



# The SPIRE

**First United Methodist Church**

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

find us on Facebook

600 East Michigan Avenue

Albion, MI 49224

## Endings and Beginnings

By now many of you know that I have been appointed to become the next pastor at Community United Methodist Church in North Muskegon, Michigan, effective July 1. The leaders of our conference decided that my gifts are needed there. The people there are going through some grief at losing the pastor who has led them and loved them for years. They are anxious to find out how the church will be with a new pastor. You may have the same anxieties. Those anxieties are good, because they are expressions of your love for your church, and also the love that you have shown to me over our eight years together.

I have plenty of anxieties myself, that draw me into prayer! What conflicts will there be? Will they accept and love me as the people in Albion have? Do I have the gifts they need? And I am a little anxious for you, because I love you and I want the best for you. I want you to flourish and find great new directions with your new pastor. But I know that in all changes, God accompanies us and shines a light to help us know the way. Here is what I pray for you: that you will "Let your light so shine before people that they see your good works, and give glory to God in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

Within my story, my eight years in Albion have been a joyful chapter. You have allowed me to be myself, and have hardly complained at all! Promise me that you will share the same love and acceptance with the person who follows me. Love and acceptance are your great gifts as a congregation.

When I leave Albion, I will be busy serving another church, and they will deserve their new pastor's love and attention. At the same time, your new pastor will be working to get to know you, and to build trusting relationships

## March 2017

Christian Sympathy	2
Gourmet Nuts	
Leadership Listing	
Office Hours for Jeremy	
Prayers	
March in Worship	3
We're Looking for...	
2017 World Day of Prayer	4
UMW News and Views	
Calendar	5

*Follow Jesus; Love Everyone*

with you. That's why, once I leave, I won't be coming back to do funerals, weddings, or baptisms. That will be someone else's job. I won't be available to you for counseling or advice. I promise you it's the best way. I may be able on rare occasions to make it back to sit in the congregation for a funeral or the like, but it won't be as pastor. And if you're up that way, please stop in and say hi!

In the meantime, we have some months together for getting used to the idea--and I have some months to get packed! My expectation is that after a few months of knowing I'm leaving, you'll be ready to say hello to your new pastor. I hope it'll be possible to share a worship service together, as I was able to do with Dwayne before me.

Thank you, thank you, thank you! You are always in my prayers.

Pastor Jeremy

### Office Hours for Pastor Jeremy

Tuesday, Thursday 9am - 12pm

### Christian Sympathy

**Nancy Held**, who has been in our prayers for many months, passed away on Saturday, February 4, after a lengthy illness. Please keep the family in your prayers.

**Ruth Seelye** passed away on Sunday afternoon, February 5. Memorial services are tentatively planned for April 22. Please keep Dan and the family in your prayers.

**Rev. Gregory J. Martin**, former UM pastor who served several churches in the West Michigan Conference, died suddenly on Sunday, February 12 in Rhode Island. He was 58. A memorial service is being planned in Dayton, Ohio at Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (<http://mvuuf.org/>) with details yet to be determined.

Condolences may be sent to Greg's parents:

Jim & Eleanor Martin  
30485 Pokagon Highway  
Dowagiac, MI 49047

### Prayers

Jim Neal, Jeanne Randels, Torrey Wyma, and Sherry Wyma @ home

Betty Beese @ Glazier Assisted Living, Chelsea

Dan Seelye @ Arbor Manor, North 31, Spring Arbor

### 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

**Nuts** are still available in both Wesley Lounge and the church office.

The cost is \$20.00 for a 36 oz. can.



## March in Worship

**March 1 is Ash Wednesday.** We'll have worship that day at noon in Wesley Chapel, just half an hour or so. It's a time to begin the holy walk of Lent--the Christian time of fasting that's a little like Ramadan.

### Worship Series: Voices of God

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of **Lent**, the six weeks of spiritual preparation leading up to Easter. For the six Sundays during Lent, Jeremy will be speaking on six biblical characters who acted as voices for God: Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist.



**March 5: Moses**, the original prophet who spoke for God to Pharaoh, to his own people, who

brought the name of God to the people in Egypt, and led them through the desert to the Jordan river.

**March 12: Samuel**, who was the last prophet to rule the tribes, who anointed the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David.



**March 19: Ezekiel**, who had visions when his people were captives in Babylon, and changed the whole way his people thought about God.



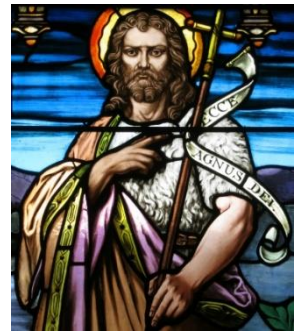
**March 26: Elijah**, who felt entirely isolated as one of the last faithful worshipers of God, in a time when the kings had turned against God. He despaired more than once, yet kept being "zealous for the Lord."



