



Port Austin Bible Campus, 8180 Port Drive, PO Box 474, Port Austin, Michigan, USA, 48467. • 989-738-7700 • pabc@portaustin.net

In This Issue

- [1 \\$2500 Electric Bills Getting Paid](#)
- [1 PABC Garden Is Best Ever](#)
- [2 Families with Children at PABC](#)
- [2 Church Zoning in Supreme Court](#)
- [3 Guests Write: Poems for Paulie 2](#)
- [6 List of Needs for PABC](#)

PABC Newsletter #4 — November 2014

Helping the Homeless in the "Thumb" of Michigan

\$2500/mo Electric Bills Getting Paid

Our previous issue, [June 2014](#), explained how our electric bill ranged between \$300 and \$600 per month for three years, even though we were using much more service every month, then suddenly shot up to \$2500 per month! Both DTE Energy and the Michigan Public Service Commission had no idea how we had been receiving such blessing for the past three years. We were not sure how we would continue operating, as our ministry typically received only slightly more than that in offerings each month! But we were confident that if it were God's will, He would make it possible.

Indeed, we did receive increased offerings from some of our readers, **for which we are very thankful!** We also had to continue to borrow, mostly at low interest or no interest. Between the two, we have paid our \$2500 each month on time and our electric bill balance has gone down from \$35,595 to

\$25,749. But we continue to need help with this bill—**\$1500 more by November 30.** We gratefully accept checks to Port Austin Bible Campus (or Port Austin Bible Church if tax deduction is important). See more options on-line: www.portaustin.net/pabc/what-can/

We are in the process of implementing a much more efficient wood heating system for some of our buildings. A new brother in Christ has come to PABC to volunteer to help us. (Nobody is paid at PABC—staff members who do not have a their own income live from the food, clothing and other items given to the homeless Guests here.) He has implemented several "rocket stoves" in previous locations, which burn wood so efficiently that the exhaust air is only about 100 degrees. Recently, we have had a generous donation of un-split fire wood, then shortly after we accepted a Guest whose last major remaining assets were a truck, trailer and log-splitter!



PABC Garden Is Best Ever

This year's PABC garden produced more food than any previous year, thanks to a lot of diligent weeding by PABC Guests. This provided a good quantity of nutritious food during the summer and for winter storage. We have provided a few pictures here, but this year's harvest included: apples, asparagus, basil, beans, broccoli, cabbage, cantaloupe, carrots, cilantro, corn, cucumbers, kale, onions, peas, peppers, raspberries, summer

squash, sunflowers, Swiss chard, tomatoes, water melons and winter squash. Almost all of these produced well; we had no significant problems with insects and only needed to water early in the season. Leaves, stalks and surplus produce served well as chicken feed. This is the first time our watermelons were good. Our corn was grew from 11 to 13 feet tall—very unusual! We had both fresh sweet corn and our largest crop of field corn, which we dried for grinding into cornmeal.



Families with Children at PABC

For the past few months, about half of the PABC Guests have been families with children. One mother with children ages 4 and 6 moved to her own apartment just last week. The mom and one child had serious ongoing health issues. Mom had two felonies on her record from many years ago; there is no simple way to have them removed and they still prevented her from entering most housing programs. Even after five months living at PABC, and the staff realizing that she was not committing crimes and that she was one of the best at helping keep the place clean, there was no way to get her into those housing programs that rejected her.

We have another family with three minor children, plus an adult child who also lost her place to live while her family was at PABC. The father of the family is disabled, but the mother and the adult child worked long days out in the cold in the sugar beet piling this fall. The family is no stranger to tragedy as both parents lost their previous spouse to an early death. The children are doing well in school, involved in music and other extra curricular activities. Finding a home is difficult for families larger than four, especially with teens. Most low-cost housing is focused on just one and two bedrooms. Yet, most housing regulations require a separate bedroom for parents, for male teens and for female teens. After three months at PABC, they have plans for a new home next week.

A month ago, a father with children ages 1, 2 and 3 came to PABC. He had tried to find

other places to live, but the "good deals" that others were offering him turned out to have problems that made them uninhabitable for small children. We do not know of another facility within 100 miles that would take this family—most shelters are set up only for mothers with babies. Without PABC, the children would have been placed into the foster care system. The oldest child has autism. The father was very good at taking care of the children, but was unable to look for work while doing so. The father and mother had gone through a lot of difficulty, but a week ago, she came back to resume her duty. She herself had come from a broken home, but said "I promised myself I would do better for my family, and I will. The father is now out looking for work."

