on the cart in the Narthex. If you prefer, we can do your shopping for you! Just leave your \$\$ in the bucket on the cart.



GLUMC Financial Times – June 2026

May Mortgage Loan Restructure has been Completed

1. **The mortgage loan principal balance has been cut by 59% in 5 years. Great News!**
2. **The monthly loan payment has been cut by 42% to \$910. Even Better News!**
3. The updated mortgage principal balance (and payment) is based on the May balance of \$105,916.

A significant number of contributions have been received in the last year for the mortgage.

Thanks to everyone who donated to make this happen.

Over the last 3 years, several people have worked to make this a success including extra effort by Joe Alberding and Kelly McLeod. Thanks to all who worked on this.

Special recognition goes to Edie Lane and Kathy Ruger. They have put in countless hours working with the mortgage company over the last couple of months via phone and email to get the restructuring completed. During the last two weeks of May, they were in almost daily contact (sometimes several times a day) with the loan representative. This would not have been finished without their determination and perseverance. **Thank you for what the two of you were able to accomplish.**

Jim Dolbee

GLUMC Finance Chair

REFLECTIONS ON ANNUAL CONFERENCE

A friend who had attended Annual Conference before once told me it is difficult to describe the experience to someone who has never been there. After attending this year, I understand exactly what she meant.

The first evening was spent settling into the hotel and reviewing conference materials. Of course, Aidan and I also spent time at the pool. Unexpectedly, that is where some of the most meaningful moments began.

While Aidan made friends his own age, I found myself in conversation with clergy, laity, and musicians from across the conference. The conversations covered ministry challenges and personal faith journeys alike.

As introductions continued, everyone shared how they came to ministry or became involved in the conference. One pastor offered advice that stayed with me, encouraging me to embrace opportunities for growth and trust the support of my church family that has walked with me for many years. What struck me most was how quickly connections formed, as strangers became friends through shared faith in Christ.

Saturday began with a 5K race supporting efforts to end child hunger. As runners gathered, we met Pastor Ray, who at 73 remains an avid runner. He shared the course map and kept pace with Aidan throughout the race. After the race, we headed to worship, my favorite part of the conference.

The music was uplifting, and scripture was read in multiple languages, providing a reminder that we are one in Christ despite our different backgrounds.

During worship, Bishop Bard reflected on being an “accidental Methodist,” drawn to Methodism by its understanding of grace, not something earned, but God’s persistent and transforming love. He encouraged us to know, live, and share that grace through bold love and service.

Throughout the conference, there were displays representing UM ministries across Michigan, including familiar ones such as church camp. It was meaningful to meet in person people I normally speak with by phone or email in the church office.

It was also good to reconnect with familiar faces, including Pastor Mona and Pastor Ian.

The second day was devoted primarily to plenary sessions and legislation. Though detailed and procedural, it was an important reminder of how the church discerns God’s direction together and shapes the future of ministry.

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One statistic that stood out was that approximately 10 to 15 churches are closing each year, a sobering reminder of the challenges churches face and the importance of supporting one another in mission.

Just outside the conference hall, snack tables and massage chairs offered breaks between sessions, which quickly became one of Aidan's favorite spots.

Even amid business sessions, there were opportunities for fellowship. Sharing a meal with Pastor Melodye and Pastor Ron helped make the upcoming pastoral transition feel more familiar.

As each day ended, Aidan and I often returned to the pool, swapping stories and reflecting on the day.

One of my greatest takeaways from Annual Conference was a renewed sense of who we are as United Methodists and who we are called to become.

This was reinforced through *The Five Marks of a Methodist* by Steve Harper:

1. A Methodist loves God.
2. A Methodist rejoices in God.
3. A Methodist gives thanks.
4. A Methodist prays constantly.
5. A Methodist loves others.

Sunday brought final worship, final sessions, and a final meal together before heading home.

After packing up, Aidan and I made one more stop before heading home: Sleeping Bear Dunes. Standing amid God's creation offered space to reflect on the weekend and the sense of connection that carried through every part of it.

