



From the Pastor's Desk...

On Sunday, September 21st, we will gather for a special town hall style worship service. This service has been planned by the Leadership Team and will be led by the team chair, Doug Hughey. It will be a time of rejoicing in the love of our living Lord, celebrating our accomplishments as a church over the recent past, and a chance for work teams to pass information onto the congregation. It will also include an open forum segment when those in attendance can ask questions and express opinions on topics of their choosing. It is only through communication, co-operation and transparency that the Leadership Team can guide our church into the future and help us fulfill our vision statement.

However, this journey is not one that leadership can take alone. Advancing our church's mission and vision requires the active participation of the entire community. Your input and involvement is essential if we are to move forward together in doing the work of God.

During this exceptional service, we will pause to celebrate the transformative work God is accomplishing in and through First UMC. At the same time, we will consider areas where improvement is possible. Fulfilling our calling to grow God's kingdom and strengthen our church community demands that we discern God's expectations for us and set meaningful, achievable goals that honor and glorify God.

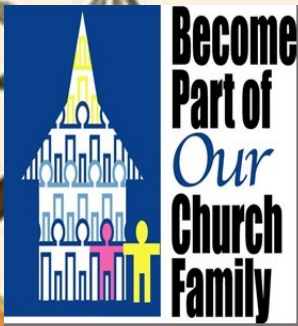
As we planned this worship service, Linda Vincent, Doug, and I reflected on whether anything like this had been done before in our church. To our knowledge, it has not. The prospect of breaking free from routine and embracing something new is invigorating. God is never stagnant or boring—our Triune God continually invites us out of complacency, drawing us nearer and leading us to glorify the One who blesses us as we embark on the unknown for Christ's sake.

I warmly invite you to attend this meaningful worship service. Your voice and perspective are vital as we pursue transformation by God's grace and work together to move First UMC into a vibrant future. As we commit to this journey, we open ourselves to receiving God's abundant blessings in bold and magnificent ways—a reality we are already beginning to experience.

My hope and dream for us, as disciples partnering with Christ, is to bring transformation to the entire West Branch area. I believe this vision is attainable, but only if we unite and work together. Bring the Holy Spirit that lives within you to worship on September 21st and let us partner with Christ, making a difference in the world as we await His return.

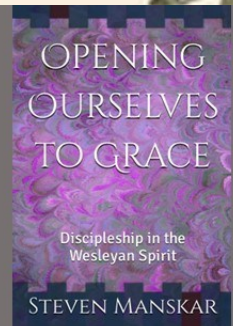
As always, it is a true blessing to journey alongside you, forging ahead together in Christ's service and transforming the world one faithful step at a time.

Michelle Forsyth



NEW MEMBER CLASS STARTS Wednesday, September 24TH, AT 4:30 P.M.

(4 week class every Thursday)



There are no materials required for the class. Please know, however, that members are encouraged to attend this class. We will be discussing the Wesleyan way of discipleship. Our time together will be a relaxed and engaging time of fellowship. Of course, since we are Methodists, snacks will be provided. So, please consider gathering for an hour of holy conversation only to be filled with the fullness of God's grace that sustains us in our life's journey.

If you're interested, please talk to Pastor Michelle.



We need a few more items to help
fill the shoeboxes.
Thank you!

Glue Sticks
Jumbo Crayons

Hair Ties
Combs

If you would like to give a cash donations for
shipping the shoeboxes that would be great too!

Prayer Shawl Ministry

We will join in Christian fellowship to knit or crochet prayer shawls to be gifted to help spread the message of God's mercy, love and compassion.
All skill levels welcome!



September 15th
from 1-3 p.m.



COME JOIN US FOR A
FIRE SIDE CHAT

"PSALMS AROUND THE FIRE"

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH
7PM (SIDE YARD OF THE CHURCH)

BRING YOUR LAWN CHAIR AND
FRIENDS!

QUESTIONS CONTACT DOUG HUGHEY





Bathrooms and Heaters and Driveways—OH MY!

