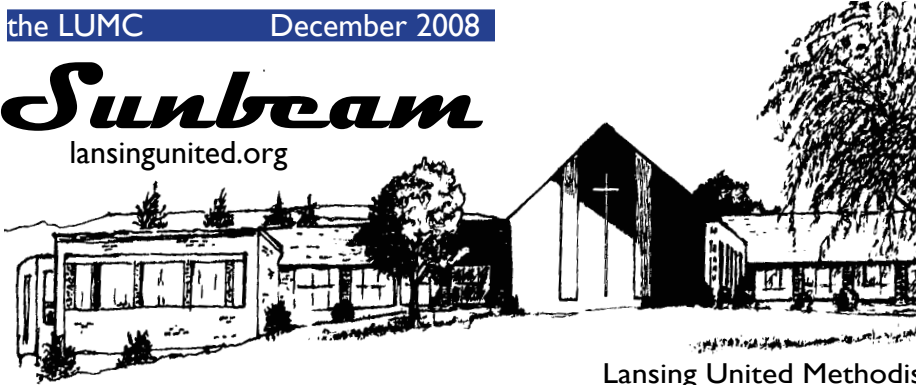


Please join us for worship at 8:30 and 11:00. Sunday school at 9:45.
Christmas Eve worship at 5:00 and 8:00 PM

the LUMC December 2008

Sunbeam
lansingunited.org



Lansing United Methodist Church
Route 34B and Brickyard Road, South Lansing

Pastor: Bill Gottschalk-Fielding • Program Associate: Marilyn Paradise • Youth Coordinator: Kevin Dunn

THE VIRGIN...WILL GIVE
BIRTH TO A SON, AND THEY
WILL CALL HIM
IMMANUEL.

MATTHEW 1:23





Christmas...and Easter

From the Pastor

A couple of years after I'd moved from Trumansburg (my first church) to Geneva (my second), I had coffee with the Trumansburg's new pastor. She shared with me an informal survey she'd conducted during a small group Advent study she was leading (incidentally, don't forget about LUMC's adult Advent study beginning during Sunday School!). In this survey she asked participants to identify the leanings of the pastors who'd served that church in terms of whether they were "Good Friday-Easter Sunday" pastors or "Advent-Christmas" pastors. She asked me if I wanted to know how my former parishioners saw me and I replied I certainly did!

Now before I tell you what she told me, let me explain what these two categories mean. A "Good Friday-Easter Sunday" person is someone whose faith is deeply informed and moved by the stories of Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection. God's victory over sin and death, the gift of new life through resurrection and the triumph of God over evil powers are vital ideas for a "Good Friday-Easter Sunday" person. An "Advent-Christmas" person, on the other hand, is drawn to the story of God becoming like one of us. Incarnation ("taking on human form"), Emmanuel ("God with us") and God showing up in a baby are vital ideas for this sort of person.

It's not an "either-or" proposition, of course. A follower of Jesus is going to be drawn, nurtured and challenged by both of these emphases. What the Trumansburg pastor was searching for was a leaning or a visible emphasis. For

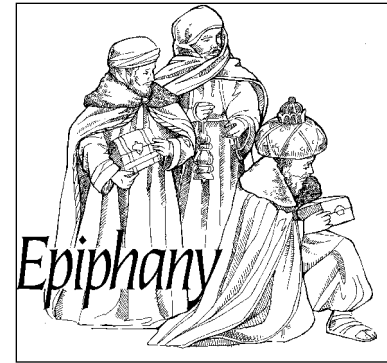
a preacher, this might show up most clearly in sermons, I suppose.

So how was I seen back then? The pastor said folks identified me as a Good Friday-Easter Sunday sort of guy. Looking back over my sermons from those days, I can see why. Cross and empty tomb featured pretty prominently. Today, though, I might identify myself leaning the other way or, perhaps, doing a better job of including the "Advent-Christmas" side of things. I know I'm getting very excited about the upcoming Advent season. The story of a God who comes to us, becomes one of us, and befriends us in Jesus deeply moves my soul. I read into this story the testimony not only of a God who deeply loves us, but of one who is radically available to us. As South African Methodist pastor Trevor Hudson puts it, "our God happens in a baby!" We are touched by God's divinity through the ordinariness of our own humanity. Amazing!

I wonder how you'd describe your leanings. Are you more a Good Friday-Easter sort or is Advent-Christmas the time that makes your heart sing loudest? Maybe we can chat about this over coffee sometime in the days ahead, as we make ready to meet the Risen Christ, born of Mary, the one we call Lord, Savior, and Friend.

