

# MAMRELUND MESSENGER

NOW IN OUR 158TH YEAR OF SERVING CHRIST AND THE COMMUNITY.

## VISION STATEMENT

MAMRELUND IS A FAITHFUL COMMUNITY EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SHARE GOD'S LOVE.

## MISSION STATEMENT

OUR MISSION IS TO CONNECT WITH AND INSPIRE PEOPLE TO KNOW AND FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST.

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

OUR PURPOSE IS TO BE SERVANTS OF GOD.

Beginning the first week of January, our food pantry and clothing bank expanded its hours to 9-11am, three days a week and opening on Tuesday evenings from 5-7pm. Since then, we have seen an increase in number of clients referred by North Kent Connect. In only three months, the food pantry/clothing bank has serviced over 75 families and 215 individuals.



Our food pantry is such an important ministry, and we appreciate all donations given to help keep the shelves full. We are so thankful for **Ellen Nyblad**, who does a wonderful job ordering items, scheduling pickups and organizing our annual holiday distributions. We appreciate our

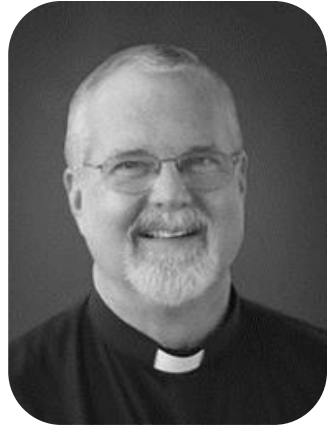
weekly volunteers, who stock and reorganize the shelves, provide information about food pantry needs, and assist clients. Our volunteers are: **Duanne & Carolyn Roberts, Don & Pat Libolt, Julie Libolt, Mick Kleibusch, Paul Swanson, Jean Hawley, Kathy Kahrs, Dave & Julie Johnson, Rochelle Baldwin, Amy Iwaniw, Nancy Freeland, and Stephanie Wirth.**

Our clothing bank is another important ministry at Mamrelund. **Jan Cook** and her daughter, **Megan Frayer**, come in every week and sort through the bins of donated clothes and shoes to get the items ready to put on the racks. Jan and Megan also assist clients. Our clothing bank has been a resource for those who need apparel for work, school or to replace clothing lost in a fire.

We cannot thank are volunteers enough for donating their time and energy to help so many in need in our community!

## From the Pastor:

An old friend of mine texted me. I had not talked to Tim in years. He said he was just checking on me to see how I was doing and to tell me that he and his wife were both doing well and was I still causing trouble? We were very close in seminary school. Tim was the



conservative, laid back type, not the kind of person who make waves. I, on the other hand, well...I was younger and rebellious (bet you would never guess that) and willing to take risks and speak out against the professors and get in trouble. When I responded to Tim, I said that Michelle and I were doing well too, and that I think I am still willing to take risks. I am still speaking out and getting in trouble. That statement made me stop and think if I really am still willing to take risks?

I have always told other pastors if I cannot preach the gospel or tell the congregation the truth, then it is time to get out of the ministry. Over the years I have seen the pressure of economics and the worry of getting paid or losing paying members muzzle many pastors. I have to admit I know there are times that I wanted to speak up and I didn't. I know there I times I didn't show up for someone when I should have. I know there are times I didn't listen or recognize a cry for help. I know there are times when I think of myself more than

others. Many of these sins were because I was unwilling to take the risk and followed my own selfish desires. Even though my rebellious character has been part of who I have been, I feel as I have gotten away from that. Michelle and Monica have both commented to me when I didn't respond to something in the past year that. "What's wrong with you? You would have never let that happen in the past." I know that when I was in rebel mode things happened and the congregations felt alive. They weren't always happy, but they were alive. There was ministry happening and people were fired up. So, I ask myself if am I doing all I can right now? What is God asking me to do? Have I become too old to be radical and rebellious and take risks? As I sit and write this article thinking what can I do? I wonder if I am setting the example God wants me to set? Will I take the risk?

