#### Facebook shuts down Michigan prolifers again Grand Rapids, Mich. - Wexford/Missaukee Right

Grand Rapids, Mich. - Wexford/Missaukee Right to Life, an affiliate of Right to Life of Michigan, discovered on October 4 that their Facebook advertising account had been shut down without explanation.

This is the third time this year Michigan prolife organizations have had their Facebook advertising accounts summarily banned. Right to Life of Michigan's advertising account has been banned twice without cause in 2017, but was restored thanks to media scrutiny.

Right to Life of Michigan President Barbara Listing said, "Facebook's self-described mission is to, 'give people the power to build community...' It's hard to do that when community organizations have tools taken away from them without an explanation. Unfortunately many local organizations don't have the resources we did to demand an explanation and receive a solution."

Wexford/Missaukee Right to Life has not been given any specific details about what caused the ban. They were not directly informed their account had been banned; they only discovered the ban when attempting to purchase additional advertising.

Similar to the ban of Right to Life of Michigan's advertising account, Facebook's support team refused to answer specific questions and instead sent a vague form response. On October 4 Wexford/Missaukee Right to Life was told by Facebook, "There's no further action you may take here. We don't support ads for your business model."

Wexford/Missaukee Right to Life has the exact same "business model" as Right to Life of Michigan and our other local affiliates who utilize Facebook advertising. Their "business model" was never in question for earlier advertising purchases.

Right to Life of Michigan in April was similarly told our ban was a final decision beyond appeal, but after a Detroit News reporter contacted Facebook for details in May, our advertising account was restored. Facebook told the Detroit News the ban was a mistake and that they had contacted Right to Life of Michigan to inform us of the resolution. Facebook has not contacted us to this day to explain how the mistake occurred.

Right to Life of Michigan's advertising account was again shut down a few days after our account was restored in May, but a support request including a link to the Detroit News article led to the account being quickly reinstated.

Listing said, "We achieved no results working through Facebook's customer service department and the Better Business Bureau. Facebook only appears to respond to media attention to fix what they claim is a simple mistake.

In 2016 Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg met with conservative leaders who exposed fear that they would be victims of censorship following an accusation that Facebook staff members were blocking legitimate political pages based on personal biases. After the meeting Zuckerberg said, "I wanted to hear their concerns personally and have an open conversation about how we can build trust."

Listing said, "Are these bans automated? Does a human being respond to questions from users? Does Facebook think they can get away with censoring smaller pages and users because they can't draw attention? These are questions Facebook must respond to if they truly want to build community trust.

Right to Life of Michigan is calling on Facebook to be more transparent. They must do a better job of communication with users who make good-faith attempts to abide by their guidelines.

Background information: Facebook response to Wexford/Missaukee RTL May Detroit News article Original ban of Right to Life Michigan

Right to Life of Michigan, 616-532-2300 / info@rtl. org 'www.RTL.org

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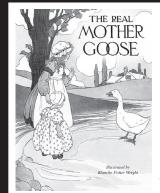
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### **Pumpkin Patch Path at First Congregational Church**

By Mariann Cooper

Pastor Mike Scott and his wife, Cony, ventured into a Pumpkin Path at a church in Allendale last year. They were so impressed that they wanted to try it at our church.

Pastor Mike got a deal on 75 pumpkins and some of the members started decorating and carving them. Wayne and Lorene took several home, as well as some of their family members. Pastor and Cony took several to carve, also.

A path was cut through the woods with a chainsaw, clippers and finally a mower.

The path was cut a little larger than Cony had envisioned, so we were worried we wouldn't have enough pumpkins to 'light' the path after dark. After all, the path was a little rough after being left to nature all these years.

We tied some small lights from tree to tree wherever possible. There weren't quite enough so we used some battery operated lights in the dark

Preparations were being made to have cookies and beverages for treats after walking the path. We also put the fire ring to use for roasting marshmallows.

It came time for the opening night and it came much too fast as some lights were still being installed and pumpkins had to be lit with small candles and battery lights. Luckily it was still daylight and visitors could find their way around easily. Of course, there were lots of us to support and guide them.

The treats were welcomed and parents sat with their children roasting marshmallows around the firepit. Sprinkles of rain tried to dampen our spirit, but they didn't suffice. Closing time came of the last day and we turned out the lights, candles, and firepit. Looking back, it was a success for a first year and we had over 200 visitors.



