

FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
WEST BRANCH

December
2025



From the Pastor's Desk...

Merry Christmas, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ!

Or in the words of the Orthodox greeting, “Christ is born!” and the proper response would be “Glorify Him!” This greeting is used to celebrate the Nativity season, which is from Christmas until the end of the twelve days of Christmas.

So, on December 24th, we enter the season of Christmas. So, we celebrate the incarnate Word, God becoming flesh to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ, then and now. We celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord with great fervor. If you like Christmas songs, the Christmas season is the time, in the words of John Wesley, to “Sing lustily with good courage.”

One of my favorite Christmas hymns is hymn number 246, “Joy to the World.” We sing this hymn during the Christmas season because we believe God sent Jesus to bring joy into the world. It is a fact that people are generally more generous during Christmas because the season encourages reflection, compassion, and especially gratitude. So, when we experience the joy of Jesus in our lives, we give cheerfully and joyfully to God.

Isaac Watts composed his hymn “Joy to the World” on Psalm 98:4-9:

Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth!

Be happy!

Rejoice out loud!

Sing your praises!

Sing your praises to the Lord with the lyre—

With the lyre and the sound of music.

With trumpets and a horn blast,

shout triumphantly before the Lord, the king!

The psalmist invites the followers of God to “shout triumphantly” and “rejoice out loud” to thank God for the living presence of God in our world. Isaac Watts affirms that because God sent Jesus into the world, we sing joyously: Joy to the World, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing.

When we open ourselves to receiving God’s unconditional love that comes to us in Jesus Christ, then our hearts are filled to overflowing with love and joy, so that we give back to God out of the overflow. So, we give to God joyfully and cheerfully out of the overflow of the blessings in our lives.

Friends, my Christmas prayer for us is that we find ways to pour ourselves out in loving service to God and to others. And in return, we are filled to overflowing with love, joy, and enthusiasm for living lives that glorify Christ by responding to God’s undeserved gift of grace with our time, talents, and our treasures with a joyful heart. And that our lives, not only during the Christmas season, be characterized by joy and generosity.

As always, serving as your pastor is a joy, and I am so incredibly grateful for the gift of growing in God’s grace with you, and that we are a church that gives joy to the world.

May the abundant Christmas blessings of the Lord be with you always.

Michelle Forsyth



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!



December 1st & 15th
from 1-3 p.m.



To all United Methodist Women
there will be a meeting on
Monday, December 8th at 1:00 PM
Hope to see you there!



There will be a mailing coming out soon.
The mailing will be about 2026 PLEDGE CAMPAIGN.
So please check your mailboxes.

Thank you!
Finance Chair



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

Wednesday,
December 10th
@ 1pm here at the church.

All supplies will be provided by Jane.



HAVE YOU SEEN?

The Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study Class is missing:
Season 1 and Season 2 Videos of "The Chosen" on DVD

1 Video DVD of "NOAH'S ARK" filmed at Branson

1 VIDEO DVD OF "MOSES" filmed at Branson

We are quite sure they have been "loaned out" or misplaced, so if you can
solve our mystery , we would appreciate it!!!

Please Drop off at the Church Office.

Thank you!



“Huddle Up!!!”

Men's Christian Study

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



COMMUNITY FREE FOOD GIVEAWAY

First United Methodist Church

2490 West State Rd, West Branch

Friday, December 12th, 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



West Branch Area
Chamber of Commerce

CHRISTMAS PARADE



Saturday,

December 13th

Parade Start at 7:00

Theme: Home for the Holidays!!

SEW WITH US

COME SEW WITH US!

All levels of sewers are welcome to join us!



Friday, December 19th
10 a.m.



Some of us in Adult Bible Study really wanted to go to Branson to see "David" (meaning King David). We knew it would be in the Sight and Sound Theatre in Branson and we had previously seen a video of their former production of "Noah" and were so impressed with the production available on such a large stage.

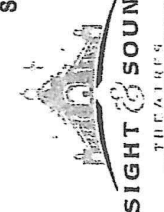
Oddly enough, we found out that "Good Times Travel" tour company (they live at Victorian Manor) were going to go to Branson and see that show and 4 others on April 26 to May 1 2026. Many of you have probably travelled with them in the past.

Some of us have signed up and we wanted to share this information with the rest of the congregation to see if anyone else would be interested.

Below is the "flyer" on this trip. It is \$999 per person based on two people in a room. I have heard "wow" and I said wow, but I took it upon myself to add this up if I got in my car and drove there and did these same shows, stayed in the same hotel and ate the meals, etc. etc. It came to approximately \$1200 but that was me driving the car and making me weary!!! This is me relaxing and "leaving the driving to someone else"! This includes one hotel going and one hotel coming back to Michigan. 3 nights in Branson. I did this trip around 12 years ago and thoroughly enjoyed.

