



The CROSS & FLAME

DECEMBER 2023

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

167 S. Ripley Blvd. Alpena, MI 49707

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our vision is to follow Jesus Christ through worship, learning, serving and sharing.

STAFF

Rev. Robert Nystrom,
Pastor

Russ Anderson,
Custodian/Maintenance

Robin Rayment, Bookkeeper

Sandy Jarmuzewski,
Administrative Assistant

OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Thursday
9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Office: (989) 354-2490
Pastor Rob: (989) 415-3830
Fax: (989) 358-8150
E-mail:
alpenafumc@gmail.com

Watch videos of our services on
YouTube, Facebook, and our
website:
alpenafirstumethodist.org

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday School 8:30 a.m.

Worship Service 9:30 am

Hearts to Home - Wednesdays 12-2pm

DECEMBER MEETINGS

6th—JOY 11:30 a.m. 19th Hole

Items of Note for December

3rd—Communion Sunday

5th—Basket Guild Party 4-9 p.m.

5,12,19,26 -Audio Bible Study-Lounge 1:00 p.m

6th —Besser Chorus Rehearsal 6:30pm

9th—Benefit Dinner/ Silent Auction for Jenn

Swoffer 3 pm—7 pm here

10th—Tin Can/Potluck

13th—Besser Chorus Concert Here 7 pm

13th—Bunco Club 6 pm—10 pm (Overflow)

14th—MARSP 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

17th—Sunday School Christmas Skit

18th—Parkinson Support @ 1:00 p.m.

24th—Christmas Eve Services at 9:30a & 7p

25th—Office Closed (Christmas Day)

27th—Friendship Room

December Newsletter Deadline

December 26, 2023

The Pastor's Page

Darkness is impactful. Mental health professionals warn us that Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.) is a prominent cause of depression; the lack of sunlight this time of year can be daunting (some people use full-spectrum lightbulbs to help counter SAD). Michigan not only experiences reduced sunlight hours, but with lake-effect weather patterns we have more cloudy days than most other states. We can go for weeks during a Michigan winter without seeing the sun!

It's no wonder then that people are eager to put up lights. It may be that since Covid-19, people are more eager than ever to find and share the bright and exciting colorful lights of Christmas. Those lights harken back to times in our lives of hopeful optimism. Our tree went up early too. And, I've been listening to Christmas music at home as I plan Advent worship messages and services, since before Halloween (pastors need to kindle the "holiday spirit" earlier than most folks). Last night the skies were clear and cold, and the landscape was illumined by the full moon and the first snowfall of winter; they were welcome guests to fend off pervasive darkness.

There is a spiritual truth here that parallels nature. In the time of greatest darkness God sent His Light into the world. The prophet Isaiah foresaw God's intervention:

"Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. ...
2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." Isaiah 9:1a-2

Three days after the darkest day of the year (Dec. 22) God brought Jesus into the world, under hope of the star of Bethlehem. Three days after the darkest time... Does that ring a bell? Spiritually speaking, three days after the darkest day (Good Friday, and the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross) God would raise up Jesus Christ as the Sun rose – the Son arose.

We are not there yet, but we have begun the journey. Each week of Advent we will light another candle to mark the way toward the birthday of Christ. Anticipation grows, hope builds, faith is confirmed, love is revealed as we remember when He came into the world and as we prepare to welcome Him into our hearts and lives.

Shalom, Pastor Rob

HEARTS TO HOME REPORT
 Many thanks for the generous donations.

Month	Money Collected	# of Families	# of Individuals	# of Items Distributed
September	\$10	8	21	153
October	\$35	8	16	167
November	\$30	10	14	232

Church Envelopes -

If you have not done so, please pick up your 2024 church envelopes and Advent Books that are on the table in the hallway so they do not need to be mailed. Everything is alphabetical.

Thank you, Sandy



VALET PARKING SERVICE

Parking lots re often slippery—even when it looks as if they aren't. If you are worried about slipping and falling, please take advantage of our valet service.

