

*Be with us, God. Be with us, God, in stone stillness and quiet corners.
Help us to be lights in the darkness, lights that burn bravely in the circle of your love.
Hear our prayers, God, our yearnings, our carings, our concerns, our questions.
Help us to be lights in the darkness, lights that burn bravely in the circle of your love.
Be in us, God, in our work, our calling, our journeys, our wondering.
Help us to be lights in the darkness, lights that burn bravely in the circle of your love.*

~Ruth Burgess

Tuesday Evening Candlelight Services

Dec. 6 and 13 at 7:00 p.m.

Come and be the light, surround yourself with the light from others in this sacred season of Advent that ushers in the Light of the World in the midst of the darkness. In the circle of God's love we will embrace the darkness, the mystery of this holy season, as we yearn for the light. With prayer, songs, and the flickering candlelight we will slow ourselves down and prepare ourselves for the Christ child to come into our lives anew.

On Tuesday, December 6 our worship will focus on "Longing for the Light," as we pray for all of the many places and people in our world who need the Light of Christ to shine upon them. On Tuesday, December 13 we will raise our candles in all directions and sing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," creating a circle of love and light that burns brightly.

Come, experience Advent. Live into the wholeness and holiness of the complete season.
Be blessed and be a blessing in this sacred time.

WELCOME to *The First Word*, a bi-monthly publication, except during the months of June, July, August and December when *The First Word* is published monthly. Articles for the next issue are due no later than Wednesday, **December 7, 2016**. The next newsletter will be mailed **December 14, 2016**. Articles submitted to the newsletter should be sent electronically by email to Jennifer Stupica at jstupica@umc-kzo.org.

FIRST CHURCH STAFF

The staff is here to empower and equip the congregation for ministry and mission. Email *staff by entering the first letter of their first name and the entire last name, and then: @umc-kzo.org. (i.e., scharnley@umc-kzo.org).

*Rev. Steve Charnley	Senior Pastor
*Rev. Julie Kline	Associate Pastor
*Rev. Dan Duncan	Pastor of Children & Families Ministries
*Rev. Keith Treman	Pastor of Congregational Care
*Jacqueline Stilger	Minister of Music
*Ruth LaMachia	Church Business Administrator
*Christi Landreville	Administrative Partner in Ministry
*Jennifer Stupica	Communications Coordinator
*Bernie Foulk	Organist
Rich Peavler	First Singers Director
Linda Winkelman	JFON Legal Assistant (kzoo_assist@jfonwestmichigan.org)
*Curt Flowers	Bookkeeper
*Denise Wilcox	Contributions Assistant
*Sara Miller	Office Assistant
*Robin Entenman	Office Assistant/Security
Pamala Roman	Custodian
Todd Bloomfield	Evening Custodian
Ernesto Escobedo	Custodian/Security
Michael DeYoung	Evening Security
Julie Meyers	First Care Director (msjulie55@yahoo.com)
Bishop David A. Bard	Bishop of the Michigan Area
Rev. Dwayne Bagley	Kalamazoo District Superintendent
Rev. Cora Glass	Dir. of Discipleship and Resident Director of Wesley Intentional Living Community

PRAYER CHAIN. Did you know that it is as easy as picking up the phone or e-mailing the office to have your prayers multiplied by many caring members of your church family? Please contact the church office, 381-6340, if you would like to be included in our weekly email prayer chain. If you would like to be added to our phone prayer chain, please contact Mary Beth Garman at (269) 321-9332.



STEPHEN MINISTRY is a confidential care giving ministry of our church. If you would like a Stephen Minister to walk with you during a difficult time in your life, you are welcome to contact Wendy Arnold at 323-3244.

Our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of

Richard Huss, father of Cheryl Warnicke and grandfather of Elise Warnicke, who died November 10.

Nancy Jacobs, who died November 10.

Mariel Neu, who died November 15.

Mary Beth Rhine Sears, mother of Jason Haithcox, who died November 18.