Feel free to ask me questions!

Maggie Robinson

APRIL 26 - MAY 1 ~ 6 DAYS	
 "BRAND NEW 2026 SHOWS"	
CONVENIENT NORTHERN MICHIGAN DEPARTURES.	
YOUR 6 DAY BRANSON VACATION WILL INCLUDE ALL THIS AND MORE.	
DELUXE MOTORCOACH, EQUIPPED WITH RESTROOM, SEMI-RECLINING SEATS, LARGE VIEWING WINDOWS, DVD, PA, LOTS OF STORAGE, AIR CONDITIONING.	
5 NIGHTS LODGING; 2 IN INDIANA, 3 IN BRANSON AT GRAND COUNTRY RESORT.	
ALL ENTERTAINMENT AND MEALS HAVE RESERVED SEATING.	
5 LIVE SHOWS	
SIGHT & SOUND THEATRE PERFORMANCE OF "DAVID" ~ GRAND JUBILEE ~ PRESSLEY'S	
TWO MORE GREAT SHOWS, ANNOUNCED IN JANUARY	
8 MEALS, 5 BREAKFASTS, 3 DINNERS	
ONLY \$999 PER PERSON/2-ROOM	
SINGLE \$1,349, TRIPLE \$949, QUAD \$899	
DEPARTS NORTHERN MICHIGAN	
CALL FOR DAILY ITINERARY	
	
	
OVERNIGHT TRIP SIGN-UP FORM (BIRTHDATE REQUIRED)	
AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____ NAME OF TRIP: _____	
NAME (S): _____ BIRTHDATE(S): _____	
ADDRESS: _____	
CITY: _____ ZIP: _____	
HOME PHONE: _____ CELL PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____	
E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____	
PICK-UP LOCATION: _____	
CIRCLE REQUEST: 1-BED 2-BEDS HANDICAPPED	



Christmas Eve
Candlelight
Service
December 24th
7 pm



Packing of the
Christmas Food Boxes

is Dec 21st after
the church service.

Please help if you are able!

Thank You!!



Advent



Come Join Us for
Advent Devotionals
Dec 4th, 11th, 18th

At 1pm

Organ update/Clavinova purchase 11/20/25

Doug Hughey: Leadership Team Chair

As most of you know, the organ's blower burned out causing the organ to suffer significant damage due to overheating. A special committee of representatives from our standing committees, plus some choir members, Carol Lockhart, and Reverend Michelle held a special meeting to discuss the organ situation. Also in attendance was Loree Noel, whose brother gifted the organ. J. Granger Pipe Organs did an evaluation and estimated that the cost of replacing the blower would be in excess of \$10,000. This estimate did not cover any other repairs beyond replacing the blower. The committee decided unanimously that putting tens of thousands of dollars into an organ built in 1908 was not financially sound.

Acting upon the recommendation from the organ committee the Leadership Team approved the purchase of a new digital piano/clavinova. Upon researching the options, we elected to purchase the model suggested for churches by Yamaha and Herter Music in Bay City. The retail price of the clavinova at Herter's is \$5,399. The sale price until January 6, 2026 for churches is \$4,200. We thought it was important to take advantage of the sale price and also important to have the new instrument in time for Advent and the Christmas season. Therefore we placed the order.

We have donations that will cover a little more than half of the price. You can help fill our sanctuary with wonderful music by making a contribution to the clavinova fund. Any donation, however small, would be a blessing and will take a little pressure off an already strained yearly budget. If you need any clarification, explanation or answer to a question about the old organ or the new clavinova feel free to talk to me, Rev. Michelle, or any member of the Leadership Team.



Thank you to all who
gave time, supplies
and monetary
donations to
Halloween Grab-n-Go

You are appreciated!



Grace & Games

Food, Fun and Fellowship

Sponsored by GAP Ministries

Lunch followed by a time of games and fellowship.

Wednesday, Dec 3rd @12:30pm

Come, bring your friends and join us!!!



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

The Community Christian Choir Presents...

HOPE

Was Born This Night!

Sunday, November 30th at 5:00pm.
Beaverton United Methodist Church
150 West Brown St. Beaverton

Sunday, December 14th at 6:00pm.
West Branch 1st United Methodist Church
2490 West State Road, West Branch

A love offering will be received.



The office will be closed
December, 22nd, 2025 thru January 2nd, 2026.
I will be back in office on January 6th, 2026.
Merry Christmas Everyone!!



The office answering machine and email will be checked daily while the office is closed. Just leave a message and we will get back with you as soon as possible. Non emergencies will be contacted after Jan 6th. Thank you!