Just drive up to the overhang by our front door and someone will drive your car to a parking spot and will retrieve it for you after church.

Seeking an opportunity to volunteer this winter?

Join our valet parking volunteers. For more information regarding First UMC's valet parking service, contact Russ Anderson at the church or Pat Leahy @ 269-830-6293.

I just want to thank
 everyone who
 purchased gifts for the
 Angel Tree.



PASTY DINNER:

Without the help of the FUMC Pasty Crew and many others, this would not be possible. The money was divided between:

Campership for the Youth to go to camp

Boys and Girls Club of Alpena

Church General Fund

VVA #583 Toys for Tots

Most importantly we would like to give a BIG THANK YOU to the FUMC Pasty Crew and let you all know how APPRECIATED you are to us and the church. The team is made up of some congregation members and friends & family outside the church. They donate their time to help make this all possible. We could not do this without all the help that is given. There are no words to express how appreciative we are to them and for their hard work and big hearts.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! *Peter & Linda Rasmussen*

PASTY MAKING

Peter & Linda Rasmussen took over making pasties for the church 3 years ago in October 2020 due to the illness of Stan, which she started back in 2010. The sale of pasties helps the church and different organizations around Alpena. This would not be possible without the help of the FUMC Pasty Crew. A Big thank you to them and all the support we are given. We can only report for the last 3 years we have been involved, but we estimate that over 6,000 pasties have been made in our 3 years.

PASTY PROCESS:

Day 1: (Monday) Veggies are ordered.

Day 2: (Wednesday) Pick up veggies and peel rutabaga. Do shopping for supplies and order the meat. Do set-up for next day.

Day 3: (Thursday) Consists of 6-8 people. Make the dough, make shells, prepare potatoes, onions, grind rutabaga, rip foil. Set up for the next day.

Day 4: (Friday) Consists of about 16-18 people. Grind onions, dice potatoes, mix up meat, fill shells, bake, wrap pasties and fill freezers. Make anywhere from 350-400 pasties each time.

MONEY: Pasties are %6.00 each or Buy 10 and get 1 free.

Money is used in different areas of our church as well as organizations in Alpena.

Helped with: Power Point projector — \$225 each money toward church bills —

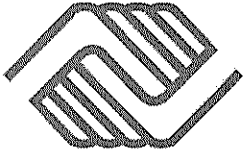
Bought riding lawn mower — Money for other needs when needed — Boiler repair —

Use of wood chipper — Angel tree gifts

If you wish to become a participant in the Pasty Crew, please contact Linda or Peter Rasmussen. All are welcome. Thank you!

JOY FELLOWSHIP MEETING

Joy Fellowship will meet on Wednesday, December 6, at 11:30 at the 19th Hole for their Christmas luncheon. All women are invited. Come and enjoy fellowship and friendship..



CONGREGATION HAS TOUR OF BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF ALPENA

BOYS & GIRLS

CLUB

Twelve members of our congregation visited the Boys and Girls Club of Alpena on Wednesday, November 8. JOY Fellowship sponsored a mission project to support the Boys and Girls Club and we presented the donated items to the club at this time. We were then given a two-hour tour of their new facility. They were excited to receive the needed items and as excited to tell us about their new facility and the programs they offer. They see between 120-160 kids a day. Students arrive by school bus, are given a meal, and then proceed with various programs. The facility is divided so that teens are together, early elementary together, and later elementary together. The director, Brad Sommers, and his staff are dedicated and are excited about the program. It is so great to see such enthusiasm and dedication to our students in Alpena.

JOY Fellowship wishes to thank everyone that donated items to this wonderful facility and program. We just wish everyone could have experienced the JOY of Giving. Thank you.