A trustees report by Doug Hughey

In the movie The Wizard of Oz, Dorothy and her friends are concerned with lions and tigers and bears. Here at First Church the trustees and leadership team are concerned with bathrooms, heaters and driveways. And just like the characters in the movie, we can't ignore our concerns or run away from them. We must solve them by confronting them head on with resolve and commitment.

Bathrooms: Over the years I have heard more complaints about our main bathrooms than any other one thing about our church. This is especially true of the women's bathroom. I'm not sure if the bathrooms were attractive and adequate sixty years ago when they were first built, but I am certain that they are neither attractive nor adequate now. A plan to completely remodel the bathrooms has been designed by the trustees and approved by the leadership team. When the project is completed both bathrooms will have ADA compliant stalls, new fixtures and new flooring. The women's bathroom will be much larger than the current bathroom, have two full size stalls in addition to the ADA accessible stall and have a double sink. We hope work on this project can start after the GAP summer program is over.

Heaters: The heaters we are talking about are the ones on the east wall of the sanctuary. They have been there since the church was built and in short they are worn out. Their shafts are shot, their bearings are burned, and their blowers are blown. They shake, rattle, and roll so loudly they have to be shut off on Sunday mornings. They need to be repaired or replaced before next winter. Since we have to shut down the boilers to remodel the bathrooms we want to take care of the heater problem at the same time.

Driveways: The driveways we are talking about are the two that lead up to our parking lot. They are in rough shape but the fix is not a simple one. Because the sod between Fairview Road and our ditch is too thick the snowmelt and the rain water cannot run into the ditch. Therefore the water runs to the ends of our driveways and stays there. The water that runs off our parking lot also sits there. Pavement that sits underwater, especially if it freezes, will develop pot holes. Those pot holes can be patched but they will soon reemerge as long as the drainage situation is not corrected. What we need to do is have the sod on the side of Fairview landscaped so the water will run into the ditch. We also need to curb our driveways so drivers can't "cut the corner" and so the runoff from the parking lot will also run into the ditch. Then we need to have the pot holes fixed and the driveways repaved.

Oh My: three problems—one solution. The solution to all three problems is money. The total cost for the three projects is estimated to be something less than \$35,000, which is very reasonable. We can't ignore these problems any longer and if we don't fix them now they will only cost us

more in the future. We have been talking with the finance team in an attempt to find the funds needed to complete these projects. We also have a committee that is trying to secure some grant monies. We have access to low interest loans through the church district office as a last resort. Of course donations and contributions from our members and congregation are always welcomed and encouraged. If you wish to contribute to these projects contact the church office or after clearly identifying your donation you may place it in the Sunday morning offering plate.

If you have any questions about any or all of these projects feel free to talk to me or any member of the trustees.



If you would like to donate to our 2025 Building Projects Fund

Here are 3 ways you can donate.

1. Place donation in collection plate marked "Building Projects"
2. Mail your donation to the church marked " Building Projects"
3. Drop your donation off at the church office.

Adult Sunday School begins
Sunday, September 21st
at 8:30 am



Children's Sunday School (Junior Church)



Junior Church will start on
Sunday, September 21st
During the worship service



Adopt a Road Clean up
Saturday, September 20th
Starting at 9am
Questions contact Mark Page



(Rain Date September 27th)





Grace & Games

Food, Fun and Fellowship

Sponsored by GAP Ministries

Lunch followed by a time of games and fellowship.

Wednesday, Sept 3rd @ 12:30pm

Come, bring your friends and join us!!!



If you need a ride contact Arlene Martin,
Sue Smith, or Mary Chrysler



**HEARING ASSISTANCE
RECEIVERS AVAILABLE
DURING CHURCH SERVICE.
IF YOU NEED A RECEIVER
SEE MARK.**



Membership care team will
be hosting a Creative Card
making with Jane!

**Tuesday, September 10th
Tuesday, September 16th
@ 1pm here at the church.**

All supplies will be provided by Jane.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN of WEST BRANCH
INVITE YOU TO A



Potluck

**GUEST SPEAKER FROM LYDIA'S GATE
KAITLIN KAUFFMAN**

Lydia's Gate is a faith-based emergency shelter for women and children. They solely rely on community donations.