+Grace and Peace,

Pastor Bin



Celebrate Epiphany with *Amahl and the Night Visitors*

Sunday, January 4
All Saints Roman Catholic Church
4:00 PM
Free and open to all

On a cold night in a far land, three unusual visitors appear at the home of a poverty-stricken widow and her son, who can walk only with a crutch. The visit by three kings who follow a star contains surprises for all. This opera, by Gian-Carlo Menotti, captures the magic of Christmas and the promise of Epiphany.

This is a joint production of Lansing United Methodist Church and All Saints RC Church. All invited. By arrangement with the publisher, this performance is free and open to all.

Christmas concert and song
Please join us at the home of Diane and Glenn Withiam, 1196 Ridge Road (34B), on Sunday, 12/21, 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Enjoy and sing your favorite carols, as well as hear songs by soloists and choir. Come for all or part of this open house.

Prayer Requests

Brian Cleveland 7358 Cedar St., Akron, NY 14001
Bill Earl 2000 East Shore Dr.
Carol, friend of Karen Bishop
James Hall
Barb Hebert, sister of Karen Bishop
Jim Howell, 826 Ridge Road
Bonnie Huff, Judy Butman's friend
Karen Lee Marquis, friend of Sharon Bowman
Sheryl Mattoon, friend of Barb White
Harry Reinhart, 615 Ridge Rd.
Frannie Sampson, 1138 Auburn Rd. (Groton)
Vaughn Selby, 105 Ludlow Road
Don Shreve (Jim's brother)
Jean Thorn
Kylie Walley, friend of Anne Czymmek
Marian Wilson Cortland Memorial Hospital, Room 2C241, 134 Homer Ave. Cortland 13045

Please pray for those in our armed services:

Ken Allen	Daniel Jacobsen
Mike Beaudoin	Trevor Judd
Richard Butler	Matt McDonald
Shawn Butler	Travis Potter
Matthew Cornell	Nick Prabhavat
Scott Cowles	Josh Randles
Steven Cowles	Matthew Ravas
Thomas Deis	Joan Sullivan
David Ferris	Adam Ward
Andrew Jacobsen	Michael Zhe



Worship during December

Worship during Advent will be shaped around the passages coming out of the Hebrew scriptures, specifically, the writings of the Old Testament prophets. The stories and testimony of John the Baptist will also feature prominently. This makes sense as he's considered the last of the Old Testament prophets. Christians have found in the words of the prophets (some written down hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus) amazing allusions to the life and mission of Jesus. To many these words read like direct predictions of future

events. Prophecy may at times work that way, but Old Testament prophets were primarily interested in reminding people of God's vision for how a faithful life should unfold. The reason the prophecy of the Old Testament calls to mind the picture of Jesus that is laid out in the New Testament is because Jesus embodies God's vision. He is, as John says in his gospel, "the Word made flesh." The text of Hebrew scripture becomes the testimony of Jesus of Nazareth. Come to worship and experience these texts become living testimony among us again this Advent!—PB

November 30—First Sunday of Advent: The theme shaping this morning's worship is "Living Faithfully in the Midst of Difficult Circumstances." Both today's passage from Isaiah and the gospel reading speak of the challenges faced by people of faith during difficult times. How do we hold on in the middle of a storm? Read: Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; and Mark 13:24-37.

December 7—Second Sunday of Advent: "Making Room Today for a Future Blessing" is this morning's theme, with particular attention to repentance. What do we need to let go of or walk away from in order to receive Christ into our hearts and lives? Read: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; and Mark 1:1-8. Note: The 11:00 service will feature the Children's pageant instead of a sermon. Come to both services today and be doubly blessed!

December 14—Third Sunday of Advent: This morning's guiding theme is "Called to Serve" With John the Baptist as our model, we'll ponder how following Jesus means serving like Jesus. Read: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; and John 1:6-8, 19-28.

December 21—Fourth Sunday of Advent: "Moving into the Neighborhood," a phrase borrowed from Eugene Peterson, serves as our theme today. If we meet God in a baby born to a peasant girl named Mary, where should we look to meet him today? Read: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55; Romans 16:25-27; and Luke 1:26-38.

