



# The SPIRE

**First United Methodist Church**

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600 East Michigan Avenue

Albion, MI 49224

## A Conflict of Loyalties

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church is over for another four years. It left unresolved the question of what to do about sexuality in the denomination, and has decided to move forward only with the appointment of a committee to look at solutions for going forward. Not as though we haven't had those before, and not as though we'll agree at the end of another two years of conversation. All this makes plenty of us United Methodist clergy ask whether we still belong in the denomination. The same question is being asked by a great variety of people with a great variety of opinions about where we should go from here.

The indecision of General Conference has given me cause to ask why I hesitate and remain in the denomination. Certainly there are big things like income, employment, pension, and knowing people around the denomination. I've put my last twenty-one years as a pastor into the strengthening of United Methodist ministries. Are these earthly concerns too small to worry about? There's more. There's the covenant I entered, to receive the appointments I was given, to be under orders rather than to work for my own interest. Within the denomination, I can continue to be one of the people who continue to stand up and speak for full inclusion of people of gender and sexual minorities. I have a loyalty to work within this denomination, my community. What's more, sexuality is not the greatest problem faced by United Methodists, who are subject to tribal violence in Africa, and religious persecution in some Asian countries. Surely there's a call to remain committed to those brothers and sisters in faith, whose need is profound.

On the other side of the question is my loyalty to the many good and faithful people I know, who are excluded from ordination, and even from public church marriage, by the position of my denomination. Does my remaining a United

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*Follow Jesus; Love Everyone*

Methodist betray them? Am I insulting or lessening them if I continue to represent the United Methodist Church? Should I become UCC, or even Unitarian? Should I give up church ministry entirely, out of solidarity with others? I appreciate that none of my sexual minority friends has yet suggested that I should.

The thing that always frustrates me most suddenly and deeply is a conflict of expectations and loyalties. How can my first loyalty be to God? How can I give a full commitment to love of all people, and remain committed to the Church that does not? I suspect that I shall remain in the United Methodist Church, and that I shall also become a stronger advocate for equality.

## 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

- July 10** Congregation Potluck
- July 14-16** Mission U (formerly the School of Christian Mission) at Albion College



## Prayers

Eva Rottenbiller, Hilda Ebbinghouse, Dan Seelye, and Ken Bentley @ home

Nancy Held @ Maplewood in Marshall

Betty Beese @ Glazier Assisted Living

Florence Reed @ Spring Arbor Assisted Living; Spring Arbor

## UMW News

### UMW News and Views

One of the things we all enjoy is eating together. Come join us for the Summer Refresher at 10 a.m. on June 21st at the home of Evelyn Gedman, 15330 Behling Rd. Our Leadership Team will prepare the lunch which we'll eat around noon. We can share rides to Evelyn's lovely farm. Perhaps we'll do an easy hands-on mission project while we visit.

Here is an opportunity to get the big picture of United Methodist Women and the United Methodist Church around the world. I am remembering fondly that Mary Margaret Moore and Connie Tuthill were faithful participants in School of Christian Mission when it was at Albion College and elsewhere. Well, Mission u (its new name) is coming back to Albion College, July 14-16. Commuters may choose to register with or without meals, \$150 with, \$100 without. Children and youth are FREE as is "enriched child care". Encourage a friend and/or bring a grandchild. Registration deadline is July 3, 2016. I am excited to know that Rev. Ellen Brubaker is leading the Spiritual Growth study, "The Bible and Human Sexuality" and is the author of the study book. Ellen was an Albion College classmate of mine. Choices for the other studies are "Climate Justice-A Call to Hope and Action" and "Latin America-People and Faith". Registration forms will be in the church office, and I will have some also. Encourage someone who has never attended to come along. NOTE: Mission u is for women, children, youth, and MEN! Our local unit can offer scholarship assistance.

Blessings always  
Donna Williams

## Worshiping through June and July

**June 5** will be communion Sunday, and will also be the end of our series on Bringing It Home to Albion. To wrap up the series, we'll have a look at "What a Church Can Do: Our Mission and Vision."

**June 12**, Jeremy will be at Annual Conference in Lansing, and David Habicht, a prison minister well known to the congregation, and an associate minister at the Presbyterian Church, will bring the message.

Also, on **June 12**, there is a Community Prayer Service/Fellowship event at Lewis Chapel AME Church at 5:00 p.m.

Following Annual Conference, Jeremy will take a vacation. David Habicht will fill in again on the 19<sup>th</sup>, and our own Rev. Bea Robinson will preach on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

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)

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

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

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



## Women United Garage Sale

The Women United garage sale will be in early August. During spring cleaning or similar times between now and then, please consider donating your good/salable items by bringing them to the church and leaving them on the big cart in the north stairwell beside Tennant Hall.



## Caring Skills Training

By the time you read this, the Caring Skills Training will be completed. Seven people from the congregation participated in the 6-weeks of classes. We mainly learned how to come alongside someone in their life journey. We learned some companioning questions to ask, like "What is today like for you?"; "What is the doctor telling you?"; "May I pray with you?"; "How may I pray with you?"; "Is there Scripture that you have found comforting or helpful?"; and "Would you like me to read that?"

The people who participated may serve as the core for a new visitation team for First United Methodist Church of Albion. You may find yourself being visited by one of the team when the pastor is not available. Or you may find them doing follow-up visits as the need arises. God has blessed us.

*Thank you*

We, the family of Lillian Nearnberg, wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for all of the prayers, cards, phone calls and compassion during the illness and passing of the center of our lives, our mother.

We also wish to thank the UMW and those who provided additional food for the luncheon. It was a tremendous amount of help to us all.

Because of you, her church family, Mom and our family were able to feel the love and comfort of our Savior. So many days when things were a little more difficult, the Grace of God lifted us up and assured us of his presence.

We consider ourselves blessed by your friendship and support during this time and pray that God's blessing will be with each of you

The Family of Lillian Nearnberg

## Office Hours:

**Sunday Schedule:**

9:00 Band

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

9:30 Refreshments

Friday 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

10:00 Worship

11:00 Refreshments

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Communion			1 1:15 Bible Study - Sheldon Place	2	3 PEG NEIL MEMORIAL 9:30 Graveside Service 11:00 Service-Wesley Chapel 12:00 Luncheon	4 9:30 Holy Conferencing Skills - Paw Paw UMC
5 Sunday Schedule Communion 11:15 Finance Committee Meeting 11:30 Sermon Discussion	6	7 8:00a Bible Study-Bigby	8	9 5:30 Women United Board Meeting	10	11
West Michigan Annual Conference						
12 Sunday Schedule 5:00 Community Prayer/ Fellowship Service	13 OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 First Church Seniors	14 OFFICE CLOSED 8:00a Bible Study-Bigby 5:30 Philanthropic Women -Dinner 5:30 Trustees Meeting	15	16	17	18
West Michigan Annual Conference						
19 Sunday Schedule 5:00 Church Council	20 1:30 Entre Nous 5:30 Women United Meeting	21 8:00a Bible Study-Bigby 10:00 UMW Summer Refresher	22 4:00 SPRC Meeting	23 12:00 Red Cross Blood Drive @ Knights of Columbus Hall	24	25 Pastor Amos' Birthday Celebration
Pastor Jeremy Vacation						
26 Sunday Schedule	27	28 8:00a Bible Study-Bigby 10:00 Piecemakers	29	30		
Pastor Jeremy Vacation						