Marla Ferguson, dear friend of Jane Rettke, who died November 20.

Please keep these friends in your prayers

Connor Bigelow, John Boekhout, Hannah Boley, Helen Bray, Sandy Brink, Skip Decker, Hyesuk DeRoo, Sharon Dougan, Bob Goodwin, Brenda Haan, Paula Hall, Marge Hastings, Carl Hausermann, Mildred Hedrick, Nell Holland, Barbara Hughey, Ann Kneas, Rueith Lewis, Jim Martin, Dave Martin, Marsha McKenzie, Terry Mishler, Mandy Morrill, Ham Scharf, Mary Helen Thomas, Arlene Triestram, Lori Volkema, Linda Winkelman, Anne Wolfe

New Grandchildren!

We celebrate the births of **Charles Alun Pence**, born on Nov. 5, grandson of Becky and Dennis Pence; **Irene Marguerite Kujacznski**, born on Nov. 7 to Caitlin and Adam Kujacznski, granddaughter of Gordon and Barb Miller; and **Maria Ann Charnley**, born on Nov. 13 to Iain and Kalie Charnley, granddaughter of Rev. Steve and Cindy Charnley.

Baptism Sunday

Our next date for baptisms is February 19, 2017. Please contact Pastor Dan Duncan if you are interested in baptism for yourself or your child.

The Music and The Arts Committee presents

Advent Season Concerts

Thursdays at noon in the Sanctuary
Freewill donations gratefully accepted

December 1 | Terry Lower Trio



December 8 | Holcomb-Alder Duo



December 15 | Blarney Castle



Reveal Watch Turn See
Word Dream Peace

Join us for worship this **Advent** and **Christmas Season** as we study the key theme identified in the **Gospel** reading each Sunday

DEC 4 8:30 and 11 a.m. Advent 2

TURN. We are invited to turn, to turn toward the Son, to acknowledge our need of God and our desire to change. Come as we hear the message of John the Baptist who came to prepare the way of the Lord.

DEC 11 8:30, 9:30 and 11 a.m. Advent 3

SEE. Once we have turned toward the fulfillment God intends, we begin to be able to see the world and treat others in it in a new way.

DEC 18 8:30 and 11 a.m. Advent 4

DREAM. Even as we begin to see God's way of compassion and mercy, we also – like Joseph – come to acknowledge our reliance on God communicating with us and transforming us. We are called to dream, dream of the way the world should be and of our role in it.

DEC 24 5. 7 and 11 p.m. Christmas Eve

PEACE. Whether in dreams or visions of angels, we see and hear and join the chorus of the heavenly host announcing the birth of Jesus as a sign of peace to all people of good will.

DEC 25 10 a.m. Christmas Day

WORD. In a Service of the Word, we contemplate the mystery of the Word made flesh and dwelling among us.

JAN 1 10 a.m. Epiphany Sunday

REVEAL. The star shone brightly in the night sky and summoned the magi on their journey to Bethlehem. Come as we seek to follow the star into the new year, revealing God's purpose for us and for the world.



Children & Families Ministries

by Rev. Dan Duncan
dduncan@umc-kzo.org



Getting Ready! In this season of Advent, we prepare ourselves in many ways, on many levels, for the coming of the Holy One, who reminds us of God’s abiding care for all of creation. We will be giving each child an Advent/Christmas book, as a gift from the church, called A Deep Blue Star, which younger children can read with their parents, and older kids on their own. And, for those who enjoy digital technology and collaborative media, here’s a link to a “Photo Advent” site, that provides a daily photo challenge that is fun and meaningful for all ages. Follow this link to sign up for the devotions: <http://lecfamily.org/advent/>

Christmas Pageant. Dec. 18 at the 11 a.m. worship. Led by First Beats, all of our children can participate because we need a number of characters and animals (in costume, provided by the church). Please sign up on the clipboard in the Arches, or email Pastor Dan. We need 3 shepherds, 1 cow, a number of sheep, and plenty of angels.