I remind you too. You need to take the risk. Marginal membership isn't going to sustain Mamrelund. Complacency is not going to move us or help us grow. If we are worried about making people angry, we won't do anything because risk tends to make people uncomfortable.

Easter is the celebration of new life and of a risk that wasn't really a risk at all. When we look back at the cross from the resurrected life we don't understand what we were so worried or upset about. Then we are reminded, we have to go through Good Friday and risk death first before there is new life. That is what I preach and I need to live it.

Peace, Pastor Mike



## Spanky Speaks...

**Acts 2:42-47:** <sup>42</sup> *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

Happy Easter everyone! He is risen indeed! I love the Easter season because of the celebration of new life all around us. And nowhere is this more important than in Christ's church. We are the bearers and sharers of the new life that Christ gives to all of us. This was also evident in the first church, revealed to us through the book of Acts. New life in Christ was spreading like wildfire, even in the face of persecution. What made the movement irresistible was how the church lived out the message of grace, hope, and love. The church grew rapidly because they strived to make life better for the community around them. Yes, they worshiped together, they ate together, but history also tells us they sacrificed personal gain and interests for the sake of others. Many government officials, who at one point tried to stifle the movement, eventually came to the realization that this group of people, originally known as "The Way," genuinely cared about others. In so doing they were strengthening the community and making it better for all. With no agendas, other than to love their neighbor as Christ exemplified and commanded, people were naturally drawn to this new way of life. Today, you may have heard the term, "Acts 2 Church." It's a term that challenges churches to live and act similarly to that of the original church. With no agenda other than to bring new life, value, grace, hope, and love to the community, Acts 2 churches are still alive today.

I believe that we at Mamrelund have many elements of an Acts 2 church in place, but there is always room to grow. I

was reminded on March 17<sup>th</sup>, that part of the call to be a selfless church is to have the adults step aside in order that our teens can use the gifts that God has given them. Our youth led worship that day (which we haven't done in a long time) was a huge blessing to all of us who were in attendance or watched online. Jack Jeffreys preached and reminded us that God's love never leaves us, even in our life struggles. In fact, it's in the struggle that we realize God's unconditional love, because all of it leads us where God intends us to go and to become the people God intended from the start. Beyond Jack, our youth led us beautifully in reading, praying, serving communion, and musically. They used their gifts and brought value to our faith community. After the service I received many comments that we should get out of the way more often, allowing the youth to lead on a regular basis. I agree. Pouring into our young people, giving them a space where they feel seen and valued, and encouraging them to lead is one aspect of a selfless, Acts 2 church. It's also one great way to grow Christ's church. There are many other aspects highlighted in the scripture, which, to me, is about becoming irresistible through grace, hope, and love. This, my friends, is the way of "New Life!" In Grace. In Hope. In Love,

Jeff "Spanky" Amlotte

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## **Youth & Family Ministry in April**

**Wednesdays in April Include MamFam & Jr. High Youth:** In April we're back to our rotating schedule of MamFam & Youth Group. MamFam will include dinner, Jr. High Youth Group will not. Here's the schedule...

**April 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>: MamFam (6:00-7:45)**-We will gather for dinner, fellowship, and relationship building. This is for the whole family. Bring the kids and bond with the church family!

**April 17<sup>th</sup>: Jr. High Youth Group: (6:30-8:00)**-This is for all 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. We will continue with our "Dares From Jesus" devotions.

**Sr. High Youth will resume youth group on April 14<sup>th</sup> and will continue every Sunday in April. They gather from 6:30-8:45.** \*We are looking for volunteers from the congregation who are willing to provide dinners for our Sr. High Youth. This is a great opportunity to connect with and get to know our young people. Contact Jeff Amlotte if you are interested.

**March 2024 Minutes  
Mamrelund Lutheran Church  
Congregational Council Minutes  
Monday March 11, 2024**

**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order by President Steve Nelsen at 7:00 PM. Absent: Pastor Mike Conklin due to family emergency.

