



The SPIRE

First United Methodist Church

www.albionfirst.com

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600 East Michigan Avenue

Albion, MI 49224

LOTS OF WORSHIP AT CHRISTMAS

For those of you who notice such things, it's Advent now. That's a time originally intended for fasting and spiritual preparation for Christmas. It has of course been eclipsed in the last few generations by an entirely different kind of preparation for Christmas. Thus two days before the beginning of Advent, we celebrated the new national holy days of Black Friday, followed by Local Saturday, Cyber Monday, and Giving Tuesday (clearly an afterthought!). Tom Lehrer warned us of this in the fifties: "Angels we have heard on high tell us to go out and buy." So it's old news.

This year we're going to fight back, not with more stickers, cards and Facebook posts about how Jesus is the Reason for the Season. Instead, we're going to have an extra helping of Christmas worship. Join us for all the worship, and reclaim a worshipful Christmas for yourself and your family!

To begin with, the Sunday before Christmas, December 18, at 5:30 p.m., we'll have a "Blue Christmas" service, especially for those of you who have suffered loss and loneliness, and for whom Christmas can be a time of renewed grief. We haven't done this before, but in a year when we have lost so many beloved members of the congregation, we need it.

Christmas Eve (Saturday, December 24) we'll have our main worship at 5:30 p.m. in Wesley Chapel. We're going to pack the place with great singing and a short message, followed by lighting candles and singing Silent Night. We're going to squeeze into Wesley Chapel because it's such a great space for singing!

Then at 11:00 p.m. we're going to try something else we haven't done in a very long

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Follow Jesus; Love Everyone

time: a quiet and prayerful service as we celebrate the arrival of the day we have awaited so long. If we only have ten people there, it'll be OK: there wasn't a big crowd gathered for Jesus' birth the first time! It's a great reminder that Jesus interrupted our lives. And the message will be different from the previous service!

This year, Christmas Day falls on Sunday, so we will also have our usual Sunday morning worship, focused of course on the joy of the day. If you have family around at Christmas, make this part of your plan for the day. It's OK to show up in your pajamas and robe, definitely as you are, and ready to sing. If you don't have family that day, then you need to be together with us for a time of community togetherness, like the shepherds and wise men gathered around a manger long ago.

Pastor Jeremy

Prayers

Mark Robison, Ruth Seeley, Torrey Wyma, and Sherry Wyma @ home

Nancy Held @ Maplewood in Marshall

Betty Beese @ Glazier Assisted Living, Chelsea

Florence Reed @ Spring Arbor Assisted Living, Spring Arbor

Dan Seelye @ Arbor Manor, North 31, Spring Arbor

Gourmet Nuts and Peanut Brittle

Nuts are now available in both Wesley Lounge and the church office. The cost is \$20.00 for a 20 oz. can.



The aroma of **Peanut Brittle** is filling our building again! What a delicious scent...and taste! The cost is \$6.00 per container and it is available through the church office.

Leadership

Lay Leader	Lois Fennimore glfennimore@yahoo.com
Church Council Chair	Mark Robison majerobi@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sally Ammerman sallya@wowway.com
Trustees Chair (Building & Property)	Gary Harrison
Staff-Parish Co-Chairs (Personnel)	Evelyn Gedman Barbara Lange
Finance Committee	Rick Lange Langehome.1@gmail.com
Pastor	Jeremy Williams jeremy@albionfumc.org
Choir Director	Drew Dunham
Pianist	Jan Fourn
Administrative Secretary	Cindi Klingel albionfumc@gmail.com
Housekeeper	Lynn Markovich
Custodian	Larry Maynard

Advent Luncheons

Through Advent, the churches in Albion get together for lunch Wednesdays at noon. Please bring your friends and join us!



November 30	St. James Episcopal Church
December 7	First United Methodist Church
December 14	Albion Free Methodist Church (Maple Street)
December 21	Lewis Chapel AME Church

December in Worship

Advent is the four weeks before Christmas. We're full up with special worship, including a new Blue Christmas service on the 18th, a late service on Christmas Eve, and Sunday morning, Christmas Day. Make worship the center of your Christmastime!



December 4: Charity (agape) The end of our four-message series on the The Four Loves, by CS Lewis, with Charity (agape).

December 11: Promises, Promises: What God Promised Us for Christmas Luke 1:67-80; 2:25-35.

December 18: Once in Royal David's City: What Was It Like? Luke 1:26-38.

December 18: Blue Christmas worship - Message: "Touching God"
5:30 p.m., focusing on those for whom Christmas is a time of grieving; John 1:1-18.

December 24, Christmas Eve family service
5:30 p.m. in Wesley Chapel, "Catching Our Breath"; Luke 2:1-20.

December 24, Christmas Eve late service
11:00 p.m. in Wesley Chapel, "Light"; Isaiah 9:2-7; John 1:1-14.

December 25, Christmas Day, "For People Like Us" Matthew 1:18-2:15. Come as you are, in your pajamas or whatever you wear on Christmas morning!

In January we have a new series of messages based on Jesus' Farewell Teaching in John 12-15: Words of comfort, encouragement, grace, and strength. In the darkest time of the year, messages of hope from Jesus.