I returned home with a renewed sense of connection, a deeper appreciation for the United Methodist Church, and gratitude for the grace that continues to bind us together.

Lost & Found:

Items will be collected for three months and at the end of the quarter be given to charity.

Found:

Tire cover
Sunglasses



Take, Swap, Enjoy!

There are books, puzzles, games, and more on the table in the fellowship hall. Feel free to **take, exchange, or swap** items with others!

Loving our Neighbors

Jesus said, when asked which is the greatest commandment, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Matthew 22:37-39

In July we'll focus on being good neighbors to those with disabilities and learning more. Remember that while some disabilities are visible to others, many experience hidden disabilities. We're familiar with mobility disabilities, and our barrier-free building is designed to assist with those disabilities. But many deal with disabilities that may not be obvious and may be very well hidden. How we support those with disabilities is very much the same way we should support and value each and every person we meet. Many in our church family deal with visible or invisible disabilities, either themselves or in their families.

As a church family we should be open with one another and share our joys and concerns, our strengths and weaknesses, supporting each other.

Here's the Interactive Activity for July. Each box shows one possible disability—visible or invisible. If you or someone in your family struggles with that disability, take a blank card and place it in the box. And then take a candy to celebrate your participation. And to talk to each other! Did you learn something? How can we better support one another and all our neighbors?

From GLUMC Ministry Cluster; Contact: Karen Morse



HIDDEN disabilities

What are Hidden Disabilities?

Here's a sampling from hdsunflower.com, a site that helps bring awareness—Several people inside our congregation and outside our congregation deal with some of these challenges.

ADHD	Asthma	Autism
Brain Injury	Cancer	COPD
Celiac Disease	Crohn's Disease	Ulcerative Colitis
Dementia	Diabetes	Dysautonomia
PoTS	Dyslexia	Fibromyalgia
Hearing Loss	Ostomy	Leprosy (yes, it still exists)
Long Covid		



Happy Birthday!

- 7 Eileen Dolbee
- 7 Karen Morse
- 11 Aidan McLeod
- 16 Troy Wilson
- 21 Matt Thornton
- 22 Nancy Wenke
- 22 Baylor John Wilson
- 28 Steve Rogers
- 29 Bill Hicks
- 31 Doug Worgess

Happy Anniversary!

- 6 Sue & Doug Worgess
- 15 Deb & Jaime Kuch
- 28 Craig & Joan Schroeder

Our Mission: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We are energized by faith – Engaged to grow – Empowered to make a difference.

CONNECT WITH US!



Giving



GLUMC Website



Facebook



Facebook Family



YouTube



Instagram

This 'N' That

Breakfast at Parkview Perk



Breakfast at Parkview Perk (in the village square), Tuesday's at 7:00 AM. We'd love for you to join us.

;;Puzzling??



Puzzling takes place every second and fourth Thursday of the month at 10 AM for about 2 hours in the classroom in the education wing. All are welcome to join the fun! Sometimes we go out for lunch afterward.

Sunday Connections



Sunday Connections follows worship in Hamill Hall beginning about 11:15 a.m.

Wednesday Walkers



Wednesday Walkers meet every week @ 9:00 am @ the Richland Township Park (at the church during the winter months). Please join us!

Women at the Well



Women at the Well meets the second Monday of each month, at the church @ 6:45 pm.

From the Editor:

Articles for inclusion in the monthly Trailblazer are due the 3rd Thursday of each month by 9 am.

Make sure to include: Who, What, Where, When, Cost, Contact name and Phone number.

Please submit to:
gullakeumc@gmail.com

Office Manager:

Kelly McLeod
Monday - Friday, 9A-1:00P
gullakeumc@gmail.com
269-303-1324

Financial Manager:

Edie Lane
Mon., Wed., Friday 9A-1:00P
ediefinancialglumc@gmail.com

Pastor:

Melodye VanOudheusden
Tuesday 9A-12P
pastormelodyevano@gmail.com
517-250-1879

Trailblazer:

Kelly McLeod
3rd Thursday each month, 9 AM
gullakeumc@gmail.com
269-303-1324