JOY FELLOWSHIP

Word Verses for December 2023

Old Testament: Isaiah 9:6

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

New Testament: Titus 2:11

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all,”

Sunday School Class to Present a Christmas Play

During our regular 9:30am service on December 17, the Sunday School kids (and some helpers) will provide a glimpse into the manger in Bethlehem. Would you like to help with this production? We're looking for help with costumes and props, one female speaking role is also available. Please see Janice Miller after worship service in the office. Or call/text 989-590-7231, email seekerjan@yahoo.com



Sending Greetings to Our Shut-in Friends

You can help us send Christmas Notes to Shut-ins! They are now placed on a table in the Fellowship Hall. You will find colored pens and pencils available for you to use when writing a short greeting to our friends who are confined indoors. Each letter has been addressed to someone from our church family. Please write a few lines of greeting on each letter and sign your name. After service on Sunday, December 17, these letters will be mailed to our shut-ins in time for them to receive it before Christmas. This is one way to keep in touch with these dear friends, and a great way to let them know we're thinking about them. Questions? Ask Janice Miller. See her in church, after worship service in the church office,

Merry Christmas

December 2023 Schedule

Liturgists

3 Janice Miller
10 Linda Suneson
17 Janice Miller
24
31

Acolytes

Zach Cook
Cooper Knapp

Greeters

3 Monna Bennett
10 Carolyn Anderson
17
24 Betty Gordon
31

Ushers

3
10
17 Betty Gordon
24
31

Couriers

3 Mark Gilin
10 Ken Cook
17 Bill McConnell
24 Scott Koproski
31 Mark Gilin

Hearts to Home

6 Ron Ross
13 Carolyn Anderson
20 Jill Lutes
27 Pam Alexander

PowerPoint— Bill King
Robin Benson

Sound Board— Russ Anderson

Video

Janice Miller
Monna Bennett
Cassie Anderson

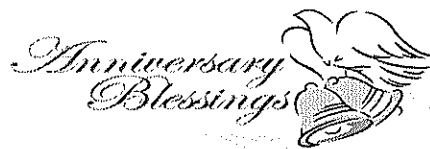
DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Gary Stevens	1
Mary Lou Froggett	5
Mark Gilin	5
Mary McConnell	5
James Bullen	6
Helen Smith	7
Marion Parent	12
Anne Dessenberg	14
James Coleman	19
Susan Osbourne	19
Harry Pilarski	19
Bill McConnell	20
Kevin Osbourne	22
James Dessenberg	23
Barbara Bowman	25
Zach Cook	25
Kim Borowski	26
Mike Barnett	29
Cheryl Russell	29

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Bernie and Kim Borowski 12/12 (11 years)
Mike and Judy Dennis 12/21 (55 years)
Mark and Kim Gilin 12/22 (17 years)
Ray and Cheryl Hansen 12/23 (28 years)
Gary and Judy VanDeven 12/24 (42 years)



DECEMBER 2023

SUNDAY

MONDAY

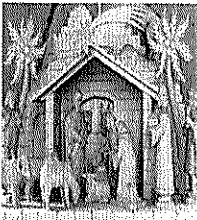
TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

					1	2
3 SS 8:30 AM 9:30am Worship COMMUNION SUNDAY	4	5 Audio Bible Study-Lounge 1p Basket Guild Party 4-9p	6 JOY Grp. 11:30 19th Hole Besser Chorus 6:30-9:30p	7	8	9 Benefit for Jenn Swoffer Spaghetti Dinner Silent Auction and Chinese Raffle 3-7 pm Please attend!
10 SS 8:30 AM 9:30am Worship Tin Can Youth Potluck	11	12 Audio Bible Study-Lounge 1p	13 .Bunco in Overflow 6-10p Besser Chorus Concert Here 7 pm	14 MARSP 11-2p	15	16
17 SS 8:30 AM 9:30am Worship Children's Christmas Skit	18 Parkinson Spt- 1 p.m.	19 Audio Bible Study-Lounge 1p	20	21	22	23
24 SS 8:30 AM 9:30am Worship Christmas Candlelight Serv. 7:00 p.m.	25 CLOSED 	26 Audio Bible Study-Lounge 1p NEWSLETTER DEADLINE END OF DAY	27 Friendship Room	28	29	30
31 SS 8:30 AM 9:30am Worship						