

First United Methodist Church
111 East Michigan Avenue
Battle Creek, MI 49014
www.firstumcbc.org



Address Service
Requested

Your Church Staff

Ministers All Members
Pastor Larry French
Administrative Assistant Jean Harvey-Clark
Music Director Anita Blueford
Custodian James Hidley
Organist..... Kay Ensfield
Keyboards Naghielly Walker
Sunday Child Care..... Alexa Robinson
Day Care Starr Older
Video Technician..... Micheal Blueford
Sound Board David Howard

Facility Hours: Monday-Thursday 10 am to 5 pm
Office is Closed for Lunch between
12:30 - 1:30 pm
Office is Closed on Fridays
Phone: 269.963.5567 • Fax: 269.963.6899
Pastor Larry French: 616.551.9280
pastorlarryfrench@gmail.com

The *TOWER News* is published monthly.
Copy deadline is the 20th of the month. **Please**
electronically submit your information to:

Editor & Publisher: Jean Harvey-Clark
jharveyclark@firstumcbc.org



Worship Schedule

In person worship in the
sanctuary at 10:00 am and
Saturday night at 5:00 pm.
Masks are optional.
Sunday School for all ages after
the service.



The Tower News

First United Methodist Church

The City Center Church

*111 East Michigan Avenue
Battle Creek, MI 49014*

Volume 12 Issue 10 – December 2022



*The vision of First United Methodist Church is to be a Vibrant,
Diverse, Christ-Centered People.*



Pastor Larry's Ponderings

December 2022

The time is here, finally. Finally, it is socially acceptable to play Christmas music, put up the tree, and let your holiday spirit shine bright! Some folks wait all year for occasion to bust out the Christmas decorations. First United Methodist Church has a service for everyone this Holiday Season.

Blue Christmas: Saturday, December 17th @ 6pm

'Tis the season for hope, peace, love, and joy. Those are our Advent themes each week, and more than that, those are the emotions we are *expected* to

feel this season, right? And sometimes we do. But sometimes there is stress associated with the Holiday Season, and that stress can become overwhelming. If you are tired, worn out, or feeling down, you are not alone. Our Blue Christmas Service is offered especially for those hurting during the holidays. People come to this service because they have lost someone they love. Sometimes we find ourselves missing home this time of year. Some folks in our community are struggling to put a roof over their heads, or to put food on the table. Loneliness, family conflict, disconnection from those we love, all these things can become more painful amidst what is supposed to be a joyful season. And then there is the violence, hatred, and division in this country and around the world. The reasons we come together seeking God are many. Blue Christmas is a time to exhale, a low-pressure celebration of Jesus that provides hope in a world that is broken.

Christmas Eve: Saturday, December 24th @ 6pm

Come one, come all - and bring the kids! The whole family can enjoy this celebration of the scriptures that tell of Jesus' birth. Our Christmas Eve service is a time to share in worship and song! We'll sing the classic hymns you grew up loving, we'll light candles, and we will celebrate the good news of God among us, together!

Christmas Day: Sunday, December 25th @ 10am

Like hot chocolate? Like singing Christmas Carols? Come to church Christmas morning and join us as we have some holiday fun!

I am grateful to be able to spend the holidays with my First UMC family! This time of year is not always joyful. Sometimes love is a challenge. Joy can be elusive. The world is not at peace. But there is always hope. Join us as we remember why we are a people with hope. Christ brings with him hope for this broken world, hope for a better tomorrow.

If you are struggling this year, I want you to know you are not alone. Please reach out to someone who can help. You can contact me at pastorlarryfrench@gmail.com or by calling 616.551.9280.

Blessings of peace and love to you all, Pastor Larry

Happy Birthday to You!

12/03 Don Larder
 12/04 Michael Dixon Sr.
 12/04 Grace Hardy
 12/06 Shirley Carr
 12/09 Anita Blueford
 12/12 Char Hill
 12/16 Carol Rasmussen
 12/19 Mary Soule
 12/22 Adam Stagner
 12/28 Earl Wade

Blue Christmas Service

Saturday, December 17 @ 6:00 pm

Many thanks to everyone who helped decorate for Christmas.

