

CONNECTIONS

Our purpose is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world



Message from the Pastor



*Glory to God in the heavenly heights,
Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.*



As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. “Let’s get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us.” They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherders were impressed.

19-20 Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherders returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they’d been told! Luke 2:15-20 (MSG)

(Continued on Page 3)

UPCOMING EVENTS

11/29-12/20
In-Person
Worship

Fun Fridays:
12/4, 12/11 &
12/18

12/24
Christmas Eve
Parking Lot
Worship

With Christ as our center, we are His extended family, compassionately sharing Jesus’ love with all people.
Our congregation is on a lifelong journey of discipleship to become more like Christ.

Prayers and Praise



PRAYER requests

In the Hospital

Please remember those in Continuing Care Facilities

Luanne Genga
Novi Lakes Health Campus

Bobbie Winters
Superior Woods

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

Stephanie Boltrick
Daughter of Nancy Boltrick

Christopher Stone
Son of Mike & Dawn Stone

Michael Stone
Son of Mike & Dawn Stone

Blake
Grandson of Betty Hughey

Jared Stabnau
Grandson of Elaine Stabnau

Cody Ford-Aimone
Grandson of Mike & Lynda Aimone

Justin Renton
Grandson of Donna Sweeney

Chad Koenne
Grandson of Dick & Lila Timm



Jim	Wagner	1
Susan	Lewke	2
Chase	Reeves	2
Isabelle	Thomas	2
Joyce	Banks	5
Nicole	Altobello	6
Bob	Goike	6
Carolyn	Hyde	12
Eric	Shuryan	13
Jamie	Moore	14
Paul	Smith	18
Mike	Aimone	20
Luanne	Genga	20
C. Genevieve	Riggs	25
Martha	Conley	26
Carol	Fitch	27
Beth	Sampson	27
Marlene	Gamble	28
Eleanore	Hendrickson	28
Jack	Keelan	28
Robert	Nurnberger	28



David & Rachel	Murray	3
Mike & Lynda	Aimone	13
Mark & Dee	Groeneweg	17
Leonard & Doreitha	Armstrong	27
Jim & Pam	Boughton	29

Message from the Pastor

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I love this part of the Christmas story. The Angel chorus: what might that have sounded like? Can you imagine? How bright the heavenly host? Take a moment to imagine this scene and put yourself within it.

Then I love how it says, “the shepherders talked it over.” What’s to talk over? You just saw angels who told you a terrific story about someone coming to save you, to give you peace. Why would you need to talk it over? Take a moment and contemplate what the shepherders may have talked about. What questions would you have asked?

So the talking is over and it says they left, running, and found. They found what the angels told them they would, a new family with an infant baby in the manger—a cattle feeding trough. They must have been breathless after all that running. If you were a shepherd, what sensations would you have experienced after seeing exactly what the angel had proclaimed to you? Would you have a sensory overload that your mind could not compute? Would you take a memory picture so that you could remember this moment for the rest of your life? Or perhaps, you’re a skeptical shepherd and you are wondering why your friends made you leave your sheep and come see another poor family. There are tons of them around. Why is this family, this infant so special? Take a moment and ponder what it might have felt like to see the newborn king in the flesh.

Eventually, I guess even the most skeptical among them saw and believed. Why did they believe? Did they look into the infant’s eyes and see more than they could comprehend? Did the mother and father tell them the story of an immaculate conception and the journey they had taken, both literally and figuratively, to witness and be a part of this wondrous birth? Take a moment and visualize what it might have been like to see the holy family on that holy night.

These conversational shepherders then told everybody, and everyone they told were awestruck at the news. I can see them running throughout the town of Bethlehem reporting their incredible evening experience to anyone who would listen. These shepherders were changed. They were no longer mere shepherders, but evangelist for the newborn king. What story would you have told?

Message from the Pastor

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Who would you have told it to? Write this down in your journal placing yourself in these evangelist shoes.

The shepherders turned evangelist didn't stop their telling that night. They continued to let loose, glorifying and praising God, amazed that everything they had been told turned out to be true. Continue to journal, and list the names of those with whom you need to share the good news of great joy, that a Savior has been born. Pray over these names, and then begin writing out your story of saving grace and love.

