

Please join us for worship at 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Christmas Eve at 5:00 and 8:00 PM.

the LUMC December 2009

Sunbeam

lansingunited.org



Lansing United Methodist Church
Route 34B and Brickyard Road, South Lansing

Pastor: Bill Gottschalk-Fielding • Program Associate: Marilyn Paradise • Youth Coordinator: Kevin Dunn

A Blessed Advent



and a Merry Christmas

Children's Pageant
December 13, 10:30 AM



Time for Something Completely Different

The great Catholic writer Flannery O'Connor once deliberately misquoted Jesus when she said, "The truth shall make you odd." Jesus had said, of course, that the truth would make us free. But on closer examination, maybe O'Connor got it right. To be a free person in a bound society will make one odd. You will stand out and appear "out of sync."

Such is the possibility and promise of Advent for Christians who live deeply into the rhythms and practices of the Church. During a time when the world around us will be dashing and consuming like mad men and women, you and I are invited to "live and move and have our being" in accord with a different agenda. As followers of Jesus we know this season isn't about what we get done or are able to purchase; this is the season which points to what has been done for us and what we've already received by grace. In other words, we know, as the bumper sticker aptly summarizes, "Jesus is the reason for the season." Slowing down, doing less and re-focusing on Jesus are the orders of these days.

Of course, that's all well and good when your Christmas shopping is done and your in-laws are hosting Christmas dinner! There are some things which not only have to be done but which we want to do. Not all of these are wanton acts of consumption or random endeavors of busy-ness. Being with family, blessing one another with gifts as tokens of our love and (dare I say it) attending an extra church function or two are ways to participate in the joy of the season.

Once again, the key word is "balance."

Making a few changes in the way we use our time and energy this season can make a huge difference. As an analogy, I'm reminded of a recent trip along I-90. The speed limit is 65 mph, which means most people do at least 70. One day I decided to "slow down" to 60 mph. I had the time, wanted to save gas and didn't want to encourage a sense of "rush and hurry" within me. I was rapidly out of sync with my motorist neighbors, not all of whom were happy with my choice regarding speed. Cars were passing me left and right. But my enjoyment of the ride was increased many fold. I saw some beautiful sites—even on I-90—I'd missed before: a new house that had gone up with some interesting architectural features; the playhouse of some young children in a backyard; some trees which had managed to hold onto their glorious red leaves; an ancient Volvo of 1970s' vintage with no bumper stickers!

Even a slight change of pace could improve your "view" this Advent. Who knows what you might see more clearly...or Who you might see more clearly.

+Grace and Peace,

Pastor B. J.

Giving Tree Reminder

LUMC is supplying presents to 64 children through our Giving Tree. Each child will get two presents, for a total of 128 tags. So, if you took a tag or two, thank you! Please remember to return your gift (with the tag on the outside), by December 11. The gifts will be distributed at the Food Pantry, on December 14.

The Annual Children's Christmas Pageant will be held on Sunday, December 13, following the Worship Service at 10:30 AM. Parents are asked to bring a dish-to-pass for a luncheon after the Christmas Pageant, and a "Happy Birthday, Jesus" Party will follow the luncheon.



Remaining rehearsals:
December 6 10:30-11:30 AM;
Saturday, December 12, 10:00
(Dress rehearsal)

A Note from the Treasurer

Please submit all reimbursements for the Calendar Year asap if you have them. Any reimbursements or invoices for 2009 must be submitted to the treasurer no later than January 14, 2010. Anything received after January 14, 2010, will not be included in calendar year 2009 books, but will be included in 2010, even though these types of expenses were not budgeted for. Also, if you are keeping records of a liability account (e.g., Food Pantry, Haiti), now is the time to reconcile your records to mine. Please e-mail Vicky Swanson at ges28@cornell.edu to request an up to date Quickbooks report on the account you wish to reconcile. Thank you—Vicky Swanson, Treasurer.