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE AT 5 PM, DECEMBER 24. If you will be in town and would like to be a part of our Family Christmas Eve service at 5 p.m., please let Pastor Dan know soon. Readers, singers, and instrumentalists are all needed! We also need a number of children for a manger “tableau,” in which the characters come up front during the Christmas story (no speaking parts required). We need Mary, Joseph, a cow, a camel, a donkey, sheep, 3 Magi, shepherds, and angels. Child care will be available during this service. Contact Rev. Dan Duncan (381-6340 x231), or email dduncan@umc-kzo.org for more information

Sunday School (9:30-10:30 a.m., beginning in the Arches on the second floor, Pre-K through 4th grades). Upcoming Bible lessons using our United Methodist “Deep Blue” curriculum will be:

- Dec. 4: Mary’s story
- Dec. 11: Joseph’s story
- Dec. 18: Jesus’ story
- Dec. 25: No Sunday School; one worship service at 10 a.m.

5th and 6th graders “submerge” themselves in issues of Christian faith and life with the “Submerge” curriculum from Cokesbury:

- Dec. 4: Hope (Isaiah’s prophecy)
- Dec. 11: Trust (Elizabeth and Zechariah)
- Dec. 18: Faith (Mary and Joseph)
- Dec. 25: No Sunday School; one worship service at 10 a.m.

Godly Play stories coming up (11:15 to noon)

4 -5 year olds—Room 203

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dec. 4: Mary & Joseph Show the Way | Storyteller: Pastor Dan | Guide: RuthAnn Uggen |
| Dec. 11: Shepherds Show the Way | Storyteller: Shelly Wisdom-Long | Guide: Donna Oudersluys |
| Dec. 18: all children attend pageant in worship | | |

6-8 year olds—Room 200

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dec. 4: Mary & Joseph Show the Way | Storyteller: Julia Librizzi | Guide: Donna Oudersluys |
| Dec. 11: Shepherds Show the Way | Storyteller: Pastor Dan | Guide: JoAnne Ivey |
| Dec. 18: all children attend pageant in worship | | |

First Bells will rehearse during the Gathering Time at 9:30 a.m. in the Arches on Dec. 4.





"A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray." Isaiah 35:1-10

"Hope is the strongest driving force for a people. Hope which brings about change, which provides new realities, is what opens our road to freedom." ~Oscar Arias

EMERGING WORSHIP

December 11 @ 9:30 a.m.
Wesley Hall

**"The Holy Way: Encountering
Light & Dark"**

by Rev. Julie Kline

"Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord." James 5:7-10

The Advent season beckons us to spiritually consider times of darkness. The season of winter will not let us deny the reality of darkness; we live with less hours of daylight. We wake to dark mornings and the dark of evening comes quickly. The realities of life will not let us deny that there are times of darkness, moments and situations when we struggle to find the light and grasp for hope. Isaiah was prophesying to people who were living within a time of great darkness and despair. In a vivid and prophetic manner, Isaiah tells them that "a highway will be there." This highway is a road to freedom, a road to joy, a road that would lead them from their despair. In this time of worship we will encounter the dark and illuminate it with many candles of hope, we will discover the open road to freedom. Come and join us.

Enjoy the convenience of electronic giving

by the Finance Team



The Finance Team wants to let you know that starting in January 2017 we will be offering some new electronic giving options as a way to automate your regular weekly offering. Electronic giving offers convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

- ▶ **Direct Debit Giving** is used to automatically transfer funds from your checking or savings account to the church's bank account. (If you already use this way of giving, you will continue to stay with the program you already are enrolled in unless you let us know you wish to change.)
- ▶ **Credit & Debit Card Giving** will allow you to make offerings automatically on a pre-determined schedule using a credit or debit card.
- ▶ **Online Giving** will allow you to go to www.umc-kzo.org at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan or make a one-time donation.
- ▶ **Mobile Access** will allow you the ability to use your mobile devices; i.e. smart phones and tablets, for anywhere-ability to give using your credit or debit card.

