



14 Char Crosby  
28 Ron & Ruth Annelin  
28 Bill Ross

First United Methodist Church  
190 N. Cedar Street  
Manistique, Michigan 49854



First United Methodist Church  
Worship Service 11:00am



First United Methodist Church  
Church Phone: (906) 341-6662  
Pastor: Rev. B.J. Ash Cell: 906-286-1492  
email: [pastor@manistiquemethodist.org](mailto:pastor@manistiquemethodist.org)  
Office Hours: Pastor B.J. M-F 8 am-12 pm, Off Wed  
Connie: Office Hours M-W 10-2 pm,  
TH 10-2 pm work from home  
email: [office@manistiquemethodist.org](mailto:office@manistiquemethodist.org)  
[www.manistiquemethodist.org](http://www.manistiquemethodist.org)

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Visit [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search  
Manistique First UMC where you see the  
magnifying glass at the top of the page.  
Live worship services each Sunday at 11AM.



*THE CHRISTIAN CALLER*

First United Methodist Church  
190 N. Cedar Manistique, MI  
[www.manistiquemethodist.org](http://www.manistiquemethodist.org)  
[office@manistiquemethodist.org](mailto:office@manistiquemethodist.org)  
December, 2024

PASTOR'S  
WORDS

If I tell my children about some story that happened in my past, how do they know if it's true if they weren't there to see it happen? There must be a level of trust on their part that what I tell them is true, because I cannot always prove to them that these things really happened. What if I tell them that I will love them forever and always be there for them? Again, they can only believe me if they trust me.

The Bible is filled with stories of events that happened in the past that none of us were able to witness firsthand. How do we know these stories are true? What proof do we have that they really happened? The Bible says God created the world in seven days. Where's the proof of that timeline? The Bible says Noah built an ark that saved the animals of the earth from a worldwide flood – where's the proof? The Bible says that God separated the waters of the Red Sea and allowed the Israelites to cross on dry land to escape Pharaoh's army – where's the proof? And what about the resurrection of Jesus Christ – where's the proof?

Prior to the 18th Century, people tended to accept what the Bible said without question. But then came the age of enlightenment, an era in which reason was the primary source of authority. If something made sense, or could be proven scientifically, then it must be true. It was the end of blind belief and adherence without question to the Biblical teachings. Following the age of enlightenment, the world entered what is called the post-modern age: a time when people view the world not so much in terms of black and white; an era in which truth is not easily defined and people are more willing to question what they are told.

These changing views of truth had an impact on how people viewed Scripture. Originally, God's Truth was accepted. In the age of Enlightenment, truth could be accepted if it was proven, and due to a lack of proof, some people began to question the Bible. In the post-modern age, people began to ask, "But even if you can prove it, how do we know that the Bible's Truth is the *right* truth?"

Though we live in a postmodern world, one that doesn't necessarily rely solely on scientific evidence, we still want proof. Think of all the shows on television about the

PASTOR'S WORDS

search for Noah’s Ark – if they could just prove it, then we’d know the story is true, and it would give the Bible more validity, right? If we have proof, then we don’t have to decide whether to believe or not – the facts make the decision for us. We don’t risk anything by believing if we have proof.

We don’t like risks. We want guarantees. We want evidence so that we can see the end results before beginning something new and unfamiliar. We need to know how things are and how they’ll turn out for us before we make any kind of commitment. We want things explained to us so we can understand. Knowledge and understanding give us control and power – without a sense that we are in charge, we have to put our trust somewhere other than in ourselves. And we don’t like that, because as long as we’re in control, we can choose to change course or bail out altogether. We’d rather put our trust in self than anywhere else.

Faith is defined as confidence or trust in another person or thing, or belief that is not based upon proof. Hebrews Chapter 11 presents Abraham as an illustration of how faith doesn’t require proof, but it does involve belief and trust.

As we enter into our season of Advent, let us remember where and who we place our faith and trust in.

Pastor B.J.



A Note from the Administrative Council:

We have received several questions regarding the special Administrative Council Meeting scheduled for December 3, 2024 at 11 am. All are invited to this meeting, and we hope that as many of you who can come will do so. Our goal is to share information regarding the issue of the church’s stand on homosexuality and other nontraditional sexual orientations. Pastor B.J. has been in contact with our District Superintendent Scott Harmon regarding his recommendations on how to proceed. He also participated in an in-person session with Bishop David Bard in Marquette, and will relay that information to us.

