



The SPIRE

First United Methodist Church

www.albionfirst.com

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600 East Michigan Avenue

Albion, MI 49224

Keeping the Sacred Argument

In September I preached a series of messages called "Arguments in the Bible." In case you missed it then, I want to share the basic idea, and then to talk a little about what it has to do with us today.

Contrary to what many people think about the Bible, it was not originally meant as a single book, and it doesn't offer just one consistent set of judgments. A closer look reveals quite the opposite: writers who disagree with each other, and who both believe they're speaking for God. So Isaiah and Jeremiah thought that the Temple should allow non-Jews (gentiles) to be included in worship, while Ezra, Nehemiah, and several historical writers, believed that only ethnic Jews could be included in the covenant. Peter and James and the writer of Revelation believed that only Jews should be included in the Christian faith, and that they all had to follow the whole Old Testament Law. Meanwhile, Paul and Luke and Matthew believed the opposite: no Law, and everyone is welcome. John the gospel writer believed that Jesus was divine. The other gospel writers apparently didn't.

It's not as if we're the first generation to notice all these arguments going on in Scripture. But about a hundred years ago, some Christians decided to believe that the Bible only gives one answer to each question, and that's that. They decided to believe that the only the Bible can be God's Word is if it always agrees with itself. Face it, you can only make it all agree if you cover your eyes on half the pages!

Perhaps surprisingly, I want to celebrate the disagreements in Scripture. They tell me that our ancestors in the faith have given us

November 2016

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Follow Jesus; Love Everyone

something much more exciting than a list of rules or simple guidelines. Instead, they've given us a lively discussion, and asked us to carry it on.

What does this have to do with us today? Well, among other things, it means that we are allowed and expected to disagree with each other! If we never disagree, it may mean that we're not thinking. Christians are arguing about plenty of things these days: the acceptance of gender and sexual minorities, the right approach to Israel and Palestine, and other disagreements, about what God intends for us, whether there's a hell, whether God wants us to be wealthy, and much more. What a boring world this would be if we all agreed! What a blessing that we have inherited a lively conversation, rather than a set of settled issues!

Pastor Jeremy

Membership Day: November 13th

Membership in the church doesn't have privileges; it is a commitment. November 13th, we'll be taking in anyone who wants to be a new member. Pastor Jeremy would like to have a personal conversation with you before you join, to help you get to know the church better, and you are encouraged to take part in our Sunday morning study following worship to learn more and get to know some new people. To talk to Jeremy, and make an appointment, call him directly at 517 554-1836.

Time Change November 6!

Fall back an hour, preferably the night before Sunday, November 6th. Those who arrive an hour early will be recruited to the choir!



Prayers

Torrey Wyma, Sherry Wymna, and Ken Bentley @ home

Nancy Held @ Maplewood in Marshall

Betty Beese @ Glazier Assisted Living, Chelsea

Florence Reed @ Spring Arbor Assisted Living, Spring Arbor

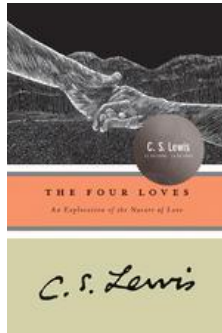
Dan Seelye @ Arbor Manor, North 31, Spring Arbor

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 |

November in Worship: Four Loves, by CS Lewis (November 6-December 4)

In 1960, CS Lewis published *The Four Loves*. Starting November 6, Jeremy will give four messages, one for each of the four loves that Lewis talks about. We also will have conversations about the book after worship. Copies are available for sale in the church office, or show up for the conversation and pick one up there.



A book that's fifty-six years old certainly shows its age, but it's not hard to recognize our own experience in his conversation. Lewis is one of the most important and well-known Christian writers of the twentieth century, most famous for the Narnia series, and other spiritual classics, such as *A Grief Observed*.

November 6—Affection (from the Greek word *storgē*).

This word doesn't appear much in the Bible, but it's a great way to talk about the feeling between people who are familiar with one another, like family members, church friends, and people we have coffee with.

November 13—Friendship (from the Greek *philos*).

There is a great intimacy between close friends, the people who share the most real and profound conversations. This is something that most people in modern times don't get enough of! Where is this kind of friendship in the Bible? The friendship of David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel is a great example, and also Jesus saying to his disciples in John that they were now his friends (John 15:12-17).

November 20—Desire (from the Greek *eros*).

Here is the beginning of romance, of sexual desire, but also what Augustine said was the right way to talk about our love for God! And if there's anything that confuses us today about relationships, this is probably it! The word doesn't appear in Greek in the Bible, but desire

sure is present anyway, especially in the Song of Solomon (Song of Songs), and lots of stories.

November 27

This week we interrupt the series, because Jeremy is away for Thanksgiving with family. Rev. David Habicht brings the message. This is also the first Sunday in Advent, the season of getting ready for Christmas.

December 4—Charity (from the Greek *agapē*).

What God has for us, and the most common word for love in the New Testament, in all of Jesus' famous sayings about love. Christmas is getting closer, and we really need to remember what love isn't, as well as what it is!

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

December 1 UMW Ingathering

December 4 Church Conference


December 5 Women United -
Faithful Families Nutrition Class

December 11 Lessons and Carols @ St. Paul
Lutheran Church

December 24 Christmas Eve Services
(5:30 pm, 11:00 pm)



Giving Tuesday November 29




November 29, 2016

umcmmission.org/give

Because we have received, we

**GIVE LIGHT
GIVE LOVE
GIVE LIFE**

 **GLOBAL MINISTRIES**
The United Methodist Church

This Advent, "Give Light, Give Love, and Give Life" through The Advance at umcmmission.org/give.