As you contemplate future contributions, please consider electronic giving. Authorization forms and additional information will be available at the Welcome Desk. If you want to give using church envelopes, please let Contribution Assistant Denise Wilcox know by December 12th. You can call her at (269) 381-6340 X236 or email dwilcox@umc-kzo.org.

Sunday Morning Partners in Ministry

	Dec. 4 8:30 and 11 a.m	Dec. 11 8:30 and 11 a.m	Dec. 18 8:30 and 11 a.m	Dec. 25 10:00 a.m.	Jan. 1 10:00 a.m.	Jan. 8 8:30 and 11 a.m
8:30 Lay Reader	Jan Schoenherr	Andy Vorbrich	Molly Williams	One service at 10 a.m. (No Sunday School)		Deb Search Willoughby
8:30 Office/Welcome Center	need someone	need someone	need someone			need someone
8:30 Greeters	Jennifer Stupica	Pam & Terry O'Connor	need someone			need someone
8:30 Sound/Lights	Jim Willoughby	Greg Anderson	Jim Willoughby			Jim Willoughby
11:00 Lay Reader	Derek Wheaton	Lynne Corbus	Vickie Winfield	Linda Winkelman	Thom Victor	Mike Seals
11:00 Office/Welcome Center	need someone	Harriet Chalker	need someone	need someone	need someone	need someone
11:00 Greeters	Kay Gross Mark Mittlebach	Laura VanVlack-Ailes	Don & Harriet Chalker	Matt, Josie & Allison Bland	need someone	need someone
11:00 Acolytes	Ella Adams Sean Willoughby	Andrew Hampton Emma Hampton	Children's Pageant	Andrew Wright Alex Moon	Layla Eaton Sean Willoughby	Sam Ledlow Ryan Ernest
11:00 Sound/Lights	Robyn Lane	Jonah Bolton	Bob Lane	Jonah Bolton	Greg Anderson	Bob Lane
Van Driver	Jake Lisak	Dave Russel	Mike Cooper	no van	no van	Fred Corbus

YOUTH TRIBE

SUNDAY MORNING AND EVENING YOUTH EVENTS

SUNDAY, December 4

Cocoa & Class: @ 9:30am - "Joseph & Mary: Under the Shadow of an Empire, Peace Comes from Hope and Forgiveness." In this Advent season we are going to watch portions of this movie each week and study the birth stories in each of the Gospels. Joseph & Mary is a "story of inspiration and hope, of mercy versus revenge, in the years before Jesus became the Man that ultimately changed the course of humanity forever." Come join us for growing our faith and our friendships.

Youth Council @ 5pm. Youth Council, please plan to be present to plan for the beginning of 2017!

Youth Tribe @ 6-8pm - #StayWoke Advent. We are going to pick the top social issues of our times, break into small groups, and educate ourselves about them. Then we will discuss what we can do to make a difference and share some of what we have learned with our congregation.ent.

SUNDAY, December 11

Emerging Worship @ 9:30am - Youth attend Emerging Worship during the Sunday School hour. The Holy Way: Encountering Light & Dark. Isaiah was prophesying to people who were living within a time of great darkness and despair. In a vivid and prophetic manner, Isaiah tells them that "a highway will be there." This highway is a road to freedom, a road to joy, a road that would lead them from their despair. In this time of worship we will encounter the dark and illuminate it with many candles of hope, we will discover the open road to freedom. Come and join us.

Youth Tribe @ 6-8pm - #StayWoke Advent. We'll be back in our small groups and working to be attentive and called to action in this Advent season. Now that we have named our social issues, done some homework, it is time to dedicate some of our resources and time to helping others to be woke. Hopefully, the small groups have established a plan and now it is time to implement it.

