

**Streaming Worship 9:30 AM**

**LANSINGUNITED.ORG**

**PLEASE JOIN US!**



**Epiphany**  
**Season of Light**

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**Pastor: Alison Schmied**

**Adult Ministries Coordinator: Karen Veaner**

**Christian Education Coordinator: Debbie Geise**

**Youth Ministries Coordinator: Krystal Cole**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES VIRTUALLY AT 11:00 AM FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS,  
12:00 NOON FOR JUNIOR HIGHS, AND 1:00 PM FOR SENIOR HIGHS**

**Church Can Happen Anywhere: Join Us Online!**

## From the Pastor

### God's Gift

On a Sunday evening in December, the Lansing United Methodist Church parking lot was overtaken by shepherds, angels, wise ones, a young mother, her child and fiancée, and a chicken, a calf, and a miniature donkey.



While more than 50 carloads of viewers drove slowly past, groups of costumed characters depicted some of the scenes from the story of Jesus' birth.

Wearing masks and costumes outdoors or driving through in our vehicles, members and friends of Lansing United gathered to see, hear, and tell again the story of God loving the world so much that God comes to earth as a human baby. The Live Nativity at Lansing United was a sight to behold.

In this time of global pandemic, distance learning and working, and divisions between us due to differences in race and political perspectives, I needed to see a Live Nativity. During this season when I intentionally put space (at least 6 feet) into all my relationships, I need to

**When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us."—Luke 2:15 (CEB)**

hear again the story of God closing the distance between God and humanity through Jesus.

At 5:00 p.m. my favorite moment came: shift change. Many characters retreated to their cars to thaw, while a second group of characters took their places.

It was as if the angels were singing,

*"Do not be afraid! Do not let your isolation fool you into believing that you are alone, or that you are the only one willing to humble yourself to wear a costume over your puffy winter coat. In the loneliness of winter, you are still part of a living, lively community. God is with you, revealed to you in the love of the Body of Christ."*

There was a long line of vehicles waiting to drive through for themselves, to see this thing that happened. In the midst of the gathered community, God is with us, Emmanuel.

*Blessings to all, and happy new year.*

*Pastor Alison*

## Thinking Outside the Building

It has been a long time since we have been able to gather in person in the sanctuary on a Sunday morning. During this time, we have been able to offer a worship service each week to anyone with a computer or video player. Sadly, that does leave out some people. On the other hand, we have learned that it also allows former members who have moved away to be in touch once again, even sharing in scripture readings and singing in the choir.

The church building remains closed to the general public, although a small crew of workers enters to produce the Sunday service stream, provide children's Sunday school classes (when possible), and handle other necessary chores.

With the development of vaccines, there is a light at the end of the tunnel, however long that tunnel may be. We rejoice that healthcare workers, teachers, first responders, and elderly persons can now be vaccinated. Eventually that will extend to all of us, but it's clear that this process will take considerable time.

LUMC's Planning Safe Gatherings group continues to meet to assist groups to plan safe in-person activities. The bottom line remains: we cannot fill the sanctuary. Technically, under state rules, we could have a small group of worshippers. We face two problems there. First, there is a significant health risk to those who attend, even masked and at great distance from each other. Second, limiting attendance would require choosing who could attend and who would be left out, conflicting with our commitment to welcome all people. Those with health concerns, for instance, would not be able to attend.

Going forward, we need to figure out how to continue streaming worship services even when we are able to meet in person again. The sanctuary has been converted into a "streaming set." In front of the altar is the backdrop you see behind Pastor Alison, together with a lectern and chair. A bunch of computer equipment and monitors sit where the first pew used to be. We will need to set up screens and properly arrange the chancel when the time comes, so that people attending worship in person can see the pre-recorded videos as well as the live content that we are streaming.

On a positive note, over the last nine months, several of us have learned how to create the slide shows, musical beds, choir videos, and composite videos that we stream, as well as learning to operate the software that makes the stream possible. You could be part of this. We welcome anyone who is willing to assist to contact the streaming team. Instruction is available!