**Monday
September 8th
5:30pm**

First United Methodist Church
2490 WEST STATE RD
WEST BRANCH, MI 48661



Harvest Dinner

Save the Date!!!!

Harvest Dinner

Saturday, October 4th, at 5:00 p.m.

Details to follow

SEW WITH US

COME SEW WITH US!

All levels of sewers are welcome to join us!
If you have any questions contact Sherri Jacobs.



**Friday, September 26th
10 a.m.**





First United Methodist Church
Corner of Fairview and State Roads



2025 Rummage Sale



Wednesday, Oct 1st 9am-7pm

Thursday, Oct 2nd 9am-5pm

"BAG DAY" Friday, Oct 3rd 9am-1pm "BAG DAY"

1 paper grocery bag \$1

Or 3 paper grocery bags for \$2

Proceeds go to Missions!!!



United
Women
in Faith



All great events need volunteers for set up and clean up,
the rummage sale is no exception.



On Sunday September 28th after the church service
the set up will begin.

On Friday October 3rd at 1:00 PM the clean up will
begin, please assist if you can.



We will need a couple pick up trucks to transfer
the left over items to St. Vincent DePauls.



Contact Sherry Dean 345-3213 if you are able to help.
Thank You!



“Huddle Up!!!!”

Men's Christian Study

**Saturday,
September 13th & 27th
at 9:30 a.m.
Here at the church.**



**United Methodist
Men's Breakfast**



**Sunday,
Sept 21st
7:30 a.m.**

**To Help Men Grow In
Christ,
So Others May Know
Christ.**

**UNITED METHODIST
MEN**

COMMUNITY FREE FOOD GIVEAWAY

**First United Methodist Church
2490 West State Rd, West Branch
Friday, September 19th, 2025**

**This will be a drive thru event
1 box per car**



**DISTRIBUTION STARTS AT 9:00 A.M. Until gone
Questions, call Lisa at 989-345-0381**



Music Notes ~ September 2025

Blessed Assurance (UMH #369) is a beloved hymn written by Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) a New York native, who despite being blind from six months of age composed over 9,000 hymns besides writing poetry, political and patriotic songs, and librettos for several cantatas. Her hymn writing career didn't begin until 1864. Besides this hymn, we have five more of her creations in the current United Methodist Hymnal: #591 *Rescue the Perishing*; #419 *I Am Thine, O Lord*; #98 *To God Be the Glory*; #351 *Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior*; #301 *Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross*.

Fanny's goal in hymn writing was to bring people into a close relationship with Christ. She was an active proponent throughout her life in serving as a missionary to destitute people and provide for their physical and spiritual welfare. From the age of sixty she worked tirelessly to help struggling immigrants, as well as the poor and homeless. She was referred to as "Aunt Fanny" by those she helped. That moniker was on her meager tombstone until it was replaced in 1955 with a large marble monument containing the first stanza of "Blessed Assurance". In 1975 Fanny was posthumously named to the Gospel Music Hall of Fame.

The tune of this hymn was created by an organist and song writer Phoebe Knapp who asked Fanny to write some lyrics to the melody she had created. The collaboration resulted in one of the most cherished hymns in Christian worship.

The hymn emphasizes the assurance of salvation through themes of grace, security, and divine love reminding believers that salvation is a gift from God, not something earned by works. It expresses the joy and confidence of our salvation through Jesus Christ.

Crosby's lyrics are a powerful testimony to her unwavering faith and confidence. Her blindness, while a physical limitation, never hindered her ability to see and experience God's love. We are reminded of the Bible verse in 2 Corinthians 5:7 – "we walk by faith, not by sight".

As we sing "Blessed Assurance" let us remember the incredible woman of faith who penned these words and the God who inspired them. May we sing these words with hearts full of gratitude and hope "praising my Savior all the day long!"

*Blessings in Christ,
Carol Lockhart, musician*





PRAYER CONCERNS

Please contact the office if you know of anyone that should be added to our Prayers. If you are listed below, and wish to be removed from our prayer concern list, call the Church Office: 989-345-0210 or

Email: office@westbranchfumc.org or drop a note. Thank you!

