



# The SPIRE

**First United Methodist Church**

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

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600 East Michigan Avenue

Albion, MI 49224

## I've Got People

I've got people. When I have a question about church money, I ask Sally. When I want someone to start a visitation ministry, I mention it to Lois. When there's ice building up on the sidewalk, I mention it to Larry. When I want someone to update an event on the calendar, or redraft a policy, I ask Cindi. When I need to understand a budget question, Rick is on it. When we need part of the building to look better and be more welcoming, Barb is all over it. And when it comes to food for a funeral or anything else, it's another Barb. If we need to put music together for Easter or Christmas, we can depend on Jan (and Drew, Ken, Ken, Phil, and Torrey). This isn't a catalog of all the people I depend on—just a hint about how deeply we depend on one another all the time. Being me, I also have people to call on when I want to play some music!

It seems especially important to point out our interdependence as our western world continues to pursue its ideal of individualism to absurd levels. Read this from psychologist Martin Seligman: "In the past quarter-century, events occurred that so weakened our commitment to larger entities as to leave us almost naked before the ordinary assaults of life... Where can one now turn for identity, for purpose, and for hope? When we need spiritual furniture, we look around and see that all the comfortable leather sofas and stuffed chairs have been removed and all that's left to sit on is a small, frail folding chair: the self."

Seligman is clear that if we want to recover our optimism, our positive outlook on the world and our future, we need to be fully engaged in a network of people. Depression and isolation are two beasts feeding on one another. I can see the truth in this from my own life. I have usually been pretty good at finding a few friends to

## July 2016

Leadership Listing	2
Prayers	
UMW News: Our Women in June	
Upcoming Dates to Remember	
Worshiping Through the Summer (July-August)	3
Every Member A Greeter (EMAG)	4
Miracle Sunday Update	
Thank You – Rottenbiller	
Women United Garage Sale	
Women United Work Day	
Calendar	5

*Follow Jesus; Love Everyone*

## I've Got People (continued)

connect with—people who will notice when I look down-in-the-mouth, who will listen to what's going on, and invite me over to their house on a whim. At those times when and I haven't had those supports at the ready, I've slipped pretty close to depression a few times. In Sligman's words, they are the "comfortable leather stuffed chairs" that make up the furniture of my internal home.

Where's God in all this? Everywhere! God is the glue holding so many of these relationships together. God is the maker who made us to live in community. God is the one who rejoices when we live together in harmony, creating villages of relationships. And God is the first and final friend, from the beginning to the end of our lives. The relationship modeling faithfulness for every other relationship is the holy relationship we have with God. Now let's go and make it real!

Pastor Jeremy

## 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 office@albionfumc.org
Housekeeper	Lynn Markovich
Custodian	Larry Maynard

## UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

**August 6** Women United Sale

**August 7-11** Vacation Bible School  
(date subject to change)



## Prayers

Hilda Ebbinghouse, Dan Seelye, Torrey Wyma,  
Beverly Bentley and Ken Bentley @ home

Nancy Held @ Maplewood in Marshall

Betty Beese @ Glazier Assisted Living

Florence Reed @ Spring Arbor Assisted Living;  
Spring Arbor

## UMW News

### Our Women in June

Even though summer is upon us, the current of UMW continues to flow throughout the missions of the church. The All-church potluck on May 1 was our last planned general meeting activity before the summer hiatus; the kitchen has remained a busy place with the monthly Seniors luncheons, funeral luncheons, and a meal for Philanthropic Women that has helped raise money for missions. Barb Stowell's quilting group has been meeting regularly as well to fill the never-ending requests for quilts for hospital patients from children to the elderly. There is no summer slow-down in the faithfulness shown by the women in our church to fill these needs.

A summer refresher was held at the home of Evelyn Gedman on June 21, and 12 women attended, enjoying food and fellowship in a lovely setting.

Mission U is coming up in July, Donna Williams and Sally Ammerman have forms, and details were given in last month's Spire. The deadline for reservations is July 3rd.