Prayer Requests

Judy Aguirre
Ray Buckley
Brooke Gainey
James Juenger
Paul Lutomski
Marti Zimmerman
Mourning family of Ernestine Howell and of Marvin Jennings (son of Ruby Ferris)

Church World Service

Peg MacKenzie reports that LUMC has boxed and shipped a total of 448 Church World Service kits as of November 2009. Thanks to all the people and groups who worked on assembling the kits, including our youth and K.A.N. That breaks down to 380 school kits, 36 hygiene kits, and 32 baby kits. We are asked to provide a donation of \$2.00 to cover shipping and handling for each kit—that amounts to \$896. Dick Stark helped out with this collection by cooking a breakfast in October, but more cash donations would be most appreciated.

Church World Service Hygiene Kits

For the *hygiene kits*, please bring in any of the items listed below. Note that this list is slightly revised, as I used the old list in the last *Sunbeam*. In particular, please don't bring in toothpaste, due to stale dating issues.—gw

- One hand towel
- One bath size bar of soap
- One washcloth
- One toothbrush
- One comb
- Six Band-aids
- One nail clipper
- \$1 to buy fresh toothpaste

Ringin' Bells for Salvation Army

The Bells Angels will be performing at the Ithaca Mall near the Sears mall entrance on Wednesday, December 2, from 5:00-6:00 PM. Please come and enjoy some holiday music and support the Salvation Army Kettle Drive.

Worship in December



The Worship Committee has had the usual debate about Christmas Carols during the Sundays of Advent this year. It's always good to wrestle with this issue. If nothing else it just reminds us of how important music is to our faith life. Once again the outcome of this discussion will be to seek to balance the desire to sing the "soul-stretching" hymns of Advent with the "heart-warming" Carols of Christmas. In both cases, there are never enough opportunities to sing these great hymns of hope and fulfillment, but we're going to do our best. Bring your voices to worship this season. We'll be doing a lot of great singing! Also, be ready to receive some "unexpected" visitors bearing Good News each Sunday during Advent.

December 6—Second Sunday of Advent:

Malachi 3:1-4, Luke 1:68-79, Philippians 1:3-11 and Luke 3:1-6.

December 13—Third Sunday of Advent:

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7 and Luke 3:7-18.

December 20—Fourth Sunday of Advent:

Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55; Hebrews 10:5-10 and Luke 1:39-45.

Greening the Church

We'll decorate our sanctuary for Advent and Christmas on Friday, December 4. We'll start by feeding you a nice dinner at 6:00, and then you can make wreaths, put up the Christmas tree, and set up other decorations after that. Bring gloves to work with the greenery, and clippers help too.

Youth Mission Can and Bottle Drive

Here's a way you can support our Youth Mission team. On the third Sunday of each month, bring your deposit cans and bottles to the basketball hoop on the south side of the church. The Youth Missioners will spirit away your cans and such, and you won't have to fight with those redemption machines! The money goes to help our Youth Mission team travel to Guatemala and other mission destinations.

December 24—Christmas Eve:

5:00 PM **Family Candlelight Service**

8:00 PM **Candlelight Communion Service**

Read: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; and Luke 2:1-20

December 27—First Sunday After Christmas

Day: A Festival of Lessons and Christmas Carols! Come and sing the wonderful Carols of Christmas.

Note: No Fireplace Service this Sunday.

Bazaar Thank You

Thank you to all who helped with the annual bazaar dinner and shoppes. Whether you helped make the all-time favorite peanut brittle, sewed some craft items, baked some goodies or a turkey or some squash, served up the delicious dinner, moved the furniture, or washed the dishes, you helped make it a huge success! A special thanks to Dick and Shelly Stark for their efforts and coordination of the meal which received rave reviews.—*Nan Makela*

Acolyte Coordinator—As of the end of November, we still needed an acolyte coordinator. This is a matter of directing a willing group of young people who start our worship service by bringing in the light of Christ. Position comes with a ready made support group of helpful parents. See Pastor Bill.

It's Tradition!

Many of us have traditions in our home that we practice regularly. Traditions sometimes say who we are or perhaps connect us to our heritage. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), a German scientist and educator on whom the Waldorf School based its educational philosophy, considered tradition to be essential. Steiner believed that a child who was raised in an environment rich in tradition and ritual thrived abundantly. Traditions are good for us.