Another father of four younger children recently came to PABC. He was very successful economically, but a legal issue (apparently not his fault) caused him to lose his business and home. Neither he nor his wife had ever previously applied for any government assistance. When she had completely run out of money, she did not know what to do, so walked out of a store with some food, hoping that if she got caught, they would understand. She should have contacted Department of Human Services, a church "food pantry", or any of several other organizations that provide emergency food. They would have understood and given her some food. But the police and courts sent her to jail. She will come to PABC with the children when she comes out.



Church Zoning in Supreme Court

After two years, we are still in court for having chickens in a business district, a charge originally filed against us on October 4, 2012. While there are multiple reasons why we believe we should have been found "not guilty", the only reason we have brought to the Supreme Court is our understanding that unincorporated churches are not subject to local zoning ordinances. The courts have frequently ruled that churches are subject to zoning within certain limits—such as churches cannot be excluded from a town by zoning—but every case in Michigan was about a church organized as a corporation. Corporations are created by state law, so of course, they can be regulated by state law. But states do not make laws about what

churches can do on their own property! The Michigan laws allowing zoning (MCL 125.3101 - 125.3702) do not contain one word about churches or religion. The local Port Austin Township Zoning Ordinance does not claim authority over them either.

In our case, and numerous other cases we found, townships and counties have tried to use zoning ordinances to get rid of homeless shelters and other ministries to the poor. Their real reasons are usually centered around economics: these ministries and the people they serve spend little money in the community, they use government services, and supposedly they "look bad" and drive away wealthy people from the community.

In fact, the US Department of Justice has noticed so much discrimination against religion by local zoning that the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act was passed in 2000: www.justice.gov/crt/spec_topics/religiousdiscrimination/ff_landuse.php. In spite of this, a noted UCLA law professor says that the act has done little to help religious entities owning land: uclalawreview.org/pdf/57-6-4.pdf. The act forbids local governments from imposing a "substantial burden" on religion when it is not affecting a "compelling government interest", but courts have ruled that burdens of tens of thousands of dollars are not substantial. Neither the act nor court cases stemming from it address whether or not unincorporated religious entities are subject to zoning.

A ruling from the Michigan Supreme Court exempting unincorporated religion from zoning would provide a means for Christians to accomplish work that otherwise might be "zoned out" by local governments. While only binding in Michigan, such a ruling would be noticed by other states and make it many times easier for religious groups there to achieve similar court decisions. The fear expressed by our local Circuit Court of numerous bogus religious entities being created to avoid zoning is unfounded. Unincorporated religion is not for the faint of heart—those involved can be held personally liable if the ministry loses a lawsuit, whereas a corporation provides a layer of protection. Unincorporated churches are tax exempt, but most new churches gladly pay to incorporate simply because it makes tax exemption easier.

Our Supreme Court Case Number is **150365**, which you may click to see its progress. (If reading this on paper, go to courts.mi.gov/opinions_orders/case_search/ and click "BY DOCKET NUMBER" then enter "150365". Nearly all of the documents of the case are available on our website: www.portaustin.net/pabc/zoning-2012/. Our case was filed on November 6, 2014, and the letter sent to us indicated it would be five to six months before the court decides if they will hear the case—they are not required to hear it. If the Supreme Court decides not to hear it, or decides against us, then we would be able to file a case in Federal District Court. We are able to file this Supreme Court case because the Lansing Court of Appeals issued an Order declining our Application for Leave to Appeal on September 4, 2014. This is the way the appellate

process works: one has to lose at a lower level in order to win at a higher level.

This filing turned out to be more dramatic than usual. We filed the Application on October 30, 2014, 56 days from September 4, the maximum days allowed for a **criminal case**. On Monday of the next week, we received our case and check returned in the mail with a letter saying we had exceeded the 42-day limit for a **civil case**, and there was "**no exception** to the time limitation". With amazement, we called the Supreme Court Clerk, and they told us the Court of Appeals had it docketed as a civil case, so that is how they categorized it. The Supreme Court was diligent, however, and promised to investigate further. We prayed that they would find the truth of the matter and allow our appeal to proceed.