SUNDAY, December 18

Cocoa & Class @ 9:30am. We will continue our Advent study of "Joseph & Mary."
Youth Tribe @ 6-8pm - Christmas party!



Collecting household items needed by refugee family

by Mark Oudersluys, Outreach Chair

As you have heard, our church is partnering with the First Presbyterian Church on helping to resettle a Syrian refugee family in Kalamazoo on or about December 5. The family is composed of seven individuals: a mother and father, two teenage girls, and an eight year-old child. Also included in the family is an adult daughter with her 7 year-old boy.

To prevent overlap and potential confusion, the churches have divided the items necessary to set up a house for the family. The items that our church has been asked to supply are for the bathroom: bathmat, waste basket, bath towels, hand towels, shampoo toothpaste and toothbrushes. Also needed are a variety of cleaning supplies to include: a bucket, laundry detergent, cleaning products, laundry baskets, and rubber gloves.

If you are able to assist with any of these items, please drop them off at the church office in basket provided. Thank you for your support.

If you wish to be on an email list that will receive updates of what is needed by the Syrian family that we will be assisting beginning early December, please email Ray Sweany at rasweany@charter.net.



Wedding Celebration

We are pleased to share the good news that on **Friday, December 23 at 2:00 p.m.** long-time First Church members **Susan Paul and David Lundquist** will be married in the sanctuary of our church. Sue and David along with their families invite members of our congregation to join them and be part of the celebration of their marriage. A reception in Wesley

Hall will follow their wedding. RSVPs to Sue at 349-8218 or David at dlundquist@ameritech.net will be appreciated.

Welcoming Syrian Refugees

Panel Discussion

All are welcome to attend a panel discussion on the needs of the Syrians that will be resettling into the Kalamazoo area. Sponsored by the Kalamazoo Interfaith Coalition for Peace and Justice

Kalamazoo Public Library

in the 3rd floor Van Deusen room

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Five competent panelists will each address a different theme, as follows:

- "The Experience of those forcefully displaced," by Aram Derbandi, Samaritas Program Coordinator
- "Law enforcement and those forcefully displaced," by Rick Fuller, Kalamazoo County Sheriff
- "Welcoming Michigan, and the vetting of those forcefully displaced," by Susan Reed, managing attorney for the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
- "Housing and those forcefully displaced," by Don Cooney, Vice-Mayor, City of Kalamazoo
- "Education and those forcefully displaced," by Nkenge A. Bergan, Interim Director of Student Services of Kalamazoo Public Schools

Supporting JFON Immigration Ministry

by Ann Sweany, JFON Clinic Coordinator

Just in case you didn't get in on the shopping frenzy of Black Friday, Local Saturday, Cyber Monday or Giving Tuesday—it's not too late! To give, that is! You could give competent, trustworthy legal advice to a vulnerable immigrant, help someone obtain authorization to work in the US, or perhaps help immigrants seeking asylum from terrifying conditions in their home country.

We have an opportunity to join West Michigan's Giving Tuesday campaign at <https://www.crowdrise.com/nationaljusticeforourneighbors/fundraiser/jfonwest-michigan>. This campaign lasts until January 31. Contributions that can be identified as Kalamazoo will go directly to FUMC's JFON clinic. Of course, you can donate directly to JFON-Kalamazoo at any time by giving to FUMC and writing "JFON" in the memo of your check.

Bishop's Advent Offering December 4

Bishop David Bard has designated to support hurricane relief efforts in Haiti this Advent season. Hurricane Matthew left an estimated 350,000 people homeless and thousands injured. On Sunday, December 4 you will have the opportunity to share in support for the people of Haiti.

Thank you for the approximately \$3,000 given in the initial appeal for emergency aid. UMCOR's continued work in the aftermath to assist in rebuilding lives is the focus of the Bishop's Advent Appeal. Let us continue to work in bringing God's hope and love for the people of Haiti through our gifts.

