



The SPIRE

First United Methodist Church

www.albionfirst.org

find us on Facebook

600 East Michigan Avenue

Albion, MI 49224

(517) 629-9425

From a Certain Point of View

Sunday November 28 begins Advent. This is the season in the church year when we wait. We anticipate. We spend time reflecting on what the birth of Christ means for us.

This month in worship, we're going to take a look at some of the different characters in the Advent story, and view the story through their eyes. What would it have been like to be Mary, an unwed teenage mother? How might the birth of Jesus be seen through Joseph's eyes? What might the faithfulness of the shepherds or the witness creation say about Jesus' coming?

The novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in a well-known TED Talk, discusses the importance of stories. In particular, Adichie comments on the danger of a single story. Only having a single story can warp our view of the world. It can make us blind to complexities. It can lead to bad assumptions about other people. (I'd encourage you to check out Adichie's talk here:

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

For many of us, we've heard the Christmas story so many times, often mediated through popular culture, that we forget its complexity. We forget the radical message of Mary. We forget the self-less love of Joseph. We forget how Jesus's birth upended social and economic norms. And we forget how the birth of Jesus was a rupture, the reign of righteousness sidling its way into human history.

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So this Advent, take a look at the birth of Christ through a different perspective. See what fresh message you might hear in the coming of the Christ child. Hear anew the radical reality of God coming to be with us.

Peace,
Pastor Joel

Current Message Series

On November 28, Pastor Joel began a new message series called:

“Looking at the Christmas Story from Different Perspectives”



November 28 Joseph

Making integrous decisions even when its hard

December 5 Mary

Making courageous decisions to follow God's lead

December 12 The Animals

All creation's participation in God's redemption story

December 19 Shepherds

God's story for all people



December 26

Rev. Dale Miller will be gracing our pulpit.

Blue Christmas

Service

Wednesday, December 15
7 pm in the Chapel

Lantern Release will be immediately following in the Memorial Garden.



Music by Josh Vreeland

This worship service is offered jointly by Rev. Erin Fitzgerald (Marshall UMC) and Rev. Joel Fitzgerald (Albion First UMC). All are welcome!

The liturgy, message, and music is a gift for those who are depressed, grieving, or struggling to find the 'magic' of the Christmas season.

721 Old US 27 North
Marshall, MI 49068
269-781-5170
umcmarshall.org



Community Prayer Breakfast

December 11, 2021

9:00-11:00

**Albion College
Upper Baldwin**



Lessons and Carols - Sunday, December 5, 2021



The Albion College Music Department's tradition continues this year with the beloved Lessons and Carols programs on Sunday, December 5, at 7:00 p.m. in Goodrich Chapel

The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols was designed by Archbishop E. W. Benson for use in the cathedral at Truro, England. The first formal event was held there on Christmas Eve, 1880. The late David L. Strickler introduced a modified service to Albion College in 1966.

Leadership Listing

Lay Leader	Sharon Hostetler shostetler@albion.edu
Church Council Chair	Mark Robison majerobi@gmail.com
Treasurer	Ellen Wilch ellenwilch408@gmail.com
Trustees Chair (Building & Property)	Gary Harrison gwh2510@att.net
Staff-Parish Chair (Personnel)	Andrew French andrew.french.albion@gmail.com
Finance	Rick Lange langehome.1@gmail.com
Pastor	Joel Fitzgerald pierfitz@gmail.com
Missions Co- Chairs	John Williams Donna Williams
Memorial Chair	Carol Maynard
Choir/Handbell Director	Drew Dunham
Music Director/ Pianist	Jan Fourn
Office Manager	Cindi Klingel albionfumc@gmail.com
Housekeeper	Lynn Markovich
Custodian	Larry Maynard

Many thanks...

to all who answered my call for your plastic shopping bags. Your bag of bags makes the volunteers job at the Community

Table Food Drive so much easier! Keep in mind that this is a need that will be ongoing so continue to bring them to services or call Tami Oliver at 517-366-0313 to arrange a pick-up.