**Opening Prayer/Devotion:** Sign up sheet sent around for monthly devotions.

**Secretary Minutes from February 24, 2024 meeting:** These were previously approved via email. No comments or concerns.

**Treasurer's Report:** Per Tracee Vander Laan- Concern that giving is down again this month. Discussion was held as to why this might be occurring. Possible reasons provided, but nothing concrete. This is something that needs to be watched.

**Staff Reports:**

**Pastor-** No questions. Empathy and concern expressed over the decline in health status of Pastor's parents. Pastor has the council's full support as he makes a difficult decision regarding his career.

**Youth Director-** Reason for date change for VBS has to do with timing of National Gathering and other commitments that Jeff has.

**New Business:** No new business at this time.

**Old Business:** Newaygo Love Inc. Housing for the homeless. This was discussed and approved at the last meeting and there are no new questions or concerns.

**Standing Committee Chairs:** Brief discussion as to whether or not the word "chair" should be changed to "representative" as not all council members are the chair of the committees they are on. No decision was made.

Property.....Dan Zemaitis, Paul Umlor (Vice President), Jason Baldwin  
Social Ministry.....Deb Bissard (Secretary), John Bissard  
Support.....Marcy Toporski  
Fellowship.....Steve Nelsen (President)  
Care.....Jennifer Harper  
Worship.....Paula Thorndill  
FaithFormation.....Isaac Owens  
Endowment Committee.....John Buckley

**Property Committee Mtg:** Parking lot- due to several suggestions by contractors, it makes sense to fill the cracks in the parking lot at this time. Drainage continues to be an issue on the north side of the church and the north parking lot. Bids are being taken for excavation of these areas. Drainage tiles and where they need fixing have been identified. An itemization of the cost of having gas installed to the MCC building has been obtained. Lighting in the church continues to be worked on. All projects are being prioritized and will most likely require a capital fund raising effort in the future.

**Faith Formation** Discussion of upcoming events. So far there are 14 teens going to National Gathering. Mamrelund is partnering with a church from Traverse City for this event.

**Endowment Committee** The Endowment Committee will meet on Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjournment:** Motion made by Isaac Owens at 7:55 and seconded by John Buckley.

**Closing Prayer:** Lord's Prayer

**Next Meeting Date:** Monday, April 8, 2024



**Cinco De Mayo  
Mardi Gras  
Celebration!  
May 5th.**

This is a party AND a fundraiser for our youth and adults going to the National Youth Gathering in July!

- Youth Led Worship
  - Fiesta Food
  - Pinatas
- Mardi Gras Flair

\*\*All following the 10:00 worship

**Come and support our youth as they prepare for this Summer's National Youth Gathering in New Orleans!**



# Mamrelund Event Calendar

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
7	<b>8:30am Traditional</b> <b>10:00am Contemporary</b>	8am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry 7pm Faith Formation Meeting	8:30am Yoga Pastor's Devotion 5-7pm Food Pantry 7pm Adult Bible Study	8:30am Yoga 9am Productive Fellowship Pastor's Devotion 5-7pm Food Pantry 7pm Adult Bible Study	6am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry 5:45pm MamFam	8:30am Yoga Pastor's Devotion 6pm Praise Band	6am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry
14	<b>8:30am Traditional</b> <b>10:00am Contemporary</b>	6am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry 6:30pm Pub Theology	8:30am Yoga Pastor's Devotion 5-7pm Food Pantry 7pm Adult Bible Study	6am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry 6:30pm Jr. High Youth Group	8:30am Yoga Pastor's Devotion 6pm Praise Band	6am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry	6:30-9pm Together! Youth Event- MCC
21	<b>8:30am Traditional</b> <b>10am Contemporary</b>	6am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry 7pm Worship Comm. Meeting	8:30am Yoga Pastor's Devotion 9am Productive Fellowship 5-7pm Food Pantry 7pm Adult Bible Study	6am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry 5:45pm MamFam	8:30am Yoga 6pm Praise Band 7pm Support Committee Meeting	6am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry	6:30-9pm Together! Youth Event- MCC
28	<b>8:30am Traditional</b> <b>10am Contemporary</b>	6am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry	8:30am Yoga Pastor's Devotion 5-7pm Food Pantry 7pm Adult Bible Study	8:30am Yoga Pastor's Devotion 5-7pm Food Pantry 7pm Adult Bible Study	8:30am Yoga 6pm Praise Band 7pm Support Committee Meeting	6am Basketball 9-11am Food Pantry	6:30-9pm Together! Youth Event- MCC



