



# The Beacon

Volume 6 No. 12

DECEMBER 2017

## A Christmas Poem

by Russell Logston

Packages wrapped with mischievous care,  
Shall I put another bow over here?  
Tie it tighter lest it slip,  
Opening this package will be half the trick.

Have you ever put a brick with something small?  
Or boxed a box just to fool them all?  
Some may think this to be rather odd,  
But it always caused my grandma to laugh and nod.

The joy was in giving, and the receiving was fun too,  
The smell of pine, and gifts so new.  
Twinkling lights, and trains that go,  
Looking outside and expecting the snow.

But those childhood days slip away,  
Everyone knows that they cannot stay.  
Loved ones leave us, and we move away,  
However, I know it will not always be that way.

For the truth of Christmas is not an earthly thing,  
It is a story that made the angels sing.  
It is about our God who came to stay,  
And gave us a gift in a special way.

Wrapped in the ordinary was a transforming grace,  
Tied up proper, and sent to the human race.  
With a grin so sly and in God's good time,  
A savior was born, one of a kind.

The Babe seemed ordinary and innocent for sure,  
But he was the hope for the sins that we bore.  
His life was given that we might live,  
And learn the importance of what we might give.

And somewhere in the living and giving we do,  
We shall find our way back to the family we knew.  
Eternal truths are the best of presents to share,  
For they shall take us to heaven and to those who are dear.



Perhaps one of the things that makes Christmas special is that it is a time when memories are made. Even though the yesterdays are gone, I still remember and value the joys of Christmases past, and the family members who shared in them. In my mind those times still have significance and life. Also, I realize that today is the opportunity to write other chapters to those Christmas stories. The present and future may not be like the past; however, today can be filled with the same importance to be something more than ordinary.

Perhaps God is like this. In our lesson for this Sunday the prophet Isaiah cried out wishing that God would once again come down and shake the mountains; dislodging all doubt from the people's mind about who God is and what God wants.

### **Isaiah 64:1 (NRSV)**

*O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence.*

Isaiah was thinking about how God revealed himself on Mount Sinai to Moses. Isaiah would have God do again what God did then, but God didn't repeat this revelation. The stories of Moses at Mount Sinai were left to stand on their own. We are free to either believe what we heard and let it become a part of who we are, or to ignore it. However, to ignoring the truth doesn't make the story less true. It doesn't reduce the meaning of the event any more than the years make me forget the meaning of the Christmases I shared in my past.

However, Isaiah words also are prophecy. Mount Sinai stands on its own, but God would reveal God's self again. When Jesus was born the heavens were describe as being torn open at the time of his baptism. In Christ God came down and spoke to us again. We can either hear the old story told in the new way or ignore it.

Every Christmas becomes a new retelling of the old story. It is another chance to hear God's message, and to live out God's truth again. We shall not return to Mount Sinai, or even the manger, but that is okay. Today, God is offers us a new day. In the Spirit's leading the present is a new chance to recreate God's truth within us and within our world. Today is the opportunity to know that we are called to an eternal life. The story is far from over. We have just become a part of it. This year may Christmas reveal God's truths to you.

*Blessings,  
Pastor Russell Logston*



## ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

November 28, 2017

Members Present: Barb Foged, Sandy Mallory, Roger Noonan, Bill Lyon, Roy Pentilla, Pat Smith, Jean Petersen, Tom Petersen, Jan Lyon, Rod Meade, Jim Fowler, Jim Coombs, Pastor Russell Logston, Kay Wilcox, Kay Coombs, Candy Hasselbeck, Gerri Sorbie, Carole Merillat

Meeting opened with a prayer given by Tom Petersen.

Minutes of October's meeting were read and approved.

**Single Board Governance Model** was presented by Pastor Russell. The Board would consist of 15 people (Pastor, Treasurer, finance, 2 SPRC, 2 Trustees, Lay Leader, Men's Group, UMW, Missions, Worship, Music, Summer Worship, Education, Hospitality, Memorial – two year terms; meet approximately every 6 weeks. A vote was taken and passed to try this new structure. Hand-outs are available from Pastor Russell. Pastor will schedule a Church Conference meeting with District Superintendent before the end of the year.

**Pastor-Parish Relations** – Roger Noonan said that he will present ways to do the box luncheon which we will try to do the first part of 2018.