This story of God's love came down at Christmas. It's a story of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. It's a story that still needs to be told. It's our story, yours and mine, but it is a story that all who live need to hear.

The incarnation, Jesus, the Christ, came to dwell with humanity, every woman, man, and child. Won't you, this Advent and Christmas season, live incarnationally, live as the light of the world, by telling everyone you meet that Jesus Christ is the Joy of the World and the Peace to all Humankind? Let's all leave our flocks by night to witness this great Messiah's birth and then go expressing to all we met how this story gives us light even in the darkness.

Rejoicing in the blessings of telling,
Pastor Mary





Sermon Series/Study: *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*

by Adam Hamilton

His parents gave him the name Jesus. But the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh.

In Incarnation, we will explore the meaning of these titles and what they tell us about the child whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. Join us and reflect upon the significance of the Christ-child for your life and world today!

November 29, 2020—Advent 1

Scripture: Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-2

Title: *The Royal Titles: Lord and Messiah*

Synopsis: While our politics have divided us, Advent should bring us together, unifying us around the newborn King and his life, message, ministry, death and resurrection. Today we will seek to unify under one Lord and Messiah and find hope for a future.

December 6, 2020—Advent 2

Scriptures: Luke 2:10-11; Matthew 1:20-21

Title: *The Deliverer's Title: Savior*

Synopsis: Jesus' very name means, "God saves." Jesus came to help us find the pathway to peace. This week we will seek that peace in our deliverer.

December 13, 2020—Advent 3

Scripture: Matthew 1:20b-23

Title: *The Incarnate Title: Emmanuel*

Synopsis: We celebrate with joy Emmanuel, God with us. But if God is with us, how come we have to deal with coronavirus and all the other calamities of our lives? How do you get to the fear not part of the story?



December 20, 2020—Advent 4

Scripture: John 1:1-14

Title: *The Light of the World*

Synopsis: What does light have to do with a baby in the manger? Did love come down at Christmas or light? Or maybe both? Let's explore this concept of light and how it is bursting forth in this beloved story.

December 24, 2020—Christmas Eve

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

Title: *God's Plan for Changing the World*

Synopsis: Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, and Light of the world, whatever name you call Jesus, the Christ, he is the world's change agent. So how do we fit into the plan? How do we show and spread the love that came down at Christmas? Come and find out how you fit in.

December 27, 2020- January 2, 2021

Pastor Mary on vacation

Sermon Series: *Change Happens: Now What?*

Johnny Rivers once famously sang, "The only thing that's permanent is change." What are the changes effecting our lives, the Church, the culture and what will we do about it? What should we embrace and what should we not? How do we tell the "old, old story" in a way that is attractive and effective in this changing world?

SPECIAL NOTES: Series is based on "Who Stole My Church" by Gordon MacDonald

January 3, 2021

Scripture: Matthew 23:37-39

Title: *Why is Change so Hard?*

Synopsis: Jesus weeps over Jerusalem's unwillingness to accept him and the change he was bringing to their lives. The people failed to see that something "new" could be good...are we guilty of the same mistake?



2020 Advent and Christmas Opportunities:

*Gathering Around the Wreath

Each Saturday evening starting Saturday, November 28-Saturday, December 19, @ 6:30pm, come gather around the large outdoor Advent wreath on the lakeside of Belleville First. We will sing a few carols, have conversation about where we've seen hope, peace, joy, and love around us and light the candles of our glowing wreath.

Come prepared for the weather, wearing a mask, and ready to socially distance from those not within your family unit.

*Growth Groups

Join a Growth Group this Advent as we study Adam Hamilton's book, *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*. Sign up on our website <https://www.bellevillefirstumc.org/>, on the MyChurch app, or call the church office 734-697-9288.

His parents gave him the name, Jesus. But the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh.

In *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*, best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth.

This Advent season church families will come together to remember what's important. In the face of uncertainty and conflict, Christians reclaim the Christ Child who brings us together, heals our hearts, and calls us to bring light into the darkness. Now more than ever, we invite you to reflect upon the significance of the Christ-child for our lives and world today!

*Worship

In-person worship each Sunday, November 29-December 20 (dependent upon health department guidelines).