UMW News

UMW News and Views

By the time you received this Newsletter, our December program will have happened – our annual Ingathering. It is always a highlight of the year. We had a men's instrumental group and a small women's choir, gave out three special memberships and sang wonderful thanksgiving/thanksgiving hymns. Psalm 100 led the way to treasured scripture. I can say with confidence ahead of time that it was a wonderful time of spiritual depth and warm fellowship.

Good news - peanut brittle making is back in town with Polly helping Amy Plassman learn the ropes with much help from Carol Maynard.

We are in the process of trying to get programs planned and a membership book ready. The two circles plan to meet together several times next year. Do think about joining us!

I'm in the thankful mode so I conclude with a quote from Grace Fox (at gracefox.com):

"Giving thanks in difficulty is a sacrifice. It demonstrates our willingness that we believe He is who He says He is - the faithful One. And it demonstrates our love and respect for Him in return. But there's more. Offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving helps us evolve as Christians. It shifts our focus from our circumstances to Jesus. His presence becomes more real, and His peace calms our anxious thoughts."

In Christ,
Barb Stowell

Albion UMW Serrv Order

Dear All,

Please note that the Albion UMW serrv.org order will be placed on Wednesday, December 7.



Buying gifts through Serrv is super-convenient *and* supports small businesses, poor communities and fairly-treated workers. You'll give plenty of money to Fortune 500 retailers this year, but everything you buy through Serrv really is giving to a good cause.

If you want to order online, here's how to do it and give the credit to Albion UMW:

1. Go to www.serrv.org
2. Login as jweber@albion.edu with password serrv49224.
3. At top, click on "My Account" and then click the blue button "wishlists."
4. Look for a wishlist with 0 items, then go back to the home page.
5. As you shop, add your items to that wishlist.
6. When you're done, let me know which wishlist is yours.

If you ordered online last year, your wishlist is still there, so you can re-order things you liked! Don't worry, I will NOT re-order any lists unless you let me know.

Serrv catalogs will be at Ingathering and at church. If you want to look at one at home, let me know!

Thanks, Jake

News from Women United

Dear everyone:

On behalf of Women United, I want to express our gratitude for the church's gifts of time, talents and resources this past year. We very much appreciate the church's generosity and know that we wouldn't be a group were it not for Albion FUMC. I doubt there are many FUMC members who haven't directly offered something to Women United, which is marvelous and very encouraging.

This past summer we raised some \$900 via participating in the Michigan Avenue Garage Sale. Thanks again to all of you who donated items for us to sell! We are planning to do this again in 2017 so please do keep that in mind when cleaning out closets.

We also want to give an extra thank-you to Barb Lange, who has worked with our group the



whole year, leading us through the "Faithful Families" program sponsored by the USDA. This program brings food/nutrition information to all Americans and even Barb indicated that she had learned new things from it! Anyhow, it was very valuable to our members and again, we appreciate Barb's dedication in working with our group.

Women United plans to focus on membership growth in 2017, in part by doing more community outreach as a group. We're not totally sure how this will take shape, but are realizing that while this group was brought together as a support for the members, already that's not enough; we need and want to help others too. As you support this group, we're in turn looking to help others.

Thank you again for being such a blessing to the women of Women United.

Jake

Sunday Schedule:

9:00 Band
9:30 Refreshments
10:00 Worship
11:00 Refreshments

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday 8:00 am - 12:30 pm
Friday 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

December 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 9a SPRC/DS Mtg Sunday Schedule Communion 11:30a Charge Conf 3p Gonzalez Shower	5 1p Peanut Brittle Making 8p College Bible Study	6 8a Biggby Bible Study 1p Peanut Brittle Making	7 12p Community Advent Luncheon 6:30p Peanut Brittle Making	8 ALBION COLLEGE SEMESTER ENDS 1p Peanut Brittle Making 7p Trustees Mtg	9 1p Peanut Brittle Making	10
11 Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion 7p Sounds of Christmas @St. Paul Lutheran	12 12p First Church Seniors	13 8a Biggby Bible Study 9a SAP Coalition Mtg 1p UMW Evening Circle	14 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study	15 1p UMW Afternoon Circle	16	17 10a Cook Family Gathering
18 Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion 5:30p Blue Christmas Worship	19 5:30p Women United	20 8 am Biggby Bible Study	21 1:15 Sheldon Place Bible Study	22	23 OFFICE CLOSED	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 5:30p Worship 11p Worship
25 Sunday Schedule	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 8a Biggby Bible Study	28 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study	29	30	31

Yoga Anyone?

Hello Friends,

I have been thinking about leading, if there is interest, a yoga-type stretch and breathing class in January.

I am not a trained yoga instructor, but over the years have attended many classes and have a personal practice that I developed when I couldn't find a yoga class nearby. It is a gentle routine that I think



someone of any age could do, and it involves breathing, stretching, and some meditation.

I was thinking of holding the class on Saturday mornings, in either Wesley or Fellowship Lounge. I haven't worked out all the details yet, but if you are interested, contact me, Polly Moore, my email is

catim@frontiernet.net

I'll comprise a contact list and let you know what I come up with. You would need a folding chair, a yoga pad (optional), a small throw or blanket, and the ability to get down on the floor and back up again. It might be a good way to while away January and February.