We spent most of the day writing a letter to the Court of Appeals showing how all of the proceedings were criminal and how indeed the law allowed the Township to prosecute it as a criminal case. As we were walking out the door to mail the letter, the Supreme Court Clerk called and explained that it is the codes at the end of the case numbers that the clerks use to determine the type of case—they do not look at its contents. The original district Court Trial used "ON" (civil) instead of "OM" (criminal), but the Circuit Court used "AR" which is correct for a criminal appeal. The Court of Appeals, seeing the confusion, docketed it as a civil case since most zoning cases are civil in nature. Before that time, I had not known what any of those case codes meant, and most of the local court staff did not know either. Because of the confusion, though, the Supreme Court agreed to file the case and decide if they will hear it. If one loses the case because of filing too late, one does not gain the right to go to Federal Court—all of the work is over. It was an exasperating day—but it ended well!

We ask you to join us in prayer that the Court will decide to hear this case and allow unincorporated church ministries to serve God free of unnecessary local regulations! In our case, our chickens had been in the same place on our property for seven years, and neither we nor the township ever had any complaints from neighbors. Our [June 2014 PABC Newsletter](#) contained more details about the facts of the case.

Guests Write: Poems for Paulie 2

This is part 2 of the writings of a former PABC guest. She received very little real love or care growing up, and was unable to manage her affairs well enough to retain custody of her son. When one is raised in a world of lies, it is difficult to understand truth. Nevertheless, during her visits to her son, she was still able to express the love she had for him in these poems that exceed the ability of many of us "more stable people". May God deliver her from her difficulties, draw her to Himself and bless her by uniting her family. We publish this Guest writing so that mothers everywhere can see the most challenged people often still have the same desires for a loving and peaceful family—even though they may have little experience with it and little understanding of how to make it

happen. Mature Christians need to be willing to help such people. Jesus Christ began His ministry like this:

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” (Luke 4:16-19).

The following poems’s copyright © are held by their author, who gave permission for this publication without her name.

Never Unsaid

*I never want this to go unsaid,
So here in this poem, is for it to be said.
There are no words to express
How much you mean to me.
A son like you, I thought could never be.
Because the day you were born, I just knew
God sent me a blessing and that was you.
For this I thank Him everyday.
You are the true definition of a son, in every way.
It is because of you that my life has a meaning.
Becoming a mom has shown me a new sense of being.
I want you to know that you were the purpose of my life.
Out of everything I did-it was you that I did right.
Always remember that I know how much you care;
I can tell by the relationship that we share.
For a son like you there could be no other,
And whether we are together or apart,
Please do not forget how much mommy
Loves and cares about you, my little man.*

Sweet Baby

*Sweet baby boy
Cuddled in my arms
Looking up at mama
What a treasure you are
God gave me you
From the heavens above
I'll never let you go
I give you all of my love
Your Daddy loves you too
He's very proud of you
He thinks your something special
And gives you lots of kisses and hugs
Now baby boy
It's getting late
Paulie James
I'll show you the world tomorrow
But for now dream of me while you sleep
Sweet, sweet baby boy*

My Son

*Sticky fingers,
Dirty face,
Rugs and pillows*

*Out of place;
Cars and tractors,
Here and there;
Blocks and boats
everywhere.
Gold and silver
Have I none;
But worth a million
Is mommy's precious son.*

Smiles

*As you lay there in your crib
Watching the mobile go around,
A smile comes upon your face
And I couldn't make a sound.
I start to remember the past two months
From newborn to infant.
God, I love you so much!
We play airplanes together.
You're face is so serious.
Before I sit down you grin.
How unbelievable!
You're growing so fast,
Just yesterday it felt like I could feel you move
Inside of me.
Waiting nine months to see you
And a lifetime to enjoy.
I love you with every
Ounce of my being
And couldn't imagine life any other way.
You bring so much peace and love
To me each and everyday.*

Tiny Fingers

*Ten tiny fingers
That from the very start
Will reach out for tomorrow
Yet always holds your heart
Ten tiny fingers
That always wants to play
That never stop exploring
The wonder of today*

It's A Boy

*You get this news one day
That soon will change your life
Not knowing what it is
Coming next we wait*

*For your surprise!
Congratulations its a boy is
What they said to me,
I closed my eyes and
Thanked the Lord for this
Gift that couldn't be!
At first it was so hard, at
Night I couldn't sleep
Every two hours he woke
Up because he had to eat!
Next thing you know he's
Crawling around the house
He moves so quickly everywhere
You'd think you saw a mouse!
Oh look at him go he's
Walking but he's really not that good
It took him a little while to
Realize that he could!
Hey you should see him now
He is learning how to talk
His favorite word you hear a lot
It's "look-a-look-a-look!"
But he's still my little baby
We've got lots of years to
Go we've got lots of time to
Play he's got lots of time to
Play he's got lots of time to grow.*