Here at LUMC we practice many traditions throughout the year, many of them connected to Advent and Christmas. The Advent Season marks the beginning of the Christian calendar, and the events of this season help us prepare to celebrate the arrival of our Lord and Savior on Christmas. The festivities begin with the **Greening of the Church** on Friday, December 4, at 6:00 pm. This is an evening we set aside to share a meal together in the Fellowship Hall and decorate the church. Wreaths are made, candles are hung in each of the windows, and the Christmas tree adorns the chancel. On Saturday, December 5, we meet in the narthex at 2:00 pm for an afternoon of **caroling**. The carolers will carpool to various homes to bring holiday cheer to folks who may not be able to attend church at this time of year. The last stop is at Woodsedge, where we are greeted with cookies and hot chocolate. This is a wonderful time that spreads a lot of holiday joy!

The **adult Advent study**, which began in November, continues to meet with Pastor Bill, discussing the book entitled "Celebrate the

Newborn Jesus." The book invites us to open our hearts, find hope, and recognize and celebrate the fulfillment of God's promises through Jesus. Copies are still available.

The **Annual Children's Christmas Pageant** will be performed on Sunday, December 13, directly following the morning worship service. The children have been preparing this presentation as a gift to the congregation. The program is entitled "A Traditional Christmas Pageant." The congregation is also invited to attend a dish-to-pass luncheon and Happy Birthday, Jesus, Party following the pageant. All of these events lead up to the Christmas Eve Services.

On Thursday, December 24, the **Christmas Eve Family Service** will be held at 5:00 pm with a family message as the theme. Child care will be provided in the nursery. The Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Holy Communion will be held at 8:00 pm. Please join us this season as we embrace the traditions that help prepare us to celebrate the feast of our Lord's birth. God Bless.—*Marilyn Paradise*

Christmas House Party

You are invited to a Christmas singalong at the home of Diane and Glenn Withiam, 1196 Ridge Rd. (34B), on Sunday, December 20, from 2:00 to 4:00. We'll sing Christmas songs, have some snacks, and enjoy the season. You are welcome to bring goodies, an instrument, a song to share. More info? See Diane, Glenn, or the choir room door.

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY



*Lansing United
Methodist Church*

*December
2009*

1
Quilt Bee 9:30

Disciple Bible Study 6:30
Finance 7:00

2 Prayer Service 9:00
Women's Bible Study 9:30

Advent Study at Woodsedge 2:30

Bell Choir 6:00
Choir 7:00

3

Senior High Youth 7:00

4

Greening of the Church
Dinner 6:00
Decorating after

5 Mens' Breakfast every
Saturday at Linda's in North
Lansing 7:00
Prayer Shawl Ministry
10:00

Christmas Caroling 2:00

6 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Worship 9:00
Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 10:30
Caregivers 11:30
Poinsettia Orders Are Due!
K.A.N. at Woodsedge 4:00
Praise Singers Rehearsal 5:00
Fireplace Contemporary Worship 6:00

7

Staff Parish 7:00

8
Quilt Bee 9:30

Disciple Bible Study 6:30
Church Council 7:00

9 Prayer Service 9:00
Women's Bible Study 9:30
Advent Study at Woodsedge 2:30

Bell Choir 6:00
Choir 7:00

10

Senior High Youth 7:00

11

12 Mens' Breakfast 7:00

Christmas Pageant
Dress Rehearsal 10:00
SUNBEAM DEADLINE
12:00 Midnight

13 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Worship 9:00
Christmas Pageant 10:30

Praise Singers Rehearsal 5:00
Fireplace Contemporary Worship 6:00

14

Food Pantry 3:00
Trustees 7:30

15
Quilt Bee 9:30

Disciple Bible Study 6:30

16 Prayer Service 9:00
Women's Bible Study
Holiday Brunch 9:30
Advent Study at Woodsedge 2:30

Bell Choir 6:00
Choir 7:00

17

Senior High Youth 7:00

18

19 Mens' Breakfast 7:00

Youth Movie and Gift Swap
Party 5:00

20 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Worship 9:00
Sunday School 10:30
Youth Mission Can and Bottle Drive