## Worship Volunteer Ministry April 2024

	<b>8:30 Traditional</b>	<b>10:00 Contemporary</b>
<b>April 7th</b>		
Ushers:	Paul & Kae Swanson	Gayle Malone/Jan Cook
Lector:	Kae Swanson	Carol Witt
Communion Assistant(s):	Paul Swanson	Walt & Cindy Schultze/ Jerry & Carol Witt
Acolyte:		Aubree Owens
Sound/PowerPoint:	J. Goetzka/D. Mortensen	Tyler House/Ben Amlotte
<b>April 14th</b>		
Ushers:	Paul & Kae Swanson	Inger Nicholson/Jon VanDam
Lector:	Carolyn Carlson	Scott Flegel
Communion Assistant(s):	Mick Kleibusch	Owens Family
Acolyte:		Ben Amlotte
Sound/PowerPoint:	J. Goetzka/D. Mortensen	Tyler House/John Grahs
<b>April 21st</b>		
Ushers:	Paul & Kae Swanson	Julie Anderson/Ben Amlotte
Lector:	Paula Thorndill	Jack Draper
Communion Assistant(s):	Keith Anderson	Doug & Laurie Piccard/ Ken & Cathy Jantovsky
Acolyte:		Paige Owens
Sound/PowerPoint:	J. Goetzka/D. Mortensen	Tyler House/
<b>April 28th</b>		
Ushers:	Paul & Kae Swanson	Paul Umlor & Jessica Umlor
Lector:	Amy Iwaniw	Amber Byl
Communion Assistant(s):	Mick Kleibusch	Fox Family
Acolyte:		Taylor Owens
Sound/PowerPoint:	J. Goetzka/D. Mortensen	Tyler House/Amy Looney

## **TOGETHER! April 27<sup>th</sup>!**

Saturday night, April 27<sup>th</sup>, Mamrelund will be hosting a community wide youth event intended to bring Sr. High Youth from all the area churches together for a night of food, games, worship, and a message. Sparta youth are working with Jeff to plan the event with the spirit of creating an ecumenical gathering where our churches and Young Life support one another in our mission to reach our youth with the good news of Jesus!



If you are interested in helping out in any capacity, please contact Jeff. We'd love to have Mamrelund well represented in this community event!

**What: "Together!" A night of food, games, worship, & message for our community youth.**

**When: April 27<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-9:00**

**Where: Mamrelund Lutheran Church & Community Center**

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### **Results from the March 7<sup>th</sup> Blood Drive**

**Goal: 15**

**Number of Donors: 17**

**Successful Donations: 10 whole blood**

**Lives saved in our community: 30!**

*Thanks so much to everyone who turned out!*

*It was so good to see you all!*

**Sign up for our next blood drive on May 2nd!**



Contact Julie Anderson (cajaapple@prodigy.net)  
or Sherrie Rader (sherrierader@gmail.com)

or use the link: **https://**

**donate.michigan.versiti.org/donor/  
schedules/drive\_schedule/155941**



## Mamrelund Scholarship Applications

The MLC Education Fund provides support to members of Mamrelund attending college or vocational school. The Scholarship Committee is accepting applications at this time. Forms are in the narthex, the office or online.

**Completed applications must be turned in to the church office by Friday, May 31, 2024.** Recipients will receive notification in mid to late June.

### Guidelines and General Information

Anyone applying for post-high school training to complete a program leading to a degree and/or area of employment is eligible. In addition to pursuing a college degree, other types of training may also qualify, i.e. technical, cosmetology, agriculture, etc.

The maximum amount will be determined by the funds available and the number of people the committee selects to receive a scholarship. Scholarships are renewable for up to five years. It will be necessary to re-apply for a scholarship each year one is desired. The Scholarship Committee will then re-evaluate the qualifications and the need.

