

The Methodist Message



December 2025

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.

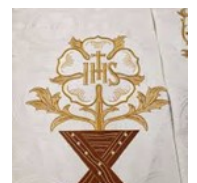
LITURGICAL COLORS OF CHRISTMASTIDE

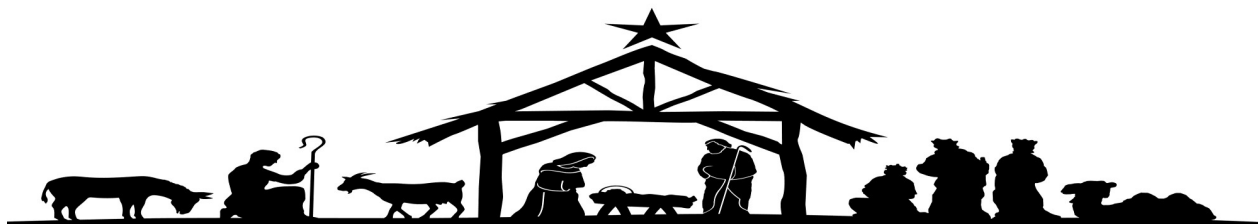
White and gold are the colors used today for the season of Christmastide, which is only one or two Sundays long. The very best furnishings should be used during Christmastide (as well as Easter.) In medieval times red, gold and brown were used and in Jerusalem 1100-1187 A.D./C.E. red, white and gold 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 2025 Advent-Christmas theme is: *What Child IS This...Beyond the Lullaby.*

In 1865, William Chatterton Dix penned a poem that would become the beloved Christmas-time favorite, hymn "What Child Is This?" During Advent, we will see the story of the time leading up to the birth of Christ in its historical trauma-informed fullness. The story of humanity and its recurring themes of oppression and corruption run right through history and into our own stories. Yet, we can rely on the assurance of the carol to confirm that God is "present with us" in powerful ways that continue to be the Word of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love even and especially in the midst of hard times.

Friends, we live in troubled times... I have questions: How do I offer something that can address the complexities of our time? What is the Gospel Word to us as we worry about so many things? How do we struggle to be faithful witnesses to all the things we see unfolding all over this world of ours yet still proclaim the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love of the season? "Beyond the Lullaby" could help us see into the difficulty of the socio-political-economic context that shaped the identity and story of the birth and life of Jesus. One of the most beloved carols we know, "What Child Is This?", asks and answers the question of Jesus' identity. The Good News is that God chose to enter our trauma-filled world in order to know us, tend to us, teach us how to be in these times. The "anchor image" (visual metaphor) for this series is the nativity scene, or crèche. This worship series is meant to help us know more about who Jesus is by looking at the actual lives and circumstances of His story. And to see that God is also with us in our fragility, as we are to be with others. Advent is usually about waiting. But we cannot wait to have hope; it is essential now. We cannot wait to work for peace; lives are at stake. We cannot wait to embrace joy, even and especially when it seems in short supply. We cannot wait to love, most of all, because we are the ones who follow the saving love of Jesus Christ, God-With-Us.

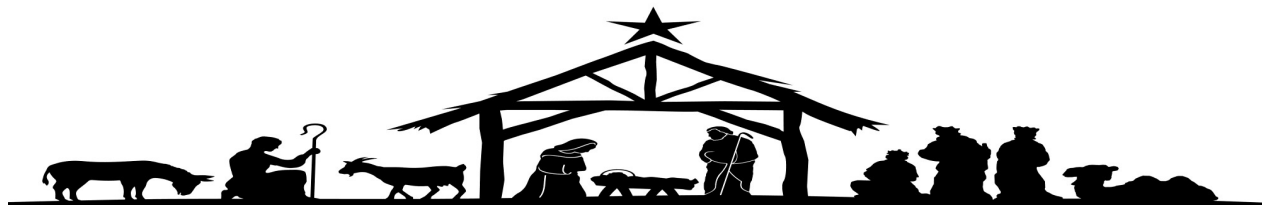
DECORATIONS:

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 (11/23-SLF, 11/29-B) or put it on the Fellowship Hall tree yourself at anytime.



Creche Set/Nativities – We are decorating the entire facility with nativity sets... if you have one or more nativities 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.





CHRISTMAS NEWS -CONTINUED

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PLAY:

Once again this year, the youth of BUMC will be performing a Christmas play. This year's play will be Nutcracker Act 1 March. Kids will perform to the classical song. It will be gift to the congregation on Sunday, **Dec. 14 during the 9:30am service at BUMC.** Practices will be starting soon during Kids church time. Dress rehearsal will be on Saturday, Dec. 13th from 9:30-10:30. Kids of all ages and abilities are welcome to join in.