In the meantime, we must remain patient while we plan for our eventual safe return to worshiping together in the sanctuary. We are currently planning the seasons of Lent and Easter 2021 to be live-streamed, and encourage everyone to practice reaching out to others by telephone, mail, or online while we are apart.—Pastor Alison and Glenn Withiam

## Thoughts on LUMC's Advent Theme: "I Believe"

I was asked to read the introduction to the anthem for the first week of Advent. It spoke to the power of music and that music is the soundtrack of hope. Music holds a role in healing, change and reconciliation. It also reminded us all of how hard it has been not to sing together as music unites us in its poetry and power.

The anthem I was introducing was "I Believe," which was said to come from poetry from an anonymous Jewish person during the Holocaust. It was said that the words were scrawled on a wall. They can help us remember the resiliency of hope and what can happen when evil is allowed to go unchecked.

As I was reading the words for the recording, it was difficult not to cry as feelings and memories overwhelmed me. In April 2019 I visited Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps. I stared down places where evil walked and felt the incredible sadness all around. I saw the horrific evidence of what was done to innocent people. I watched young Jewish student visitors as they fell to the ground and wept looking at places where ancestors were gunned down or cremated. We walked past rooms full of suitcases, eyeglasses and shoes. Each room became harder and harder to move through until I saw an entire case of children's tiny shoes and then I broke down in tears vowing to never allow this kind of evil to exist in this world again. It was so incredible that people could still hang on to love and belief in goodness. So "I Believe" brings that spring of hope into our world and reminds us to always be inspired to create goodness. It is so timely now as we go through this dark time of a world pandemic. We all need to try and make a difference in our world every day.—*Linda Pasto*

Linda's reading is on the next page, together with photos of her trip.

## Acolyte Training

Sharon Bowman will be leading our 3rd graders in acolyte training in the new year. We are looking forward to having five new candlelighters who will bring the light of Jesus into the worship service and carry the light out into the world (Daniel Boscia, Kayla Geise, Cora Gaffney, Brooks Moore, and Emily Weaver-Mulé). Check with Sharon or the church office if you have a third grader who would like to learn to be an acolyte.

## The Witness of Music (reading from the first Sunday of Advent)

Our worship series this Advent calls on the power of sung poetry to inspire those who hear it to a brighter tomorrow. It has been difficult during this pandemic for us to be restricted from singing together. We are reminded just how important it is to sing together. Music has often been the soundtrack of hope.

So our choir has been hard at work to prepare a season of music appreciation for you—as well as reflection on the power of music. Someday, we will once again be able to join our voices in song in our sanctuary. But for now, rather than turn away from music in sorrow, we will turn toward the story of music and deepen our appreciation of its role in healing, change, and reconciliation.

This morning, we present to you the theme for our Advent series, "I Believe."



The text of this anthem is said to arise from the poetry of an unknown Jewish person during the Holocaust. The story goes that these words, found scrawled on a wall, have now been

shared with the world, to remind us of the resilience of hope. May we never forget what can happen when evil is allowed to go unchecked, and may we always use our music, our art, our poetry, even our simple acts of kindness, as inspiration to create goodness, not evil, in this world.



Photos of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen by Linda Pasto

## Youth Ministries

December brought some unexpected cancellations due to COVID numbers, but we were able to have a Zoom Christmas cookie decorating party with our Junior and Senior High youth. In the new year, we look forward to continuing with the Bible Project curriculum with our Senior High youth, and Junior High will continue with “Connecting Faith and Justice,” which corresponds with the lectionary (the same scriptures used in worship each week).

Youth painting night for junior high youth will be on Sunday, January 31, at 5:00 p.m. (no painting experience required).