December 24

Christmas Eve Parking Lot worship @ 6:30pm—Carols, telling the story, and candlelight service

—or—

Online worship throughout the season via YouTube at Belleville First United Methodist Church, our website <https://www.bellevillefirstumc.org/>, or our FaceBook page.



*Christmas Offering Foundation:

This year, the Christmas Offering will be going towards Community Assistance Foundation 5 (CAF-5), a non-profit that furnishes glasses and other needs to children in the five communities of the 34th District Court, and Guiding Harbor (formerly known as Girlstown Foundation) <https://guidingharbor.org/>.

By supporting these Belleville area non-profits, we will be incarnating the love of God that came to us in Jesus Christ. We will be the light of Christ shining in Belleville, MI.

CAF5's Mission: To provide financial support to families and children in need while encouraging personal growth through community. CAF (Community Assistance Foundation) was created as a non-profit organization to assist families and children in need within the communities served by the 34th District Court.

Those communities are Belleville, Huron, Romulus, Sumpter, and Van Buren. CAF 5 steps in to provide assistance with drug prescriptions, eye glasses, and other needs of our students in these communities. CAF 5 is a non profit 501 (c) (3) as recognized by the IRS and therefore, donations are tax deductible.

Parking Lot
Christmas
Eve Service 6:30pm

the Wonder Celebrate the Wonder Celebrate th

A poster for a Christmas Eve Service. The background is dark red with a bokeh effect of light spots. At the bottom, there are seven lit red candles. The text is centered and reads: "Parking Lot" in a white serif font, "Christmas" in a large, elegant red cursive font, "Eve Service" in a white serif font, and "6:30pm" in a white serif font to the right. At the very bottom, there is a dark red banner with the text "the Wonder Celebrate the Wonder Celebrate th" in a white serif font.



Dear First United Methodist Church Member,

I want to personally thank you for your donations this year to First United Methodist Church. This **continues to be one of the most challenging years for our church finances due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

We continue to operate the church and maintain many of our normal outreach programs as much as possible. This, of course, takes donations. As Chair of the Finance Committee, I would like to ask you to prayerfully consider starting to support or continuing your financial support in these unprecedented circumstances.

There are many ways to give. Pushpay, through your mobile phone or through our online website, will support the general budget/expenses of the church. (Select “Fund-Tithes”) in the application. If you would prefer to support a particular mission/program, that is also possible through the Pushpay application by selecting the particular mission/programs listed in the application.

One example of a place to donate to a particular mission/program, might be our Special Sundays (by selecting “Fund – Special Sundays”, and in the note box indicating which Special Sunday the gift is to be used toward). Several times throughout the year, United Methodist congregations celebrate church-wide Special Sundays with offerings. Your support is critical to these important ministries. To review a list of the church-wide Special Sundays please visit the following website <https://michiganumc.org/treasury-post/2020-special-sunday-schedule/> .

I want you to know that donations like yours make a big difference in the sustainability of our church and the work we are able to do in the community. With your generous support, we are continuing together to make for a stronger church and impact in 2020 despite the pandemic!

Thank you for supporting First United Methodist Church!

Sincerely,

Scott Zechiel

Finance Committee Chair



Greetings Church,

I am very excited to be contacting you regarding our new Growth Groups!!! Hopefully, by now you have heard of them through Pastor Mary's October sermon series (<https://www.bellevillefirstumc.org/sermons>), in church announcements, on our newly updated website (<https://www.bellevillefirstumc.org/groups>), listed in the My Church app, posted on Facebook, as well as represented as an experience along the BFUMC spiritual pathway (see the graphic our own Amy Reeves has crafted).

It is the great hope that each and every single person will join a Growth Group as a connectional ministry experience in an intimate Christian community setting that will foster support, prayer, and discipleship and continue to expand, reaching more and more people and developing additional leadership. The reason we are anticipating everyone signing up is because being a part of a Growth Group is a step on the BFUMC spiritual pathway and a way to grow in love for God, neighbor, and self. The kickoff for these groups will be the Incarnation study by Adam Hamilton starting the week of November 29th and going through the Advent season, which ends the week of Christmas. Sign up for a Growth Group through any of the following Sign Up Genius links, the website, the My Church app, or by calling the church office at 734/697-9288.

