

The Methodist Message



December 2024

Pastor's Page....

SEASONS OF THE CHURCH YEAR: ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

ADVENT is the beginning of the Christian church year. These 4 weeks provide a period of preparation for the coming of Christ, which is culminated in remembering the birth of Christ as a human baby at Christmas.

LITURGICAL COLORS OF ADVENT: The earliest known colors for Advent (Jerusalem 1100-1187 A.D./C.E.) were black and violet. Medieval period colors included black, red and/or white. For the past several centuries the colors have been changed to royal blue or royal purple signifying Christ's Kingship. The colors are used until Christmas Eve when they are changed to white and/or gold. Some modern churches use a rose pink color as well. The secular world uses red and green, which reminds us of St. Nicolas and pine trees.

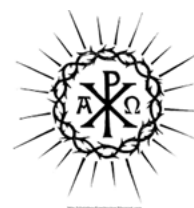
SYMBOLS OF ADVENT:

Sun and Chi Rho (Ky-Row) One of the most beautiful descriptions of the Messiah is in the last chapter of the Old Testament—Christ is referred to as “The Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2.) The sun is the source of light. Christians refer to Jesus as the Light of the world, “In Him was life; and that life was the light of men” (John 1:4.) The symbol combines the sun with the Chi Rho, a familiar symbol for Christ.

Messianic Rose The rose has various meanings in Christian symbolism. Isaiah 35 Writes that the desert shall blossom as a rose at the coming of the glory of God. God comes to us in Jesus Christ.

The Branch The prophet Jeremiah wrote, “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous branch (23:5.) The Messiah had to be born of the house of David to be the true Savior; Jesus was of the lineage of David through His earthly father, Joseph's, family tree. Sometimes Jesus is called The Branch of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David, It 's also associated with laying down branches as Jesus enters Jerusalem.

The Lamb of God When John, the Baptizer, Jesus' first cousin, saw Jesus, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1: 29.) During Advent. The lamb symbol has the three-rayed nimbus to designate a member of the Trinity.



CHRISTMAS Early Christians celebrated the birth and baptism of Jesus on Epiphany day, which is always January 6th. Christmas, as we celebrate it today, developed from a pagan festival celebrating the birth of the sun-god, the first day of winter, shortest day of the year. In the 4th century, Christians in the Roman Catholic faith began celebrating Christ's birth on December 25th (which was then the first day of winter) referring to Christ as the Son of Righteous, believing that Christ would bring light into the world again as the days lengthened.

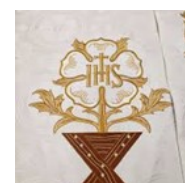
LITURGICAL COLORS OF CHRISTMASTIDE

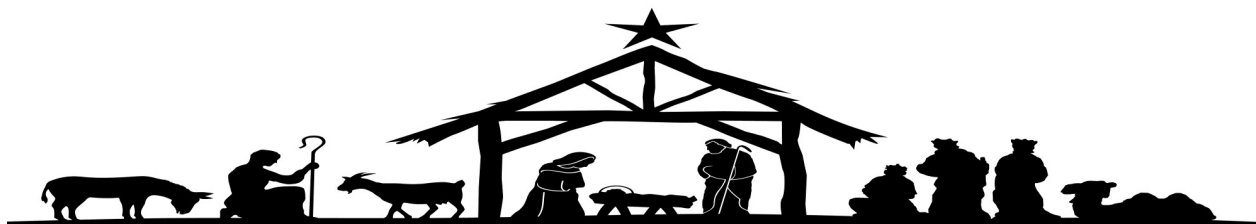
White and gold are the colors used today for the season of Christmastide, which is only one or two Sundays long. The very best furnishings should be used during Christmastide (as well as Easter.) In medieval times red, gold and brown were used and in Jerusalem 1100-1187 A.D./C.E. red, white and gold were used.

SYMBOLS OF CHRISTMASTIDE

The Manger is the most familiar symbol of Christ's nativity. The simple manger reminds us of Christ's humble birth. The symbol above the manger is the sacred monogram for Jesus (the first three letters from the Greek word for Jesus) and the Christmas Rose symbol.

The Holly Wreath The holly wreath has become as much used symbol during Christmastide. Holly has a shiny, spiny edged leaf and bright red berries. The foliage and berries in the form of a wreath symbolize the crown of thorns and the drops of blood reminding us that during the celebration of Christ's birth we should not forget the purpose of Christ's coming as our Savior.