Our goal for this church is to discuss the issue more fully. We know that there are many differences of opinion among us, yet so far we have been able to treat each other kindly and with respect and Christian love. We seek to maintain this atmosphere during the upcoming meeting and afterwards. We are at a point where, if we make a decision to take any specific stand, or if we decide not to do so, we will encounter opposition and dissatisfaction on the part of some members of this church. We would like to have a meaningful, respectful discussion in which we can agree to disagree without getting into an “us vs them” mentality. Can we get along with each other in a warm, welcoming church as we have done and at present we are continuing to do, or will we let this one contentious issue divide us into warring factions? Please give your response to this question careful consideration. Whether or not we make a final decision or decide not to do so at this time, let us maintain the caring and accepting demeanor for which this church is known. Remember this phrase from an old hymn: “They will know we are Christians by our love.”







Janet Helmbold, Administrative Council Chairperson



First United Methodist Church

We exist to joyfully share God’s love,  
preach the Good News, and make disciples.

December

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3 Trustees 10 AM  Special Ad Council Meeting 11 AM	4	5 Simplified Accountability Structure (SAS) 10 AM Zoom	6	7 Rehearsal of Festival of Lessons & Carols 7 PM St Francis deSales Catholic
8 Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM  Festival of Lessons & Carols 3 PM St. Francis deSales Catholic	9 Bible Study 11 AM Prayer Group 12 PM	10 Ad Council 10 AM	11  Pasty Prep 7:30 Sales 10AM-1PM	12  Pasty Prep 7:30 Sales 10AM-1PM	13	14 Char Crosby 
15 Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM	16 Bible Study 11 AM Prayer Group 12 PM	17 Vitality 10 AM	18	19	20	21 Ecumenical Longest Night Service 7 PM Episcopal Church
22 Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM  Children’s Christmas Program during service	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 7 PM  Office Closed	25 Christmas Day Office Closed 	26	27 Newsletter information deadline	28 Ron & Ruth Annelin   Bill Ross 
29 Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM Worship 11 AM	30	31 New Year’s Eve	<b>December Mission Noisy Offering — God’s Country Community Ministry</b> GCCM is in the eastern part of the U.P.; it covers a 2500 square mile area. Communities of faith combine their resources, share their faith and, through their active presence, work to bring self-esteem, hope and faith to all God’s children throughout their vast parish.  Drop your donation in glass jar as you enter or as you exit the sanctuary!			

# Prayer Chain

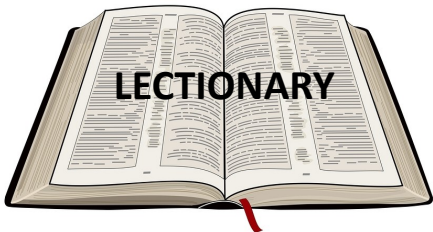
As many of you know we have a group in this church, called the Prayer Chain, that offers daily prayers for individuals, situations, and problems brought to them. Prayer requests can also involve individuals, situations, etc. outside our church community.

These prayer requests may be called in to Pastor B.J. Ash at 906-341-6662 (church) or 906-286-1492 (Pastor B.J. cell). You may also call Carol Weinert at 906-341-4499.



Visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search 1st United Methodist Church where you see the magnifying glass at the top of the page.

Live worship services each Sunday at 11AM.



Committee updates and newsletter articles are always welcome!


If you have anything you wish to have published in the next newsletter submit before **December 20, 2024** deadline.

Pictures and other additions can be emailed to: [office@manistiquemethodist.org](mailto:office@manistiquemethodist.org)

The collection amount for November Mission Noisy Offering collected for Christmas Adopt-A-Family will be announced soon. Thank you for your support!