## Thank You, Leo the Shepherd!

I would like to take this opportunity to rejoice in Leo the Shepherd, who came via video to spend the Advent season with us. Leo brought Lansing United a big Sparkle Box, taught us about the most important part of the Christmas tree, shared some of the sheep of his flock, and broke down a wall of blocks so a bridge could be built, all the while showing us how Jesus is, indeed, the Light of the World who brings us true hope, love, joy, and peace. Leo was brought to life by Kayla Geise, who was his voice, and Stephen Geise, who made him move while wearing a green suit in front of a green screen. At the risk of embarrassing them, I want to thank them for their courage, willingness, and perseverance as they made this children’s message series come to be this Advent season. It has been a blessing to share in producing and editing the children’s messages with my tech savvy and fun-loving son and to witness God working in his heart as he gives these offerings each week.—*Debbie Geise, Children’s Ministries Coordinator*

## Confirmation

Calling all 8th graders! (and 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th). We are calling together any youth interested in participating in confirmation this year. Parents of those youth will be asked to join in discussing the goals, expectations, schedule, and curriculum. Please reach out to Krystal with any questions and further details! ([youth@lansingunited.org](mailto:youth@lansingunited.org))

The confirmation classes start January 31, 3:00–4:30 p.m., via Zoom. Again, this is open to anyone in 8th grade through 12th grade, with their parents.

Next youth ministry team meeting is January 21 at 7:30 p.m., via Zoom (3rd Thursday of month as usual).—*Krystal Cole*

## Children’s Sunday School Resumes

Sunday School will be via Zoom when the Lansing Central Schools are operating virtually. We hope to resume in-person classes, but we follow the LCS schedule for in-person sessions. We will keep you posted.

## Adult Ministries

### Lansing United Book Club: New Year, New Book

Lansing United Book Club has resumed each Friday, at 1:00 p.m., with Karen Veaner

*All These Wonders, True Stories About Facing the Unknown*, compiled by Catherine Burns

Celebrating the 20th anniversary of radio and podcast storytelling phenomenon, The Moth presents 45 unforgettable true stories drawn from the best ever told on their stages. Launched in 1997, The Moth is co-produced by Altantic Media and distributed by PRX.

From the introduction by Catherine Burns, artistic director and editor:

...bearing witness to a stranger’s unfiltered story is an act of tremendous compassion. To listen with an open heart and an open mind and try to understand what it’s like to be them...takes real courage..

Some of the stories are lighthearted and fun, but others are more challenging. ...When we dare to listen, we remember there is no “other,” there is only us, and what we have in common will always be greater than what separates us.

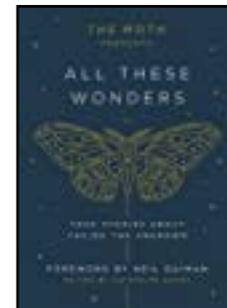
Join us on Fridays, as we ring in the new year with a fresh tome. In our first session, we discussed “The Moon and Stars Talks,” by author Tara Clancy, the first story in the Moth collection.

Missed the discussions so far? No problem. Jump in any time. Each story stands by itself and will be used as a starting place for sharing stories of our own. Books are available in the church airlock, suggested donation is \$15. Also available on Kindle.—*Karen Veaner*

## The Giving Tree Ministry Update

Together with the Lansing Food Pantry, All Saints Church, and Lansing Lunchbox, LUMC provides support every Christmas season to families in our community who need it. Each child within a family receives two gifts, an outfit (or shoes or boots) and a gift item (or toy). This year, we served 35 children in 15 families. On December 21, gifts were distributed in a drive-through pick-up in our church parking lot. Thank you to all who provided gifts and fruit to make this support possible. It gives me joy to communicate to you the joy that you bring to others through your contributions. They matter, and they are appreciated! Thank you for honoring Christ’s birth as you bring His hope to those who need it most.

An abundance of thanks goes to Bonnie Biata, Bonnie Blair, Linda Chapman, and Kathleen and Lyle Wadell, who helped sort gifts and put together fruit baskets.—*Debbie Geise*



## Christmas Support for Longview Assisted Living Community

Thank you to all who contributed cozy care items for the residents of Longview's Assisted Living. Rebecca Schillenback, the Spiritual Life Coordinator at Longview, coordinates giving each of the 85 residents in the Assisted Living and Enhanced Assisted Living wings small individually wrapped gifts at Christmas. This holiday season was a particularly isolated one for these residents, and Rebecca was even more determined to make sure that these gifts could be given this year. With tears in her eyes, Rebecca accepted the bags of stuffed animals, puzzle books, jigsaw puzzles, cozy socks, lotions, teas, hot chocolate packets, and other gifts that came from our congregation. She was so excited and poured out her gratitude for all of the contributions that would bring joy and cheer to those who would receive them. Thank you for giving hope to Rebecca as she carried out her role of caregiving for the residents and for giving joy to those who are alone.

