

# CONNECTIONS

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



## Message from the Pastor



One of the first sermons I ever preached was on Romans 12. In fact, it's one of my favorite chapters in the whole of the Bible. I think I like it because Paul tells it to us like it is, without reservation, and tells us that we are all part of the body of Christ having unity in our diversity. Listen to the beginning of chapter 12 from the Message Bible. Perhaps even read it out loud, go ahead, no one's listening...

### *Place Your Life Before God*

**12<sup>1-2</sup>** So here's what I want you to do, **God helping you**: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and **place it before God as an offering**. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for God. **Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking**. Instead, fix your attention on God. **You'll be changed from the inside out**. Readily recognize what God wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, **God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. (MSG)**

I highlighted the things that I think help us to accept and to live into change. God helps us to change, especially when we give ourselves over to the change God wants in us. We run the risk of adapting to the culture around us, much like the Israelites did when they were in exile. So we need to be intentional in our daily lives, allowing God to change us from the inside out. When we can do that, we become well-formed fully mature disciples.

Yet, even with these words and knowing that change is just a part of life, don't we still resist and complain when change seems just too hard? I know this is a problem I face. We want an easy button and one never seems to be around.

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

1/1/21  
Happy New  
Year!

1/5/21  
Giving  
Envelopes  
Available

1/6/21  
Who Stole My  
Church Study  
Begins

1/17/21  
Lenten  
Devotional  
Stories Due

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.



## 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

## JANUARY Birthdays

Nathan "Nate"	Clark	1
Sandy	Wilson	1
Carl	Marosi	2
Scott	Skelton	2
Jacqueline	Dalzell	3
Darryl	Raymond	3
Jean	Hayward	5
RuthAnn	Herkimer	5
Rick	Baker	9
Dick	Timm	9
Chris	Anderson	10
Susan	Zemko	12
Cindy	Schloesser	15
Nancy	Carey	18
Mike	Skelton	23
Nathan	Sparks	23
Cathy	Andrews	24
Debie	Gurkin	24
Ian	Simmons	24
Elaine	Stabnau	27
Jane	Cook	31

## JANUARY Anniversaries

Carl & Wyn Ann	Marosi	23
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# Message from the Pastor

Continued from Page 1

As we enter a new year, our hopes are high. We hope that coronavirus will be defeated. We hope for a smooth transition to a new president. We hope for an anti-racist world that begins in our own hearts. We hope for life to return to normal. Yet, what is normal? Maybe that's just it. Maybe the way we embrace what God does for us is by accepting that normal is a fantasy created by our culture. Maybe that change from the inside out isn't just one and done, but a constant renewing and remodeling and reshaping.

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. (NRSV)*

So let us embrace change in the new year. Let us be new creations in Christ in the new year.

*<sup>17</sup> So if anyone is in Christ, **there is a new creation**: everything old has passed away; **see, everything has become new!** <sup>18</sup> **All this is from God**, who reconciled us to God's self through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to God's self, not counting their trespasses against them, and **entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.** <sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ, since **God is making God's appeal through us**; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.  
2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (NRSV)*

Won't you join me in the new year's resolution to embrace change, especially the change that God want for us? Remember, it's not us who makes this happen, but God in Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit that brings this change within us. In 2021, let us become ambassadors of change and reconciliation for our families, our community, and for the world!

Being the change I want to see,  
Pastor Mary



## **Sermon Series:**

## ***Change Happens: Now What?***

Johnny Rivers once famously sang, "The only thing that's permanent is change." What are the changes affecting 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?

### January 10, 2021

Scripture:

Matthew 24: 3-13

Sermon Title:

Masters of Change

Synopsis:

as

The disciples and those leading the early church were masters of change. We, too need to have this quality 21st Century Christ followers. We will look at why we shy away from such mastery and why it's important that we grow in this area of spiritual development.

### January 17, 2021

Scripture:

Acts 16 & 17

Sermon Title:

Changing Times & Changing Methods

Synopsis:

Paul famously molded his message to fit the people he was trying to reach. Who do we want to reach for Jesus and what changes are we willing to make to do it?