The scholarship program is open to graduating high school seniors, those already in college, training program, or any other members of Mamrelund needing financial assistance to continue their education.



*Recognizing our*  
**GRADUATES**

### **Attention Graduates (And Parents):**

If you are graduating this spring from high school, college or vocational school, please fill out a graduation information sheet to be used in the graduate section of the June Messenger. Please be sure to return the completed form to the office no later than **Monday, May 20**. Please submit a wallet size photo to use. You will find graduation forms online, in the narthex or the office. Thank you!!

Thank you to all our church committees who provided meals for our mid-week Lenten Koinonia services. The meals were delicious and enjoyed by our attendees. The mid-week services included music, prayer and fellowship and were attended by about 30 people per week.



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**Thanks to Mick & Sue Kleibusch and Paula Thorndill for delivering Easter lilies and cards to our shut ins!**

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## The Joy of Jesus

The joy that Jesus offers his disciples is his own joy, which flows from his intimate communion with the One who sent him. It is a joy that does not separate happy days from sad days, successful moments from moments of failure, experiences of honor from experiences of dishonor, passion from resurrection.

This joy is a divine gift that does not leave us during times of illness, poverty, oppression or persecution. It is present even when the world laughs or tortures, robs or maims, fights or kills. It is truly ecstatic, always moving us away from the house of fear into the house of love, and always proclaiming that death no longer has the final say, though its noise remains loud and its devastation visible. The joy of Jesus lifts up life to be celebrated.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Lifesigns*

DESIGNATED ACCOUNT REPORT				
2/29/2024				
ACCOUNT	Balance as of 1/31/24	RECEIPTS	EXPENDITURES	Balance as of 2/29/24
Adopt a Family	\$ 219.79	\$ 50.00	\$ 172.44	\$ 97.35
Clothing Bank	\$ 1,385.44	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,385.44
Confirmation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Family Promise	939.56	-	-	939.56
Food Pantry	582.12	2,785.69	1,082.30	2,285.51
Feeding America For Vets	19.80	-	-	19.80
Fellowship	70.61	226.00	48.40	248.21
Helping Hand	265.50	215.50	-	481.00
In/Out Clearance	244.02	-	62.54	181.48
Learning	1,329.09	-	199.00	1,130.09
LYO	3,572.84	-	748.44	2,824.40
LYO Events	-	-	-	-
MCC Events	3,726.70	-	272.66	3,454.04
MCC Security Deposits	679.93	-	-	679.93
Memorial Garden Fund	3,255.00	5.00	-	3,260.00
Misc. Donations	1,651.83	-	-	1,651.83
MMF Fund	29,858.01	560.00	3,780.91	26,637.10
Parsonage	1,922.50	-	-	1,922.50
Property Improvement Fund	4,577.91	165.00	-	4,742.91
Quilting	1,035.58	-	-	1,035.58
Scholarships	-	-	-	-
Thrivent Funds	1,185.71	-	-	1,185.71
VBS	-	-	-	-
W/ELCA	-	-	-	-
Endowment Funds	-	-	-	-
Technology Upgrade	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>56,521.94</b>	<b>4,007.19</b>	<b>6,366.69</b>	<b>54,162.44</b>

**CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

**2/29/2024**

	Checking	Savings	Total
General Budget	\$16,788.85		\$16,788.85
Designated Accounts	\$54,162.44		\$54,162.44
Food Pantry	\$166.89	\$7,448.83	\$7,615.72
General Fund Savings		\$54,099.86	\$54,099.86
Memorial Garden Fund		\$5,135.26	\$5,135.26



**Vacation Bible School**  
**June 23-27**  
**5:00-8:30pm**  
**Long Lake Park**



**We remember in prayer...**

Sam Amlotte, Keith Anderson,  
Imogene Clement, Ashlee Davis,  
Rev. Wayne Harrison, Jacob Johnson,  
Joan Johnson, Julie Johnson,  
Loreen Lundquist Stream,

Charlie Montalvo, Alyce Mortensen, Evelyn Nicholson,  
Leonard Nicholson, MaryAnne Spangenberg,  
Marilyn Schnepf, Marge Swanson, Jon VanDam,  
Chuck Vereecken, Ann Weber, Marilyn Wiley, and Wayne &  
Marilyn Youngquist.