December 24—Christmas Eve: Celebrate the birth of Jesus with song, prayer and story. Two services are offered tonight:
5:00 **Candlelight Family Service** planned especially with children in mind, with a dramatic "retelling" of Christmas story; and
8:00 **Candlelight Communion Service** with Holy Communion.
Read: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20. NOTE: Jesus asks that we invite **friends, relatives, associates** and **neighbors** to his birthday party tonight.

December 28—First Sunday after Christmas Day. Once service only at 9:30 AM. There will be no Sunday school this day. Read: Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; and Luke 2:22-40.



Advent: Then and Now

Advent begins the new Church Year. It is the season when the Church prepares for the celebration of the feast of Christmas, the anniversary of the birth and the coming of Jesus Christ. It's a season of hope and anticipation. Although we know the sequence of events all too well, every year wherever we are on our spiritual journey, Advent takes on new meaning. The Season of Advent came into being toward the middle of the

sixth century. At first, the Advent Season was determined as the six Sundays leading up to Christmas. This was reduced to four Sundays by Pope Gregory the Great (591-604). The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus in his First Advent and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in His Second Advent. It also symbolizes our spiritual journey both individually and as a congregation as we affirm that "Christ has come, that He is present in our world today, and that He will come again".

The Christmas story, too, unfolds each year with great anticipation—especially here at church. The children are studying a **new unit in Sunday School** entitled "Good News." They will learn about the first people to hear about the good news of Jesus and how each had a role in carrying that news into the world. The children will hear how they also have a role in carrying that same message into our world. These students are busy preparing for the **Annual Christmas Pageant** to be held on Sunday, December 7 during the 11:00 AM Service of Worship. The pageant is entitled "Double Take," and it is the Christmas story according to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Did you know

that these gospels tell the story differently? In Matthew's gospel there are no shepherds and no choir of angels, and the story focuses on Joseph, the message Joseph receives in a dream, and King Herod's rule. Luke's birth story talks about women and shepherds. Please join us as the children reenact these stories at the pageant. The congregation is invited to a dish-to-pass luncheon following the pageant in the Fellowship Hall. The Annual **Happy Birthday Jesus Party** follows the luncheon.

Adult Advent study during Sunday School is using the book "What do you Want for Christmas?" by James Moore. Join us as we discuss the Christmas gifts of hope, freedom, salvation and Christ. Please take a copy of the Advent study book and devotional booklets in the narthex and share them with folks that may be unable to attend church. There are two booklets—*Good News Great Joy!*, by Rev. Robert Hereth, an adult daily reading devotional, and *Wake Up to Joy*, by Mark Neilsen, which is a family devotional guide. It is our hope that your Advent is a time of joy and peace. God Bless.—*Marilyn Paradise*

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

December 2008

1
Finance 7:00

2
Quilt Bee 9:30
Staff Parish 7:00

3 Prayer Service 9:00
Women's Bible Study 9:30
Bell Choir 6:00
Choir 7:00

4 Bible Study 2:30
Woodsedge
Senior High Youth 7:00

5 Church Decorating
Simple Supper 6:00
Decoration follows
Christmas Band Rehearsal 6:30

6 Mens' Breakfast 7:00
9:30 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal
2:00 Christ Caroling
4:00 Haiti Cookie Decorating

7 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Worship 8:30
Sunday School 9:45
Outreach 9:45
Worship and Christmas Pageant 11:00
Dish-to-Pass Lunch and Birthday Party for Jesus 12:00
Disciple Bible Study 2:30
K.A.N. 5:30

8

9 Quilt Bee 9:30
Lay Leaders 7:00
Youth Ministry 7:00

10 Prayer Service 9:00
Women's Bible Study 9:30
Bell Choir 6:00
Choir 7:00

11 F o o d P a n t r y S e t u p
Senior High Youth 7:00
Trustees 7:30

12 Mens' Breakfast 7:00
New Member Meeting 9:00

14 GRATITUDE SUNDAY
Worship 8:30
Sunday School 9:45
Worship 11:00
Food Pantry Setup
Disciple Bible Study 2:30
Youth Group 5:00
Youth Mission 6:00

15 Food Pantry 4:00
Haiti 7:00
SUNBEAM DEADLINE 12:00 Midnight

16 Quilt Bee 9:30
Worship Committee 7:30

17 Prayer Service 9:00
Women's Bible Study 9:30
Bell Choir 6:00
Choir 7:00

18 Senior High Youth 7:00



19 Mens' Breakfast every Saturday at Linda's in North Lansing 7:00

21 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Worship 8:30
Sunday School 9:45
Worship 11:00
Disciple Bible Study 2:30


22 Caregivers 9:00

23 Quilt Bee 9:30

24 
CHRISTMAS EVE
Worship 5:00
Worship and Communion 8:00

25 CHRISTMAS DAY
Church Office Closed

Church Office Closed

27 Mens' Breakfast 7:00

28 FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
Worship 9:30

29 Church Office Closed

30 Church Office Closed

31 Church Office Closed

Note: This calendar is current as of November 24. For updates to all LUMC events, visit lansingunited.org, and check the bulletin when you're in church on Sunday.