To learn more about the Incarnation study go to this link:

<https://www.cokesbury.com/incarnation-advent-study> "Bestselling author Adam Hamilton examines the meaning behind the names of Christ, giving historical and spiritual significance of his birth and how the meaning behind the names might affect the difference he makes in our lives this Christmas." Incarnation materials are available now in the church office. Books for adults are \$10 each while the cost for youth/children is \$7 each.

Lori Summer recently shared that her current Soul Reset group study experience is helping to prepare her with the spiritual practices and wonderful discussions for her journey of becoming whole. She said "I don't know if people realize the impact their words and experiences can have. That's a big part of why I enjoy these small groups - when people open up and are willing to share, their comments bring a deeper or new perspective to me that I so welcome."

Pastor Mary shared, "This pathway, these Growth Groups, they are the way forward for us. This is how we grow in faith. This is how we grow the church even during Coronavirus. This is how we work with Jesus to make disciples that transform the world."



Please join a group today!!!

Children's Growth Group:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508094AAAAD2FAAF85-growth5>

Please note that any time the church closes to in person gatherings, this group will meet virtually via Zoom instead. Meeting after the children's message on Sunday mornings in the church fellowship hall.

Adult Growth Groups:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508094AAAAD2FAAF85-growth1>

With Abby Fleming meeting on Sunday at 6:30 p.m.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508094AAAAD2FAAF85-growth>

With Mark and Dee Groeneweg on Monday nights at 7:00 p.m.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508094AAAAD2FAAF85-growth2>

With Jill Sestok on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508094AAAAD2FAAF85-growth3>

With Pastor Mary on Thursday mornings at 10am

Many blessings and thanks,

Jill Sestok

Belleville First UMC

Director, Spiritual Formation

COVID-19 Support Meeting

Covid-19 has effected us in many different ways: death of loved ones, financial hardships, sadness, emptiness, confusion, just to mention a few. Although we know that God is there, his word reminds us that He will never leave or forsake us. It's still good to come together to talk to someone and share your thoughts. The purpose of the support meeting is to give people a forum to share things that are on their mind regarding either Covid-19 effects on their life or the extended effects that they have experienced. The possibilities of affects on our lives are far reaching. Please rest assured that whatever is discussed will remain confidential from henceforth. The suggested date is Wednesday at 7pm. If this date and time will not work for you. Please feel free to suggest an alternate date and time. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 734-776-3630.

Mike Skelton



Reminder! – For Christmas this year, please consider participating in providing healthcare for the people of John Dean Town Liberia

There is still time to help sponsor the salary of nurse Comfort Flomo, the only health professional serving the people of John Dean Town in Grand Bassa County Liberia. Comfort serves at the John Dean Town United Methodist Clinic. Without the clinic and its staff, there is no chance for medical care in the local area and villages surrounding Joh Dean Town.

Sponsor a day of Comfort's time for only \$16.00

Sponsor a week of Comfort's salary for \$80.00

Sponsor a month of Comfort's salary for \$350.00

As we approach the Christmas season, consider sponsoring part of Comfort's salary as an alternative gift. Give in honor of your loved ones, or simply give because that is one way of showing Jesus' love for people across the ocean in one of the poorest countries on earth.

You can give by:

Mailing a check to the church:

Belleville First UMC

417 Charles Street

Belleville MI 48111 (write Nurse Salary in the memo)

or through the Pushpay App:

select the Fund dropdown box - 'Nurse Salary, John Dean Town Clinic Liberia.

Any questions: call Mark G. @313-617-8994 or email mgroe@comcast.net

Thank you for your support and compassion.

Your Missions Committee

Comfort at work in John Dean Town Clinic





*Fabulous Fun Fridays

Tired? Worn out? Covid got you down?!? Need a little bit of fun to wrap up your week?!?! Then join Pastor Mary and Jill for three Fabulous Fun Fridays in December: 4, 11, and 18 @ 7pm. Each week, we'll play a little trivia or Pictionary and then watch a classic Christmas movie. It's fun for the whole family. Bring your favorite Christmas snacks and beverages to your home computer and Zoom away Fabulous Fun Fridays with us.