Thanks to everyone who has helped with UMW projects this month, and in the months ahead. May the beauties of the season refresh and renew us all.

Polly Moore

## Worshiping through the Summer

### Tell Me a Story.

**In July**, Jeremy begins his eighth year as pastor here, with a series of sermons on some of the most evocative stories in Genesis: **Tell Me a Story**.

#### July 3: In the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-24).

Here's the story of Adam and Eve: how they lost their innocence and were kicked out of the garden. It is often called the story of the "fall," which implies somehow that this is the beginning of sinfulness, and the fall from grace, making Jesus' whole project necessary. It's not quite that simple. There were gains as well as losses, such as knowing the difference between good and evil, and becoming in some ways "like gods." This ancient story says some profound things about the human condition, and about our personal stories of change.



#### July 10: Under the Oaks of Mamre (Genesis 18:1-33).



The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is wrapped inside another story: God paying a visit to a nomadic chieftain named Abraham at his camp and having a conversation. Unlike the

residents of Sodom, Abraham proves to be a model host, a reminder that we should look for God in the guise of a stranger, and treat the stranger well. But there's much more here!

#### July 17: By the Jabbok (Genesis 32:6-32).

Perhaps one of the most ancient tales of the Bible, wrapped in mysterious hints about divinity. Abraham's grandson Jacob finds himself alone at night, wrestling with a strange figure by a stream. This story is likely older than Jewish monotheism, yet the writer makes it into an evocative story of wrestling with God as the founding character of Israel. Jacob's name



is changed to Israel, which means "wrestles with God." And by not letting go, he receives a blessing!

#### July 24: Into Egypt (Genesis 37:17b-36; 45:1-15):

The story of Joseph is very long-- here we have a scene near the beginning, and another from near the end, telling the story of Joseph and his eleven brothers, the sons of Jacob. Brothers fight, they mock one another, and occasionally try to be noble. In this story, they sell their brother Joseph into slavery, and lie to their father about it. In the end, this is a beautiful and wrenching story of forgiveness and reconciliation. Over the centuries, many Christian writers have considered Joseph to be the most Christlike of all Old Testament figures.



### Hospitality

**Beginning July 31**, we start preparing ourselves to welcome back college students and others, with a three-week series on **Hospitality**. College move-in weekend is August 21.

#### July 31: Prepare (Mark 6:30-44)

Jesus put his followers on the spot when he told them to get dinner for a crowd of thousands. They had the usual complaints: we're not prepared; we can't afford it; can't they just go home? Churches use the same sorts of complaints when people arrive looking for either spiritual or physical sustenance. But if we're not prepared, maybe we should change that, and change the whole conversation with Jesus.



#### August 7: Welcome (Matthew 25:31-40)

Jesus paints a picture of a final judgment, and in the middle of the story is perhaps the most difficult demand: welcome the stranger.

This is harder than we think precisely because we have a hard time putting ourselves in the head and heart of a person who's not just like us. The demand to welcome is a requirement to stretch our imagination. Ready?



#### August 14: Walking Together (Luke 14:12-24)

OK, so you're pretty good and walking up to a stranger and making conversation--maybe. Well, how are you at inviting that person into a longer faith relationship? Where are people going to find the invitation to walk in a shared path of discipleship, if not from you? Are you ready to change a life, and be changed in the process?



## Worshipping (continued)

### Arguments in the Bible

The Bible is not simply a group of texts that share the same truths and points of view. The Bible is intentionally a collection of disagreements and arguments about the very foundations of faith, life, and community. **Beginning August 21**, Jeremy begins a six-week series on some of the most profound **arguments** that the Bible has handed on to us. We're invited to join the conversation--and maybe take sides!

#### August 21: North and South

From Jacob (Genesis 35:1-10) to Jesus and the Samaritans (John 4:9-11, 21-24), the history of people in Palestine was divided between two groups of people, who were usually two nations, and sometimes despised each other. The roots of the story (2 Kings 17:4-6; 17-24) shape a thousand sensitivities and perceptions over the years, including our own.



