

# The Methodist Message



December 2023

## *Pastor's Page....*

This Advent Season we are studying Rev. Susan Robb's book: *The Angels of Christmas—Hearing God's Voice in Advent*. Rev. Robb writes:

### *Angels Gather Among Us....*

Roberta, a member of my Bible study group, had driven her husband to MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, where he was to receive a lifesaving stem cell transplant. Before the transplant could take place, however, her husband required a very risky surgery. The doctors were honest as they told Roberta and her husband, Tom, that his chances of surviving the surgery were less than 50 percent.

Other than Tom's medical team, Roberta knew no one else in the hospital, and she'd had no conversations with others. Knowing the odds were not in her husband's favor, Roberta sat alone at a table in the waiting room while he was in surgery, laid her head down on the table, and began to sob. After a few minutes, a woman she had never seen before approached and introduced herself. She said she and her mother had recently flown to Houston from Egypt, and her mother was having surgery that day. Then she reached out and touched Roberta's hand and said, "I just came over here to tell you that your husband is going to be okay." Roberta later said that when the woman touched her hand, a complete sense of peace washed over her, and her words and her voice filled Roberta with a deep sense of assurance and comfort.

Hours later, Tom came out of the surgery—alive. He made it through the critical hours of the night and by the next day it was apparent that he would be able to receive his stem cell transplant in the near future. Roberta asked the nursing staff if they would lead her to this woman's mother's room so she could properly thank her for her words that brought her through the ordeal with a sense of peace. However, none of the nurses she spoke with had seen anyone fitting the woman's description, and they insisted that no one from Egypt had been admitted to the hospital.

Later that day, Roberta asked her husband's surgeon if he knew anything about the woman and her mother. The doctor affirmed the medical staff's assessment: "We don't have anyone here from Egypt." He went on to say, "We get stories like this all the time here at MD Anderson. You've just experienced an angel sighting!"

Sometimes angels appear in our lives in such a way and with such an impact that it's difficult to tell if their presence is human or divine. But one thing is certain: whether the angels we experience are of human or divine origin, the Divine is always at work in and through these messengers to offer assurance, guidance, comfort, peace, love, and protection to God's children.

How have you experienced heaven's messages? How have you experienced angel-like helpers in your life? How have you/are you being an angel-like helper to family,<sup>1</sup> friends or strangers? We are blessed to be a blessing. Merry **CHRIST**mas!

*Pastor Billie Lou Gillespie-Brown*



## ADVENT –CHRISTMAS NEWS

### THEME:

Our 2023 Advent-Christmas theme is: *The Angels of Christmas: Hearing God's Voice in Advent* based on a book and study by Rev. Susan Robb (UMC.) In worship and mid-week study we'll explore the four angelic visits surrounding the birth of Jesus with Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. We'll look deeper into the angel Gabriel (the Announcer) and other angels in the Old Testament while looking at God's presence in history and our lives today.

### DECORATIONS:

**Family Tree** – Both churches are inviting your family (no matter the size) to bring in an ornament for the tree in Fellowship Hall to represent your family... a **Church Family Tree**. It doesn't have to be fancy or homemade—just what you think represents you. Please bring it to the church BEFORE hanging of the Greens (11/26-SLF, 11/30-B) and put it on the table or cart in the gathering area.

**Angels** – We are decorating the entire facility with angels... if you have one or more angels we can borrow for several weeks, please LABEL and bring to the church before the Hanging of the Greens dates. Place on the table or cart in the gathering area.