**Finance** – Roy reported that he is confident that we will meet budget by end of the year. Still have \$4,100 left to pay on ministry shares. Balance of \$30,418.00 of liabilities and equity. See bulletin Board for detailed report.

**Trustees** – no report. Pat Smith said that items for time capsule are slow coming in. She will put items on display before we seal it.

**Memorial** – Lots of "thank you" notes have been sent out by Barb Foged for donations.

**Missions** – Alternative Gift Giving Event report was given. Very few of our church members attended. Committee will evaluate whether we will continue event. We received a thank you from UMCOR for the \$1,490 donation we gave.

**Education** - Sunday School lessons in January will be on The Ten Commandments.

**UMW** – The annual Christmas Luncheon will be Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December. Theme is "Grandma's Apron". The group has provided 5 funeral dinners this year, sent money to Salvation Army for children to go to summer camp, supplied funds for a pastor's discretionary fund request and helped pay for new chairs for the Sunday School Room.

**Men's Group** – Next men's breakfast will be Saturday Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Hospitality** – Jan reported that greeters and ushers have name tags and she would like them to be worn. She requested approval for professional display signs be purchased to advertise the yearly events that we have. Council approved \$200 for this project.

**Worship** – Hanging of the greens special service was this last Sunday. We received positive comments about the service and the council would like to see it done again next year. The children participated and was a positive experience. The Christmas Cantata will take place on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> with the children participating on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Christmas Eve service will be at 7:00 pm.

**Compassionate Care** – JoAnne has been sending out about 17 cards a month. Members have been delivering meals once a week for one individual. If anyone is in need of this service please call Barb Foged.

### Other business

- Jim Coombs talked about endowment fund and how to make more interest on money.
- **Annual Staff Christmas giving** – Postcards or e-mails will be sent to congregants and who will be collecting it.

Kay Coombs moved to adjourn and Barb Foged seconded.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carole Merillat, secretary



# The 9 Districts of the Michigan Conference

*(We are in District 2)*

## A Message from the Bishop



*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation, everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*

**- II Corinthians 5:17-18**

*God's self-revelation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ summons the Church to ministry in the world through witness by word and deed in light of the Church's mission....The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by proclaiming the good news of God's grace and by exemplifying Jesus' command to love God and neighbor, thus seeking the fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world. - The*

### Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church

At the 2017 Annual Conferences, members voted to create nine districts as we come together to form the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church. Following *The Discipline*, it is the responsibility of the bishop to draw the lines establishing these boundaries. Over the summer, I brought together an advisory group to help me with this task. We were guided first and foremost by the mission of the church - to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. For the Michigan Conference, we have said that we envision a conference that is Christ-centered and connected: to engage in shared mission and ministry, to support bold and effective leaders, and to nurture vibrant congregations. With nine districts instead of twelve, we are re-directing ministry share monies to help provide staff that will work with district superintendents and other lay and clergy leaders to fulfill our mission and vision.

With mission foremost in mind, we also identified other important values in forming nine districts: honoring current shared ministry arrangements; creative possibilities for missional alignments; creativity in providing district leadership; regional identity/affinity; transportation patterns; considering resources and capacity for new districts; diversity; and connectedness.

We view the districts as serving as a primary locus for connecting and equipping local churches in the fulfillment of the Conference's mission and vision. The District will be the primary community, for both clergy and local churches, focusing on accountability to the Conference vision, continuing education, development and growth, and spiritual discernment and support.

Continued on the next page ...



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There is still more work to be done. By the end of 2017, district superintendents will be selected, and they will begin their ministry July 1, 2018. A number of the current districts have or will be celebrating their significant accomplishments. In the spring, district conferences will be convened to name these new communities and select new leadership. In the coming months, district superintendents, district leadership, and conference trustees will select district office locations.

It is my hope and prayer that our new nine districts will be as helpful and as spirited as the districts have been in the past. I have been delighted by the work I have witnessed in our current districts and trust we will find ways to use these new districts to work out our mission and toward our vision.

Lastly, I would remind us that no structure is perfect. In the same letter where Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that their ministry of reconciliation comes from God, he also notes that “we have this treasure in clay jars” (4:7). The new district boundaries represent our best prayerful thinking. If in the future, we need to make changes and adjustments to further our mission and vision, we can and will do that. In the meantime may we, by the grace and power of God, continue to move into the future. Confident that God’s Spirit is at work within and among us so that lives and the world are transformed in the name of Jesus Christ. May we work with the courage that comes from knowing that we are loved deeply, profoundly and wildly by God, by a God who wants all to see that love.

