



A Note From Pastor Julie



It's December, which means that Advent is here helping us prepare to receive the Christ Child at Christmas. I've already seen the messages on cars that say, "Keep Christ in Christmas." Recently, Cheryl Sykes tagged me in a Facebook post that gave this same message, however this message expanded it a bit. Here is what the message said:

Want to keep Christ in Christmas?

Feed the hungry,
clothe the naked,
forgive the guilty,
welcome the unwanted,
care for the ill,
love your enemies,
and do unto others as you
would have done unto you.

Not only can we serve our own communities in the ways given above through the food pantry and the angel tree, but we also have the opportunity on Giving Tuesday (December 2 from 12:00 am to 11:59 pm EST) to support United Methodist related ministries around the world who do! On December 2, simply give a gift at www.umcmmission.org/give. All gifts of up to \$1 million given through this United Methodist site will be matched.

I personally enjoy giving to organizations in honor of loved ones in the form of an alternative gift. Last year, I drew my mother-in-law's name for Christmas and gave a gift to Pura Vida (Pure Life) in her honor. Pura Vida is an organization that works to create a brighter future for children in Guatemala. Since my mother-in-law is a retired Spanish teacher and loves kids, this was the perfect way to honor her during the Christmas season. The people of Guatemala have suffered great tragedy through wars and massacres in the last several decades. Hope is what is needed and Pura Vida is working to bring that hope.

Consider joining me in honoring a loved one on Giving Tuesday and throughout the Advent and Christmas Seasons.

Happy Advent! Merry Christmas!

Love,
Pastor Julie

The Season of Advent

What a beautiful time of year is upon us! Advent is a journey we make each year to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ child. Rev. Julie Elmore will lead an Advent sermon series, "Here is Our God." Each service will be a time of inspiration as we see where we can find God. All Sunday worship services begin at 11 a.m. Please note the following schedule:

Sunday, November 30, Worship Service, "Finding God in People,"
Isaiah 64:1-9 & Mark 13:24-37

Sunday, December 7, Worship Service, "Finding God in the World"
Isaiah 40:1-11 & Mark 1:1-8

Sunday, December 14, Worship Service, "Finding God in Unexpected Places"
and Infant Baptisms Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 & Luke 1:47-55

Sunday, December 14, 3 p.m., Hillsdale Arts Chorale presents Handel's *Messiah* at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 2551 West Bacon Road, Hillsdale. \$8.00. Come and support Marge Beckner and Cathy Crater, our church members, as they participate.

Sunday, December 21, Worship Service, "Finding God in Our Community"
2 Samuel 7:1-11 & Luke 1:26-38

Wednesday, December 24, 7 p.m., Christmas Eve Service, "Finding God in the Manger"
Isaiah 9:2-7 & Luke 2:1-20

Enjoy visiting with friends, old and new, following the service as we share punch and cookies.
"Reaching Out" Goodie Bag Delivery (see page 4 for details)

Sunday, December 28, Worship Service, "Finding God in the Christ Child"
Isaiah 61:10-62:3 & Luke 2:27-40



O Come This Night

Hundreds of years ago there was no Christmas celebration. The first three centuries had no calendar recognition of Christ's birth. It was declared by Origin (c.185-c.254) to be wrong to honor Christ the same as Pharoah and Herod. Birthdays were for pagan gods. However, not all agreed that Christ's birthday shouldn't be celebrated. Actual records were seemingly lost and speculations abounded by leaders in those early centuries. January, March, April, May, and November months and days were all considered for His birth date. The December 25 choice already had pagan festivals regarding the 'birth of the unconquered sun' (Roman) and the birth of Mithras, the Iranian 'sun of righteousness' (Roman). Also, the winter solstice which celebrates the sun is at this same time of year.

“She gave birth to her first child, a son.” Luke 2:7

Christian celebration of His birth was confusing then. Just as it was then with confusing days, we see similarities in agreeing when Black Friday really begins. Is it the first Monday in November, The Saturday before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving night, or the whole month of November? For some, this really raises the stress level in decision making. To be at Denny's for 3 a.m. Friday breakfast after Thanksgiving or leave the turkey at 6 p.m. Thanksgiving day?! Too much confusion.

So in the 3rd century, enough was enough in debating when Christ's birth should be celebrated. With all those other celebrations occurring yearly, in the year 336, Emperor Constantine declared December 25 as Christmas, and that Christianity would be the empire's favored religion.

“Look at my servant. He is my chosen one... He will be gentle.”