ADVENT –CHRISTMAS NEWS

THEME:

Our 2024 Advent-Christmas theme is: *On the Way to Bethlehem* based on a book and study by Rev. Rob Fuquay (UMC) and designed by Rev. Marcia McFee (UMC.) In worship and mid-week study we'll visit the six places where the story of Jesus' birth unfold: Rome, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, The Manger, and Persia. Places shape us and shape our stories. By focusing on the places that shaped the path of Jesus birth story, we learn more about why Jesus' life, ministry, and death became one of the most significant stories of human history (His story!)

MISSION PROJECT:

We will all be encouraged to pick 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 scarves, socks, slippers, lap blankets, notepaper, sugar-free candy, puzzles, 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. 15th. Please **DO NOT** include personal greetings/cards and notes—your gift is being given from the whole church family, not you as an individual. The BUMC Outreach Team is coordinating this project for both churches. Delivery persons will be needed from both churches the week of **Dec. 16—22.**

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 2024 theme: *On the Way to Bethlehem*. We'll explore in-depth four of the six locations surrounding the birth of Jesus: Rome, Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem (+ the Manger & Persia.) All studies will be held at the St. Louis location from 2:00-4:00pm. **Wednesdays:** (Nov. 27), **Dec.4, Dec. 11, Dec. 18.**

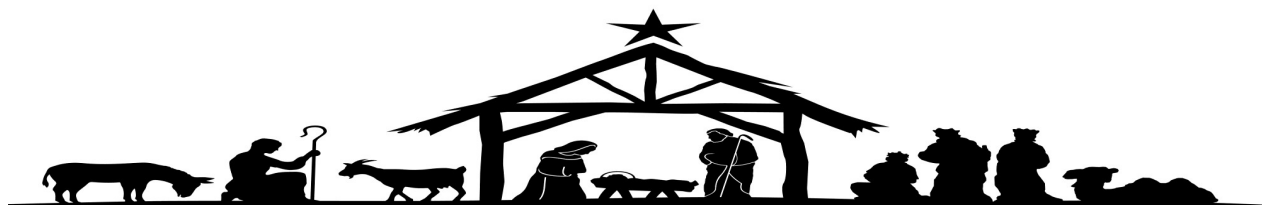
CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PLAY:

The Breckenridge Kids Church will present a gift to our congregations on **Sunday, Dec. 8 during the 9:30am BUMC service.** The children's book *The Santa Prayer* by Ray Gauer will be transformed into the Kid's Church presentation.

CHRISTMAS CANTATA:

Pat Pyle will direct a short-term community choir which will offer to our communities a cantata by Joseph Martin: *The Voices of Christmas* on **Sunday, December 15th at 7:00 P.M.** Christy Schnizlein will be the accompanist. The cantata will be held at the **St. Louis** sanctuary. The cantata will be followed by a time of fellowship and refreshments.





CHRISTMAS NEWS -CONTINUED

CHRISTMAS CAROLING:

All are welcome to spread the joy of Christmas by singing Christmas carols on Sun. Dec. 22 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 participated in the caroling will enjoy pizza at Main Street to finish off their good time! The BUMC Outreach Team is sponsoring this activity. All ages are invited from both churches.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES—TUESDAY, DEC. 24 EVENING SERVICES:

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:

For a 2nd year we will offer a New Year's Eve Game Nite... many of you gather with family and friends on this night, but for all others interested we will gather from **7 – 10 PM Dec. 31st @ 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 **Fri. Jan. 3 from 5-8pm**. **St. Louis** will take down greens on **Sat. Jan. 4 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 12th, 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

Angel Tree Mission



Reminder: We will be having the combined UWif Christmas Party on Wednesday, December 4th at noon. Carrie Knause Circle will be the hostess and the Dorcas Circle will present the program. Hope to see everyone there!

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.



A big thank you to everyone who came out and helped hang the greens and decorate the church on November 25th. It looks wonderful! It's a big job and we couldn't do it without the help of the congregation. You are appreciated!

Please support our Advent-Christmas theme and consider being an angel for our shut-ins, assisted living home friends and others in local nursing homes. It's as easy as 1,2,3...

