

**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

**9:15 AM**

Watch on:

**[Greenville First UMC website](#)**

**[Facebook page](#)**

**[YouTube Channel](#)**

# The Connection

*Greenville First United Methodist Church*

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2023

## Together with Christ at the Right Time

Pete Blinklide shared a brief review of recent pastors in his October 8 sermon. He spoke about having the right pastor at the right time for the needs of the Church. It was a review he did genuinely and with integrity.

I responded on the pastor side of things that being a pastor does not make sense apart from a congregation. MY being a pastor does not make sense apart from Beverly, my wife. Her love and grace and ministry are amazing. Our compatible vocations (medical social worker and pastor) are also a blessing.



As a congregation you shape what kind of pastors we are as we cooperatively figure out what works best in this time and place. Together we discover what gifts we bring and what gifts are needed. Which means in one sense you also are the right congregation at the right time for me.

As we enter November with All Saints' Day I see Pete's phrase in an expanded way to understand that **saints are the right people at the right time for God's purposes**. It is a wonderful time to remember and give thanks like we do in this worship prayer:

*Everlasting God, this day revives in us memories of loved ones who are no more. What happiness we shared when they walked among us. **What joy when loving and being loved, we lived our lives together.***

And isn't this a helpful and inspiring way to think about the birth of Jesus? Right person at the right time for God's purposes for the world that God loves?

But **when the fullness of time had come**, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children (Galatians 4:4-5).

**With Christ God makes the time right all the time.** Sometimes we show up for each other with gifts of mercy or compassion to listen to grief and pain. Sometimes we show up for each other with gifts of joy and peace to rejoice in healing or restoration or forgiveness. By faith we understand that what God does with us right here in Greenville is what God does all over the world. And we have the encouragement of the writer of Colossians to act accordingly:

Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, **making the most of the time**. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone (Colossians 4:5-6).

May God bless us to be the right people at the right time with Christ during this All Saints - Thanksgiving - Advent - Christmas season. Praise God from whom all time and blessings flow.

Peace, Pastor Jeff

## November 2023 WORSHIP

November 5

*All Saints Day/Fall Back*  
**When God Does  
Not Provide**  
Amos 8:1-12

November 19

*3rd Sunday Mission Offering*  
**Feed Us Again, O God**  
Jeremiah 31:1-5, 10-14

November 12

*Holy Communion*  
**Jesus: Bread of Life**  
*Right Now*  
John 6:25-40

November 26

*United Methodist Student Offering*  
**Life as a Banquet**  
Luke 14:15-24 (NLT)

## December 2023 WORSHIP

December 3 **Advent 1**

*Holy Communion*  
**Stay Awake**  
Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19  
Mark 13:24-37

December 24 **Advent 4**

**Let the Lord Be With Us**  
Romans 16:25-27  
Luke 1:26-38

December 10 **Advent 2**

*Pastor Jane Duffey*  
**Take Time to Be Holy**  
2 Peter 3:8-15a  
Mark 1:1-8

December 24 **Christmas Eve**

**Lessons & Carols**

December 17 **Advent 3**

**Feel the Spirit's Power**  
Isaiah 61:1-4  
Luke 1:46b-55

December 31

**We Are Born to Praise God for Jesus**  
Galatians 4:4-7  
Luke 2:22-40

# Those In Our Thoughts and Prayers

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## **HOMEBOUND**

Harley VanHoose  
Louise Noble  
Kay Welsch  
Fran Wilson  
Jim Westbrook



Caitlin Jensen  
Bob Knapp  
Liz Campbell  
Cathy & Louis Carman  
Walt Stevens  
Jill Betten

## **THOSE WHO HAVE CLAIMED ETERNAL LIFE**

Neil Sergeant  
Leona Romine  
Roger Betten

## Thursday Bible Study

Friends, I am excited to welcome one of our dearest friends, Laurel Stravers, to two of our Bible study classes in November. Laurel and I were in seminary together and our families have vacationed together for more than 30 years. She has recently completed training in Spiritual Direction and will share that approach to spiritual life with us. Here is her introduction:

I'm excited to join the Thursday Morning Adult Bible Study class for two sessions in November. On November 16, we will explore an experience of the ancient Christian practice of Lectio Divina, which is a way of approaching scripture with hearts and ears ready to listen to what God is saying to us through God's word. On November 30, we will expand our theme of Holy Listening to practice listening to how God speaks through our hearts, through each other, and through the natural world. Both sessions will be experiential and conversational.

