



The SPIRE

First United Methodist Church

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find us on Facebook

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Friends,

Happy New Year and welcome to 2020!

What a year 2019 turned out to be ... together, we worshipped, celebrated, grieved and worked to serve God and our neighbors as a community. We welcomed some new faces, said goodbye to several long-time friends, and you joined me in celebrating the end of my seminary journey. Through it all, we loved and supported one another in truly remarkable ways. I am grateful for the light of God that shines in and through each of you.

No doubt, the year ahead will also be filled with joy, sorrow, laughter and mission. And if the last few years have taught us anything, there will be a few unexpected surprises, too.

One of the first tasks on our 2020 list is to begin a needed conversation about renovating Wesley Lounge and Wesley Chapel. At its last meeting, the Church Council approved the creation of a team to begin looking at what is needed and what is possible. Members are being asked now to take part. If you are interested in joining the team, let me know.

Thank you for loving God, loving one another and loving this church. I am honored to serve beside you as your pastor. I cannot wait to see what God has in store for us in 2020!

Pastor Leslee

January 2020

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Follow Jesus; Love Everyone

Rev. Dr. Jennifer Browne returns to Albion; Will Preach on January 12

Jennie Browne last lived in Albion in 2002 while her late husband, Rev. Greg Martin, served as pastor here at Albion FUMC. Since then, Jennie has pastored churches in Brighton, Grand Rapids, East Lansing and Georgetown. She currently serves as Director of Clergy Excellence for the Michigan Annual Conference. In this newly-formed role, Jennie and her team work to ensure that clergy have the tools they need to be effective pastors, preachers and administrative leaders.

Jennie was born and raised in San Francisco, California. She holds degrees from Wesleyan University in Connecticut, Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and The Divinity School of the University of Chicago. Jennie is married to Eric Strand, Director of Music and the Arts at First United Methodist Church in Grand Rapids. Between them they have five children, ranging in age from 31 to 17.



Church Finances on Solid Ground as 2019 Ends

Though the final numbers are still being crunched, the financial indicators for the church look positive as the year draws to an end.

The 2019 budget was nearly 10% higher than the previous year's budget thanks to this church's strong commitment to restoring our pastor's position to full-time. The many people who upped their commitment or made first time commitments to make that increase possible saw those commitments through. For the third year in a row, giving will exceed expectations in 2019! Thank you for your faithful stewardship.

In addition, expenditures have been at or below expectations in most areas so we expect to end the year have spent a little less than planned. This strong position of increased giving and controlled expenditures also made it possible for us to pay 100% of our Ministry Shares to the conference and district for the first time since 2014!

The next six weeks are a busy time in the financial life of the church. The 2020 pledge campaign will wrap up and the annual budget will be recommended by Finance Committee and adopted by the Church Council. Stay tuned for updates on this process in the weekly bulletin and next month's *Spire*.

Study Hall for Albion College Students

Albion FUMC hosted a study hall in Tennant Hall for Albion College students before Fall semester finals, on Saturday and Sunday, December 7th and 8th. Nearly 60 students took advantage of the opportunity to study in a quiet and comfortable space, or to just stop in for a study break and grab something to eat (not all of the students have a meal plan). Thank you to everyone who helped provide abundant coffee, mac and cheese, pulled pork, veggies, chips, salsa, hummus, and cookies, and/or helped with setup and cleanup. Quite a few of the students stopped in to the kitchen to say thank you. We hope to make this a regular thing. If you'd like to help next time, mark your calendar for the Spring semester reading day, Wednesday, April 24th.



The Future of the United Methodist Church

There has been considerable news over the last few days regarding a new proposal to end the decades-long debate over inclusion in the United Methodist Church. While the details are still coming into focus, our leaders have begun the discussion of what it could mean to the future of the church.



Bishop Bard, responding to the news, said in part, “my initial impression is that this is an extraordinarily hopeful development. The protocol offers The United Methodist Church a unique opportunity to move beyond our current impasse over ministry with LGBTQ+ persons and toward a needed restructuring in our governance. It also acknowledges the on-going work needed in addressing long-standing issues of racial-ethnic inclusion within our denomination.”

To read more about this developing issue, including the Bishop’s full statement, go to <https://michiganumc.org/news-and-events/news/>.

FUMC-Sponsored Food Distribution Begins January 28



With your support, Albion FUMC is now in partnership with the Albion Food Hub and the Food Bank of South Central Michigan to expand access to fresh food in our community. On the 4th Tuesday of each month, approximately 250 families in our community will receive needed produce, meat, dairy and bakery goods.

Want to be a part of this local mission? A sign-up sheet will be available beginning this week. Two shifts will be available to volunteers each month. Hands are needed from 3:30-5pm to meet the truck, unload and prepare the food for distribution. Additional people are then needed from 5-7pm to greet recipients and assist in distribution. Tasks for all ages and ability levels are available.


Sunday Schedule:

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

January 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5 Sunday Schedule Communion	6 5:30p Women United Leadership 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158	7 8a Biggby Bible Study	8 5:30p WU/SIS Mentoring 7p Bell Choir	9 9a Zone 1 Clergy 10a AALL Winter Assembly 2p UMW Executive Team	10 2p Community Leadership	11 9a Trustees
12 Sunday Schedule	13 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158	14 8a Biggby Bible Study 9a SAP Steering Committee	15 5:30p WU/SIS Mentoring 7p Bell Choir	16 7p Men Who Give	17	18 5p Coleman Wedding Reception
19 Sunday Schedule	20 MLK Jr. DAY 1:30p Entre Nous 5:30p Women United 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158	21 8a Biggby Bible Study 1p UMW Circle 5:30p Mutual Ministry Team	22 7p Bell Choir	23 12p  Blood Drive	24	25
26 Sunday Schedule	27 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158	28 8a Biggby Bible Study 10a Piecemakers	29 7p Bell Choir	30	31	