1. Pick up a paper angel at the church that details what is needed.

2. Purchase the item.

3. Put it in a gift bag, if you have one, and return it with the paper angel attached by Sunday, December 15th.

****** Do not include any personal message or cards as this is a gift from the church family and not you as an individual.

Treasurer's Report

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2024			
	August	September	October
Balance on Hand (Beginning of month)	\$ 9,226.02	\$ 6,724.73	\$ 4,222.80
Receipts	\$ 6,585.14	\$ 6,533.98	\$ 10,437.54
Total Dispersable Funds	\$ 15,811.16	\$ 13,258.71	\$ 14,660.34
Budget Disbursements	\$ 8,364.41	\$ 8,228.44	\$ 8,381.07
Soup Supper Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 263.88
Personal Needs Pantry	\$ 617.02	\$ 727.47	\$ 618.16
Special Giving	\$ 105.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 148.00
Umcor	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Balance in General Fund @ Month End	\$ 6,724.73	\$ 4,222.80	\$ 5,249.23
Designated Funds:			
Personal Needs Pantry	\$ 7,777.85	\$ 7,210.38	\$ 6,702.22
Memorial Garden	\$ 806.42	\$ 806.42	\$ 806.42
Soup Supper	\$ 3,599.29	\$ 3,599.29	\$ 3,412.41
Total Designated Funds	\$ 12,183.56	\$ 11,616.09	\$ 10,921.05
Balance on Hand IF Designated Funds Were Paid in Full	\$ (5,458.83)	\$ (7,393.29)	\$ (5,671.82)

There have been several large repairs/purchases recently, that have stretched our budget. If you are able to make a one-time extra financial gift to help out in any amount that will be appreciated...

Elevator: \$6,800.	Purchase of 8 round tables: \$600. private donation
Audio-Visuals: \$300.	Carpet cleaning: \$550. private donation
Parsonage Washer & Dryer: \$1,787.11	Electric keyboard repair: \$253.



3. Nancy Draper
 4. Cheryl Sabatovich
 6. Tina Leonard
 12. John Cresswell
 22. David Galloway
 26. Sharla Alspaugh
 28. Lynn McMann
 29. Seairra Rhines
 31. Kay Clark

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

Art & Pat Pyle
 Dec. 20, 1980

Jeff & Sue Baker
 Dec. 22, 1979

Gary & Pam Amiels
 Dec. 23, 2000

Upcoming Events



Wednesday, Dec. 4
 UWif Christmas @ Noon
 Advent Adult Study 2-4 PM @ SLF

Thursday, Dec. 5—
 Small Town Christmas Parade @6:00 PM

Wednesday, Dec. 11-
 Advent Adult Study 2-4 PM @ SLF

Sunday, Dec. 15—
 Sunday Brunch—after service
 Angel Mission Project gifts due!
Voices of Christmas Cantata—7Pm @SLF

Tuesday, Dec. 17—
 Soup Supper @ 4:30

Wednesday, Dec. 18-
 Advent Adult Study 2-4PM @ SLF

Sunday, Dec. 22-
 Christmas Caroling—3-5 PM @ Main Street Pizza in Breckenridge (outside)

Sunday, Dec. 24—
 Christmas Eve Service
 5:00 PM—BUMC
 7:00 PM—SLFUMC

Tuesday, Dec. 31— New Year's Eve Gathering—
 7-10 Pm @ BUMC

Saturday, January 4- Taking down the greens
 10-noon

Sunday, January 12— Baptism of the Lord service



SOUP SUPPER

Due to Christmas, this month's free community dinner will be held on **Tuesday, December 17th 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!



DECEMBER OFFICE HOURS:

Starting on December 3rd, the office hours will return to the normal hours of Tuesday and Wednesday from 9-2.

SECRETARY OFFICE HOURS:

Sherri—Tues/Wed. 9-2 PM

Email Address:

stlouisfumc@yahoo.com

Facebook Address:

www.facebook.com/stlouisfumc

THE METHODIST MESSAGE

“SERVING ONE ANOTHER AND SHARING GOD’S LOVE”

First United Methodist Church

116 S. Franklin St.

Saint Louis, MI 48880

Billie Lou Gillespie-Brown—Pastor

Office phone: 989-681-3320

Office Fax: 989-681-5394

11:00 AM worship

“Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.”

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

**First United Methodist Church
116 S. Franklin St.
Saint Louis, MI 48880
Return Service Requested**