Just before Christmas, she sent us this note:

Hi Debbie, I just wanted to tell you that we distributed gifts yesterday [December 22], and residents were thrilled. It was just so lovely and heartwarming to be able to give them something substantial, and to watch their faces light up in surprise and pleasure at the unexpected gift just for them. I will send you pictures when I get them. In the meantime, please pass on to your community my very great gratitude, and tell them that they have truly brightened the season of some folks who have been especially burdened by this pandemic's loneliness and isolation.

With joy and thanksgiving!—Rebecca Schillenback, Longview

## A Note on Church Finances

Thank you for your faithful and generous giving in support of your church's mission and ministries in 2020. Income to the operating fund and the building fund were greater in 2020 than in any other year to date. Congratulations! This is truly a milestone to celebrate.

Financial pledges only tell part of the 2020 income picture. We were not able to hold our spring or fall rummage sales, which typically provide about \$7,000 revenue each. In their place, more than fifty volunteers working under the supervision of Dave Hatfield staffed six drive-through chicken barbecues, plus one spaghetti dinner supervised by Judy Hinderliter. Also, \$49,752 of our 2020 income came from a Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) loan, which has been fully forgiven. We do not anticipate being eligible for PPP in 2021.

On January 5, the Church Council reviewed and approved the 2021 Ministry Spending Plan (budget). The budget relies on the 85 pledgers who have pledged to give a total of \$261,339.00 to the operating fund in 2021. Financial giving statements, final reports for 2020, and the approved 2021 budget will be available from the church office near the end of January.

—Pastor Alison

## Ongoing Gatherings—Jump in Any Time!

See the calendar at [LansingUnited.org](http://LansingUnited.org) for dates, times, and Zoom links

### A Story Telling Walk Through the Bible

with Bonnie Blair

Tuesdays, 10-11:30 a.m.

From early on, God's interaction with people involved trying to get them to understand how to live in relationship with Him. Walk through the story of Abraham and God's Covenant. What is this covenant? How does this relate to me?

### Women's Bible Study

with Dianne Walter

Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Finding God in the Psalms

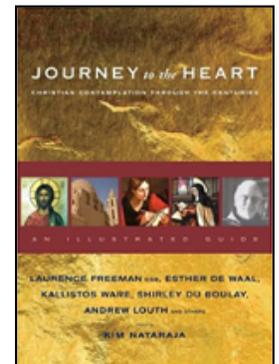
### Universal Christ

Christian Contemplation

Mondays, 1:00 p.m.

*Journey to the Heart: Christian Contemplation Through the Centuries*, edited by Kim Nataraja

Introduce yourself to key figures and movements in the history of Christian spirituality. Each week covers a different figure. For the Christian mystic of the week, call Daisy Kirkpatrick, 607-733-7143. Jump in or out of the group as your schedule allows!

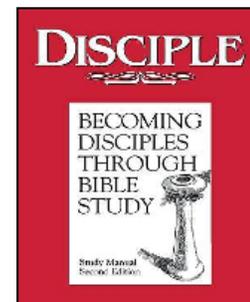


### Disciple

with Bonnie Blair & Pastor Alison

Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m., or Sundays, 4:00 p.m.

Get the big picture. Look at all of those familiar Bible stories and see how they are tied together. Participate in a rich discussion that just might help you to connect scripture to your everyday life.



## Alzheimer's Workshop

### 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's

Thursday, January 21, 1:00–2:00 p.m.  
with Carianne Wilson, associate program director,  
Alzheimer's Association, Central New York Chapter

Alzheimer's and other dementias cause memory, thinking, and behavior changes that interfere with daily living. Learn about common warning signs of Alzheimer's and what symptoms to look for in yourself and others, as well as tips to approach someone who is experiencing changes in their memory, the benefit of early detection and diagnosis, and more.

### Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia

with Carianne Wilson, associate program director, Alzheimer's Association, Central New York Chapter  
Thursday, February 4, 6:30–7:30 p.m.  
Thursday, February 11, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging. Join us to learn about the impact of Alzheimer's, the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia, stages and risk factors, current research and treatments available for some symptoms, and Alzheimer's Association resources.

## Meal Cooking and Packing

LUMC volunteers have scheduled cooking and packing meals for those sheltering in hotels on January 30 and 31. Note that coronavirus protocols are in effect, so contact Laura or Steve Alexander for information. The designated time slots are as follows.

Saturday, January 30: prepare 1–4 p.m., clean 4–5:30 p.m. Sunday: pack 1–3 p.m., deliver 3 p.m., clean 3–4. Other times may be available. We appreciate assistance but you cannot just show up.

## Youth Mission Can and Bottle Drive

Bring your cans and bottles to the shop at the end of Triphammer Road, at your convenience. Just tell them it's a donation for Lansing Youth Mission.



## Virtual Church Calendar lansingunited.org

*Lansing United Methodist Church January 2021*

**Sunday church services:** 9:30 a.m., via YouTube (through church website, lansingunited.org); music stream begins at 9:15; "Coffee time" follows at 10:30

**Sunday school:** Adults, The Wired Word, 11:00 a.m.,  
Pre-K to 6th grade, 11:00 a.m.,  
Junior High, 12:00 p.m.,  
Senior High, 1:00 p.m.

Note: Sunday school will meet in person when Lansing Central School resumes in-person classes. Otherwise, classes are via Zoom.

Confirmation class, January 31, 3:00 p.m.

Junior High Sunday Youth Group, 5:00 p.m.

Senior High Sunday Youth Group, 6:30 p.m.

Disciple, Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.; Sundays, 4:00 p.m.

Universal Christ Group, Mondays, 1:00 p.m.

Storytelling Walk through the Bible, Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m.

Kinship Ministries, Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Women's Bible Study, Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m.

Virtual Choir Rehearsal, Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.

Lansing United Book Club, Fridays, 1:00 p.m.

Alzheimer's Workshops, January 21, 1:00 p.m.;

February 4, 6:30 p.m.; February 11, 1:00 p.m.

**Packing Meals for Those in Shelters,** January 30 and 31,  
Designated time slots.

**Clothing Giveaway at Lansing Community Center,**  
Saturdays, 12:30–3:30 p.m.

**Virtual Meetings** (all but Staff-Parish are open via Zoom):

Finance, January 4, 7:00 p.m.

Safe Gatherings Task Force, January 5, 12, 19, 26, 5:00 p.m.

Church Council, January 5, 7:00 p.m.

Safe Sanctuary Team, January 7, 7:00 p.m.,

Trustees, January 11, 7:00 p.m.

Staff-Parish Relations (Personnel), January 14, 7:00 p.m.

Haiti Committee, January 18, 7:00 p.m.

Worship Committee, January 19, 7:00

Youth Ministry Team, January 21, 7:30 p.m.

Interfaith Community Dish-at-Home, January 28, 6:00 p.m.



*The Sunbeam*

January 2021

VIRTUAL WORSHIP  
9:30 A.M. VIA FACEBOOK OR  
VISIT LANSINGUNITED.ORG  
MUSIC STARTS 9:15

BAPTISM OF THE LORD  
JANUARY 17  
REMEMBER YOUR BAPTISM AND BE  
THANKFUL



EPIPHANY  
SEASON OF LIGHT

**Lansing United Methodist Church**

32 Brickyard Road, Lansing, NY 14882  
one mile north of the spotlight on  
Route 34B in South Lansing.  
Church office: 607-533-4070

E-mail: [office@lansingunited.org](mailto:office@lansingunited.org)  
Lonnajeon Yoest,  
Pastoral Administrative Assistant  
[www.lansingunited.org](http://www.lansingunited.org)

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editor, at [grw4@cornell.edu](mailto:grw4@cornell.edu).  
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