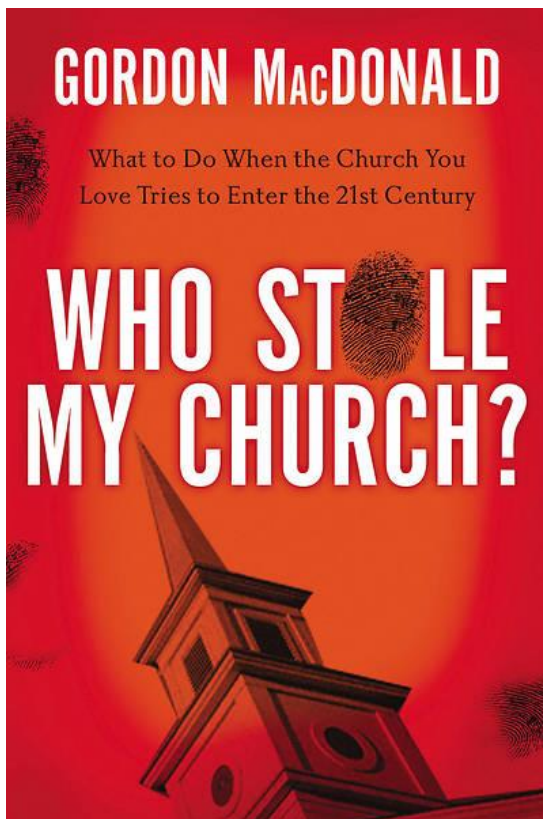
January 24, 2021

Scripture: Mark 11: 15-19

Sermon Title: The Seldom Used Why Question

Synopsis: In church we seldom ask the question, "Why?" Even Jesus had to ruffle some feathers to awaken the temple authorities from their complacency. This week we will ask that question, "Why?" in the hopes "To turn our eyes out the front door into the larger world and see who needs to be touch with the saving love of Christ." (MacDonald, 88)

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Join Pastor Mary on Wednesday evenings @ 7pm or Thursday mornings @ 10 in January as she explores the book, "**Who Stole My Church**" by Gordon MacDonald. Let's explore together, "What to do when the church you love tries to enter the 21st Century."

The book can be purchased in the church office M-Th (9a-12p) for \$12 with scholarships available. Sign up and a Zoom link will be sent to you to participate.



*Happy New Year*

*May the Lord bless you  
and keep you. May His favor  
shine upon you. May you be  
filled with His peace!*

**The church office will be closed Wednesday,  
December 30<sup>th</sup> 2020–Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup> 2021**



2021 Giving envelope boxes will be available beginning **Tuesday, January 5, 2021** from 10:00a.m. – 1:00p.m., and every Tuesday & Wednesday throughout the month of January (10:00a.m.- 1:00p.m.). If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Micky Keelan (734-740-3700) or the church office (734-697-9288) .

Thank-you  
Finance Committee



HUMAN RELATIONS DAY



**TOGETHER**  
OUR REACH IS BEYOND MEASURE

The United Methodist Church's special giving structure ensures your generosity blesses as many people as possible in sustainable, strategic ways

**YOUR DONATION CHANGES THE WORLD ONE LIFE AT A TIME**

**GIVE TO YOUR CHURCH:**  
Make checks payable to your local church or donate online via credit/debit card at [ResourceUMC.org/SSGive](https://ResourceUMC.org/SSGive)



TO GIVE ONLINE SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE CAMERA



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.  
The people of The United Methodist Church®

Human Relations Day is Sunday, January 17, 2021.

Donations may be paid via Push pay and selecting Special Sundays.





The Advent Devotional and Christmas boxes were a wonderful success due to the great team of workers writing the stories, purchasing of items, assembling and delivering the boxes, and other miscellaneous tasks. Thank you all so very much!!

Do you have a Lent or Easter story that you would like to share? We are looking for stories for the upcoming Lent Devotional. All completed submissions are due Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup> to the church office. The devotional will consist of a scripture, story, and prayer and the maximum word count is 300 words. Below is a sample template, to be used, or as a visual guide. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the church office.