Praise Singers Rehearsal 5:00
Fireplace Contemporary Worship 6:00

21

22
Quilt Bee 9:30

23 Prayer Service 9:00

Bell Choir 6:00
Choir 7:00

24 Christmas Eve
Family Candlelight Service 5:00
Communion Candlelight Service
8:00

Church Office Closed

25 Christmas

God Bless Us, Every One

26 Mens' Breakfast 7:00

27 FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS
Worship 9:00

28

29

30 Prayer Service 9:00

31

Note: This calendar is current as of November
30. For updates to all LUMC events, visit
lansingunited.org, and check the bulletin when
you're in church on Sunday.

C h u r c h O f f i c e C l o s e d

K.A.N. Update

It's been a busy fall for the Kids in Action Now! In our latest meeting, we assembled almost 300 school tote bags for the Church World Service school kit program. With the help of Joyce



Rendano, Peg McKenzie, and Janette Reeves, we were able to get them boxed up and ready for delivery to Syracuse for distribution. In the process, we were amazed by the giving hearts of our congregation who provided so many supplies for children around the world who struggle for an education. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for such a wonderful example of making a difference in our world.

We also had a moving presentation by Dean Benware, who introduced us to Cherkens Metelus, the 5th grade boy that

K.A.N. sponsors in Haiti. Dean showed us, through pictures and stories, what a day in Cherkens's life is like. We learned how grateful he is to be in school and how dedicated he has to be to get there everyday. We saw his family, where he lives, and his school. Again, we came away with a sense of the devotion that each of our missionaries to Haiti brings, and thankfulness that we can help to make such a big difference in this boy's life.



Our next meeting is Sunday, December 6, at 4:00 PM when we will meet at Woodsedge for a games afternoon.

The residents are looking forward to playing some of their favorite games and sharing refreshments with us. This afternoon activity is always lots of fun for everyone! Because we will not be meeting at the church, there will be no meal between the meeting and the Fireplace service that Sunday. Special thank you to Jackie Baker and the families who have brought dishes for sponsoring these meals!—*Bonnie Blair*

Volunteers in Mission—Around the World and in Your Neighborhood

Nicaragua. A medical mission team plans to serve in Nicaragua from February 20 through March 1, 2010. This team will be led by Greg Wright, gjw412@yahoo.com. The estimated cost is \$1,200. As this was being composed, the team was still open for participants; if you are interested, contact Greg.

Flood Relief

You do not have to travel to the Gulf Coast to help with storm and flood relief, although

Louisiana and Mississippi could still use your help. Here are other locations that are trying to recover from storms and floods:

Illinois

In March 2008, storms hit southern Illinois, causing major flooding, and then came the major flood of June 2008. Fifteen counties were affected. There will be approximately 115-150 homes that will need repairs or rebuilding in Union County (rural areas), Saline County (the town of Harrisburg), and Franklin County (the town of west Frankfurt). Contact [Ed Hoke](#).

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Christmas in Haiti

Carol and I were in Haiti for ten days at the beginning of December last year. We had to postpone our regular September trip because of the devastation caused by four tropical storms hitting Haiti in less than one month. In Verrettes, everything was as usual despite the storms, except for a few large bows in the church and school rooms. We had the church women cater a Christmas dinner for our students at the church camp dining hall. It was great time with lots of food (a real treat in Haiti), music, and student-made signs—*Joyeux Noël, Bonne Année* (Merry Christmas, Happy New Year).

I wondered how our students would be celebrating Christmas after we returned to the USA. So I asked John Croyance, one of our high school students, how he celebrates Christmas. He said, "First we go to church at midnight, and then, if there is enough money, we have a big meal at home after." I asked whether they exchange presents. He said, "I hug my mom and say 'I love you,' and she hugs me back and says, 'I love you, John.'"