Isaiah 42:1-2

Today in many ways, we, too, stretch that Christmas celebration throughout the month of December. Weekends are filled with choirs, parades, and gala events. Weekends are host to family gatherings, filled with music, travel, and shared meals. It is still calendar worthy to see that much of this confusion comes together on December 25, and Christ's birth is truly a celebration. Join in the month-long preparation! Join in the celebration!

“Greetings... the Lord is with you!” Luke 1:28

Ron Giacobassi



Sources: *Christianity Today.com*

“Reaching Out” Efforts Continue

The Litchfield United Methodist Church will continue to “Reach Out” to our community during the month of December with efforts organized by the Nurture/Witness Teams.

- * To recognize the teachers and other school staff at the Litchfield Community Schools, a large tray of treats, similar to the goodies in the gift boxes for farmers, will be delivered to the school on December 10. We want to include Christmas cookies, fruit, and snack treats. A card of encouragement and appreciation will accompany our gifts. If you would like to provide some goodies, a sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board. Please remember to pray for the teachers and administrators in all of the area schools, as well as the students.
- * We all know how nice it is to be with family on Christmas Eve. Unfortunately, many people are required to work in service occupations, and they must be away from their loved ones. This year, we want to show those employees that we remember their efforts that help us all.

We plan to put together holiday bags of trail mix and candy canes to deliver to gas station attendants, emergency response teams, police officers, and caregivers at select adult care facilities. If you would like to help distribute these tokens of appreciation, please contact Sharon Thompson. Perhaps this will become a new Christmas tradition for our church as we remember to “Reach Out.”



Hallelujah!



On Wednesday afternoon, November 19, several people around the Litchfield area were tempted to start singing the “Hallelujah Chorus.” Rev. Julie Elmore received a message from the Albion District of the West Michigan Conference that our church’s grant application for the new sound system had been approved. The church will receive a \$5,000 grant in early December. With the grant, our church has raised \$18,625 toward new equipment. Hallelujah!

Rev. Julie contacted Craig Playford immediately to place the order. Mr. Playford began to work immediately on microphones, and it is likely the new sound board will be installed before Christmas. With new equipment issues that have developed since last summer, we also plan to purchase a new PowerPoint projector and CD player, which were not included in the original bid. New speakers, which were scheduled as part of Phase 3, may be delayed while other more pressing items are installed.

We praise God for all the support received for this project. Our prayer remains that this new equipment will allow our church to expand ministry opportunities in the Litchfield area. Thank you for helping us to achieve the goal, and may you receive many blessings for your faithfulness.

UMC Giving Tuesday – December 2!

You can extend the spirit of giving thanks into the Advent season by participating in UMC Giving Tuesday. Every gift made online through The Advance at www.umcmmission.org/give on December 2 between 12:00 am and 11:59 pm EST will be matched up to \$1 million. UMC Giving Tuesday offers an opportunity to start off the holiday season by giving to support organizations and missionaries that have been researched and approved by the Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. Giving through The Advance is also a way to give alternative gifts to those in your life who already have everything they need. One hundred percent of all gifts made through The Advance are given directly to the designated project. Last year on UMC Giving Tuesday, United Methodists collectively raised a record \$6.5 million online through The Advance.



Refreshment and Liturgy Schedule

REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE

<i>December 7</i>	<i>December 14</i>	<i>December 21</i>	<i>December 28</i>	<i>January 4</i>
Laura Cierpilowski Sheila Gary	Betty Peiffer Janice Teller	Ron & Velvet Giacobassi	Clara Dawson Ella Hamrick	Carl & Cheryl Sykes

Plan to stay after our worship service every Sunday
and join in for some good food and fellowship.
Special thanks to those listed above who will be serving.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

<i>December 7</i>	<i>December 14</i>	<i>December 21</i>	<i>December 28</i>	<i>January 4</i>
Tom Beckner	Zach Hiser	Frank Hiser	Cheryl Sykes	Valery Roberts

Special thanks to those listed above who are willing
to assist the pastor in Gathering Words and reading Scripture.
You are appreciated.

Boy Scouts



Boys in Boy Scout Troupe 241 received awards on Saturday, November 15. This troupe includes boys in first through fifth grades and meets each Monday at Litchfield UMC.

Seasons Greeting from Litchfield Cub Scout Pack 241!

We have been very busy over the fall! We went to Flavor Fruit Farms and had a hayride, learned about apples, had treats, and went home with pumpkins! A Halloween party with lots of games and candy! Even a hayride at Dark Side Acres!

We created over 200 cards for the Salvation Army to pass out for their Thanksgiving dinner with the help from Litchfield Girl Scout Pak 60135.