2017 Offering Envelopes

If you wish to have offering envelopes for 2017 (whether you had them for 2016 or would like us to place a new order for you for 2017), please contact our Contributions Assistant Denise Wilcox by FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12. Email Denise at dwilcox@umc-kzo.org or via phone (381-6340). When the order arrives, we will communicate to the congregation in our newsletters and bulletin announcements, so that they can be picked up in the office.

Christmas Offering

Your Christmas offering will support a group of new missionaries designated by our Outreach Team. Look for more info on these missionaries in the next issue of *The First Word*.

2016 Special Sunday Offerings

2016 DATE	OFFERING DESCRIPTION	GIVEN IN 2015	GIVEN IN 2016
<i>January 17</i>	<i>Human Relations Sunday</i>	446.00	571.00
February 21	Wesley Sunday	---	2,861.35
<i>March 6</i>	<i>One Great Hour of Sharing</i>	1,889.40	1,446.80
March 27	Easter Offering	7,609.00	7,233.00
March 27	Easter Outreach Offering		1,328.00
<i>April 10</i>	<i>Native American Sunday</i>	633.51	557.00
<i>May 22</i>	<i>Peace with Justice Sunday</i>	255.00	710.00
June 19	Camp Sunday	1,481.00	525.47
July 21	Michigan United/Justice Team	2,750.00	2,080.36
September 11	Christian Education Sunday	469.00	419.25
October 2	ASP Sunday	1,301.41	1,795.33
<i>October 2</i>	<i>World Communion Sunday</i>	400.00	140.00
October 30	UMW Sunday	1,455.00	1,799.18
<i>(Nov. 2015)</i>	<i>United Methodist Student Sunday</i>	83.00	150.00
November 20	You Are Not Alone (YANA) special offering		5,991.00
December 25	Christmas Offering	13,441.47	1,325.90
SPECIAL SUNDAY OFFERINGS TOTAL		<u>\$41,741.26</u>	<u>\$27,657.74</u>

Those Sundays in bold italics are the six Special Sundays of the United Methodist Church. Giving to Special Sundays empowers the poor and victimized to live fuller lives through self-improvement programs; challenges injustice; and pays administrative costs for disaster relief.



October 2016 General Fund Financial Picture

Note: Building Fund numbers are not included

	Oct. 2016	2016 YTD	2015 YTD	2016 Budget	% of Budget
Total Income	\$ 71,581	\$ 756,411	\$ 739,502	\$ 913,661	82.8%
Total Expense	\$ 67,929	\$ 736,575	\$ 719,248	\$ 913,661	80.6%
Net Income/(Loss)	\$ 3,652	\$ 19,836	\$ 20,254		

* Income includes 2016 pre-paid pledges of \$126,137.51 and \$152,002 received in 2015.