**April 2: Jeremiah**, who loved the people, and suffered while he tried to warn of the total military defeat that was coming. He blamed the defeat on God's judgment against the people. In the midst of that defeat, he also

shouted to everyone who would listen, that the coming destruction would not be permanent, but that they could hope in a better future. Is that a message you're ready to hear today?

**April 9: John the Baptist**, who identified Jesus as the one we were waiting for. He was a harsh critic of the Temple leadership before he learned about Jesus, and never failed to speak truth to power, even when it cost him his life.



## We're looking for one or two good people!

You mostly have to be willing to make a modest commitment to help out, especially on Thursday or Friday mornings!

Here is a list of items a Church Office Volunteer could do (1+ hours or 2+ if newsletter week):

- Refill Altar Candles
- Check/Refill Pew Envelopes
- Check/Sharpen Pew Pencils
- Fold/Collate/Stuff Bulletins
- Fold/Tape/Label/Stamp Newsletters

Are you thinking that one of these jobs is calling your name? Contact Cindi in the church office.

# UMW News

Anticipation is half the fun when we gather the two circles together for the wonderful fellowship and in knowing what an inspiring and challenging program Tom Hunsdorfer will present. He is a man who travels around the world, not to the fancy “touristas” places, but to places where he gives of himself and helps us to understand where our donations and prayers go and challenges us to do more. On a sad note, we said goodbye to Pat Brown as she and Tom are moving to Chelsea — she has been a good leader to the Ammerman Circle. From now to November, the circles will be meeting separately and we welcome new members — check with Cindi about a program book to see “what’s happenin’” or talk with any of us.

Our quilting group, “Piecemakers” (Peacemakers) met this week and had 14 new blankets — we’ll have a display one of these Sundays so you can see what we do. Oaklawn and Eaton Rapids Hospitals are so grateful for these signs of love and caring from our women (and so are the parents as well as the children who receive them). One dad called me late at night to tell me about his ill child and how they had brought him back from dehydration, and since his clothes were all soiled, they had wrapped him in one of our blankets, and then he burst into tears. We would welcome anyone who quilts, knits, or crochets to join us and help us spread the love.

We are looking forward to our Lenten breakfast on March 18. It is on a Saturday, so we hope many of you, even working women, can join us.

Blessings always,  
Barb Stowell



## 2017 World Day of Prayer

**Saturday, March 4, 1 p.m.  
St. James Episcopal Church  
Am I Being Unfair to You?**

Program based on Matthew 20:1-16 written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of the Philippines

*Mabuhay! Come to the circle and tell your story!*

In the story Jesus told about the kingdom of heaven, he saw no wrongdoing in giving equally. However, the workers who felt entitled to receive more greatly complained. This dialogue is turned into a question for the 2017 WDP theme - “Am I Being Unfair to You?”

As we prepare for worship, women and girls from the Philippines enter carrying symbols with a story. Merlyn, Celia, and Editha represent the lives of many Filipino women and girls who are victims of domestic violence or sex trafficking, migrant domestic workers in the country or abroad, and survivors harmed emotionally and economically by disasters in the environment or unsustainable development policies.

How can we hear these stories and not realize the sinfulness of structures that consolidate economic inequality? We are called to confess and take on our ethical responsibility to answer God’s call for justice.

A traditional cultural practice, known as *dagyaw*, is introduced in the program. *Dagyaw* is a communal way of laboring each other’s farms and equally benefiting from the harvest. It is used more frequently among organic farmers for sustainable agriculture.

“It is a good practice for building and sustaining a community, an actualization of compassion and care for each other.” Maybe this is the key to a collective answer to “Am I Being Unfair to you?”

**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

# March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5 Sunday Schedule Communion 11:30a Sermon Discussion	6 7p Boy Scouts	7 8a Bible Study-Biggby 6p Vision Team	8 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study 6:30p Bell Choir 8p IVCF Bible Study	9 2p UMW Leadership 6:30p Boy Scouts Award Selection Mtg 7p Trustees Meeting	10 11	11 1p World Day of Prayer @St. James
12 Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion	13 12p First Church Seniors 7p Boy Scouts 8p College Bible Study 8p IVCF Bible Study	14 8a Bible Study-Biggby 9a SAP Coalition	15 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study 6:30p Bell Choir 8p IVCF Bible Study	16 1p UMW Afternoon Circle 4p Finance Cmmtte Mtg 7p Church Council Mtg	17 1:30p Albion Healthcare Alliance Mtg	18 9a Albion College Equestrian Team Tack Sale
19 Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion	20 1:30p Entre Nous 5:30p Women United 7p Boy Scouts 8p College Bible Study 8p IVCF Bible Study	21 8a Bible Study-Biggby 6p Vision Team 7p UMW Evening Circle	22 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study 4p SPRC Meeting 6:30p Bell Choir 8p IVCF Bible Study	23	24	25
26 Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion	27 7p Boy Scouts 8p College Bible Study 8p IVCF Bible Study	28 8a Bible Study-Biggby 10a Piecemakers	29 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study 6:30p Bell Choir 8p IVCF Bible Study	30 12p Red Cross Blood Drive	31	