I have been a proud FOJ (Friend of Jeff...and Bev too!) since 1985. My background is in health care chaplaincy and I recently completed training in Spiritual Direction through the Seine Spirituality Center in Racine, WI. I'm looking forward to learning more with you about how to connect with the God who loves us.

The Zoom link is: [\*\*Thursday Bible Study\*\*](#)

### **ONLINE GIVING OPTION AVAILABLE**



Greenville First United Methodist Church now offers an easy, convenient, and quick way for anyone to make a contribution! Just click on the GIVE tab at the top of the homepage at <https://greenvillefumc.org/>. This will take you to the Giving page. You simply click on the blue "Give Now" button, answer a few easy prompts, such as a one time gift, weekly, monthly, etc., and you will be done! Or, using your phone, scan this **QR Code** to take you directly to the Giving Page.

## **United Methodist Student Sunday November 26th**

United Methodist Student Day was the original Special Sunday created by United Methodist Church Sunday Schools who collected offerings to help advance education for their children. The fund was originally established in 1872 as the Children's Fund. Today United Methodist Student Day Sunday has the same purpose, calling upon the denomination to support their students as they prepare for life by adding knowledge to their faith. The funds received from the offering go into the United Methodist Student Loan Fund to underwrite scholarships for United Methodist students. Currently, there are over 70 scholarships available for United Methodist students.

Your donation provided scholarships for undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral level programs for United Methodist students. Every dollar – yes 100% - received goes towards supporting and educating a new generation of principled Christian leaders for the church and the world. Supporting this Special Sunday is truly an investment in our future.

### **Meals for Those in Crisis**

God has been whispering in my ear and I've finally decided to take action. There are so many areas within our church to become involved in. I am about to add another one. Organizing a meal service for those in need. We have many people who are in crises and need a helping hand.

What do we do? All of us are capable of helping but organization is the key. It might happen a lot or possibly only occasionally. We could have a variety of ways to do this. You do not need to be a gourmet cook. Often times when we are in the middle of a crisis we are unable to fix food for ourselves and our loved ones.

We will have to meet to help with clear understanding of how this will work. This isn't a brand new idea as I remember when we used to help each other in this way. Somewhere along the way, we have lost that. I believe that it is time to start this again. Hopefully some of you will feel that way also.

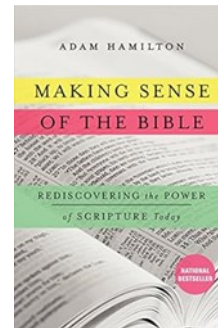
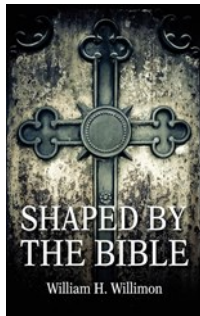
Please see me at church, or sign up on the sheet of paper on the table after church. Hopefully with your help this will become something that can become a part of our church again. Continue to pray about this and let's help make this happen.

Thank you for your help!  
Diana Surrell

# Library Link

Jesus Christ and the Bible: two of the central figures in our Faith, and they are the emphases of the title selections for this edition of the Library Link.

*Shaped by the Bible* by William Willimon and *Making Sense of the Bible* by Adam Hamilton speak of our relationship with the Bible, how we use it, how we deal with it, how we may struggle with it. Willimon inquires into the ways that scripture informs us, reforms us, and challenges us. Hamilton says, "I love the Bible, and I wrestle with it!" If that touches a chord with you, you might like to read and see what these two men have to say.

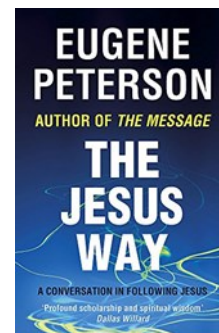
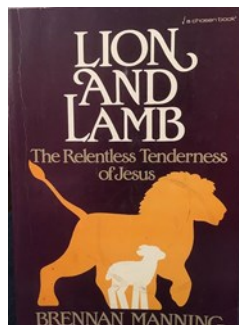
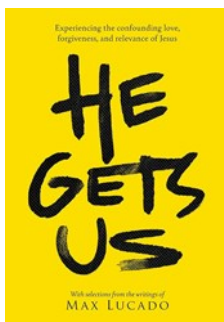


*He Gets Us*/Lucado

*Lion and Lamb*/Manning

*The Jesus Way*/Peterson

Lucado looks at how Jesus lived while he was here on earth. Did he have fun? Was he ever lonely or stressed? Manning explores 2 aspects of the character of Jesus: His overwhelming power and his gentle kindness. Peterson initiates a conversation on the way that Jesus is the Way – and the ways we go about following the Way.