### SHORT-TERM ADULT STUDY WITH SIMPLE SUPPER:

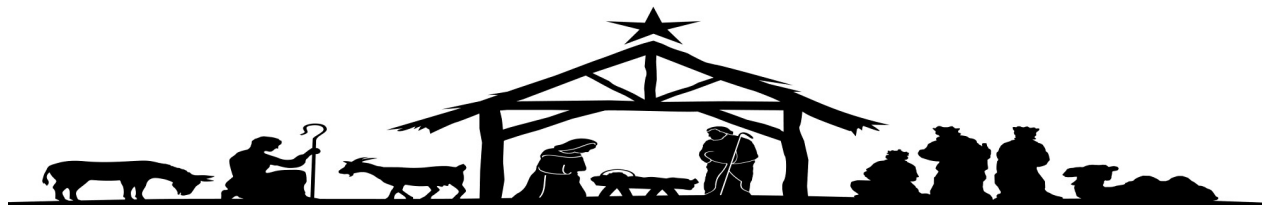
A 4-week adult mid-week study will be offered using the dvd and study that goes with our 2023 theme: *The Angels of Christmas: Hearing God's Voice in Advent* by Rev. Susan Robb (UMC.) We'll explore in-depth the four angelic visits surrounding the birth of Jesus with Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds as well as the angel Gabriel's role and other angels in the Old Testament. We'll rotate our meeting places each week with that church offering a simple supper from 6-6:30pm and then the study from 6:30-8pm. Come for supper or just the study. If you need a ride or childcare please let Pastor know. There will be a sign up list with supper needs at both churches. No cost. *Wednesdays: Nov. 29 @ St. Louis, Dec. 6 @ Breckenridge, Dec. 13 @ St. Louis, Dec. 20 @ Breckenridge.*

### SHORT-TERM CHRISTMAS CHOIR WITH BELLS:

Christy Schnizlein will lead a short-term combined choir for Christmas Eve from 5:30-6pm on *Wednesdays* before the study at the locations where the study is taking place each week. The Choir will repeat last years lovely arrangement of *Silent Night with the handbells*. Older children, youth and adults all welcome.

### MISSION PROJECT:

Supporting our Advent-Christmas theme we will all be encouraged to “be an angel” this season by picking up a paper angel displayed at both churches which will list a small item to be purchased for our shut-ins, assisted living home friends, and clients of 2 other local nursing homes. Gifts such as socks, slippers, lap blankets, etc. will be listed for men and women. Pick up a paper angel, purchase the item listed, wrap the gift (paper or bag) tape the paper angel onto your gift and return by Sun. Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>. Ken and Lynne Holloway (and BUMC Outreach Team) are coordinating this project for both churches. **Delivery persons will be needed the week of Dec. 18—23.**



## ADVENT –CHRISTMAS NEWS -CONTINUED

### CHRISTMAS CAROLING:

All are welcome to spread the joy of Christmas by singing Christmas carols on **Sun. Dec. 17 from 3-5pm** outside **Main Street Pizza in Breckenridge**. We will be gifting persons entering the pizza place not only with song but with a small financial gift towards their pizza purchase and an invitation to Christmas Eve services. From 4:30-5pm those who have done the caroling will enjoy pizza at Main Street to finish off their good time! All ages are invited from both churches.

### BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE:

This lovely service offers all an opportunity to acknowledge that not everything and everyone is full of joy during this darker time of year. This service is usually offered on the day of winter solstice (longest, darkest day of the year.) **Thursday, Dec. 21 @ 7:00pm** a Blue Christmas time of reflection will be offered at the **Breckenridge facility**. This service is one of music, poetry, prayer and an opportunity to express a loss or something that grieves you. All are welcome.

### SUNDAY, DEC. 24 MORNING AND EVENING SERVICES:

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year. The combined Worship Team has decided to offer **one combined morning service** which will be held at the **St. Louis facility at 10:00 AM**. **The Christmas Eve services will be offered at 5:00PM at Breckenridge and & 7:00PM at St. Louis.** The services will be similar to the past--- children and youth will be invited to help build the nativity scene as we hear the story and sing the songs declaring Christ's birth.

### NEW YEAR'S EVE GAME NIGHT:

A new offering to the church families... many of you gather with family and friends on this night, but for all others interested we will be offering a new Year's Eve Game Night from **7 – 10 PM Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> @ the Breckenridge facility** (round game tables.) Bring a snack to share and your favorite game (card, board.) Did you know that Pastor & Roger love to beat their opponents at Euchre?! Join us for euchre, dominoes, golf, spoons, etc.

### TAKING DOWN THE GREENS FOR EPIPHANY:

What goes up, must come down... we will gather again to take down some of the Christmas decorations for the next season of the church year: Epiphany. **Breckenridge** will take down greens on **Wed. Jan. 3 from 5-8pm**. **St. Louis** will take down greens on **Sat. Jan. 6** (Epiphany Day) from **10-noon**. It's not as much fun, but could you help us with this task—maybe there'll be a treat or two to enjoy!

### BAPTISM OF THE LORD SUNDAY

**Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024** baptisms for any age will be offered in both services (9:30 & 11.)