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, lap blankets, sugtar free candy, notebooks, 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. 14th**. Ken and Lynne Holloway (and BUMC Outreach Team) are coordinating this project for both churches. Delivery persons will be needed the week of **Dec. 14—20.**

CHRISTMAS CAROLING:

All are welcome to spread the joy of Christmas by singing Christmas carols on **Sun. Dec. 7 from 4:30-6:00pm outside the rear entrance of 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 6-6:30pm 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.) **Sunday, Dec. 21 @ 7:00pm** a Blue Christmas time of reflection will be offered at the **SLFUMC facility.** This service is one of music, poetry, prayer and an opportunity to express a loss or something that grieves you. All are welcome.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

The Christmas Eve services will be offered at 5:00PM at Breckenridge and & 7:00PM at St. Louis on Wednesday, December 24th. 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:

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 **6:30-9:30 PM Dec. 31st @ the Breckenridge facility** (round game tables.) Bring a snack to share and your favorite game (card, board.) Join us for euchre, dominoes, golf, spoons, etc.



United
Women
in Faith

Dear Friends,

For those of you who think about Christmas regardless of the season; it's your time of year! It is a shorter Christmas season due to Thanksgiving being a week later. I feel the need to make the most of the holiday season and have already begun to strategize how to fit everything in.

How fortunate we are to live where we can worship and celebrate the birth of Christ. It is so easy to fall into the commercial aspect of Christmas that we forget what we are actually celebrating. I have a couple of Christmas devotional books that I look forward to reading every year. It satisfies my desire to read daily and reminds me of the true "*reason for the season*."

As you begin a busy Christmas season I hope you have moments to reflect and enjoy the true meaning of Christmas.

Blessings,
Sue Baker

Mark Your Calendars:

Dec. 3—UWiF Christmas Luncheon; 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall
Meal /Hostess: Dorcas Circle

Program: Carrie Knause Circle

All ladies are invited. Non-members please RSVP Sue Baker

Angel Tree Mission



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 14th.

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

5th Quarter

All high school students are invited to join us at the church for our 5th Quarter party right after the basketball game on **December 19th, until 11:00pm!** Come hang out in a fun, safe and welcoming environment. We'll have food, games and fellowship. Bring your friends and come enjoy a great night of fun and connection. We can't wait to see you there.



Y.A.H.A.

Our monthly Y.A.H.A. luncheon, originally scheduled for December 11, has been cancelled. While we always look forward to this time of food and fellowship, circumstances this month have made it necessary to cancel. We look forward to gathering together again at next month's luncheon on January 8th. Thank you for your understanding and flexibility.



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|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Ted Humm | Phil & Janet Greening—Dec. 16, 1972 |
| 9. Karen Rohn | |
| 10. Jared Rutzkowski | Kenton & Brogan SanMiguel—Dec. 20, 2017 |
| 10. Brogan SanMiguel | |
| 16. Pastor Billie Lou | |
| 24. Grayson Stoneman | |
| 29. Wade SanMiguel | |

A big thank you to everyone who came out and helped hang the greens and decorate the church on November 29 th. It looks wonderful! It's a big job and we couldn't do it without the help of the congregation. You are appreciated!



Upcoming Events

Wednesday, Dec. 3
UWiF Christmas @ Noon SLFUMC

Saturday, Dec. 6-
Family Christmas Craft Day 1-4 PM @BUMC

Sunday, Dec. 7
Christmas Caroling—4:30-6:00 PM @ Main Street
Pizza in Breckenridge (outside)

Sunday, December 14 -
Children's Christmas Play 9:30 AM @BUMC
Angel Mission Project gifts due!

Tuesday, Dec. 16—
Prayer Group 10-11am
Soup Supper @ 4:30 @ SLFUMC

Friday, Dec. 19— 5th Quarter

Sunday, Dec. 21
Blue Christmas Service—
7:00PM @SLFUMC

Tuesday, Dec. 23—
Prayer Group 10-11am

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

Tuesday, Dec. 30—
Prayer Group 10-11am

Tuesday, Dec. 31— New Year's Eve Game Night—
6:30-9:30 Pm @ BUMC



SOUP SUPPER

Due to Christmas, this month's free community dinner will be held on **Tuesday, December 16th from 4:30-5:30** or until we run out. There will be 4 types of soups to choose from as well as a salad, crackers, and a cookie. So mark your calendars and warm up with a nice bowl of soup!



The Alma/St. Louis American Legion Post # 256 Auxiliary will be hosting their annual "cookie walk" on Friday, December 12th, from 10 to 3 PM. at the American Legion post (Heroes Center), 1329 Michigan Ave. in St. Louis. A variety of cookies, candies and baked goods will be available for a suggested donation of \$5 per pound. Proceeds are used to help local

SECRETARY OFFICE HOURS:

Nancy—Thurs 8-1 PM

Email Address:

breckenridgeumc@yahoo.com

THE METHODIST MESSAGE

“SERVING ONE ANOTHER AND SHARING GOD’S LOVE”

United Methodist Church

125 Third St.

P.O. Box 248

Breckenridge, MI 48615

Billie Lou Gillespie-Brown—Pastor

Office phone: 989-842-3632

9:30 AM worship

“Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.”

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

United Methodist Church
125 Third St.
Breckenridge, MI 48615
Return Service Requested