#### August 28: Prophet and Priest



This one never goes away: it's the struggle between maintaining order and purity (a priest's job) and crying for justice (a prophet's job). Readings from Amos 4 and 5, Isaiah 56:10-12, Jeremiah 7 and 26. Is there a way to keep these two things in tension?

### Women United Garage Sale

The Women United garage sale will be on August 6. Between now and then, please consider donating your non-clothing, good/salable items by bringing them to the church and leaving them on the big cart in the north stairwell beside Tennant Hall.



*Thank you*

Thank you very much to all who blessed me with prayers, cards and food to help me recover so quickly from my surgery.

Eva Rottenbiller

## Miracle Sunday Update

May 22nd was our Sunday for raise special funds supporting our ministry shares--the money we pay to support ministries around Michigan and the world. We have so far raised almost \$12,000 toward our ministry shares. Combined with part of a bequest from Sharon Stone, we were able to send a check to the conference for \$14,560, which is just a shade over 50% of our annual responsibility. Thank you for your strong support or our commitment to essential ministries like camps, campus ministries, community services, seminary scholarships, and of course all the staff who make those things happen! In the fall, we're going to call on your commitment one more time, hoping to get all the way to 100%.

## Women United Work Day

On June 11, the Women United of Albion group had a work day. A couple of the women had not had time to do their spring gardening (mostly due to caring for small children) and needed help from the other members of the group. Jobs included weeding, clearing, planting (or transplanting) and serving lunch. We worked at one house, then went to the other house and worked there too. Then we had lunch together and chatted, getting better acquainted. We soon finished up and headed home, better friends than we had been before then.

Lois Fennimore, Lay Leader

## Every Member A Greeter (EMAG)

During the Albion District Conference this year, the keynote speaker talked about how his church went through great struggles after their building burned. He also talked about their strategy for ministering to people who needed their caring.

What makes you feel cared about when visiting a worship service? For me it is being greeted by quite a few people when I enter and exit the service. That's why I really paid attention when the keynote speaker talked about a part of their strategy called the EMAG program.

It is always good when someone is willing to stand at the entrance door and greet people as they arrive. What's really friendly is when all people at the church feel that it's their obligation to greet people (every member a greeter), not just their friends.

How friendly/caring would the people of First United Methodist Church of Albion appear when we all greet each person? Can we try it and see?

Lois Fennimore, Lay Leader

**Sunday Schedule:**

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

**Office Hours:**

Monday-Thursday 8:00 am - 1:00 pm  
Friday 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

# July 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Sunday Schedule Communion 11:30 Sermon Discussion	4 Independence Day Church Office CLOSED	5 8 am Biggby Bible Study	6 1:15 pm Sheldon Place Bible Study	7	8	9
10 Sunday Schedule 11:30 am Congregation Potluck	11 12 pm First Church Seniors	12 8 am Biggby Bible Study 9 am SAP Coalition Mtg 5:30 pm Trustees Mtg	13 1:15 pm Sheldon Place Bible Study	14 Mission U @ Albion College 9 am AALL Board Mtg 2 pm Healthy Babies Day Mtg	15	16
17 Sunday Schedule 11:30 Sermon Discussion 5 pm Church Council	18 5:30 pm Women United Meeting	19 8 am Biggby Bible Study	20 1:15 pm Sheldon Place Bible Study	21 12 pm Red Cross Blood Drive @ VFW Hall	22 11 am Helen Myers Memorial Service 1:30 pm Albion Hlth Care Alliance Board Mtg	23
24 Sunday Schedule 11:30 Sermon Discussion	25	26 8 am Biggby Bible Study 10 am Piecemakers	27 1:15 pm Sheldon Place Bible Study 4 pm SPRC Mtg	28	29	30
31 Sunday Schedule 11:30 Sermon Discussion						