**Our family and friends:** Ken & Norma Amlotte,  
Marcia Bernhardt, Marylynn Bezalski, Steve Colella & Kelly  
Klein, Charles & Louise Conklin, Mary Derksen, Dan Doney,  
Sharon Hanson, Sherri Kanten, David Kent, Wayne Klinkner,  
Elte Klystra, Roger Leech, Moura McRae,  
Johanna Miklovich, Isabel Morales, Ed Morr, Marty Oakley,  
Paula Payne, Lisa Plank, Roger Soderstrom, Jim Steenwyk,  
Pam VanTimmeren, McKenna Versluis, Claudette Wieda,  
Ashton Wilkie, Dolores Wright, and Carol Wylie.

**Those serving in the military:** Dalton Dayton,  
Loraleigh Hild, Louis Ortiz, and Garrett Zuidema.  
Our family and friends: Scott Clark, Autumn Dunavan,  
John Turner, Brett Lavoie, and Brittany LaVoie.

**Mallory Anne Zemaitis** was  
received into Christ's Church through the  
Sacrament of Baptism on Easter morning.  
Mallory's parents are **Dan & Molly Zemaitis**.  
Her sponsors are Bryan & Kristen Andrews.



*Mr & Mrs* **Blaire Mortensen and Randy Thompson** were  
married on March 2nd in Grand Rapids.  
Congratulations Blaire & Randy. Your Mamrelund  
family wishes you the best!

*Altar Flowers*

<b>April 7th</b>	In loving memory of Eric Foxworthy by Gail & Susan Foxworthy
<b>April 14th</b>	In loving memory of Donald Allen Peterson by JoeAnne Peterson
<b>April 21st</b>	In loving memory of Frances Anderson by her family
<b>April 28th</b>	In honor of Mike & Diane Rexford's 45th wedding anniversary



- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Caden & Georgia Mathieu   | 14 Joe Jarvis & Erin Barkow  |
| 4 James & Margo Goetzka     | 17 Ed & Sandy Stuemke        |
| 8 Jim & Karen Brittner      | 21 Paul & Kae Swanson        |
| 12 Paul & Kae Swanson       | 28 Mike & Diane Rexford      |
| 12 Dean & Francine Anderson | 30 Charles & Paula Thorndill |



- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 KEITH ANDERSON                      | 15 JUDY DYKEMA                          |
| 2 LYNDA ANDERSON<br>AMY IWANIW        | 16 JILL WITT BAILEY<br>SOPHIE MORRELL   |
| 4 DEB MORTENSEN<br>MONICA CONKLIN     | 17 MACKENZIE MORTENSEN<br>COHEN WHEELER |
| 5 JARON MORTENSEN                     | 19 KIM CHRISTNER<br>KAITLYN GEERS       |
| 6 ANNA IWANIW<br>DAVID SCHNEPP        | 20 DAVID JOHNSON<br>MARK MATTHEWS       |
| 8 CINDY JOHNSON<br>QUINN TATA         | 21 GARY ANDERSON<br>COLE CHASE          |
| 9 STEVEN NELSEN<br>DAN ZEMAITIS       | 22 ASHLEY LONGCORE                      |
| 10 MAX HUDSON                         | 23 ETHLYN SMITH                         |
| 11 BRENDEN GEERS<br>RICH KOBER        | 26 ANDREW KINNEY                        |
| 12 ERIN ANDERSON<br>CHERYL NURMIKKO   | 27 JOE KLEIN                            |
| 13 LOREN PETERSON SR.                 | 28 RJ MORTENSEN                         |
| 14 BRANDON MAY                        | 29 JUDI ANDERSON                        |
| 15 BRIAN CHRISTNER<br>CHARLOTTE LEWIS | 30 TAYLOR THROOP                        |