Prayer Concerns

Laura Prescott
Lanae Shields
Diane Pulaskey
Jeff Fagan
Ron Trombley

Military

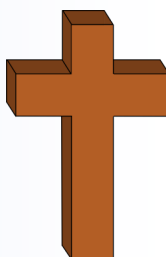
Lt. William B. Mallory

Church

Trinity United Methodist
Church ~ Rose City



The Gilmore Family
Serving in Honduras
ralphaleda@yahoo.com



FINANCIAL REPORT GENERAL FUND

JULY 2025

	<u>MONTH</u>	Year to Date
REVENUE	\$ 17,608	\$121,256
EXPENDITURES	<u>\$ 14,670</u>	<u>\$115,357</u>
GAIN/(LOSS)	<u>\$ 2,938</u>	<u>\$ 5,899</u>

FINANCIAL REPORT GAP MINISTRIES

JULY 2025

	<u>MONTH</u>	Year to Date
REVENUE	\$ 2,277	\$13,349
EXPENDITURES	<u>\$ 8,800</u>	<u>\$ 9,007</u>
GAIN/(LOSS)	<u>\$ (6,523)</u>	<u>\$ 4,342</u>



Sign-up to Serve for Coffee Fellowship



Don't think you need to do it alone because you don't! Ask a friend or two to help! Sign up sheets are on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.

Nursery Care is available every Sunday morning during worship.



Volunteers are ready to serve, but could always use more volunteers!

September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Calendar Subject to change						
	1 	2 Salvation Army 9a-noon Cub Scouts 6p	3 Salvation Army 9a-noon Grace N Games 12:30 Community Choir 6p	4 Salvation Army 9a-noon	5	6
7 Worship 10am	8 UMW 5:30pm	9 Salvation Army 9a-noon Pack Meeting 6p	10 Salvation Army 9a-noon Aktion Club noon Card Making 1p Choir 4p	11 Salvation Army 9a-noon	12	13 Huddle 9:30a
14 Worship 10am	15 Prayer Shawl 1p Cub Scouts 6p BSA Troop 7p	16 Salvation Army 9a-noon Card Making 1p BSA Cub Scouts 6p	17 Salvation Army 9a-noon Choir 4p Community Choir 6p	18 Salvation Army 9a-noon Leadership 9:30a Emmaus Women 2p	19 Food Truck 9a	20 Road Clean up 9a
21 UMM Breakfast 7:30a Adult S.S. 8:30a Worship 10am	22 Cub Scouts 6p BSA Troop 7p	23 Salvation Army 9a-noon BSA Cub Scouts 6p	24 Salvation Army 9a-noon Choir 4p New Member Class 4:30p	25 Salvation Army 9a-noon	26 Sewing 10a	27 Huddle 9:30a Rain Date Road Clean up 9a
28 Adult S.S. 8:30a Worship 10am Fire Side Chat 7p Rummage Sale set up	29 Rummage Sale set up	30 Salvation Army 9a-noon Rummage Sale set up				Calendar Subject to change



Ken & Tricia Weisned

9/18



Lori Anderson

9/1

Thom Jones

9/3

Loree Noel

9/6

Cole Lumley

9/10

Stacy Sabins

9/16

Emily Warnecke

9/18

Beth Burger

9/25

Gloria Brunzell

9/27

Eva Chambers

9/27

First United Methodist Church

2490 West State Rd
West Branch, MI 48661

989-345-0210
office@westbranchfumc.org

Website: westbranchfumc.org

Office hours: Tuesday through Friday -- 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Closed from noon to 1 p.m. for lunch

On Site Sunday Service: 10 a.m.
Adult Sunday School 8:30 a.m.
Children's Sunday School during worship service

Staff:

Pastor: Michelle Forsyth
reverendmichelleforsyth@gmail.com

Office Manager: Renee Guoan
office@westbranchfumc.org

Organist: Carol Lockhart

Custodian: Mark Page

Mission Statement

"Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who will know, love, and serve God."