

The First Connection

a publication of Mason First United Methodist Church

December 2019

Looking Forward

November is almost gone, and can I just say, “Whew!” What a flurry of activity of mission and ministry and hospitality and generosity – all good things for building up God’s community of faith! Do you know, I actually had someone say to me, shortly before I came here, that I would have to get used to a slower pace as I moved to a smaller church? Whoever said that didn’t know the folks at Mason First UMC!

And so we move into the season of Advent on a wave of excitement and expectation. Advent is a season of anticipating the coming of Christ. We go to wild lengths baking and buying and decorating to prepare our homes so that we can celebrate the historic event of Christ coming to earth. But... are we preparing our hearts for the *future* coming of Christ?

I encourage you to take some precious time amidst the decorating and doing and just sit in God’s presence and listen. Let God speak into your heart, and let the witness of the story of Jesus’s birth give you hope and peace for the season and the days to come. And as we look ahead to an exciting New Year, consider that God may be calling us to grow in personal faith as well as grace-filled discipleship.

When it comes time to flip the calendar, we’re going to be talking about grace in a series called, “Do You Know Grace?” We’ve got some new classes, and some special events lined up all to reacquaint us with God’s love in a personal and communal way.

Advent is a great season for inviting friends and neighbors to worship. Even the most jaded person experiences a longing to reconnect with the Christmas story at this time of year. Everyone needs the love of Christ and the support of a church family. The greatest gifts we can offer this season are hospitality and inclusion.

In the meantime... may God’s love and peace dwell richly in you, and may you have a blessed Advent season.

Peace,

Pastor Suzanne Goodwin

Coming in Worship

Sunday, December 1

Advent Hope: *A Day Is Coming*

Sunday, December 8

Advent Peace: *Let There Be Peace in You*

Sunday, December 15

Advent Joy: Children’s Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 22

Advent Love: *What Kind of Savior?*

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve: A Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 29

PJs and Presents – Come in your PJs

Children, bring your favorite gift to be blessed

Sunday, January 5

Epiphany Sunday

Sunday, January 12

Do You Know Grace?

Book Discussion Group

The Book Discussion Group is taking a break this month but will resume in January. Our book titles for the next four months are:

"Home to Harmony" by Philip Gulley

"Frozen in Time" by Mitchell Zuckoff

"A Long Walk to Water" by Linda Sue Park

"Can't Wait to Get to Heaven" by Fannie Flagg

Please consider joining us for one or all of the books. We'd love to have you! (And we go to lunch afterward!)

All the books are available through the Capital Area District Library. If you have any book titles that you feel would be appropriate for our group, please see Kim Wolfgang.

Change for Change

Our next Change for Change Sunday will be held on December 29 when we bring in our change to help with water projects around the world. Our money will be sent to Water for Life—UMCOR. Please remember to bring your change with you on Sunday, December 29. Our September collection totaled \$879.46.

Ring the Salvation Army Bell!

Our church will be responsible for ringing the Salvation Army bell at the Meridian Mall Food Court from 3:00-8:00 p.m. December 2, 9, 16, and 23. On December 23 at 6:00 p.m., a group from our church will be ringing the bell and singing Christmas carols—everyone is welcome to join them! The sign up sheet is at the Caring Table.



Mason Christian Child

Care Center

The children did many things to celebrate Thanksgiving this year. They made turkeys with thankful feathers, they talked about being thankful for the many blessings God has given them and they "made" cookies for the people in the church who help and support us throughout the year.

We are now gearing up to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. The children are making special gifts for their families and learning about the greatest gift of all, the gift of God's son.

The toddlers and preschoolers continue to work their way through the alphabet. They work on one new letter each week and have themes that support their letter. The letter "I" had the children learning



about ice cream and insects. This month some of our Bible stories have included: Jesus Loves the Children and Noah's Ark.

Finally, at this time of giving thanks I would like to thank some of the many people who contribute to making the center an amazing mission. They include, but are not limited to: a wonderful staff who support each other and are devoted to the children, the church staff who always go above and beyond to help us in any way they can, the congregation for all their support all year long, and to all of our families who entrust us with their most valuable blessing – their children. Thank you all so much.

—Tami Boyic, Director

News of Our Church Family

Hospitalized at this time are Jean Bement and Marge Talboys. Recovering at home following recent hospitalizations are Tom Plumhoff and Cherry Zanger.

Christian sympathy is expressed to Roger Whiting on the loss of his father-in-law; to the Strait family on the loss of Doug; and to the Hedglen family on the loss of Suzie.

Congratulations to Joshua and Miranda (Sperry) Bliss on the birth of their daughter, Hosanna Marye Bliss.

Please note: The hospitals do not notify the church when someone from our church family is admitted. Please ask a family member or a friend to let us know!