We also had a blue and gold banquet where the whole pack earned all the badges, belt loops, and awards they have so patiently waited for.

Last Saturday we had our pinewood derby race (the one thing the boys look forward to the most), and it was a HUGE success.

We have been blessed with some great volunteers and boys! And a big thank you to Pastor Julie for blessing our meals and helping to judge the cars.

Thank you, Litchfield United Methodist Church, for the space to help these young boys learn all about scouting with a safe and friendly place to have meetings. We look forward to the holidays and all the blessings they may bring. Happy Holidays! Kim Crawford

Pictured here, the Boy Scouts excitedly racing their cars at the Pinewood Derby at Litchfield UMC on November 22. First place winner was Robbie Bradstreet, second place was Andrew Atwood, and third place was Zach Atwood.



Poinsettia Sale Wrap Up-Thank You



Merry Christmas and thank you from the children!!

Thank you for the support of the poinsettia/tulip bulb fundraiser to benefit VBS. The poinsettia purchases made by individuals and also those in honor/memory of loved ones, combined with the tulip sales, added \$583.50 to our VBS fund for next year!!

The color of choice was traditional red, followed by pink, blue, purple, white and marble. We even had a few adventurous people order fuchsia and chameleon. The tulip sale was new this year. Looking forward to seeing some pretty color in some yards next spring!

Thank you very much to our sellers for being out and about. Without you pounding the pavement, this fundraiser would not be as successful.

If you did not get an order placed, we have a few poinsettias still available for purchase. Please contact Carolyn in the church office if you are interested.

Just a Couple Reminders

FROM THE TRUSTEES

If you would like to make improvements or purchase things for the church, please bring this to the trustees for approval. Thank you, The Trustees



2015 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Please contact Valerie Roberts at 398-3267 (incoming Financial Secretary,) or Marcia Ferry at 542-3992, with any changes or requests for 2015 offering envelope packets.

United Methodist Women



Our December meeting will be on the 17th, 1:00 p.m. We will fill Fruit Baskets for church staff and do cookie tins for shut-ins. If each member would please bring 2 dozen cookies etc., on that day, it would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

Pantry item: pasta.

Hope to see you at the meeting and have a Happy Holiday Season!

Carol Ireland, President



Remember to pray for...



In nursing homes and assisted living: Elnora Beckner, Geri Bennett, Roscoe Corey, Ruth Hamilton, Willie Hinkle, Lorene Ladd, and Wes Sutton.

Debbie Kurtz
Randy Jones
Olivia Estep
Betty Peiffer
Pat Smith

Patty Johnson
Garland Chapman
Mindy Zigler
Jeff Warren
Hazel Rice

Jason Hill
Bambi Lambright
Monique Yoder
Pat Smith
Rolland Hankey

Heather Pitts
Dick Kaleida
Dora Villarreal
Isabelle Russell
Bill Berry

Garrison, Grandson of Larry & Bev Reasoner is doing much better. Thank you for your prayers.

Pray for Paul Webster, our missionary in Africa.

Pray for those traveling during the holidays.

Pray for those grieving the loss of a loved one.

Annual Turkey & Ham Supper and Bazaar

Allen United Methodist Church

Saturday, December 6, 4:30-7:00 p.m.

Menu: Turkey, Ham, Dressing, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Squash, Cole Slaw,
Baked Beans, Cranberry Salad, Pies, Cake, Drinks

Cost: \$8.00 Adults; \$4.00 Children 5-12

Bazaar Opens at 4:00 p.m.

Baked Goods, Crafts, Canned Goods, Candy, Etc.

Carry-Outs available!

Bible Sunday



Second graders and a few older children received Bibles on Bible Sunday. Pastor Julie had them searching their Bibles as soon as they received them.

Angel Tree



The Angel Tree will be located across from the Narthex. Choose a tag from the tree with a child's gender, age, an interest or two, to donate a gift. If you are unable to purchase a gift yourself but still would like to donate, you can donate money towards a gift and the Outreach members can shop for you. Please contact Sheila Gary.

Please have your Angel Tree gifts or donations to the church by Wednesday, December 17. Thank you.