- December 1** — *1st Sunday of Advent / Beginning of Lectionary Year C / World Aids Day*  
Jer 33:14-16; Ps 25:1-10 (UMH 756); 1 Thess 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36
- December 8** — *2nd Sunday of Advent*  
Mal 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79 (UMH 208); Phil 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6
- December 15** — *3rd Sunday of Advent*  
Zeph 3:14-20; Isa 12:2-6; Phil 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18
- December 22** — *4th Sunday of Advent*  
Mic 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55 (UMH 199); Heb 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)
- December 24** — *4th Sunday of Advent / Christmas Eve*  
Isa 9:2-7; Ps 96 (UMH 815); Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
- December 25** — *Christmas Day*  
Isa 52:7-10; Ps 98 (UMH 818); Heb 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14a
- December 29** — *1st Sunday After Christmas Day*  
1st Sam 2:18-20, 26; Ps 148 (UMH 861); Col 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

**FOR OUR PRAYERFUL CONSIDERATION** Let us please keep the following people in our prayers:

 Penny Tracy family concerns, Fran Baker family, Jesse Baker, Sandi Kolder, Char Crosby, Curt & Celie Norton, Barbara Schneider, Ted Burson, Mary Prater, Lynn LaRose, Katie Putnam, Joel Prater, Jo Nell Rubick, Phyllis Burge, Martha Weeks, Kerry Billings family concerns, baby Brooklyn, Connie Meade, Connie Whitsitt, Sharon V. & Celie's N. brother, Michael Haynes, the leaders in our church and country, our community, our unspoken requests, the joyous blessings received.



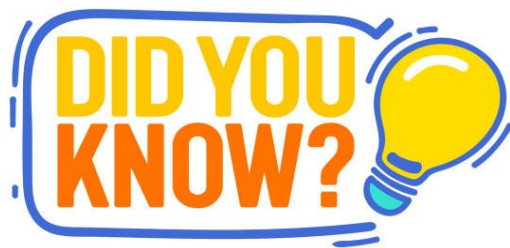
## A View From the Belfry December, 2024

**Happy holidays from the belfry!** Here's hoping that all of you wonderful people have been enjoying the Halloween-Thanksgiving-Christmas busyness this time of year brings! By now you may be digesting your turkey dinners, making sausages out of the deer you got during hunting season, and spending money on dozens of Christmas gifts for family and friends. I have seen the church elves (aka Bette Jahn and Mary Whinnen, plus a few other helpers) packing boxes to be shipped to places near and far so kids everywhere can have something for Christmas. Many kids wouldn't have anything if it weren't for these special people who contribute toward these shoe box greetings by donating, shopping, filling the boxes with presents and mailing them or taking them to central locations to be sent out around the globe. Thanks, Bette, Mary, and all of you who contribute! In addition, this church has partnered with the Big Boy restaurant to provide Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for those who might not have any this year! What a great idea and a great way to do something special for local people who can use the help. Sometimes we may forget that not all of the folks who need a helping hand live in far away places. We have them right here in Schoolcraft County!

In addition to shoe boxes full of presents, special meals for holiday gatherings, hustle and bustle, all that shopping and wrapping and decorating and cooking big special meals and making cookies and candy and gingerbread and everything else, you have a special community program, the Festival of Lessons and Carols, coming up. Everyone is invited, and several people from this church are involved! In addition, there are special Christmas programs at school and in the churches, maybe some Christmas caroling for some of you, Christmas concerts, traveling to spend Christmas with friends and families, or preparing for days to have company come to your homes, and probably some special events which I haven't mentioned! Frankly, I don't know how you do it all! From what I hear when I eavesdrop on your conversations, it sounds as if some of your folks also wonder how you can do it all! Others seem to wonder why you do it all! I'm only a bat, of course, but as far as I know there is no law which says you have to exhaust yourself and your bank accounts every year at this time! If you enjoy it all, that's great! Keep it up! If you find yourself worn out and not very happy before you get it all done, why not skip a few things? Will it really matter if little Jimmy only gets 4 or 5 gifts instead of 74 or 75? Do you have to make 30 batches of cookies? How about only 1 or 2? Better yet, you could buy them all decorated at the store, or with all the other stuff you have to eat, you might even skip them altogether, or maybe bake some cookies for St. Swithin's Day, whenever that is! You probably won't be as busy on St. Swithin's Day, and you can enjoy it more! Cookies might be more appreciated when they are the only special thing you make instead of being just one treat among dozens of them! Again, I'm just a bat, but it seems to me that if you have that little baby in the manger in your hearts and maybe a miniature version perching on a shelf in your homes, you have all you really need for a great Christmas! On that note, have a great but calm and holy Christmas!