Please contact Pastor directly if you or someone in your family would like to be baptized, or if you would like to reaffirm your baptism (Methodists don't re-baptize, but we do reaffirm.)



United  
Women  
in Faith

Reminder: We will be having the combined UWIF Christmas on Wednesday, December 6th at noon. Dorcas Circle will be the hostess and the Carrie Knause Circle will present the program. Hope to see everyone there!



Breckenridge High School students are invited to a 5th Quarter gathering for a time of fun, fellowship and food! Our next 5th Quarter is Friday, December 15 from 8pm-11pm. Volunteers are needed for serving, game supervision and clean up. There is a sign up sheet in the gathering area or call the office to sign up!



If you would like your family represented on the Fellowship Hall tree, please bring in an ornament of your choice and place it on the tree. We would love to update the tree and see an ornament for each family in our congregation.



## Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Dec. 10— The Shelley Family

### ONE CALL TELL ALL

Please contact the office if you have any changes to your phone number or if you want to be added or deleted from the ONE CALL TELL ALL.

## SOUP SUPPER

Due to Christmas, this month's free community dinner will be held on **Tuesday, December 19th from 4:30-5:30** or until we run out. There will be at least 3 types of soups to choose from as well as a salad, bread, and a cookie. So mark your calendars and warm up with a nice bowl of soup!





- 9. Karen Rohn
- 10. Jared Ruszkowski  
Brogan SanMiguel
- 16. Pastor Billie Lou
- 24. Grayson Stoneman
- 29. Wade SanMiguel



## Feeling Ill?

IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL IN ANY WAY, PLEASE STAY HOME... KNOW YOU WILL BE MISSED, BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER OUR BIGGER PICTURE AND GOAL: TO REMAIN OPEN FOR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY MISSIONS AND USE. WITH COVID, FLU AND OTHER ILLNESSES UPON US REMEMBER THAT THIS IS NOT ABOUT US AS INDIVIDUALS, BUT IT IS US AS THE HANDS AND HEART OF CHRIST. THIS APPLIES TO ALL INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS USING THE FACILITY.



Roger & Billie Lou Gillespie-Brown-  
Dec. 8, 2001

Phil & Janet Greening  
Dec. 16, 1972

Kenton & Brogan SanMiguel  
Dec. 20, 2017

# Upcoming Events



### Wednesday, Dec. 6-

Choir Practice 5:30-6:00 @ BUMC  
Advent Study 6-8 PM @BUMC

### Thursday, Dec. 7—

St. Louis Small Town Christmas Parade @6:00 PM

### Sunday, Dec. 10 -

Kids Christmas Play during morning worship

### Wednesday, Dec. 13-

Choir Practice 5:30-6:00@SLFUMC  
Advent Study 6-8 PM @ SLFUMC

### Thursday, Dec. 14 -

Y.A.H.A. @ noon with talent show

### Friday, Dec. 15 -

5th Quarter 8:30—11:00 PM

### Sunday, Dec. 17—

Christmas Caroling 3-5PM at Main Street  
Pizza in Breckenridge

### Tuesday, Dec. 19-

Soup Supper @ 4:30 at SLFUMC

### Wednesday, Dec. 20-

Choir Practice 5:30-6:00 @BUMC  
Advent Study 6-8 PM @ BUMC

### Thursday, Dec. 21 -

Blue Christmas Serve—7 PM @BUMC

### Sunday, Dec. 24—

Christmas Eve Service 5  
10:00 AM—Combined Service @SLFUMC  
5:00 PM—BUMC  
7:00 PM—SLFUMC

**SECRETARY OFFICE HOURS:**

Nancy—Thursday 8am—1pm

**Email Address:**

breckenridgeumc@yahoo.com

**THE METHODIST MESSAGE**

**“SERVING ONE ANOTHER AND SHARING GOD’S LOVE”**

**United Methodist Church**

125 Third Street—PO Box 248

Breckenridge, MI 48615

Billie Lou Gillespie-Brown—Pastor

Office phone: 989-842-3632

9:30 AM worship

**“Disciples Reflecting the Light and Love of Christ”**

\*\*Please notify the church if you wish to be taken off the mailing list.

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**United Methodist Church  
125 Third Street—PO Box 248  
Breckenridge, MI 48615**