Thank you for your passion as we live out God's mission together.

With blessings and thanks for your generosity,

Thomas Kemper
General Secretary
General Board of Global Ministries

Ministry Shares (Again)

Back in May, we had a very successful special offering, for the purpose of paying our Ministry Shares. This is an amount of money that we pay to support a great variety of ministries in Michigan and around the world, including campus ministries, camping, new church starts, seminaries, church renewal, and all the staff to make those things happen, including district superintendents and the bishop. In May and June we raised enough to pay half of our ministry shares, and we promised to be back again in the fall, to ask for the rest. You'll soon be receiving another letter asking for your help, and we'll be bringing that in as a very special offering on November 20th, the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Please give boldly! This year we decided to make ministry shares a special giving opportunity, rather than just a part of the budget, because we want you to have a sense of ownership for these important ministries.

Church Conference

Every year, every United Methodist Church has a church conference. This year, ours is on December 4, a few minutes after worship, in Wesley Chapel. If you're a member of the church, you're encouraged to participate, and you get a vote on the various things we have to cover. Here's what we cover: the pastor's compensation for the coming year, the election of our slate of officers, approval of our Lay Minister (who is also our Lay Leader, Lois Fennimore), and a review of our membership rolls. We'll be led by the Rev. Kenneth Bingham-Tsai, who serves as our district superintendent.

If you're not a member, you're invited to come and participate, but you don't get to vote. We're not doing anything dramatic this year that is likely to be divisive, but this is a good opportunity to get to know what happens in the United Methodist Church. The district superintendent meets separately with the Staff Parish Relations Committee to get a picture of where we're going and how we're getting there.

UMW News

UMW News and Views

Remembering and honoring what was special about seven women who have died since November 7, 2015 is the order of the morning for our Remembrance Brunch this year on Saturday, November 5, 2016, 9 a.m. in Wesley Lounge. We will celebrate the lives of Lois Jean Burkwalt, Mary Kay Arey, Shirley Jean Stone, Constance Louise "Connie" Tuthill, Lillian H. Nearnberg, Margaret Mary "Peg" Neil, and Helen Louise Myers. Our guest, Rev. Nancy (Crump) Lynn, who grew up in our church family, will share a meditation and serve Holy Communion. Please make reservations by calling the church office (629-9425) or responding to your circle chairperson by November 2.

Polly Moore, who has faithfully organized and led the great peanut brittle project for so many years, is stepping out of that leadership position. She is willing to "coach" anyone who might be willing to organize a group of people who have enjoyed this endeavor. The project could be on a smaller scale, but the time to order the peanuts is short so please call Polly, 517-524-6641, or Donna Williams, 629-6768, soon if you would like to make peanut brittle to sell in November and early December. There are many people who will miss the fellowship and this sweet tradition if we don't make it happen. Thank you, Polly, for all your fine efforts.

Mark your calendars for December 1st. That is the date for Ingathering.

Blessings always,
Donna Williams

Women United Would Like Your Help

We are looking for items to stock our store.

We would like to receive gently used sheet sets, towels, and small household items such as lamps, appliances, pots and pans, and dishes.

We appreciate new items too, such as personal grooming items (hair products, soaps, lotions, etc.) and household cleaning products.

Our women's clothes closet is accepting women's clothing items, both gently used and new. Plus sizes are needed.

Of course, cash is always needed, too.

Lastly, I wonder if there is some way to ask people to sign up to volunteer. People who wouldn't mind getting a monthly email asking for help. The help would be in the form of providing a dessert or salad or other item for our meetings, or as a volunteer in the kitchen on meeting nights or as a lead childcare provider (experienced only) in the nursery.

Upcoming dates for the remainder of the year:

December 5 Faithful Families nutrition class (last class in the series)

December 19 Monthly meeting.

December 29* Board & Leadership meeting. (Planning for 2017!)

*subject to approval at next Leadership meeting.

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

November 2016

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 5 Sunday Schedule Communion 11:15a Finance Meeting 11:30a Sermon Discussion | 6 7p Boy Scouts 8p College Bible Study | 1 ALL SAINTS DAY 8a Biggby Bible Study | 2 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study | 3 5:30p Women United Leadership Meeting | 4 11 VETERANS DAY 11a College Symphony Children's Concert Lunch 6p Honors' Program Dance and Dessert | 5 9a Forks Senior Center Craft Show |
| 13 Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion | 14 12p First Church Seniors Luncheon 7p Boy Scouts 8p College Bible Study | 15 8a Biggby Bible Study | 16 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study | 17 12p Red Cross Blood Drive 1p UMW Afternoon Circle 7p Church Council Meeting | 18 1:30p Albion Healthcare Alliance Meeting | 19 |
| 20 Sunday Schedule 11:30a Sermon Discussion 5p Community Prayer Service | 21 1:30p Entre Nous 5:30p Women United 7p Boy Scouts 8p College Bible Study | 22 8a Biggby Bible Study 10a Piecemakers Quilt Work Bee | 23 | 24 THANKSGIVING 8a Hostetler Family Thanksgiving | 25 | 26 |
| 27 Sunday Schedule | 28 7p Boy Scouts | 29 GIVING TUESDAY 8a Biggby Bible Study | 30 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study | 31 | | |