Prayers

Eric Rice, Gayle Evans, Fred and Shelly Wilder, Marilyn Hennon, Julia Landon, Tom Hartwell, Kelly Wilder, Hilda Ebbinghaus, Joe Jackson, Eva Rottenbiller, Jahsalynn and Abby (Krause granddaughters), Terry Bobzien, and Pastor Tom Hollowood @ home

Barb Stowell, Missy Wyss @ Maplewood, Marshall

Lynne Baldwin @ Advantage Living and Senior Care, Battle Creek

Tamara and Jeremy Williams @ Muskegon, MI
Edward Sobie, Jr. @ Chippewa Correctional Facility, Kincheloe

Donna Gaskell @ Copley, OH

Betty Beese @ Towsley Village, Chelsea

Friends battling cancer: Troy and Audrey



PIECEMAKERS II

Next Meeting:
Tuesday, February 1
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Wesley Lounge



Piecemakers will not be meeting formally in December or January. However, work will continue at home, with meetings resuming in February. You'd be pretty safe to continue to knit or crochet dishcloths, but we'd like to add other projects for the upcoming year - maybe even some one-time projects at individual meetings! So, give it some consideration and come join us in February! All are welcome.

Thanks to **Carolyn Gaswick** for heading up the process of making our dishcloths more festive in time for December at the Community Table of Albion food distribution. Also, thanks to **Connie Peltier** for heading up the distribution process.

Wesley Renovation Update

How we got here:

Renovating Wesley Chapel and Lounge has been a part of our broader building upgrade plans for a couple of decades. As many know, we have also received two significant bequests that have been designated for use to renovate Wesley.

Why we're here:

Wesley Chapel and Lounge have not had any major updates since they were constructed in the mid-50's. In looking at our church's mission and vision, we decided the space needed to be more accessible, visible, hospitable, and usable. This includes improving the bathrooms, accessibility in Wesley Chapel, and the visibility and accessibility of the archway.

Where we are now:

We are in the process of negotiating with an architect. We've narrowed the scope of what we need to the architect for to the renovation of the bathroom/kitchenette areas. Some of the other parts of the project, such as expanding the chancel area, repaving the archway road, and enhancing the archway lighting, would not need an architect. We've been in contact with some vendors to begin to scope out those parts of the project. Any outdoor work would not happen until spring at the earliest.

What's next:

- Finalize contract and scope with architect.
- Send finalized contract to Church Council for approval of architect and other possible project goals
- Continue to price out different aspects of the project
- Schedule work for the spring and summer as appropriate based on pricing and availability.

Who's on the team:

Cheryl Krause, Barb Lange, Drew Dunham, Sharon Hostetler, Nidia Wolf, Tami Oliver, Ellen Wilch, Steve Noble, Pastor Joel, Jan Fourn, Judy Patton

What can you do:

Pray for the team and its work. Pray for how we can use the space for God's mission. Keep updated on our work.



From the Missions Committee...

The General Board of Global Ministries supports UNICEF's global vaccine distribution efforts to end the COVID-19

pandemic. Advance Special #3022671 has been created for fundraising for this effort to ensure that 100% of donations go directly to UNICEF USA for this project. For just \$37 dollars, members can help provide 10 people with two doses of the vaccine.

Funds donated to a new Advance giving project will support "Love Beyond Borders: The Interfaith Movement to End the Pandemic" campaign supporting UNICEF's global vaccine distribution efforts.

You can give through Albion FUMC by writing a check to Albion First United Methodist Church and putting "vaccines" on the memo line or on your envelope.

Blessings,
Donna



UMW News and Views

On Sunday, December 5, we will celebrate **Ingathering** during the worship service so that we can include the whole congregation. Thanks to

Darlene Chisholm for organizing this.

(Additional information appears on the next page.)

Planning for 2022 meetings and events is ongoing. Stay tuned for updates in the January newsletter. All are welcome to attend any of our meetings and events.

Blessings always,
Donna Williams and Anne Lake



Dear Lord,

Please shine on us as
we support the needs of our
neighbors.

Ingathering time is here!

This is a special UMW project to gather funds to support the needs of those around us. Ingathering will be celebrated this year on Dec. 5th. We are inviting the entire church to participate by making a special donation to support the Ingathering budget.