Thank You's

- ◇ Dear Church Family, Thank you so much for the nice Halloween card and Subway gift card. It was so nice to hear from you all, Things are going well at MSU. The semester is flying by! I've been enjoying my time at football games and other fun activities. Looking forward to a break at Thanksgiving. Thanks again! Hugs, Leah Giacobassi

- ◇ Litchfield United Methodist "Little Angels", Thank you so very much for the Halloween pumpkin! It's sitting on my porch rail for all to enjoy, unless it rains, then I will bring it in.
Happy Trick or Treating, Dawn

- ◇ Dear Church Family, Thank you very much for the Halloween card and treat! All is well here in Texas. Staying very busy with research as well as teaching a lab and grading all of the lab reports. I also officiate high school volleyball for my 2nd season. I really enjoyed it and worked a lot of games. The season is over now leaving even more time to be in the lab.
Cassie Giacobassi

- ◇ To my dear friends and second family, Thank you so much for sending all your positive thoughts and prayers this year as I take on the long task of my sophomore year of college. It's been so greatly appreciated as I have had such an interesting time as the year seems to progress faster and faster with each upcoming day. I hope to be home for Thanksgiving as well as Christmas so I'll keep all of you in my heart. Love, Samantha Cares
(See her complete letter on the bulletin board near to the church office.)





December Holidays

2014



L-Litchfield Q-Quincy

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Please check the weekly bulletins for changes, updates, & locations.	1 Noon L-Rotary 3 pm L Knit & Craft 5:30 pm L Boy Scouts 7 pm L Bible Study	2 UMC Giving Day 10 am L Bible Study 2 pm Christmas Tea @ Presbyterian Church in Coldwater	3 6 am L Prayer Time 9:30 am Q Bible Study	4 1:30 pm Q Quilters 3:30 pm Q Prayer	5	6 1 pm L Girl Scouts
7 9 am Q Worship 10:30 am Q S.S. 9:45 L Adult S.S. 11 am L Worship 5-7 pm L Youth Group	8 Noon L Rotary 3 pm L Knit & Craft 5:30 pm L Boy Scouts 7 pm L Bible Study	9 10 am L Bible Study 6 pm L Trustees 7 pm L Outreach	10 6 am L Prayer Time 9:30 am Q Bible Study	11 1:30 pm Q Quilters 3:30 pm Q Prayer	12	13 L-Smith Family Christmas in Fellowship Hall
14 9 am Q Worship 10:30 am Q S.S. 9:45 L Adult S.S. 11 am L Worship 3 pm -Arts Chorale @ St. Paul's Lutheran Bacon Rd., Hillsdale	15 Noon L Rotary 3 pm L Knit & Craft 5:30 pm L Boy Scouts 7 pm L Bible Study	16 10 am L Bible Study 7 pm Q Trustees 7:30 pm Q Ad. Council	17 6 am L Prayer Time 9:30 am Q Bible Study 1 pm-UMW 5:30 L Rotary Party	18 1:30 pm Q Quilters 3:30 pm Q Prayer	19	20 L- Teller Family Christmas in Fellowship Hall
21 9 am Q Worship 10:30 am Q S.S. 9:45 L Adult S.S. 11 am L Worship 5-7 pm L Youth Group	22 Noon L Rotary 3 pm L Knit & Craft 5:30 pm L Boy Scouts 7 pm L Bible Study	23 10 am L Bible Study	24 6 am L Prayer Time 9:30 am Q Bible Study 7 pm L/ 9 pm Q Christmas Eve Service	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS 	26	27
28 9 am Q Worship 10:30 am Q S.S. 9:45 L Adult S.S. 11 am L Worship	29	30	31 5 p.m. L Girl Scout Lock-In	January 1 10 am L Lock-In Ends Happy New Year		

December

Birthdays

Anniversary

4-Oliver Elmore
6-Marissa Brinks
8-Velvet Evans-Giacobassi
13-Marge Beckner
14-Zach Hiser
15-Doris Blonde
19-Mike Bills
19-Colleen Campbell

19-Art Clark
19-Cassie Giacobassi
20-Barbara Hooley
27-Stephen Sykes
27-Mary Wendorf
28-Roscoe Corey
30-Ruth Wooden

22- Ken & Laura Cierpilowski





LITCHFIELD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**160 Marshall St
P O Box 472
Litchfield, MI 49252**

517-542-3366

E-mail: umclitchfield@gmail.com

Website: umclitchfield.org

Find us on Facebook: [facebook.com/litchfieldumc](https://www.facebook.com/litchfieldumc)

Pastor: Julie Yoder Elmore

E-Mail: jyelmore@gmail.com

Cell Number: (517)607-6977 (Text and Call Friendly)

517-542-3775 (Parsonage)

Office Hours

M-W-TH 9:00-3:00

Food Pantry Hours

M and TH 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship 11:00 AM

Youth Group
First, Third, and Fifth Sunday
5:00 PM