Lansing United Methodist Church

Worship Survey “in a Nutshell”

In November, the Worship Committee took an online survey of the congregation to determine levels of satisfaction with the Sunday morning format of two identical worship services (8:30 and 11:00 AM). The response numbers were excellent (178 people) which, in our minds, made the survey valid. Our thanks to all who completed it, and also for your thoughtful, honest, heartfelt comments.

The full results of the survey will be made available to all. Here are the outcomes in a nutshell. Of regular attendees, 61 percent attend the 8:30 service, and 32 percent attend the 11:00 service. Of those taking the survey, 48 percent are mostly to very unhappy with the two service format, while 40.4 percent are mostly to very happy with the two service format, and 10.7 percent are indifferent.

Over the next three weeks, the Worship Committee and Church Council will be giving prayerful consideration as to where we go from here, and what will be best for the life of LUMC. Pastor Bill has been clear that he will support wholeheartedly either option chosen. It is a difficult decision, and we appreciate your prayers of support. Thank you.—*Sue Frahm, Worship Committee Chair*

Christmas Caroling
Saturday, December 6
2:00 – 4:00

Get the Christmas season off to a fun start with our caroling party. Meet at the church to drive to various homes and end up with hot chocolate and cookies at Woodsedge.

Help Decorate the Church

Preparation for greening the church will be Friday, December 5 at 6:00 pm. Supper will be provided by the worship committee, so just come for dinner and help with church decorating to follow. Bring work gloves and clippers if you plan to work with the greens. -

Giving Tree

It's time again to open our hearts to those in the Lansing area who are less fortunate. The giving tree is up as of November 30. Gifts will be given out at the next Food Pantry, December 15. Due to the short amount of time between Thanksgiving and our next pantry, the presents must be back in by December 7, so that we can give them out at the December 15 food pantry.

Currently, we have 60 children signed up. Every child gets two gifts—an article of clothing and a toy. We know that we'll be receiving more names in the next week, some from the school and some from food pantry. This is a collaborative effort between LUMC and All Saints, and serves children only from Lansing.—*Diane Skrobback*



Verrettes Canteen Program

In addition to supporting the education of children at L'ecole La Providence in Haiti, a canteen provides lunch for the children. Many students go to school hungry, as they have not had anything to eat since school the previous day. We have seen over the years that the program has been in existence that poor nutrition leads to failing grades.

Since the five hurricanes hit Haiti this year the problems of hunger have grown worse. The bridges to the Artibonite Valley were severely damaged which made travel for people and food difficult. The flooding in the Artibonite Valley decimated prime agricultural land and wiped out crops. Yet the people of Haiti continue each day to thank God for what he does for them. The churches are full and growing as people pray for daily needs and display a blind-faith that God will provide. The families of our students place hope in the sponsors and donors of our program that their needs will be met. I recently received an email from Pastor Solange, the Baptist Pastor in Verrettes. He wrote, “I just came from spending one month in Verrettes. The school year began October 6, and

it is a difficult school year. The students come to school hungry and do not bring money to pay for schooling. The Bureau of Nutrition and Development (BND) for the European Union have not yet provided food for the school. We have spent the money you have given for buying food for the students. We are able to give them food on Tuesday and Thursday.”

Previously, the money that we gave supported the canteen, but without food supplied by BND our funding is not sufficient for the students to eat every day of class. As we start the Advent season, the season of gift giving, please remember that a small gift from us who have much is a large gift to the students at L'ecole La Providence, has a big impact on the grades of the students, and is an answer to the prayers of their families. This Advent season wouldn't you like to be an answer to prayer? Contributions may be placed in the offering plate and marked Haiti Canteen on the memo line.—*Dean Benware, Haiti Committee*

Editor's note: The Haiti Dessert auction raised \$1,800 and will allow us to feed children in both Banique and Verrettes.

New Member Meeting
Saturday, December 13
9:00 – 12:00

If you are interested in becoming a member, we'd love to have you join! Find out all about our church and missions. New members will be received December 21.