- Carol Barr
- Sharon French
- Tom Garland
- Jerry Mackey
- Carol Rasmussen
- John Rasmussen
- Mark Soule
- Mary Soule
- Ivan St John

Prayer List

- * Diane Buckley
- * Todd & Mary Boshers
- * Dorothy Carlisle
- * Kay Case
- * Irma Farmer
- * Donna Hoedeman
- * Ed Henegar
- * Jeff Hugget
- * Bill & Donna Lang
- * Dawn Laupp
- * Sharon Leister
- * Jess Marietta
- * Paul & Carol Reid
- * Ginnie Sootsman
- * Tammy Stephenson
- * Don & Hattie Tuck
- * Clarke Whinery

Christmas Eve Service

Friday, December 24 6:00 pm

The Building, Office and Food Pantry will be closed on Friday, December 23 Monday, December 26, Friday, December 30, & Monday, January 2 for Christmas & New Years.

December Meetings

Partners In Prayer
 Monday, December 5 6:30 pm
 Carolyn Harvey

Worship
 Tuesday, December 6 7:00 pm

Trustees
 Wednesday, Dec. 7 10:00 am

Service Team
 Thursday, December 8 10:30am

Martha Circle
 Wednesday, Dec, 14 11:00 am • Clara's

Happy Anniversary

12/05 Bill & Donna Lang
 12/17 Todd and Anne Stagner
 12/29 Mike and Betty Dawson

The service for Mike Buckley will be on Monday, December 5 at 1:00 pm at Farley Estes Dowdle Funeral Home. Visitation is Sunday from 2-5 pm.

Thanksgiving dinners

A BIG Thank You to all who donated for the dinners. It made for a nice dinner for our Christmas Families. We sure do appreciate your help with our projects.
 Thanks, Judy Brown

Bell Ringing

Bell Ringing for the Salvation Army at Penfield Family Fare will be December 16th and 17th from 10 am to 8 pm. Sign up sheets are at the Service team table. It is cold so they are made out for 1 hour, but we would be glad to see you sign up for 2 if you could. We appreciate all you do for us.
 Thank you

Giving Tree

Ornaments are on the giving tree this is to help with our Christmas baskets. Please take what you can so that we can give our families gifts for Christmas. Return your unwrapped gifts with the tag by Sunday, December 11th.

End of the year giving for 2022 needs to be in the office for deposit on Tuesday morning December 27 by 10:30 am. Please let Jean know if you want 2023 Giving Envelopes by Friday, December 9.

Christmas Eve **Poinsettia** order forms are available on the table in the Atrium and the Usher's table in the Parlor. The deadline for ordering is Monday, December 12th at Noon.

The SPRC is collecting a **Love Offering** for the Staff Christmas present, Please contribute Sundays, December 4 & 11 so that the checks can be written prior to Christmas. Thank you in advance.

Joanne's Crafters and Quilters will NOT meet on December 21, 2022.

BYOM - If you have the chance, grab that coffee mug off the counter, and bring it to church on Sunday morning. We would like to reduce the expense and waste of Styrofoam, disposable coffee cups. See you on Sunday for a fresh cup of hot coffee!

Church Council Corner November 22, 2022

Meeting highlights:

Thanksgiving meals were served from our kitchen by the God's Kitchen program to 382 individuals. Judy Brown will be taking the test to be our certified kitchen manager. A Christmas Dinner will be provided for the Women's Life Recovery and a Super Bowl party for the Men's Life Recovery, both programs of The Haven.

The Security Team received support to hold a day of training for all members by Police Officer Karl VanDyke in early 2023.

Encouragement was provided for Pastor Larry to develop a Facilities Improvement Grant for new and expanding child care providers through the Great Start Readiness Program. Details will be brought to the Council in January.

There will be a Blue Christmas service on Saturday, December 17, 7 pm, in addition to Christmas Eve at 6:00 pm and a Christmas Day 10 am services.



Giving is available on our website firstumcbc.org through PayPal

Collection Report

2022 Budget

Needed per week		
November 6		\$4,286.00
November 13		\$3,033.00
November 20		\$2,823.97
November 27		\$1,638.00
Received Year To Date		\$2,757.00
Needed Year to Date		\$130,416.97
		\$205,728.00