My Little Baby Boy

*He is my little baby boy
A boy so loved and
Comforted in life, who
Thinks that one day this
Little boy might have a wife?
When he sleeps a calm
Peace sweeps him away, the
Sight of his sweet little face
Makes you want to proudly say
That's my baby boy, and I
Love him so much
So smart a little boy like you are
He knows what a cow looks like
And can make noises like one too!
When he plays with his toys
He makes the biggest smile
Makes it double the worth
To watch him all the while
Sometimes he screams and
It's hurts so bad, but to hold
Him in my arms. I suddenly
Don't feel so bad.
But it's always worth it to me
To know he will make
Happy and beautiful memories
For me to look back at him and see*

*How happy this little boy made me!
Who knew one child could
Bring such love and joy to me
When he gets older he will
Be the one to see, not only
Did he bring love, happiness and laughter to me
He brought it to everyone that could possibly see!*

Sweet Dreams

*Sweet dreams my darling
The day is done
The moon is here to say
Goodnight to the sun
Gather your blankets and
Climb into bed
Close your eyes and lay
Down your head
Rest for now with peaceful dreams
Of twinkling stars and
Shining moon beams
Sweet dreams my darling
Sweet dreams my love
Sweet dreams my precious
Gift from above.*

To My Son

*Oh how the years go by
Oh how time can certainly fly
From once just a thought in far away dreams
Now into my arms and in my eyes gleam
To presence of you
Your laughter and smiles
Which go on for miles
Warms my heart and soul
You're growing up so fast
As I wish each moment with you to last forever
My little boy will someday be a man
And right by your side I will forever stand
I will pick up the pieces when you fall
I will hold your hand and help you stand tall
And when the day comes when you are on your own
Never feel that you are alone
No matter how near or far apart we are
I am always right there in your heart
Always remember whatever you go through
That no matter what, I will always love you.*

Little Hands, Little Feet

*Little hands, little feet,
Pure and precious, and oh so sweet.
A baby makes footprints in our hearts
That never die or fade.
Babies make footprints found,
Found in precious and hallowed grounds.*

List of Needs for PABC

The Bible mentions the principle of gleaning—allowing the poor to pick leftovers from other's fields after the owners had finished the main harvest (Leviticus 19:9; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19-21; Ruth 2:2, 15). A prosperous farmer did not really need these gleanings, which cost much more per pound to harvest, but they would provide both work and sustenance for the poor. In that spirit, we would like to encourage our friends to give us things that they own but are not using, that we can use to work and provide for ourselves. We have a small truck and trailer we can use to pick up these items when convenient. Just call 989-738-7700.

- **A wide-cut riding lawn mower.** We have 15 acres to mow. The mower we use now belongs to a Guest and will probably leave with him when he goes.
- **A sturdy garden tiller.** We have one tiller with significant mechanical problems and the one we use belongs to a PABC Guest.
- **Garden tools.** Shovels, rakes, hoes, etc. We have some, most were decades old when we got them, and they have worn out over the years.
- **Windows 7 computers, monitors and parts.** Most job

applications and government services are now on-line and require our Guests to use computers. Some of our Guests sell on-line and repair computers. We can assemble good computers from broken ones. Most of our computers are still Old Windows XP versions.

- **DVD and VHS video players.** We use them for daily Bible class and have them available in Guest living areas. They wear out.
- **Cleaning supplies:** dish soap, laundry soap, bleach, glass cleaner, floor cleaner, scrubbers, rubber gloves.
- **Paper goods:** paper towels, toilet paper, table napkins, facial tissue.
- **Transportation help:** Thumb Area Transportation (TAT) bus tickets or gasoline cards for transporting Guests to medical and other appointments.
- **Building materials and supplies** to make numerous repairs and improvements: Wood, nails, screws, shingles, drywall, paint, 55-gal drums, plumbing parts, electrical parts, heating parts including ducts, vents, chimneys, stainless steel pipe, etc.

We have a station wagon and trailer to pick these things up if it is cost-effective to do so. Thank you very much for considering assistance to this ministry.

Port Austin Bible Campus
Newsletter #4 — November 2014
PO Box 474
Port Austin, Michigan 48467-0474

Place
stamp
here

This newsletter is being sent to people believed to have an interest in helping homeless people in Michigan's Thumb. If you would like to receive it via e-mail instead, would like to cancel or would like it sent to someone else, please let us know. Use the return address above, e-mail PABC@portAustin.net or call 989-738-7700.