DECEMBER MUSIC NOTES

ADVENT MUSIC NOTES ~

'O COME, O COME, EMANUEL' (UMH #211)

The Advent season is an essential part of preparing our hearts and minds for the true meaning of Christmas. In a world often consumed by the busyness and materialism of the holidays, Advent calls us to pause, reflect, and remember the hope, peace, joy, and love that Christ brings.

Perhaps the most familiar Advent hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel", has an ancient and somewhat obscure origin spanning from the 5th to 15th century. It was originally written in Latin. The English translation flowed from the pen of an Anglican priest and scholar, John Mason Neale, who also originated the words for "Good King Wenceslas". The 'O Antiphons' that serve as the core of the hymn date back to the 5th century and remind us of the breadth of our Savior's being: Emmanuel, Wisdom, Adonai (great Lord), Root of Jesse, Key of David, Dayspring, Desire of nations.

The melody we use today originated in France during the 15th century and was paired with added text by Thomas Helmore in 1854. The declarative verses of longing and hoping each end with the joyous refrain "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee..." that highlight our anticipation and growing excitement for Jesus' second coming.

As you sing this hymn, you join generations of believers who awaited Christ's coming. The word "Advent" means "coming" and this hymn expresses the hope of Christ's arrival on multiple levels. It's not just a song for the Advent season – it is a prayer that resonates with the Christian journey. Let your heart 'rejoice' as you sing this timeless hymn, anticipating His return and celebrating the fulfillment of God's promises!

Blessings as you prepare your hearts for the celebration of the miracle at Bethlehem looking forward to sharing the "Joyous News" throughout the New Year!

*May the Hope of Advent and the Joy of Christmas
abound in your hearts and homes!*

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
Diane Pulaskey
Jeff Fagan

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

October 2025

	<u>MONTH</u>	Year to Date
REVENUE	\$ 14,539	\$169,126
EXPENDITURES	\$ 15,188	\$167,762
GAIN/(LOSS)	\$ (649)	\$ 1,364

FINANCIAL REPORT GAP MINISTRIES

October 2025

	<u>MONTH</u>	Year to Date
REVENUE	\$ 325	\$15,100
EXPENDITURES	\$ 30	\$ 16,554
GAIN/(LOSS)	\$ (295)	\$ (1,454)



**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!



December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Calendar Subject to change						
	1 Prayer Shawl 1p Cub Scouts 6p BSA Troop 7p	2 Salvation Army 9a-noon Cub Scouts 6p	3 Salvation Army 9a-noon Grace & Games 12:30p Choir 4p Community Choir 6p	4 Salvation Army 9a-noon Bell Ringing for Salvation Army Advent Dev...1p	5	6
7 Adult S.S. 8:30a Worship 10am	8 UMW 1p Cub Scouts 6p BSA Troop 7p	9 Salvation Army 9a-noon Pack Meeting 6p	10 Salvation Army 9a-noon Aktion Noon Card Making 1p Choir 4p	11 Salvation Army 9a-noon Advent Dev...1p	12 Free Food 9a	13 Huddle 9:30a Parade 7p
14 Adult S.S. 8:30a Worship 10am Community Choir 6p	15 Prayer Shawl 1p Cub Scouts 6p BSA Troop 7p	16 Salvation Army 9a-noon BSA Cub Scouts 6p BSA 7p	17 Salvation Army 9a-noon Choir 4p	18 Salvation Army 9a-noon Advent Dev...1p Emmaus Women 2p	19 Sew with Us 10a	20
21 Adult S.S. 8:30a Worship 10am Packing Christmas boxes after service Private party 2pm-8pm	22 Office Closed Cub Scouts 6p BSA Troop 7p	23 Office Closed Salvation Army 9a-noon BSA Cub Scouts 6p	24 Christmas Eve Service 7p	25 Office Closed Merry Christmas	26 Office Closed	27 Huddle 9:30a Private Party 11a-8p
28 Adult S.S. 8:30a Worship 10am	29 Office Closed	30 Salvation Army 9a-noon Office Closed	31 Salvation Army 9a-noon Office Closed			Calendar Subject to change



Happy Anniversary

Michael & Ellen Pugh

12/17



Holly Lumley

12/2

Melissa Maeder

12/8

Krystal Metevia

12/16

Chris Janisch

12/17

Eric O'Neil

12/21

Dale Wiess

12/22

Laine Mcauley

12/24

Dottie MacIntyre

12/26

Sue Crawford

12/27

Gary Howell

12/27

Janet Bentley

12/29

Nancy Hughey

12/29

Tricia Weisend

12/31

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

Musician: Carol Lockhart

Custodian: Mark Page

Mission Statement

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