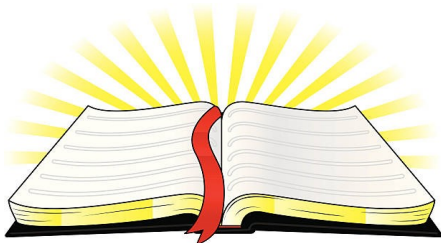
**Vitality/Mission Committee Update—Connie Kelsey**

Merry Christmas, it is hard to believe that December is here already! We have had a lot of things going on in November as we prepare for the Advent season. Special thank you to Bette, Susan and Sara for purchasing, preparing and delivering the four Thanksgiving Baskets to local families. Thank you Janet for all that you do for the church, keeping track of all those bills and paying them in a timely manner is so appreciated. Thank you to all who helped in the “Hanging of the Greens”. The church looks lovely, inside and out! Thank you Carol for taking these photos. Thank you to the Vitality committee for the many delicious treats during fellowship. Bottom line, Thank You Everyone! I am praying for all who will be traveling near and far. May you have a blessed Christmas season and a Happy New Year!



- According to a passage in the Old Testament, in what district was Bethlehem located?
  - Judah
  - Judea
  - Pennsylvania
  - Israel
  - Ephrathah
- After Mary was told by an angel that she would become pregnant by the Holy Spirit and give birth to a baby boy, she visited a relative, Elizabeth. Where did Elizabeth live?
  - In Joppa, by the sea.
  - In the hill country of Judea.
  - In Jerusalem.
  - In eastern Pennsylvania.
  - In the wilderness of Zion.

The answers to these questions can be found in Micah 5:2 and Luke 1:39-40..



United Women in Faith News

Submitted by Char Crosby



United  
Women  
in Faith

The November meeting of the United Women in Faith was opened by Candace. Ruth presented the devotional and information about the World Thank Offering, a movement started in 1881 in Lansing, Michigan with the theme of “What Shall We Render Unto the Lord?” Local members offered individual monetary donations in support.

Committee reports were given. Lynn (Social Action) delivered a box of layette items to the courthouse to be given to new mothers. Connie (Education and Reading Program) reported four participants received certificated: Janet, Phyllis, Connie and Carol W. She encouraged others to participate, even if they only read a few books a year. Reading builds faith. Janet (Membership) reported no new members joined in October. Thirty-five shoe boxes are ready for delivery. Four families in the community will receive Thanksgiving baskets. Eleven batches of pasties (440) were made for the November sale. They sold out again! Rita and Bette celebrated birthdays.

UWIF will end 2024 with disbursements to Good Neighbors and St. Vincent deSales food pantries, Backpack Buddies and UMCOR.

There is no meeting in December but members are reminded of the Christmas Tea and Cookie Exchange on Saturday, December 7th at 1:00 PM. All women in the church are welcome and invited to attend “Christmas with Friends.” Every guest should bring an ornament to exchange and 3 dozen cookies if you wish to participate in the Cookie Exchange.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 PM. Mary provided a lovely dessert.

United Women in Faith wish all a joyous and blessed Christmas!

**ADVENT READERS are still needed for December 22, and the Christmas Eve December 24 service.**

**VOLUNTEERS are needed for USHER/GREETER, ALTAR FLOWERS, FELLOWSHIP, and an adult’s caring eye during CHILDREN’S SUNDAY SCHOOL.**

**BELL JINGLERS are still needed for Dec. 7 at TSC.**

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONTRIBUTION INFORMATION CONTRIBUTION BREAKDOWN—OCTOBER 2024**

GENERAL FUND	\$6,812.00
GENERAL FUND EFTS	\$1,365.00
BUILDING FUND	\$180.00
UMCOR	\$50.00
NOISY OFFERING (THANKSGIVING BASKETS)	\$347.00
WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY	\$50.00
PIE AUCTION	\$50.00
<b>TOTAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR OCTOBER 2024</b>	<b>\$8,854.00</b>
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YEAR TO DATE CONTRIBUTIONS OCTOBER 2024	\$93,003.00
YEAR TO DATE CONTRIBUTIONS OCTOBER 2023	\$105,743.37