Mary Loring is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Fabulous Fun Fridays

Time: Dec 4, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Fri, 3 occurrence(s)

Dec 4, 2020 07:00 PM

Dec 11, 2020 07:00 PM

Dec 18, 2020 07:00 PM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZUscOioqTluHNJO1HSvD7vnnvb9dEcNQHD1K/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGprzwrGtOctB-BRpwcbY_Cd_Twtlhbggo13s07NMDZ3NRX4IOAbNpd8Pun4

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81171079466?pwd=bnVTUGtUVjNIYUJoQTZTQkxsdHQ5QT09>



Events & Activities



Meeting ID: 811 7107 9466

Passcode: 357387

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,81171079466#,,,,,0#,,357387# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,81171079466#,,,,,0#,,357387# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 811 7107 9466

Passcode: 357387

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81171079466>

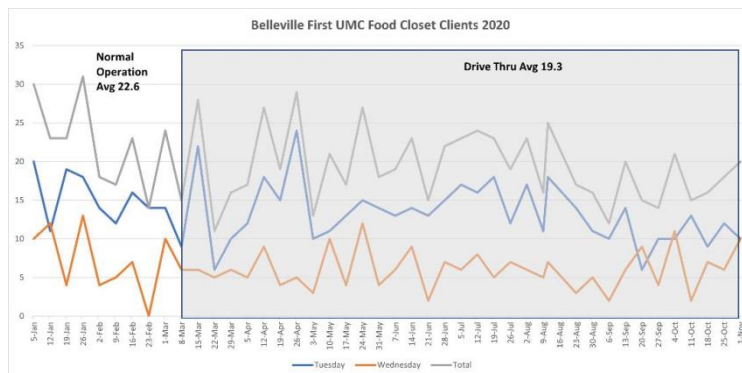


Bottle/Can Fundraiser Drive Is Going Well!



If you would like to participate, you can drop off your bottles/cans at the church on Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. when the Food Closet is open. They can be left between the doorways (parking lot entrance) and placed in the shopping carts provided. If the carts are full, they can be left along the outside wall. The bottles/cans will be collected by Steven Dolot's family every Wednesday. Thank you for your participation!

Food Closet Client Data



A BIG thank you goes out to Mark Groeneweg for organizing our client data from January through October of 2020. Since January 1st, we have 149 clients in our Intake Notebook. Our biggest increase in clients came in April with 27 and 12 in May. During the summer months our numbers started to decline. In September we had three and another three in October. From March 17 through October 27, we had 72 new clients. 48 out of the 72, or 67%, came only one time. 51 out of the 72, or 71%, are age 60+. On a good note, hopefully that indicates that people are back to work and don't need the extra support.

A BIG “Thank You” Goes To . . .

On Saturday, November 14, Boy Scout Troop 231 held a food drive in Van Buren Township. Two carloads of food were donated to the Emergency Food Closet. Another thank you goes out to Lori Summer, a food closet volunteer who, on short notice, donated her time to help sort, check dates, and store the food. This donation will help feed many in our community.

Identification of people
in the pic from left to right:

Rachel Johns
Brian Johns
Erica Fulton



In the quarter from August 1-October 31, \$40.31 was received from the Kroger Community Rewards program. 16 of our households have their Kroger Rewards card linked to the food closet. Thanks to everyone who participates! Every penny helps to feed the hungry in our community!

Additionally, **Forgotten Harvest** is still passing out food on Tuesdays at the Van Buren Township Community Services entrance located at 46425 Tyler Road. Fresh and nutritious foods are available for pick up and are free. Please share with anyone you know who might need help. I would advise getting there early for the food goes quickly.

Tuesday, Dec. 1; 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 8; 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 21; 9 a.m.-12 p.m. (Special Holiday Food distribution)

Submitted by:
Marilyn Wood



Christmas Reindeer Word Search



P R A N C E R S E D D
P N E E R E L E N O A
R C E V E E D D O N R
E H T E I B A A R N U
S R E G N L N S T E D
E I H S D I C H H R O
N S C A E T E E P C L
T T O N E Z R R O U P
S M M T R E E E L P H
E A E A E N H A E I A
E S T V I X E N A D A

Words to find:

BLITZEN
DASHER
REINDEER

CHRISTMAS
DONNER
RUDOLPH

COMET
NORTHPOLE
SANTA

CUPID
FRANCER
SLEIGH

DANCER
PRESENTS
VIXEN



Help place the present under the Christmas tree.