## Lenten Devotional

Scripture:

Story:

Prayer:

Author:



Greetings Church,

I hope and pray with you that the New Year brings a time for peace and love to prevail as we move along from isolation and disconnection in this pandemic journey!!! One way that the new year at Belleville First will offer a chance for continually renewed connectedness, is through the next semester of Growth Groups (previously referred to as small groups or Sunday School) coming up for the Lenten season and kicking off the week of February 17th. This is a great way to actively live out the **BFUMC vision part of being God's extended family that is truly Christ centered.** Meet up with some old friends, make some new friends, and after you have navigated the spiritual pathway Pastor Mary has provided us collectively by *Encountering God in Worship*, participating in a Growth Group will take you along the next step of *Engaging God in scripture and growing in trust*.

Growth Group training for Leaders and Coordinators (if you'd like to know more or volunteer for this just let me know) will take place the week of January 27th, when sign-ups will actively begin. In the meantime, know that options for meeting are so far scheduled to continue as follows:

Sunday mornings for the children at 10 a.m. with Marlayna Keelan, Jenn Daigneau, Megan Skelton, and myself starting February 21st. We will be studying *24 Hours That Changed the World* by Adam Hamilton. It is my understanding that the church as a whole has done this study in the not too distant past, though the children have not yet, as they were likely too young at that time. This will give them a chance to experience it too, remind their grown ups of the best parts, and have coordinated curriculum, activities, and media to engage with.

"What a difference a day makes. You hear people say that phrase all the time. It could not be truer than when talking about the last day of Jesus' life. In *24 Hours That Changed the World*, Adam Hamilton will help you experience and understand the significance of Jesus' suffering and death like never before. He retraces the day that changed human history in his usual straightforward yet easy, conversational style that speaks to both long-time Christians and those who are simply curious about the story of Christ's crucifixion. [The] children's version will trace the final week of Jesus' life in age-appropriate language as they experience this study based on Adam Hamilton's acclaimed series..." [24 Hours That Changed the World for Older Children | Cokesbury](#)

The curriculum for the adult Growth Groups will be based on Adam Hamilton's *Final Words From the Cross*, a follow-up book to *24 Hours That Changed the World*. "In life and in death, Jesus' words were powerful and meaningful. Despite the serious effort and increased pain required for Jesus to speak as he hung on the cross, Jesus spoke seven "final words"—statements that have much to teach us about Jesus, his Father, and ourselves. In *24 Hours That Changed the World*, Adam Hamilton took us on a Lenten journey through the last day of Jesus' life. Now in this inspiring follow-up book, Hamilton explores these final words as seen and heard through the eyes and ears of those who stood near the cross." [Final Words From the Cross | Cokesbury](#)



\*Sunday evenings around 6:30 p.m. with Abby Fleminn starting February 21st.

\*Monday nights at 7 p.m. with Mark & Dee Groeneweg starting February 22nd.

\*Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. with me starting February 24th and...

\*Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. with Pastor Mary starting February 25th.

If you just can't wait until the Growth Group sign-ups go "live" feel free to contact Darlene in the office by calling 734/697-3288 or e-mailing her at [BellevilleUMC48111@Yahoo.com](mailto:BellevilleUMC48111@Yahoo.com) and let her know which group you want to be a part of. We will coordinate together and ensure you are included there.

**Acts 2:41** "So then, those who accepted his message were baptized; and on that day about 3,000 souls were added [to the body of believers].<sup>42</sup> They were continually *and* faithfully devoting themselves to the instruction of the apostles, and to fellowship, to eating meals together and to prayers." The Amplified Bible

I am so excited to be on this journey with you all and I thank you for your faithful presence, prayers, witness, gifts, and service, especially during times such as these. Take good care and God bless!!!

**Jill B. Sestok**  
**Director, Spiritual Formation**

**Phone: 313/948-7050**

**E-Mail: [JBSestok@GMail.com](mailto:JBSestok@GMail.com)**



## Congratulations:

Jill Sestok (Director of Spiritual Formation) for becoming a certified candidate for ministry in the United Methodist Church. We are praying that the rest of the process we go smoothly.



## Liturgists are Needed:

If you are available, and would like to participate by reading the scripture and prayer list on Sundays, please contact Paul Smith [pksmith402@yahoo.com](mailto:pksmith402@yahoo.com).

Thank you!  
Paul Smith



On November 16th, Mark Groeneweg made his second delivery this fall to Belleville High School for the schools in house food pantry. Four special education students helped unload and set up the foods delivered. \$500 in food was donated to their pantry at this time. We will continue to help supply food for their food pantry needs.