Our members or friends who are in assisted living, nursing homes, or hospice care:

Grand Haven Living Center, Lansing:
Gayle Gunns

Green Acres
Bev Eccleston
Beth Grosshans

Ingham County Medical Care Facility, Okemos:
Char Bush
John Dodge
Vi Ramey

The Willows of Okemos:
Lew Tibbits

Vista Springs Edgewood, Lansing:
Vic Whipple

End of Year Giving

December is such a generous and giving time of year! Just a reminder that if you plan on giving tithes and/or offerings to the church and you want them on your 2019 statement of account, we will need them by noon on Tuesday, December 31.

Marilyn Lautzenheiser, Financial Secretary



Children's Ministry

Our Christmas pageant will be held on Sunday, December 15 during worship. On Saturday, December 14 we will have practice at 10:00 a.m. at the church. If your child is interested in being in the program, please feel free to contact me (Brittany@masonfirst.org) as we still have some open spots to fill!

—Brittany Beaune, Children's Ministry

Tuesday Night Potluck

The Tuesday Night Potluck continues Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. Come and join us in the fellowship hall for food, fellowship, and fun. Let's make this a community outreach by inviting friends and neighbors. Bring a dish to pass. The Hospitality Team provides tableware and beverages.

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

December brings us many things – colder weather, the holiday rush, and the end of another hectic year.

But most importantly, it is when we get to celebrate the birth of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. And that certainly makes it the most wonderful time of the year!

The church office is extremely busy in December. Our fiscal year ends with the calendar year, so there is much work to be done during the last week of December.

The Finance Committee will meet in December to review the individual budgets for all the ministry areas of the church. In January, Church Council will review the results of our fall stewardship campaign and vote on the overall budget for the upcoming year.

We're starting 2020 with a bold new attitude and a renewed determination to pay our ministry shares in full. The Finance Committee has committed to raising the amount we send monthly to the conference from 10 percent to 15 percent of our weekly operating budget proceeds. The committee is also working on a plan that will enable us to fund a Youth Ministry position. In addition, discussions were begun on how the church can set aside some funds for the next big roof or furnace repair/replacement project.

God bless each of you who have supported the church so faithfully throughout the year. Enjoy this holiday season as we celebrate Christmas and look forward to even more wonderful things in 2020!

—Glenn Darling, Mason First United Methodist Church Financial Administrator/IT Support

UMW Annual Christmas Brunch

Our Christmas Brunch will be held on Saturday, December 7, at 9:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall. All women of the church and their guests are invited to attend. Please sign up at the Caring Table for this special annual event.



“White” Gift Christmas

Our traditional “White” Gift Christmas will be observed on December 15. We will share from our abundance with those persons in need. Our format will be: select a tag from the bulletin board in the fellowship hall now through December 8 listing a gift you wish to purchase, and record the number of the tag on the sheet of paper provided. Purchase the gift and wrap it in Christmas paper, and return the gift to the church on Sunday, December 15 (or before if you are unable to attend on that day). Our committee will then deliver the gifts to the recipients. Thank you for sharing with those less fortunate. See Cherry Zanger if you have any questions.



Holiday Office Hours

Please note that the church office will close at noon on Christmas Eve for the holidays, but church staff will be available from 8:00 a.m.-noon on the 30th and 31st to receive and complete year-end business.

Email Round-Up

December is Email Round-up month. We'd like to make sure that you have all the latest and greatest information about what's going on at our church, and keep you up to date on the latest prayer concerns of our church family. By submitting your email address, we can make sure that you're on our distribution lists to receive news, prayer concerns, and volunteer opportunities. Find the Email Roundup slip on the Caring Table, in your bulletin, or simply leave a note in the church office. Be in the know!



M&M Event—Dec. 12

Join with the M&Ms group on Thursday, December 12 to view Lansing's **Festival of Trees** at the Turner-Dodge House! *"Embrace the Holiday Spirit and join the Friends of Turner-Dodge House for the 7th annual Festival of Trees! All three floors will feature as many as 60 trees decorated for the holidays. Monies raised*



go toward projects to preserve and enhance the Turner-Dodge House." Cost of admission is \$5.00. There is

no elevator, however, in the past there has been a video of the upper two floors. (If you are unable to do stairs, please doublecheck with Kim to confirm if the video is available this year.) Prior to visiting the Turner-Dodge House, we will eat lunch at DeLuca's Restaurant in Lansing. Our schedule will be as follows: leave from the church parking lot at 10:45 a.m.; eat lunch at Deluca's restaurant; view the Festival of Trees beginning at 1:15 p.m. Please sign up at the Caring Table and indicate if you can **DRIVE** and take others with you, if you prefer to **RIDE**, or if you will **MEET** us there. Sign up no later than Sunday, December 8. Space is limited to 20 people. See Kim Wolfgang for details.

SignUpGenius

So many volunteers, so many opportunities to serve! On Tuesday, November 12, the Mason First UMC Mission Team met together with the Mission Team from Mason Community Church to talk about collaborative efforts to have the greatest missional impact with the best use of our resources. Many great ideas were shared and the enthusiasm was contagious!

One way to make it easier to connect people to opportunities to serve is through the website SignUpGenius.com. This site allows you to set up all



your sign up opportunities under your organization's name AND invite people to participate

through email blasts. The site also will send email reminders to you to let you know what you signed up to do.