Stewardship Update

On Sunday, November 16, we celebrated "Commitment Sunday" and many estimate of giving cards were received for 2009. Initial totals were not available at press time for the Sunbeam.

While there is a practical side of stewardship – the funding needed to enable our church to carry out its mission, we also believe that stewardship is an important part of a growing relationship with God.

If you have not turned in (or mailed in) your estimate of giving card yet, please mail it back to the church or drop it in the collection plate next Sunday, so we can have an estimate of the resources that will be available to meet the needs of our church and ministries in 2009.

People can also contact Sandy Dhimitri directly with their pledge at sd255@cornell.edu, or 257-1022.

World AIDS Day News

December 1, 2008

This year marks the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day. Since 1988, the face and response to AIDS has greatly changed. While many of these changes are positive, this anniversary offers an opportunity to highlight how much more still needs to be done. Many commitments have been made to halt the spread of AIDS. For information see: www.worldaidscampaign.org.

The United Methodist Global AIDS Fund, an Advance Special, provides funding to many AIDS projects around the globe. As with all Advance Specials, 100 percent of all funds contributed go directly to the projects. To donate, go to www.umglobalaidsfund.org. or you can drop a check in the LUMC collection plate with a memo of AIDS relief.

—Linda Bales, Director, Louise & Hugh Moore Population Project

Volunteers needed for clean-up labor in Indiana

The Indiana Annual Conference is in need of volunteers to assist more than 80 families in clean-up following three major flooding events this year in the Midwest. Volunteers are needed to clean up soggy drywall and floors as well as help remove mold in homes damaged by the floods. The conference hopes to complete the clean-up work by year-end so that rebuilding may begin for affected residents. Interested individuals or volunteer groups may contact Chris Eller Esparza at 219-836-5390 or 219-923-2302, Ext. 311, to be assigned a family. Interested teams can go to the Indiana Area web site at www.inareaumc.org/—Jason Halton

Poinsettias for Christmas

If you are interested in placing a poinsettia on the altar in honor or memory of a loved one, orders are due December 7.

Africa University and Shared Ministries

In a letter written printed in the Jan 2008 issue of Africa University Today, Africa University's Interim Vice Chancellor Dr. Fanuel Tagwira says:

"As I write to you, 1,300 students are on the campus of Africa University for the 2008-09 academic year. As Zimbabwe deals with serious economic and political challenges, students attend classes taught by our outstanding faculty and supported by our dedicated staff.

"While Africa University has not missed a day of classes during this difficult time, we face a crisis caused by escalating prices. We live in a country plagued by runaway inflation. Zimbabwe's hyperinflation—more than 11 million percent—has forced us to charge tuition and room and boarding fees monthly. This creates a hardship for our Zimbabwean students and their parents, but in the current environment, we believe this is the best way to move forward.

"We owe our existence to the financial assistance from United Methodists around the world and we need your help more than ever before. As our apportionment reserve accounts dwindle because of the nation's dire economic

situation, we need your immediate financial support through the Africa University Fund.

"In the context of Zimbabwe, Africa University is doing exceedingly well. Our campus is safe. Our faculty is well qualified and respected. Our students are dedicated to learning. That is why your continued support is so important. We humbly ask you to meet your Africa University apportionment obligations early and in full. This will enable us to continue operating at current levels without eliminating important academic programs. Along with your financial support, we ask for your prayers for our university and for our nation. Grace and peace, Fanuel Tagwira, interim vice chancellor, Africa University."

Last year our NCNY Conference met its General Conference obligations in full, including 100% of our Africa University Fund apportionment (80% in 2006)! The conference encourages each church to do all it can to meet its Shared Ministry commitment in 2008 in full. Africa University is one of many ministries supported.

Christmas Band Plays December 21

Rehearsal is December 5, at 6:30, during the preparations for Greening the Church.
All instruments and ability levels are welcome to help us play simple carol arrangements. It's possible to pickup the pieces on December 21 if you are able. See Sharon Powell.



The Sunbeam

December 2008

Lansing United
Methodist Church

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Worship
8:30 and 11:00

Prayer Service
Wednesday, 9:00 AM

**Christmas Eve Worship
5:00 and 8:00**

Lansing United Methodist Church

32 Brickyard Road, Lansing, NY 14882
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Please send your news to Glenn Withiam, editor,
at grw4@cornell.edu, or use the Sunbeam folder
near the church office.

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