In addition to the five books above, also available are:

***The Spirituality of Imperfection*** by Ernest Kurtz, who says that spirituality helps us first to see, and then to understand, and eventually to accept the imperfection that lies at the very core of our human being. The spirituality of imperfection is a place where human beings discover each other in love.

***A Month of Sundays*** by Eugene Peterson contains a Sunday sermon for every day of the month – sermons from a man allergic to the dreaded god talk – that is, "language that is severed from a God-created and God saved world, language that is depersonalized and functionalized." Peterson writes using words and word pictures to which we can all relate.

***One Life At A Time DVD*** This movie about a teen who finds himself in trouble highlights both the importance of awareness and the misconception of homelessness in West Michigan, in addition to giving an historical nod to Mel Trotter, in celebration of 120 years of Mel Trotter ministries.



# Stephen Ministry

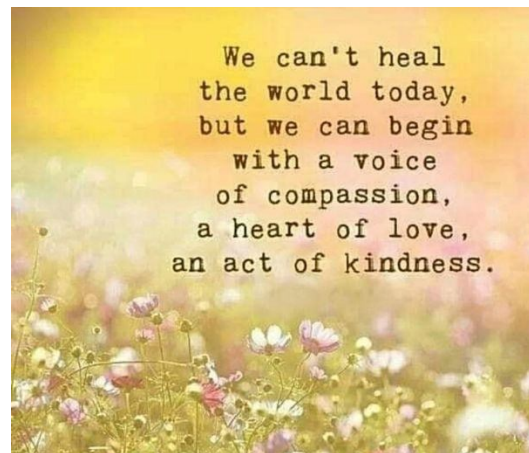


Hello, Church Family!

In our Stephen Ministry training, we learn how to be a Christian friend to those who are experiencing one of life's big or small problems. It can be an illness, a divorce, a job loss, a death, a move, an empty nest, caring for another person, or any number of other situations. We learn to listen, listen, listen and to seek God's words before responding. We didn't fix the situation because we believe that we are the Caregivers and only God is the Curegiver. Please let one of the Stephen Leaders (Tammy Youmans, Virginia Curtis, or me) or Pastor Jeff know if you would like to join a class!

Stephen Ministers, our monthly meeting will be on Wednesday, November 1 at 6:30 in the Conference Room. We have been doing a fascinating study of Jesus's miracles, led by Tammy. Please join us.

Blessings,  
Barb Perry  
Stephen Leader



## THE BEATLES

*60 Years!*

**Come enjoy some great music as the MCC Alumni & Friends Choir celebrates 60 years of the Beatles!**

**Sunday, November 19**

**4:00 pm at the MCC Gymnasium on the Sidney campus**

***Free and open to the public***

**Suggested donation is a nonperishable item to benefit United Way Montcalm-Ionia Holiday Hope Bags.**

**This event is supported by funding from the MCC Foundation.**

**FILL THE PEW Winter Comfort**

Comfort Items

Socks  
Gloves  
Blankets

Scarves  
Afghans  
Hats

Mittens  
Shawls  
Soap Sacks

Handmade & purchased items will gladly be accepted.

New, packaged soaps also needed.

Contact: Sherie Kosten-1.616.225.0023

[sheriekosten@yahoo.com](mailto:sheriekosten@yahoo.com)







## United Women Of Faith

Wednesday November 8<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 AM Brotherhood Hall

Inviting all women and friends of  
1st United Methodist Church  
Hope you can join us.

PROGRAM:  
***"God's Living Word in the  
United Methodist Church"***  
Pastor Jeff Williams

*Your Word is a lamp for feet,  
and a light on my path.*

**UMW-UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH  
CAROLING & CANDLE LIGHT  
CHRISTMAS TEA  
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>  
Doors Open at 6:00 pm  
Christmas Carol Sing  
In the Sanctuary  
Followed by a Candlelight Dessert  
In Celebration Hall**

There is no charge for the event, donations accepted to  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church Food Bank.