Isn't that what it's all about? Don't let the love Christ gave you for your family and friends get lost in all the shopping and wrapping. The Christmas gift that God sent us was love—wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. It's not what your money can buy, but what your heart can give.

Joyeux Noël—Pete and Carol Loveland

Food Pantry: A Thanksgiving Feast, but the Need Still Grows

Food pantry numbers are on the rise, but thankfully we are able to take care of those who need our help. In October, the food pantry served 45 elderly neighbors, 55 in November. The October total for adults was 147, and 158 in November, with 77 children in October and 83 in November. In all we served 87 households in October and 94 in November.

The November food pantry was helped greatly by the donation of 40 turkeys from Tioga Downs (yep, Tioga Downs), 12 turkeys from the tri-county turkey association, and 6 turkeys from the Lansing Rod and Gun Club. We also had \$400 from Cayuga Helping Hands, so everyone either got a turkey, a ham, or a \$10.00 gift card to Tops. How cool is that? We had so many volunteers and lots of good food and great fellowship.—*Nancy Myers*

Chimney Update

On behalf of the Trustees, we would like to say thank you to all who responded to our appeal to help offset the cost of the recent chimney repair. Once again, your contributions helped fund more than half the cost. There were some leftover monies from the previous sanctuary fans and narthex lighting projects which helped with the rest.

Unfortunately, replacement or repair jobs like this occur now and then, and cannot be funded from the modest annual budget money for overall church maintenance. We do thank you for your consideration and financial help.—*Nan Makela*

Meeting God

When I was in high school, some of my friends were heavily involved in Young Life, a parachurch organization that operates all around the country. They often tried to get me to come to their meetings or retreats, but I wasn't really interested. I'm not sure why. I didn't have a youth group of my own at church or anything. I suppose it was because the most transformative area of my life up until that point had been camp, and my growth came through the relationships I had with friends from there or similar communities. They were how I had originally met God, and they were how I continued to relate to Him.

Of course, a lot changed in college. I participated in different Christian groups on campus, and read a lot more (mostly, apologetics). Instead of just "camp," my experience of Christian living became broader, encompassing community through a men's Bible Study, leadership in planning and leading retreats, knowledge through study, and service through spring break mission trips. All of these things helped to mold my knowledge of and relationship to God. What started out as a spark in camping at Casowasco fanned into a much larger flame down the road.

What are the sparks for our young people? To be honest, I don't know. For quite a few recent LUMC grads, the Conference Council on Youth Ministry (CCYM) was where they met God; it's where their focus was. It's evident that for others a little further back, it was the work they did through the Youth Mission program. For our current youth? It seems right now to

be through a more local focus, participating in LUMC and Lansing area events, and the summer camping program. Our young people have been and will continue to be different in how they relate to God.

The long and short of it is that we can't predict how our youth will initially connect with God, and we should try not to be too disappointed when they don't invest in activities that are our particular passion, or how we personally met God. The Youth Ministry Team plans events and activities for our youth that embrace a variety of ways to connect with God (study, fellowship, service), in the hope that they see and meet Him and receive that "spark" through any of them. Once they meet God in a personal way, it's our job as a congregation to help bring them in deeper, fan that flame, and expose them to the whole world of what God has to offer for their lives.—*Kevin Dunn*

VIM Opportunities (continued)

Indiana

Volunteers are still needed in:

Northwest Indiana. Lakeshore Area Regional Recovery in Indiana (LARRI). Visit their [website](#). Any and all volunteers welcome.

Central Indiana. For work team schedules in the Columbus area, contact [Angie Huebel](#) at the United Way of Bartholomew County.

Northwest Indiana. contact [Alan H. Welch](#), director, DANI-Disaster Assistance ([DANI website](#)). Some housing is available.

Morgan County.

Contact [Lannie Stecher](#). Need both skilled and unskilled volunteers to assist with rebuilding and repairing homes damaged by the June 2008 floods. The "500 year flood" impacted over 2,700 households, 48% of which fall below the Federal poverty guidelines. Housing can be provided.

