



The SPIRE

First United Methodist Church

www.albionfirst.org

find us on Facebook

600 East Michigan Avenue

Albion, MI 49224

I know it's a cliché, but I cannot believe how quickly January has passed us by.

Just yesterday, we were cooking turkeys and decorating trees and now I am knee-deep in school work again and we are just days away from Lent.

Lent, the forty days preceding Easter (minus Sundays, of course), is a time for reflection, a time of renewal. Pope Francis recently described this time in our Christian calendar as the time that shakes us out of our emotional and spiritual lethargy. I pray that he is correct.

This year for Lent, we will embark on a journey of Restoration ... a journey of understanding and acceptance ... a journey of faith and fulfillment. We'll travel through the wilderness and walk alongside Jesus to emerge renewed and restored for all that lies beyond.

Our journey begins at noon on Ash Wednesday (February 14) when we'll gather in worship and share in the imposition of ashes. Throughout Lent, we'll worship, fellowship, study and break bread together.

Take a look at the variety of the Lenten offerings listed inside this newsletter. I look forward to traveling this path together.

Pastor Leslee



February 2018

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Follow Jesus; Love Everyone

Prayers

Pastor Tom Hollowood, Scott Tuthill, Jim Deal, Bev Bentley, Ken Bentley, Sherry Wyma, Hilda Ebbinghaus and Rev. Gary Wyma @ home

Betty Beese @ Glazier Assisted Living, Chelsea



**Celebrate
the Albion District
February 10, 2018
Marshall UMC
3:00 PM - 6:00PM**

Gathering 3:00 pm

Final Albion District Conference 3:30 pm

Dinner (free-will offering) 4:00 pm

Worship Celebration with guest speaker Rev. Faith Fowler 5:00 pm

Registration form is available at:

<http://forms.michiganumc.org/2018-albion-district-celebration-registration/>

Please register for dinner by February 2.

AMA Lenten Lunches

Wednesdays - 12:00 - 1:00 pm

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| February 21 | Bread of Life Ministries
916 N Superior Street
Speaker: Rev. Darlene Kuhn |
| February 28 | Lewis Chapel AME Church
522 West Center Street
Speaker: Pastor Steve Williams |
| March 7 | Bethel Baptist Church
523 Washington Street
Speaker: Pastor Steve Meszaros |
| March 14 | St. James' Episcopal Church
119 West Erie Street
Speaker: Pastor Donald Phillips |
| March 21 | TBD |
| March 28 | TBD |

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)	Barbara Rafaill plantgirl@rafaill.com
Staff-Parish Chair (Personnel)	Barbara Lange langehome.2@gmail.com
Finance Committee	Rick Lange langehome.1@gmail.com
Pastor	Leslee Fritz pastorleslee1@gmail.com
Missions Co-Chairs	John Williams Donna Williams
Memorial Chair	Carol Maynard
Choir Director	Drew Dunham
Music Director /Pianist	Jan Fourn
Administrative Assistant	Cindi Klingel albionfumc@gmail.com
Housekeeper	Lynn Markovich
Custodian	Larry Maynard



UMW News

One of my favorite sweatshirt jackets is trimmed with buttons of many colors. Some talented person took the time to choose the colors and sew on the buttons. The buttons cheer one up on a gloomy day.

I also have a collection of message buttons, and I sometimes choose one to wear when I want to make a statement, start a conversation, or support and encourage people and causes. One says; "Get a life. Get a Library Card". A very old button pictures a cat labeled "Mewsician". Other say "United Methodist Women Support Immigrant Rights" or "X Sexism".

My favorite buttons from a UMW collection say "awesome", "courageous", "faithful", "giving", "daring", "bold", "loving", "compassionate", "edgy", and "unreasonable". Why would any woman want to be all of those? Of course, we'd choose the more positive ones, but "edgy" and "unreasonable" might not be so "lady-like". However, throughout history women, even in the Bible, have been unreasonable and edgy in order to obtain rights due to them as human beings, "whole persons" as stated in our UMW Purpose.

Reading "Response" magazine informs and challenges us. Our Albion District UMW Epiphany program last month filled us with startling facts and situations of human trafficking. Be "vigilant" and "active". Wearing buttons is only the beginning.

We are planning our Lenten Breakfast for February 24th at 9 a.m. in Fellowship Lounge. Call the church office or your circle chairperson to reserve a place. Guests are welcome.

A special thank you goes out to Sally Ammerman and Cindi Klingel for preparing our 2018 program books. Copies are available from your circle chairpersons or the church office.

Saturday, March 3rd, will be the 2018 World Day of Prayer Service at First Presbyterian Church at 1 p.m. The country this year is Surinam. Join others from our Albion community churches for this world-wide celebration.

Buttoning up for action,

Donna Williams, January Team Leader



Gourmet Nuts

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

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



Special Sundays in February

February 11 Guest Pastor

David F. Habicht is a Commissioned Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church USA. He currently serves as Associate Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Albion. With an academic background in both religion and art, David's ministry is informed by the practice of traditional spiritual disciplines in concert with creative work in painting, sculpture and music. David was a volunteer chaplain in the Michigan Department of Corrections from 2010 to 2017. He continues in anti-mass incarceration activism as a board member for the non-profit Jackson Transitions, and the MDOC agency, Michigan Offender Success. David is the Moderator of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan's Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and enjoys an active vocation preaching social justice and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

February 18 Scouting Sunday

Members of Boy Scout Troop #158 will assist in worship as we celebrate Albion FUMC's long tradition of supporting the ideals of scouting.

