



# The SPIRE

**First United Methodist Church**

[www.albionfirst.com](http://www.albionfirst.com)

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600 East Michigan Avenue

Albion, MI 49224

## Sifting our past for spiritual treasure

Well, thank God 2016 is over! The year of dreadful diagnoses, dreadful elections, deaths in the church family, and much more that I hope will soon be dropped into the garbage can of history! And then again, there's a new year ahead, which will have its own serving of natural disasters, wars, plane crashes, fear-mongering and political wrangling.

But let me tell you the other side of 2016: deeper love among people I know, hours of precious spiritual conversation with people who call me pastor, joy-filled worship, serious enquiry and joyous conversation at Bible study, answered prayers, marriages strengthened and deepened, and much more that has changed me for the better. From here, the suffering looks bearable, and I can imagine bearing the same again, if there can be such deep joy again!

So can there be hope in 2017? Are we faced with Hamlet's choice this year? Should we "take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them?" or is it nobler to "suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune?" Do we enter 2017 expecting a year-long fight against things we can't change (sickness, politics, war, losses)-or do we take all the hard knocks in stride, maintaining an inner confidence and peace that Christ can provide? That's a tough and spiritual question. After all, Jesus did both. He didn't open his mouth to speak on his own behalf when he was on trial before Pilate, so he sounds passive, doesn't he? And then on the other hand, he railed violently against the money-changers at the Temple like a true wild-eyed reformer. Perhaps his choice gives us a hint about how we should approach the new year. In both cases, he made a choice that

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*Follow Jesus; Love Everyone*

served the good of others rather than himself. He put his anger and energy into justice, while he put himself into God's hands with complete confidence.

In 2017, are you ready to trust yourself and your future to God, even in the face of death itself? And in 2017, are you ready to commit yourself to the passionate pursuit of justice and good, helping others come closer to God? For me, the answer has to be yes. After the last year, what else can I do?

Let me know what spiritual treasures you've found in 2016, and what's going to move you forward into 2017 with deeper faith.

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

## Yoga Anyone?

I will be leading a yoga-type stretch and breathing class starting Saturday, January 7 in Fellowship Lounge. 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. 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. If you are interested, COME! It might be a good way to while away January and February. If you want to contact me, Polly Moore, my email is [catim@frontiernet.net](mailto:catim@frontiernet.net)



## 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

## Gourmet Nuts and Peanut Brittle

Nuts are now available in both Wesley Lounge and the church office. The cost is \$20.00 for a 36 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.

## January in Worship

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.

### January 1: Words of Comfort

This is a special service, when we renew our connection with Christ in a **"Covenant Renewal Service."** The message comes from John 14:27-31. *"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you."*

### January 8: Words of Encouragement,

The series continues with **Words of Encouragement**, a message from John 15:1-17. *"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."*

### January 15: Words of Grace

We all need Jesus' **Words of Grace** from John 12:44-50. "I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."

### January 22: Words of Strength

This wraps up the series with **Words of Strength** from John 15:20-16:4, about the promise of strength from the Holy Spirit. *"I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling."*

## UMW Epiphany Celebration

The United Methodist Women for the Albion District is having a Epiphany Celebration on January 14 at the Marshall United Methodist Church located at 721 Old U.S. Highway 27 North. Registration starts at 9:30 a.m. and the program begins at 10:00 a.m. Pastor Beverly Williams will deliver a testimony of life changing, life giving, Miracle of God moment that happened to her. Cost is \$10.00. Registration forms are available on the guest book stand in Wesley Lounge.



## UMW News

## UMW News and Views

Looking back and looking forward...again! I am grateful that this is true. The alternative is some heavenly direction from which those who have passed on now view us! We miss their earthly presence, but we are inspired by their legacy.

It is wonderful to report that Ingathering took in \$2,870 in December. Thank you to all who gave to support community ministries which help so many people in different ways. Thanks also go to those who presented the lovely Ingathering service.

There will be a Peanut Brittle sales report next month. Several people took up the reins to make the irresistible candy to share with others. A large measure of thanks goes to those who worked on the project.

There are some new plans for UMW in 2017. The "Evening" Circle and the former "Morning" Circle are planning to meet together during January and February. We will meet on Thursday, January 19th at 1 p.m. for a joint Pledge Service in Wesley Lounge. The Leadership Team is working on Program books for 2017.

Plan to join a carload of women to go to Albion District UMW Epiphany Celebration on Saturday, January 14th at Marshall United Methodist Church. Time, registration, and topic will be announced in the church bulletin (and in the adjacent column!).

Faithful God, grant us the courage, commitment, and opportunity to be strong witnesses who daily reflect your love to all we serve in our communities. Amen.

By Catherine Mudime Akale,  
United Methodist Women regional  
missionary, sub-Sharan Africa

Blessings always,  
Donna Williams

**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

# January 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunday Schedule Communion	2	3 8a Biggby Bible Study	4	5 5:30p Women United Leadership	6	7 10a Yoga Stretch
8 Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion	9 12p First Church Seniors	10 8a Biggby Bible Study 9a SAP Coalition Mtg	11 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study	12 7p Trustees Mtg	13	14 10:00a UMW Epiphany Celebration @ Marshall UMC 10a Yoga Stretch
15 BAs Return Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion	16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day 5:30p Women United	17 ALBION COLLEGE SEMETER STARTS 8a Biggby Bible Study	18 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study	19 1p UMW Combined Circle 7p Church Council Mtg	20 1:30p Albion Health Care Alliance Mtg	21 10a Yoga Stretch
22 Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion	23 8p College Bible Study	24 8am Biggby Bible Study 10a Piecemakers	25 1:15 Sheldon Place Bible Study 4p SPRC Mtg	26 12p Red Cross Blood Drive	27	28 10a Yoga Stretch
29 Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion	30 8p College Bible Study	31 8a Biggby Bible Study				