Southern Indiana. Contact Indiana Disaster Response Coordinator: Rev. [David Powell](#). Terre Haute and Bartholomew County need volunteers.

Continued at right

What Youth Ministries Is Up To

While I know that they don't always make it to the Sunday morning service, the youth in our congregation have been quite busy this fall! The Youth Ministry Team's plan has been to start the fall with fun and fellowship-oriented activities, and move toward service throughout October and November. In September, we had a half dozen Sr. Highers travel to Thunder Mountain Speedway to watch a stock car race, and we had a great time! The 6th, 7th, and 8th graders held an overnight "lock-in" where we played games, staged funny skits, watched a good movie, and ate some truly delicious junk food.

October's focus was service to our local community, and over a dozen youth helped with the Rummage Sale in setup, cleanup, or the sale itself. Some were also able to help at the breakfast on the October 31, which raised money to help ship the Church World Service kits. It's also likely that you've seen at least half a dozen youth helping each week with the Sunday evening Fireplace service, doing anything from running the lyrics on the computer to playing drums.

But October wasn't all service—a few Sr. High youth took a trip to a nearby corn maze one night, too. It was a muddy and con-

fusing, but great and worthwhile time. On November 1, the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders went to Taughannock Falls for a couple hours to get outdoors and enjoy each other's company within God's creation. Of course, the 9th-12th graders continue to meet most Thursday evenings as well. This is primarily an opportunity for kids to forget about school for a few hours, invite their friends, and just have fun with each other. We generally have some pizza, listen to music, play some games, and get to know each other a little bit better. It is one of the things kids consistently look forward to each week.

The big event this fall, though, involved eight young women traveling to Philadelphia for the Revolve Tour, which is a large, rally event for teenage girls. Five youth from our congregation and three of their friends joined Kathy Lee and Dianne Walter for a wonderful time and learned more about what it means to be truly loved by God.

I am hopeful that through all these activities, our youth will grow closer to God. Whether it's through one event or another, we are showing glimpses of God. We cannot force our children's eyes open to see these glimpses; we can only provide the opportunities for them to do so. I'm looking forward to what 2010 has in store for all of us!—*Kevin Dunn*

VIM Opportunities (concluded)

Iowa

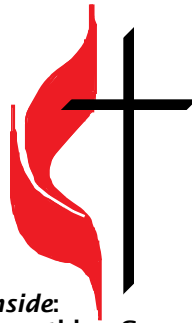
Pastor [Melisa Bracht-Wagner](#) is Disaster Volunteer Coordinator. The work involves siding, flooring, electrical, plumbing, heating, dry wall, painting, door and window replacements, finish carpentry, etc. It is very helpful to have at least one skilled volunteer on each team (to about four unskilled) to oversee the work of the less skilled.

Oakville. The UMC Block by Block program buys homes, rehabs them, and sells them to flood survivors who want to return to Oakville.

They offer accommodations and lunch is served weekdays at the community center.

Cedar Rapids. We are currently working on 32 homes. Some of them need minor repairs but, most are major rehabbing. Stay abreast of the situation and register your team [online](#) or through [Melisa](#).

Note: This work is done on your behalf through UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Next issue: Opportunities here in New York State, plus Louisiana, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. For more information, go to www.ncnyumc.org/email/VIMupdate.html



The Sunbeam

December 2009

Lansing United
Methodist Church

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Worship 9:00 AM
and 6:00 PM

Prayer Service
Wednesday, 9:00 AM

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

5:00 PM Family Candlelight Service
8:00 PM Communion Candlelight Service

Lansing United Methodist Church

32 Brickyard Road, Lansing, NY 14882
one mile north of the stoplight on Route 34B in
South Lansing.

Church office: 607-533-4070

E-mail: lumcoffice@twcny.rr.com

Office manager: Laurie Moskow

To reach the pastor in confidence:
pastor32@twcny.rr.com

www.lansingunited.org

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Please send your news to Glenn Withiam, editor,
at grw4@cornell.edu, or use the Sunbeam folder
near the church office.

Deadline for the next issue is December 15, 2009.