DECEMBER 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>4 Blood Pressure Clinic Holy Communion 8:30 AM Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School for All Ages 11:00 AM Worship 5:00 PM Youth Council 5:30 PM You Are Not Alone 6:00 PM First Singers 6:00 PM Youth Tribe</p>	<p>5 7:00 AM Sunrise Patrol 9:00 AM JFON 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 6:30 PM Basketball</p>	<p>6 10:00 AM Northside Ministerial Alliance 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Emmaus Group 4:15 PM First Beats 5:30 PM ALS Support Group 7:00 PM Advent Candlelight Prayer Service 7:00 PM NA</p>	<p>7 7:30 AM Dawn Patrol 9:00 AM Caring Summit Meeting 9:30 AM OLLI Curriculum Committee 9:30 AM UMW General Meeting & Luncheon 10:30 AM Community Healing Centers Group 1:30 PM Heritage Community Communion 6:00 PM Emerging Worship Band Rehearsal 7:00 PM Kalamazoo Christian High School Choir Concert</p>	<p>8 9:30 AM First Stitchers 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 10:30 AM Building & Grounds 11:30 AM Downtown Clergy 12:00 PM Advent Concert 1:30 PM Prayer Group 6:00 PM Handbell Ensemble 6:30 PM NA 6:30 PM SPRC 7:00 PM Church Conference 7:15 PM Chancel Choir</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 11:00 AM Memorial Service 3:00 PM Memorial Service</p>
<p>11 8:30 AM Worship 9:30 AM Emerging Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School for All Ages 11:00 AM Worship 5:30 PM You Are Not Alone 6:00 PM First Singers 6:00 PM Youth Tribe</p>	<p>12 7:00 AM Sunrise Patrol 9:00 AM JFON 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 6:30 PM Basketball</p>	<p>13 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Emmaus Group 4:15 PM First Beats 6:00 PM WTVT 7:00 PM Advent Candlelight Prayer Service 7:00 PM NA</p>	<p>14 7:30 AM Dawn Patrol 8:30 AM First Word Collating 9:30 AM MOM's Demand Action 10:30 AM Community Healing Centers Group 11:30 AM Friendship Village Communion 1:00 PM Stephen Ministry 5:30 PM First Care Board Meeting 6:00 PM Wild Ones Board Meeting 7:00 PM Perinatal Mood Disorder Support</p>	<p>15 9:30 AM First Stitchers 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 12:00 PM Advent Concert 1:30 PM Clergy Cluster 1:30 PM Prayer Group 5:30 PM Outreach Team 6:00 PM Handbell Ensemble 6:30 PM NA 7:15 PM Chancel Choir</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 10:00 AM Children's Musical Rehearsal</p>
<p>18 Blood Pressure Clinic 8:30 AM Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School for All Ages 11:00 AM Worship 5:30 PM You Are Not Alone 6:00 PM First Singers 6:00 PM Youth Tribe Christmas</p>	<p>19 7:00 AM Sunrise Patrol 9:00 AM JFON 10:00 AM Helping Our Neighbors 5:30 PM Emerging Worship Planning 6:30 PM Basketball</p>	<p>20 10:00 AM Northside Ministerial Alliance 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Emmaus Group 4:15 PM First Beats 5:00 PM Center for Transformation 7:00 PM NA 7:00 PM Ruth Circle</p>	<p>21 7:30 AM Dawn Patrol 10:00 AM Anna Circle 10:30 AM Community Healing Centers Group 1:00 PM Lydia Circle 1:00 PM Miriam Circle 6:00 PM Wild Ones Board Meeting</p>	<p>22 9:30 AM First Stitchers 11:00 AM Memorial Service 1:30 PM Prayer Group 6:00 PM Handbell Ensemble 6:30 PM NA 7:15 PM Chancel Choir</p>	<p>23 2:00 PM Wedding</p>	<p>24 5:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship 11:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship</p>
<p>25 10:00 AM Worship 5:30 PM You Are Not Alone</p> 	<p>26 In observance of the holiday the church building will be closed today</p>	<p>27 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Emmaus Group 7:00 PM NA</p>	<p>28 7:30 AM Dawn Patrol 9:30 AM UMW Executive Committee 10:30 AM Community Healing Centers Group 6:30 PM Stephen Ministry 7:00 PM MOM's Demand Action 7:00 PM Perinatal Mood Disorder Support</p>	<p>29 9:30 AM First Stitchers 1:30 PM Prayer Group 6:30 PM NA</p>	<p>30 11:00 AM Memorial Service</p>	<p>31</p> 



The View from my window

Rev. Steve Charnley
Senior Pastor

Perhaps it was the result of getting to hold our newborn granddaughter while our family was together over Thanksgiving. Or perhaps it was the influence of our recent national election. In either case, I was thinking deeply about the importance of women in our world and reading an article someone in the congregation recently shared with me. The article was entitled, "After the Election, a Thanksgiving to Unite Us" by Melanie Kirkpatrick, whose book *Thanksgiving: the Holiday at the Heart of the American Experience* was recently published.