## *Christmas Candy & Bake Good Sale*

*Sunday December 3<sup>rd</sup>*

*After Church 10:15*

*Fellowship Hall*

*Free Will Donation*

*Sponsored by*

*For UWF Mission Projects United Women Of Faith*



### **ATTENTION ALL 1<sup>st</sup> UMCHURCH MEMBERS AND FRIENDS**

**Making any extract Cookies or Candies for  
the Holidays? Keep Us in mind.**

**If interested in adding to our sales table, please bring  
any candy or baked good items to the church  
Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup> after 9:30.**

**If possible nicely wrapped or placed in a Christmas bag  
Or box that would make a lovely "thinking of you"  
Christmas gift.**



# First United Methodist Church ~ November 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>5</b> 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 10:30 am - Spiritual Gifts Class 11:00 am - CCG Worship	<b>6</b> 6:00 pm - Optimist Club	<b>7</b> 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 11:30 am - Ladies' Luncheon @ Winter Inn 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	<b>8</b> 10:00 am—UMWF Meeting 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	<b>9</b> 10:30 am - Bible Study	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 10:30 am - Spiritual Gifts Class 11:00 am - CCG Worship 12:30 pm - CCG Extended Team Mtg	<b>13</b> 5:45 pm - Missions Meeting 6:30 pm - Women's Soup Dinner	<b>14</b> 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 11:00 am - Wreath Making 6:00 pm - GHS Senior Mystery Trip Parent Meeting 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	<b>15</b> City Church Turkey Bundle Prep and Distribution 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	<b>16</b> 10:30 am - Bible Study 11:00 am - Parkinson's Support Group	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 10:30 am - Spiritual Gifts Class 11:00 am - CCG Worship	<b>20</b> 6:00 pm - Optimist Club	<b>21</b> 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	<b>22</b> 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	<b>23</b> 	<b>24</b> CCCC Closed	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 11:00 am - CCG Worship	<b>27</b> 10:00 am - Connection Zone 7:00 pm - Leadership Board Meeting	<b>28</b> 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	<b>29</b> 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	<b>30</b> 10:30 am - Bible Study 6:00 pm—UMWF Christmas Tea		

Please remember: The church doors will be unlocked 15 minutes prior to each meeting/event. If you are in need of getting into the building sooner, please contact the church office during business hours to let us know. Many people have been ringing the daycare doorbell and it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, for members of the CCCC staff to leave their classrooms to let groups in.



# November Birthdays

Cheryl Williams	11/02	Steve Comer	11/22
Connor Clark	11/03	David York	11/24
Joseph Vos	11/06	David Nulf	11/25
Rhonda Falsetta	11/10	Ingrid Waber	11/26
Julie Brown	11/10	Alvin Helms	11/26
Nancy Cooley	11/11	Kay Welsch	11/27
Margaret Durga	11/12	David Hassan	11/27
Cindy Raven	11/16	Elaine Baxter	11/28
Bryan Kading	11/17		




John and Chris Ritter	11/06
Walt & Betsy Stevens	11/29

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*If we have accidentally omitted you from our birthday or anniversary list or have a wrong date, please let the church office know so we can update our records.*



# First United Methodist Church ~ December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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<b>3 UMW/Candy Sale</b> 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 11:00 am - CCG Worship	<b>4</b> 6:00 pm - Optimist Club	<b>5</b> 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 11:30 am - Ladies' Luncheon @ Winter Inn 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	<b>6</b> 6:00 pm - Stephen Minister Leader Meeting 6:30 pm - Stephen Minister Meeting 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	<b>7</b> 10:30 am - Bible Study		
<b>10</b> 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 11:00 am - CCG Worship/ Communion 12:30 pm - CCG Extended Team Mtg	<b>11</b> 5:45 pm - Missions Meeting	<b>12</b> 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	<b>13</b> 10:00 am - UMW Meeting 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	<b>14</b> 10:30 am - Bible Study	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 11:00 am - CCG Worship	<b>18</b> 6:00 pm - Optimist Club	<b>19</b> 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	<b>20</b> 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	<b>21</b> 10:30 am - Bible Study 11:00 am - Parkinson's Support Group	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9:15 am - FUMC Worship 11:00 am - CCG Worship 7:00 pm - FUMC Worship	<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b> 8:00 am - Men's Breakfast 6:30 pm - CCG Prayer Time 7:00 pm - CCG Band Practice	<b>27</b> 6:30 pm - City Church Youth Group	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>