Grace and Peace,

David A Baul



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

**Thank You,  
Church!**

**35 Shoeboxes  
were packed  
Sunday,  
November 19<sup>th</sup>!**

L to R: Jim Fowler, Susan Davis, Candy Hasselbeck (background) Barb Fowler and Shirley Solem at Shoebox Packing time

## Be an angel this Christmas – invite someone to church ...



“It is Christmas time, and there are many people who typically don’t go to church but are searching nonetheless for the “good news of great joy for all the people.” They’ve been searching at the mall, at their Christmas parties, even sitting in front of a decorated Christmas tree, but they still haven’t found Christmas. And they won’t find it, unless someone plays the part of the angel and invites them to come and see the child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

*From Adam Hamilton’s The Journey –  
Walking the Road to Bethlehem.*





**The Advent wreath**, four candles on a wreath of evergreen, is shaped in a perfect circle to symbolize the eternity of God. In some churches, four purple candles, one for each week in Advent, are used with one larger white candle in the middle as the Christ candle. Other churches prefer three purple or blue candles with one candle being rose or pink, to represent joy.

The lighting of the first candle symbolizes expectation, the second symbolizes hope, the third joy and the fourth purity. The Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day reminding Christians that Jesus is the light of the world.

Ornaments made from Christian symbols (or Chrismons, a contraction for 'Christ monograms') were first developed by Frances Spencer and the women of the [Ascension Lutheran Church](#) in Danville, VA. Many churches display a **Chrismon tree** during the Advent and Christmas season decorated with handmade ornaments. Our Christmas trees hold Chrismons made by Leah Edsall and her group of ladies many years ago.

Many churches hold a service of preparation for Christ's coming, which includes hanging greenery traditionally associated with everlasting life. Greens such as cedar for royalty, fir and pine boughs for everlasting life, holly symbolizing Jesus' death and ivy representing the resurrection are used.

## Christmas Cantata: *Joy Has Dawned*

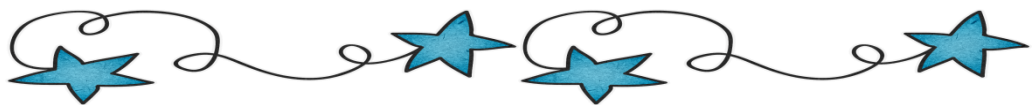
A "Let's Sing" Christmas musical will be presented on two Sundays, December 10 and December 17, by the choir. "Joy Has Dawned" was created and produced by Dennis and Nan Allen, and arranged and orchestrated by Dennis Allen for Lifeway Worship, Nashville, TN.

*"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10)*

"And before the next day had dawned, those shepherds had seen with their own eyes what millions before them had been looking for: the Messiah. True, He was not what they had expected; a conquering warrior, a savvy political figure, a regal king. He was a child, and a poor one at that. His cradle was a feed trough in a stable behind a small inn. But somehow they just knew that He was the One.

This Christmas season, ask God to bring tidings of great joy to you. Ask Him to open your eyes and let you see Him afresh. Let the Light of the world – Jesus Christ – dawn in your heart."

Blessings, Dennis and Nan Allen



**Loud  
Offering  
this  
Month**



Your coins and cash that crash into the collection cans this month help to relieve the stress of rent and utility payments, car maintenance and gas costs for those in need. What a blessing to those who receive and to those who give to the

**PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND.**



## United Methodist Women's Christmas Luncheon Dec. 5

On Tuesday, December 5, the Empire United Methodist Women will hold their annual Christmas Luncheon at 11:30 AM. The theme is "Grandma's Apron." Women of the community and area churches are invited to attend. Each guest is asked to bring a donation for the Empire Area Food Pantry. **Please RSVP by December 1**, as seating is limited. A delicious meal, wonderful fellowship, and singing Christmas carols will remind everyone of the reason for the season!

## The Micki Barr Memorial Giving Tree

Christmas gifts for families, selected by the Traverse City Women's Resource Center, will be collected this year and placed under "The Micki Barr Memorial Giving Tree" in Fellowship Hall. Paper mittens hanging on the tree will contain the family number, age and gender, sizes and/or special items requested by the recipients. Please wrap the gift, attach the paper mitten with the family number, and place under the tree.