The article featured Abraham Lincoln and his celebrated proclamation setting aside the fourth Thursday in November as a time of national gratitude to God for our blessings. Then Ms. Kirkpatrick related that the idea of such a proclamation was not original with Lincoln. Instead, it was the constant refrain of the editor of the 19th century's best known and most widely read women's magazine, *Godey's Lady's Book*.

Her name was Sarah Josepha Hale and she was a pioneer in publishing the works of American authors in a day and age when fashionable tastes gravitated toward Europe and the literary masters across the ocean. Consistent with her focus on America, she penned editorials urging our leaders to set a national day of Thanksgiving. There were many fall festivals varying by state and locale, but she wanted one united celebration.

This was especially important to her in the wake of the divisions brought forth by the Civil War. It was the coalescing of her vision and President Lincoln's desire that resulted in his fabled proclamation in 1863.

Although it was our sixteenth President who made that inaugural proclamation, it was the woman editor that truly planted the seed.

Learning that piece of Americana made me ponder, "How many other tales of our past are all told as "his story" leaving out "her story?" It reminded me of a famous speech of Sojourner Truth, the woman who escaped slavery and became a much in demand speaker for abolition and women's rights. In one of her orations she was heckled by a preacher in a little black suit who decried her cause and maligned her gender.

In a dramatic and memorable response she asked him, "Where did your Christ come from?" In the pause, there was a crack of thunder outside the hall. Again she intoned, louder this time, "Where did your Christ come from?" Hearing no reply she pronounced, "From God and a woman, and man had nothing to do with it!"

Perhaps, while I was cradling the newest miracle in our lives, God was nudging me to see how much we owe to the women in our world. Take time today to name them. And, if you're looking for a good place to start in this Advent season, how about beginning with Mary, the mother of Jesus!

Blessings,



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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 Kalamazoo, MI 49007
 (269) 381-6340



Like us on Facebook

Visit our website at www.umc-kzo.org

PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID
 IN KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN



WE ARE A RECONCILING CONGREGATION. First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo invites all persons to join us on our journey of faith. Jesus Christ calls us to be an inclusive church that exemplifies the kingdom of God. We strive to move toward reconciling relationships with all, affirming those who are marginalized for any reason, including sexual orientation or gender identity. We welcome all with open hearts, open minds, open doors.



2017 First Word Schedule

Article Deadline	Mailing Date
January 4	January 11
January 18	January 25
February 1	February 8
February 15	February 22
March 8	March 15
March 22	March 29
April 5	April 12
April 19	April 26
May 3	May 10
May 17	May 24
June 14	June 21
July 12	July 19
August 16	August 23
September 6	September 13
September 20	September 27
October 4	October 11
October 18	October 25
November 8	November 15
November 22	November 29
December 6	December 13

Articles are due on the deadline! Late submissions will only be published if space permits. Please submit articles typed exactly as you want them to appear in the newsletter. Articles may be edited for space and content.



WED., December 7, Parlor

9:30 a.m. Business Meeting

10:30 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m. Prayer and Self-Denial Service

Program: "Mothers of Hope," by two representatives of the group

12:00 noon Lunch in Wesley Hall

Reservations are needed if you stay for lunch. Please call Ruth Evelyn Graham by noon Friday, December 2 at 327-8799. Lunch cost \$7/per person.

December Charge Conference

Kalamazoo District Superintendent

Rev. Dwayne Bagley will preside over the church's regular business charge conference on **Thursday, December 8 at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary**. Members and friends of the church are invited. Meeting will include a short time of worship, prayer, hymn singing and meditation, followed by nominations for next year's administration, setting clergy and directors' salaries. The 2017 Officiary/2016 Annual Reports will be available that evening. Extra copies will be available after Charge Conference at the Welcome Center. Be sure to pick up your copy. You'll be amazed at the width and scope of the ministries of First Church. All our ministry groups warmly welcome new people to join them! Contact any of the team/committee chairs listed in the Officiary if interested in joining them, or with questions.