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# December Birthdays

Emma Larsen	12/04	Doug Lamborne	12/16
Lee Rasmussen	12/05	Chris Slating	12/17
Connie Januzelli	12/07	Chad Olsen	12/18
Blaine Kading	12/08	Michelle McComb	12/21
Jim Westbrook	12/13	Josh Januzelli	12/26
Mitch Stressman	12/14	Marty Posekany	12/29
Emily Schnepf	12/14	Judy Westbrook	12/31
Don Peterman	12/16		



Nick & Cheryl Springsteen	12/24
Lee & Norice Rasmussen	12/27

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# Leadership Board Recordings

Leadership Board Recordings  
Aug. 28, 2023

Members present: Wendy Bates, Julie Brown, Linda Custer, Cindy Hill, Chuck Hill, Eric Januzelli, Jeff Loding, John Raven, Pastor Jeff Williams, and Tammy Youmans

Members absent: Steve Homich and Chris Nelson

Guests: Sally Armstrong, Cheryl Bailey, Bob Brundage, Elaine Baxter, Virginia Curtis, Central Bay District Superintendent John Kasper, Frank McLachlan, and Kirk Perry

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Chuck Hill and Chuck provided an Opening Prayer.

Check in with City Church: No representative was present. John Raven, Pastor Jeff, Eric Januzelli and Linda Custer will meet with City Church representatives on Sept. 7 to discuss the 2024 lease arrangement.

2. The Recordings of July 24 were approved. Linda Custer motioned and Cindy Hill seconded.

3. Disaffiliation: At the Aug. 27 vote, 38 of the 94 members present (40.4 percent) voted to disaffiliate. Since the vote did not meet the 60 percent threshold, FUMC will remain in the United Methodist Church. As a result of the vote, the following members resigned from the Board and withdrew their membership: Wendy Bates, Steve Homich, Cindy Hill, Chuck Hill, Jeff Loding and Chris Nelson. Organist Jim Wise and staff member Art Byington (effective 8/31/23) also resigned. Chuck Hill said he would remain Leadership Chairman until Sept. 25 or until a new chairman is named, whichever comes sooner.

Financial update: Eric Januzelli said it will be difficult for FUMC to continue if giving falls 40 percent. It will be important to note year-over-year giving figures at upcoming Leadership Board meetings. Prior to the disaffiliation vote, the number of households contributing at least \$500/year was 72, representing 105 individuals. FUMC had been the beneficiary of a donor-advised fund (valued at \$403,553 as of July 31) housed at the Greenville Area Community Foundation. Jeff Loding - the fund's donor - said the church will be removed as beneficiary of the fund.

5. Membership classes begin Sept. 10 and Sept. 12 and will run three weeks ending Oct. 1, World Communion Sunday

Pastor Jeff schedule: Sermon Planning Retreat Sept. 12-14. Leading with Depth clergy coaching cohort from Sept. 21, 2023, to May 16, 2024. Renewal Retreat Oct. 6-15.

Pete Blinkilde preaching Oct. 8, Pastor Craig preaching Oct. 15.

The Board's next meeting will be Sept. 25 at 7 p.m.

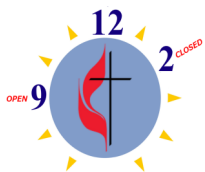
John Kasper provided a closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.  
Submitted by Eric Januzelli



Greenville First United Methodist Church  
204 West Cass Street  
Greenville, MI 48838

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**A Note From Your Church Office:**



The church office will be open on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday between **10:00 am - 2:00 pm.** Please contact the office by phone or email with any questions: **616-754-8532** or email [office@greenvillefumc.org](mailto:office@greenvillefumc.org). Pastor Jeff can be reached anytime by email [jeffwrev@gmail.com](mailto:jeffwrev@gmail.com) phone, or text (269-944-9231).

**FUMC Event Scheduling:** If you would like to schedule an event at FUMC, please contact Jennifer Loding at the church office: 616-754-8532.

**Submission Deadlines:** Deadline For the January/February Connection is **Tuesday, December 26th.** Please forward your submissions to the church office by calling 616-754-8532 or email at: [office@greenvillefumc.org](mailto:office@greenvillefumc.org).