Some of the ways we can use this site might include signups for contributions to funeral meals, volunteer needs for projects, and signups to provide particular items—like for White Christmas.

For those who don't have email—don't worry! We'll still offer traditional forms of communication and you can always be included on the SignUp Genius through the church office.

Don't forget to update your email address through our Email Roundup this month!

Christmas Poinsettias

Christmas poinsettias may be ordered in honor of or in memory of a loved one on Sunday, December 1, and Sunday, December 8. The cost is \$10 each and four colors are available. You will be able to take your poinsettia home following the Christmas Eve service.





December BIRTHDAYS

and



December ANNIVERSARIES

Andrea Ruttan.....	6
Barbara Chapman	7
Joyce Darling.....	7
Dennis Whipple.....	8
Russ Whipple	8
Chris Spyke.....	8
Chuck Reed	10
Connie Doss	12
Lori Howe	12
Jan Magsig.....	12
Glenn Darling	13
John Lord.....	14
Mark Stroud	15
Irvin Smith.....	17
Abigail Day	19
Linda Carmer.....	20
Brian Ball	21
Gordie Richards.....	24
Shaun Sherwood.....	25
Gayle Gunns.....	27
Eric Lautzenheiser.....	28
Jenny Baker.....	29
Gail Ried.....	29
Holly Gardner.....	30
Barry Hedglen	31

Aaron & Kelly Treiber.....	5
Alan & Shelly Heaviland	6
Wayne & Sharon Sodman.....	27
Jon Droscha & Beth Bousfield.....	28
Jason & Alex Darling.....	28
Gerry & Carole Bosshart	29
Dan & Linda Plyler.....	29
John & Linda Akers.....	30
Paul & April Kirk	30



Thank you notes are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. Thank you notes have been received from Mary Ruttan, the Mason Police Department, Angel House, and Shared Pregnancy.

December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 White Christmas tags 9:30am Worship 10:45am Faithlink	2 10:00am Arthritis Exercise 3:00pm Salvation Army Bell Ringing at the Meridian Mall	3 9:00am UMW Mission Team 10:30am Tuesdays With Suzanne 1:30pm Clothing Bank 4:00pm Carol Choir 5:30pm Potluck Dinner 6:00pm Clothing Bank	4 11:00am PATH Group 1:00pm Quilting 7:00pm Handbell Choir 8:00pm Chancel Choir	5 10:00am Arthritis Exercise 4:00pm Carolier Choir 5:30pm Weight Watchers	6	7 9:30am UMW Brunch 1:00pm Family Party 6:00pm Boy Scout overnight
8 White Christmas tags 9:30am Worship 10:45am Faithlink 11:00am Youth 6:30pm Youth Group	9 10:00am Arthritis Exercise 3:00pm Salvation Army Bell Ringing at the Meridian Mall	10 10:30am Tuesdays With Suzanne 4:00pm Carol Choir 5:30pm Potluck Dinner	11 11:00am PATH Group 7:00pm Handbell Choir 8:00pm Chancel Choir	12 10:00am Arthritis Exercise 10:45am M&M Event 4:00pm Carolier Choir 5:30pm Weight Watchers	13 Newsletter Deadline 1:00pm CACS Commodities	14 10:00am Christmas Pageant Practice 12:00pm Family Party
15 White Christmas! 9:30am Christmas Program 9:30am Worship 10:45am Faithlink 6:30pm Youth Group-- Caroling	16 10:00am Arthritis Exercise 3:00pm Salvation Army Bell Ringing at the Meridian Mall 5:30pm Alzheimer's Support Group 7:00pm Finance Committee	17 10:30am Tuesdays With Suzanne 1:30pm Clothing Bank 4:00pm Carol Choir 5:30pm Potluck Dinner 6:00pm Clothing Bank	18 11:00am PATH Group 7:00pm Handbell Choir 8:00pm Chancel Choir	19 10:00am Arthritis Exercise 12:00pm MCCCCC Staff Appreciation Luncheon 4:00pm Carolier Choir 5:30pm Weight Watchers	20 11:00am UMW Book Group	21
22 9:30am Worship 10:45am Faithlink	23 10:00am Arthritis Exercise 3:00pm Salvation Army Bell Ringing at the Meridian Mall	24 Office open 8:00-12:00 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service	25 	26 Church office closed 5:30pm Weight Watchers	27 Church office closed	28
29 Change for Change 9:30am Worship 10:45am Faithlink	30 Office Hours 8-12	31 Office Hours 8-12				



First United Methodist Church
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NON-PROFIT
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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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Return Service Requested

Mason First United Methodist Church

Please join us for our Christmas Candlelight Service!

Candlelight Christmas Eve service: 7:00 p.m.



Office Hours:

Monday - Friday

8:00 a.m. - noon and 12:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Phone: 517-676-9449

Email: info@masonfirst.org

Church Website Address: www.masonfirst.org