High School Drop-Off 11/16

Steven Dolot is still collecting cans bottles to raise money for our Food Closet. Cans and bottles may be dropped off at the church on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thank you for your support! He has donated over \$500 to date!



# Food Closet



Due to the overwhelming generosity of our community, our Emergency Food Closet monetary donations have increased dramatically. Starting January 5th, 2021 we will be giving out bags of food on a **weekly** basis instead of every other week for as long as we financially can. Our Chase Food Closet account currently has \$43,000. \$9,000 of this came from 2 local residents this fall. Other money was received from memorial contributions, businesses, churches, and church members who contribute on a regular basis. We still have \$11,000 in Food Only Simply Give cards from the fundraiser held in the fall of 2019. I do not see Meijer selecting us for another fundraising campaign until most of this money is spent. Meijer additionally gave us \$5,000 last March which was used for \$20 Food Only cards which were given out during April thru July when we gave out half bags of food and a \$20 Food Only card. This past July Meijer donated another \$2,500 which was spent on groceries. Since March 17th, we have had 80 new clients.

Submitted by:  
Marilyn Wood





*I want to offer a big thank you to this incredibly loving community. Your season's greetings cards, gifts, gift baskets, and gift cards have been such a blessing. I am so honored to be your pastor.*

*New Year Blessings,  
Pastor Mary*



## *Angel Tree*

Thank you so much for supporting the Angel Tree 🎄. Your generosity provided hats, gloves, coats, shoes or boots, outfits, pajamas, toys, books, arts & crafts, games, or stuffed animals to 20 local school children.

I'm sure they will be very excited Christmas morning. Thank you for blessing these children.

Valerie Moore, Chairperson –  
Worship Team





## **Thank You, Thank You, and Thank You!**

### **For your support of Comfort Flomo, the nurse at the John Dean Town UM Clinic in John Dean Town, Liberia**

The Missions Team thanks everyone for their generosity during our campaign to raise salary funds for nurse Comfort Flomo, the only health professional serving the people of John Dean Town in Grand Bassa County Liberia. As of Dec 14<sup>th</sup>, we have raised more than \$3300.00 to go towards Comfort's 2021 salary! What a great response during this time of pandemic challenges. 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 John Dean Town. By your gifts you are showing God's presence (Emmanuel) in the world to our brothers and sisters in John Dean Town Liberia.

Thank you for your support and compassion.

Your Missions Team

### **Comfort at work in John Dean Town Clinic**





**Have you been enjoying different forms of communication from Belleville First UMC? Or do you feel lost? Did you read the entire newsletter this month? Did you see our newly designed website? Did you download the My Church by Push pay app on your phone? Did you check in with us on Facebook?**

**Have you been watching the service each week on YouTube? We would love to have you join us in whatever format works best for you during these unusual times. Would you like to learn how to use these different forms of communication, or would you like to get more comfortable with any of them?**

**Call the church office, or Susan Featheringill, at 734-552-8741 and we will set up time to help you learn and get more comfortable with any or all of these communication options.**

**Thank you!  
Susan Featheringill**



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## **COVID-19 Support Meeting**

Covid-19 has affected 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 7p.m. 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



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Chinese New Year

f e a s t n m u r o l r  
r v c d c e d a z y u e  
c i e r l w a r b a n d  
e l g a e c d e o f a e  
n s o g a l a n t e r n  
t p o o n o x k e s n v  
u i d n h t a r s t e e  
r r l d o h s m d i w l  
i i u a u e s y t v y o  
e t c n s s t q w a e p  
s s k c e n a e q l a e  
f i r e c r a c k e r s

centuries

evil spirits

firecrackers

Lunar New Year

clean house

feast

good luck

new clothes

dragon dance

festival

lantern

red envelopes





Unscramble the words below:

ckcol \_\_\_\_\_

isone mreka \_\_\_\_\_

arypt ath \_\_\_\_\_

Tsmie Saequr \_\_\_\_\_

ihitnmdg \_\_\_\_\_

aytpr \_\_\_\_\_

ioylahd \_\_\_\_\_

herces \_\_\_\_\_

leetcrahe \_\_\_\_\_

Times Square

holiday

party hat

cheers

clock

noise maker

midnight

party

celebrate