***Please place all gifts under the "Mitten Tree"  
by Sunday, December 10.***



**Monday Morning Men's Group  
@ 9:00 AM**

**Tuesday Morning Group Study  
@ 9:30**

Will resume after the holidays! More information to follow.

**Thursday  
Bible Study @ 2:30 PM**

***Everyone welcome!!!***

**Men's Breakfast  
Saturday, December 9 at 8:30 AM  
2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month  
Fellowship Hall  
*Invite a friend or two!***





*All who entered into the story of Jesus' birth ended their journey in worship before the Christ:  
Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, the shepherds, the magi.  
What provokes joy and wonder in the Christmas season for us?  
What do we worship?  
Jesus is the center of our worship for the season.*

**December 3**  
**1st Sunday of Advent**  
**10:30 AM Worship**

**December 10**  
**2nd Sunday of Advent**  
**10:30 AM Worship**

Christmas Cantata: ***Joy Has Dawned*** - (Part I) a Christmas musical presented by the choir)

**December 17**  
**3rd Sunday of Advent**  
**10:30 AM Worship**

Christmas Cantata: ***Joy Has Dawned*** - (Part II) a Christmas musical presented by the choir)

**December 24**  
**4th Sunday of Advent**  
**10:30 AM Worship**

**7:00 PM Christmas Eve**  
**Candlelight Service & Carols**





## MONTHLY CALENDAR

### 1<sup>ST</sup> Sunday of every month:

Holy Communion served – *"Take communion as often as you can. It is food for the journey." All are welcome.*



### Leelanau Area Food Pantry Collection

*Donations of canned goods and packaged food are collected for the Leelanau Area Food Pantry. The pantry is always in need of volunteers. Please contact Pastor Russell, Barbara Foged or Sue Palmer for more information.*

*Palmer for more information.*

**ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETS MONTHLY – 4<sup>th</sup> TUESDAY: all committees meet at 6:00 PM;**

**6:30 PM Administrative Council.** *Your participation is encouraged and your support is appreciated!*

### Last Sunday of every Month:

**Loud Offering** – to help a wide variety of charities and the Pastor's Discretionary Fund (for people in need).

**Our Vision Statement:**  
*Be a Companion in Faith to All, That Jesus Christ May Live in All.*



### COUNTERS:

12.03	Bill Lyon	Sandy Mallory
12.10	Barb Foged	Sue Palmer
12.17	Marilyn Johnson	Gerri Sorbie
12.24	Roger Merillat	Kay Coombs
12.24	Rod Meade	Kay Wilcox

### USHERS/GREETERS:

12.03	Pete Mallory	Tim Egeler
12.10	Jim Sorbie	Dan Davis
12.17	Jan Lyon	Bill Lyon
12.24	Pete Mallory	Jack Gardner
12.31	Pete Mallory	Sandy Mallory

### READERS:

12.03	Tom Petersen
12.10	Meredith Goodrick
12.17	Sandi Flack7
12.24	Rod Meade
12.31	Kay Coombs





## The Hands & Feet of Christ 132 Years in Empire 1884 – 2017

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## ***EUMC Mission Statement***

*"To live out a faith in Jesus Christ through our efforts to hear others, share in God's truths, join in worship, and celebrate in the Joy of God's grace."*

10:30 AM	Worship Service
10:45 AM	Sunday School & Nursery
8:00 PM	AA Group
<b>MONDAYS</b>	
9:00-1:00	Church Office open
9:00 AM	Men's Bible Study - Pastor Russell Logston
10:00 AM	Worship Team
<b>TUESDAYS</b>	
9:30 AM	Bible Study with Pastor Russell Logston
<b>WEDNESDAYS</b>	
9:00-1:00	Church Office open
8:00 PM	NA Group
<b>THURSDAYS</b>	
9:00-1:00	Church Office open
10:00 AM	Worship Team
2:30 PM	Bible Study – Rev. Tom Petersen
4:00 PM	Choir rehearsal



**EMPIRE  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
PO Box 261 - 10050 Michigan Street  
Empire MI 49630

Rev. Russell K. Logston, Pastor  
(231) 326-5510  
[empireumc@centurytel.net](mailto:empireumc@centurytel.net)  
[pastor\\_empireumc@centurytel.net](mailto:pastor_empireumc@centurytel.net)  
Facebook.Com/Empire United Methodist Church  
Website: [www.empireumc.org](http://www.empireumc.org)

TO: