

Pastor: Rev. Kristen Parks

Church Administrator: Heather Marks

Office Phone: 517-486-4040

Pastor's Phone: 517-486-3805

Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m.

Fully Handicapped Accessible



## The 12 Days of Christmas

Many people are not aware that according to the church calendar the season of Christmas last 12 days beginning on Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> and going until Epiphany on Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>. The season before that is Advent, the season of waiting. Our culture has this wrong. We begin Christmas immediately after Thanksgiving (or in July if you are a retailer) and are done with by Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>. In the middle of the Christmas season our focus shifts from the birth of Christ to the New Year and the opportunities for a clean slate.

We have come to view Christmas and New Years as completely separate events, but in reality they are very similar. Both of them are about the opportunity to start over. New Year's fills us with resolutions and a clean slate. Christmas does the same. Though it seems all too easy to forget in the midst of purchasing and wrapping presents, decorating, planning parties, and making cookies, Christmas is all about the birth of Christ, God's offer to wipe our slate clean. Christmas shouldn't just be about presents and family, though those are

both great things, but about remembering that God loves each of us so much that He was willing to send His Son to live our lives and ultimately die our death.

God looked down at creation and realized that what was here wasn't working. Christmas is the celebration of God's promise to "Hold on, I'm coming." He did come, and it changed everything. The New Year shouldn't just be a date for us to reset. It should be a time for us to remember that God has given us the Grace to allow us to reset. Perhaps this year we should do more than speak about the "Reason for the Season", perhaps this year we can live our lives in full acceptance of that reason.

Christ was born so that we may experience God's grace. Remember above all else, especially when life seems hard, God loves you and there's nothing you can do about it. Happy New Year and happy new life.

~Pastor Kristen

## Our Giving for December 6- December 27, 2015

	Env. & Loose	Other	Received	For
12/6/2015	\$2,338.00	29.00	\$9,067.96	Envelopes
12/13/2015	2,598.00	122.00	135.00	Loose
12/20/2015	2,512.00	60.00	102.00	Poinsettias
12/27/2015	1,754.96	0.00	50.00	Bliss. Group
			5.00	UMC Student

Budget income this 4 weeks was \$9,359.96. This is a weekly average of \$2,339.99. We require \$2,336.00 per week to meet budget.

### Endowments

Our Scholarship Endowment has increased in value steadily this year. January is the month we announce the availability of a scholarship.

We are able to offer two (2) \$500 scholarships in 2016. Guideline/requirements are as follows:

Applicant must be a high school graduate or have a G.E.D., and a grade point average of 2.5 or higher, and must be a member of Blissfield First United Methodist Church.

Scholarships may be used for tuition, fees or expenses while attending a college, university, or trade school. Scholarships will be given on an annual basis, providing funds are available. Recipients may not be eligible to receive a second scholarship.

Decision is at the discretion of the Endowment Committee and their decision is final. Endowment Committee will make scholarship offer known each year in January, in Church Newsletter and by other announcements (bulletin, worship).

Deadline for submission of application is May 1 of each year. Should a member of the Endowment Committee disqualify him/herself from judging the applications, assistance may be requested from member(s) of the Administrative Council.

Applications are available in the church office, and again must be submitted by May 1, 2016.

**Deadline for the February  
Newsletter is January 26th.  
Thank you!!**



## January Birthdays

- 3 Ben Barrus
- 4 Barb Cambal
- 9 Jason Higgins, Kevin Wilson, Tyler Villegas
- 10 Harrison Mapstone
- 11 Alexis Crist
- 12 Carolyn Goetz, Iain Gilmore
- 13 Connie Mapstone
- 15 Wayne Hess
- 16 Amy Higgins
- 17 Diana Medley, Brian Betz, Julie Mapstone
- 19 Liam Wilkie, Becky Downing
- 22 Dawn Fisher
- 23 Lori Faulkner
- 26 Zander Wheeler
- 27 Mary Miller
- 29 Reed Mapstone
- 30 Haile Medley
- 31 Bob Spotts, Anne Jones

## January Anniversaries

- 15 Brock and Erin Sinclair
- 28 Tom and Phyllis Mallory

# Ministries on Sunday

## Mornings in January:

### Ushers:

- 3 Jay Gilmore
- 10 Jason Fisher
- 17 JR Iffland
- 24 Brad Emerson

### Greeters in Front Entrance:

- 3 Gilmore Family
- 10 The Jason Fisher Family
- 17 The Iffland Family
- 24 The Smith-Emerson Family

### Greeters in West Entry:

- 3 The Marks Family
- 10 Brian and Lisa Barrus
- 17 Peggy LaFollette
- 24 Anne Jones
- 31 Ryan Mapstone Family

### Acolytes:

- 3 Amanda Fisher
- 10 Jessica Fisher
- 17 Ashlynn Reed
- 24 Abby Gilmore
- 31 Hailie Medley

### AV Room:

- 3 Becca Gorski
- 10 Diana Medley
- 17 Dave Kerekgyarto
- 24 Chris Gorski
- 31 Becca Gorski

### Lay Readers:

- 3 Mike Frederick
- 10 Vicky Oliver
- 17 Jayne Gorski
- 24 Sharon Sauter
- 31 Janet Flores

# DECEMBER PRAYER LIST

The prayer chain was used several times over the last month. Please let the church office know when it may be appropriate for us to remove a prayer request from our list, otherwise it will be removed within a reasonable amount of time. You may also place your prayers in the prayer basket located at the back of the church. Please include name and (optional) reason for prayer.

### The following were prayed for during

**December:** ...For all the global conflicts and our troops, the economy, Carl Anderson, Myla Novak, Darlene and Bob Spotts, Bertha Grimes, Kevin and family, Ellen Smith, Kevin Wilson, Emily Hepker, Larry Greenwald, Robin Raines, Kaden Elizardo, Debbie Lake, Emily Alley, Connie Cox, Mary Gooze, Carolyn Goetz, Emily Nowak and her son Iziah, Gordon McClain, Brian Betz, Carol Sheldon, Melanie and Eric, Annaliese Marks, Emma Phenicie, Laura Fisher, Dave Handy, Ali and Karly, Gianna Sell, David Stucker.

We have also been praying long term for: Elizabeth Stutzman, David Anderson, Lori Spotts, Edie Holmes, Susie DeSue, Al VanLoocke.

If you have prayer concerns or joys to add, or know of names that could be removed, please contact the church office at 486-4040 or [blissfumc@gmail.com](mailto:blissfumc@gmail.com). You are invited to visit, call, or send notes of encouragement to our shut-ins:

<u>Hilda Knoblauch</u>	<u>Bob and Darlene Spotts</u>
650 W. Adrian St.	9953 Treadwell
Blissfield, MI 49228	Blissfield, MI 49228
517-486-2442	517-443-5834
<u>Elizabeth Stutzman</u>	<u>Barb Dittman</u>
1244 West Southern Ave	2057 N Wellsville Hwy
Muskegon, MI 49441	Britton, MI 49229
	517-423-2248





Remember our local food pantry! They are asking for the following:

Assorted Canned Soup, Cookie/Cake Mix, and Canned Peaches.

## Hoagie sale



*Our youth will once again be selling hoagies. Your choice of either Ham, Turkey, Italian.*

*Plus your choice of Provolone, American, Cheddar, or Swiss!!! They are \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00. The sale starts January 4th and ends January 31st. If you have any questions please contact the church office at 486-4040.*

**Choir!**  
*Choir rehearsals  
 January 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup>  
 at 7 pm!*

## Swim Night



Saturday,  
 January 23<sup>rd</sup>  
 from 5 to 7  
 p.m. at The  
 Centre.

## Blissfield MOPS

- The next meeting will be January 11th at 9:30 am. The meetings are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month and are from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. We are also looking for volunteers to watch the children during the meeting. Please contact the church office if you are able to help.
- The MOPS group will also have a play date at Sylvania Playland January 18<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m.

## Youth News

• Youth group will be attending Winter Jam 2016 on January 31<sup>st</sup>. If you are interested in attending, please contact Kelly Jo Gilmore.



• Youth group will be meeting on Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup> to make all Hoagie orders. Please meet at the church at 7 p.m.

We will be delivering meals to the



community Feb 8th-19th Please sign up in the sanctuary if you can help.