Please make your check out to UMW and write "Ingathering" in the memo line. Return it to the church at 600 E. Michigan Ave., Albion, MI 49224. Thank you.

Ingathering Budget for 2020

Community Table of Albion --- \$1,000

S.A.F.E. Place ----- 300

Albion Community Gardens ----- 300

United Methodist Retirement- 200
Community Benevolent
Fund (Chelsea)

Vision of Life Community
Outreach Center ----- 200

United Methodist Community
House (Grand Rapids) ----- 200

\$ 2,200

Any remainder:

50% to Safe Place

50% to Albion Community Gardens

The Community Table of Albion is currently trying to meet the increasing needs of over 250 families in the Albion area with food needs.

S.A.F.E. Place exists to provide safety to empower and advocate for victims of domestic violence and their families. S.A.F.E. Place stresses early intervention, strengthening families, and providing a continuum of care through community resources and referrals.

The Albion Community Garden provides free food as well as free seeds, plants, and garden space for those who want to grow their own food. This past year they have provided around 3,000 pounds of free food who those in need.

United Methodist Retirement Community Benevolent Fund (Chelsea) helps meet the needs of persons living in the Methodist Retirement Community.

Vision of Life Community Outreach Center. Vision of life action team is dedicated to improving the community at large and focusing on the development of youth. Vision of Life provides opportunities for youth and seniors to mix, relate and learn from one another.

United Methodist Community House's (Grand Rapids) missions is to increase the ability of children, youth, adults and families to succeed in a diverse community.

Poinsettias

Poinsettias will again adorn our worship space on Christmas Eve this year. If you would like to provide one or more, forms will be available on the table at the back of Tennant Hall and in the church office. The plants are yours to keep following the service. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the office. Cost is **\$10.00 per plant** and the available colors are red, white, and pink. **The deadline for ordering is Wednesday, December 1.**



COMMUNITY CAROLS

Sunday, December 12, 2021
3:00 p.m.
St. Paul Lutheran Church

Come join us in singing Christmas carols highlighting our seasonal favorites.

Everyone is also invited for a cookie reception following the program. Due to COVID-19 there will be no choir participation this year.

We look forward to seeing you!

Albion First United Methodist Church 2022 PLEDGE COMMITMENT	
NAME:	_____
ADDRESS:	_____
Please attach this pledge form to your check to support and sustain the church.	
Contribution Period:	From _____ To _____
Contribution Amount:	\$ _____
Frequency:	_____
Notes:	_____

2022 Pledge Cards Still Welcome

In November, we received and blessed many financial commitments to the church for the coming year. A special thanks to all of you who brought your pledge cards to that service, or mailed them to us in advance. If you haven't had a chance to send yours in, there's still time! Please consider prayerfully how you will support the ministries and outreach of our church in the coming year and then drop your pledge card in the offering plate or at the office.

AMA Advent Luncheons

With the current health concerns, many people are still hesitant to gather for these special luncheons. The AMA has decided **not** to hold these events this year, but is looking forward to the luncheon series during Lent. Blessings to all during this holy and blessed season.



2022 Envelope Packets

Envelope Packets for 2022 will be ready for pick on December 19, on the table at the back of Tennant Hall.

If did NOT get a packet in 2021, and want contribution envelopes for 2022, please call the church office at 517.629.9425 and leave a message.



Sunday Schedule:









10:00 Worship

11:00 Refreshments

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday 8:00 am - 1:30 pm

December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	2 8a Bible Study	3 8p Intersivity Christian Fellowship 	4
5 ADVENT II 10a Worship- Communion Ingathering 	6 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158 	7	8 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	9 8a Bible Study 6:30p Trustees	10	11
12 ADVENT III 10a Worship	13 6:30p Scouts Webloes 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158 	14	15 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	16 8a Bible Study	17	18
19 ADVENT IV 10a Worship	20 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158 	21	22 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	23 8a Bible Study	24 CHRISTMAS EVE DAY 5p Christmas Worship 	25 CHRISTMAS DAY 
26 10a Worship	27 7p Scouts BSA Troop 158 	28 7p SPRC	29 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	30 8a Bible Study	31 New Year's Eve 