February 25 Guest Pastor

Rev. Lois McCullen Parr (she/her/hers) believes that spiritual work begins with compassion and ends with justice. An ordained elder in the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church, Lois currently wears several professional hats: as Facilitator for Justice Leaders Network (through the Washtenaw County Intermediate School District), Doing Our Own Work: An Anti-Racism Seminar for White People (with Allies for Change) and with the Albion-Marshall Resilient Communities Project; as Staff Chaplain at the Chelsea Retirement Community; and, as Co-Convener of the United Methodist Queer Clergy Caucus.

Lois is a graduate of Otterbein College (Ohio) and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (Illinois). She served churches in

and near Chicago before she moved to Albion to join her spouse, Clayton, who is faculty with the Music Department at Albion College. They are parents to Nate and Cullen who live in California.

Lenten Fellowship Opportunities

The season of Lent is a time of spiritual renewal and rebirth for believers. In that spirit, we will gather as a church community for fellowship, reflection, and of course, great food!

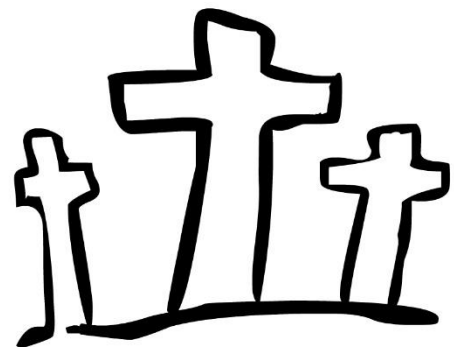
February 14 *Ash Wednesday Service*
12:00 p.m. in Wesley Chapel

February 21 *Lenten Dinner & Reflection*
Join us for dinner and a time of conversation and reflection. Dinner begins at 5:30pm with the program at 6pm.

March 7 *Lenten Dinner & Reflection*
Join us for dinner and a time of conversation and reflection. Dinner begins at 5:30pm with the program at 6pm.

March 18 *Town & Country Chorus*
Worship & All-Church Potluck
Our own Bob Dininny and more than 20 of his musical partners will lead us in worship filled with harmony and song.

April 1 *Easter Sunday Brunch*
Join us for brunch, starting at 8am, before our Easter worship.



Budget & Finance Update

The start of a new year means it is, once again, budget time at the church.

Thanks to the hard work of Sally Ammerman and Rick Lange, we've closed the 2017 books and we ended the year with a lot to celebrate. You supported the work of the church by giving above and beyond your commitments. Our pledged and non-pledged giving was higher than expected. In addition, our expenses were less than originally budgeted. As a result, we ended the year well in the black.

Even more exciting ... as of January 2018, we are, once again, debt-free! With the proceeds from our Endowment, we were able to pay off the remaining balances on the mortgage and line-of-credit which had been used to cover major expenses including the roof, fire alarm system, windows and heating and air conditioning repairs.

Though we begin the year in a strong financial position, our pledges for 2018 are down from last year. This is not entirely unexpected as

long-time members leave the church through death or departure. As a result, the 2018 budget will be less than the year just completed.

The final details of the budget are still being developed by the Finance Committee. In February, they will make a budget recommendation to the Church Council for approval. If you are interested in this process, keep your eye on the calendar for these meetings. They are open to anyone interested in attending.



Sunday Schedule:

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

Office Hours:

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

February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 Sunday Schedule Communion	5 1p Lectionary Group 5p Spanish Class 5:30p WU Leadership 7p Boy Scouts	6 8a Biggby Bible Study 11a Lewis Chapel AME Walking	7 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study 5:30p WU/SIS Mentoring 6:30p Bell Choir	8 6:30p AC Chapel	9 6p IVCF Worship	10
11 Sunday Schedule	12 12p First Church Seniors 5p Spanish Class 7p Boy Scouts	13 8a Biggby Bible Study 9a SAP Coalition 11a Lewis Chapel AME Walking 7p Trustees	14 ASH WEDNESDAY 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study 5:30p Ash Wednesday Service 6:30p Bell Choir	15 1p UMW Combined Circle 6:30p AC Chapel	16 6p IVCF Worship	17
18 SCOUTING SUNDAY Sunday Schedule	19 PRESIDENT'S DAY 5p Spanish Class 5:30p Women United 7p Boy Scouts	20 8a Biggby Bible Study 11a Lewis Chapel AME Walking	21 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study 5:30p Lenten Supper 5:30p WU/SIS Mentoring 6:30p Bell Choir	22 6:30p AC Chapel	23 6p IVCF Worship	24 8a CAA Walk for Warmth
25 Sunday Schedule	26 5p Spanish Class 5:30p SPRC Meeting 7p Boy Scouts	27 8a Biggby Bible Study 10a Piecemakers 4p Finance Committee 5:30p Mutual Ministry Team	28 1:15p Sheldon Place Bible Study 5:30p Lenten Supper 6:30p Bell Choir			