



BLISSFIELD BEACON



Upward with God, side by side with saints, outward with neighbors

Solitude & Community

Spiritual disciplines can be put into two categories, disciplines of abstinence and disciplines of engagement. This month I want to give you one from each category as they work in tandem.

Solitude is one of abstaining from people. We see Jesus frequently going to be alone to pray. You may practice solitude in your devotional or quiet time with God. Solitude is a challenge for us all on some level. We are social creatures. It is harder for extroverts. When we are alone we can feel lonely, bored, depressed, anxious, and even afraid. In our boredom we try to fill the emptiness with just about anything. We fidget, we pace, we don't know what to do when we are alone. We may attempt to pray and before you know it we are distracted and we have reached for something to take away the boredom. This is where discipline comes in. Practicing spiritual disciplines is a way of training your whole self, not just your spirit. As hard as it may be— we should intentionally practice solitude. Get away from people and distractions and be fully with yourself and God. On a recent trip to Toledo, I asked my family to come with me so that I don't have to go alone. They offered our dog Silky to join me and then proceeded to remind me that God is always with me so that I am never alone. It warmed my heart that they said this. They then made me laugh when they said, "you should know that daddy, you are a pastor."

Community is also a spiritual discipline. Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously said, "Let him who cannot be alone beware of community. He will only do harm to himself and to the community... But the reverse is also true: let him who is not in community beware of being alone". One can be so lonely that they actually fear community. Social anxiety can set in. It is a bewildering feeling to feel alone in a crowd. It is often the introvert who struggles with community. I am an introvert. I love being alone but I also deeply love genuine connection with others. I am one who tries to get past small talk as quickly as possible and talk about something important and deep. The discipline of community is about practicing life together. We are all unique and yet we can come together in beautiful ways. This is an important discipline that became virtually impossible to practice during the pandemic and we are still working on getting back into the habit. Healthy churches are fully engaged in community.



feed the need
advocacy day 2026



Advocacy Day

Michigan families are struggling more than ever to afford food in 2026. The state is facing over \$1 billion budget shortfall, and federal programs that helped people buy groceries have been cut dramatically. Churches and community groups are seeing more and more people who need help feeding their families. Advocacy Day 2026 Wednesday, March 18 at state capitol in Lansing is a chance to build relationships, share community stories, and ask for continued support from with Michigan lawmakers for important hunger programs. We need to show them why fighting hunger matters to everyone in Michigan. Join us!

WINTER 20 JAM 26

Lineup: Chris Tomlin, Matthew West, Katy Nichole, Hulvey, Disciple, Emerson Day, and Newsong.

The church is invited to attend Winter Jam on Mar 29 in Ypsilanti. WinterJam is an annual Contemporary Christian Concert tour with a variety of artists. It is a fun event for everyone. The cost is \$15 at the door. Dress warm as the line out the door is long and Michigan March weather can be chilly. I also advise that sensitive ears bring ear protection. It gets loud in the arena. The concert starts at 4pm and should end by 8pm. With Ypsilanti about an hour away we should leave the church by 2:30pm. Signup available on the backtable in the sanctuary.

Snowbird Corner by Pat Grau

[The Snowbird Corner will hopefully keep BFUMC members "in touch with" those who leave for a portion of the winter.]

A warm HELLO from **Jerry Villegas** in Cape Coral FL and **Lois McCormick** in South Ft Myers FL. Both reside in the greater Ft Myers area during January and February.

While in FL they both attend Faith Church, UMC in Ft Myers. They attend the Contemporary Service which has wonderful praise music led

by people of all ages (including their age group). Lois proudly says she has been attending this UMC since she watched it being built 25 years ago.

While in FL, Jerry stays with his younger son, Joshua's family. He'll also be visiting with his older son, Jeremy & his wife who are wintering in FL this year.



Cindy & Mike Frederick are sending their WARM hello from Nokomis, FL. They are staying 4 months this year--January thru April.

While in FL they alternate between using zoom to join in worship with BFUMC and attending the Church in the Pines, a nondenominational service held in their park. Mike enjoys singing in the park chorus.

Mike & Cindy chose to winter in Nokomis--near Cindy's brother, aunt, & cousins.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



WEDDINGS:

JOHN AND LORI FAULKNER (02/26/1984)

BIRTHDAYS:

BECCA GORSKI (02/03/1988),

JOHN FAULKNER (02/03/1969)

RYAN TERRY (02/05/1986)

LAURA FISHER (02/06/1981)

EVELYN KEREKGARTO (02/09/2018)

RICH MEDLEY (02/14/1969)

BILL REED (02/16/1975)

ERIN SINCLAIR (02/17/1981)

JASON FISHER (02/18/1972)

JAY GILMORE (02/20/1978)

JEREMY VILLEGAS (02/24/1978)

ASHLYNN REED (02/25/2002)



SPRC

The SPRC committee met on January 13, 2026. The minimum wage in Michigan has increased to \$13.73 per hour for hourly employees. Our recommendation is to increase Peggy Plotter's and Brian Gorski's wages to \$14 per hour. (The Finance Committee approved this change on January 26.)

We reviewed and updated the secretary's job description. We will review and update the custodian's job description at our next meeting. We appointed a staff support person for each staff person of the church. Staff support can serve as a sounding board or contact for each staff person. They commit to praying for their staff person. We discussed printing minutes in the newsletter. We discussed the marquee sign in front of the church – Lisa Barrus is currently posting the sign. Our next meeting is still to be scheduled.

What's Next

The next Church Council meeting will be held on February 12 at 7:00 pm. Please continue to pray for the leaders of our church as we seek to listen for God's guidance and serve faithfully together.



Church Events

- Trustees meeting Feb 11 @5pm
- SAS meeting Feb 12 @ 7pm (*see article on back*)
- Ash Wednesday Feb 18 @7pm.

UMC Events

- Winter training March 7 (9:30-2:30) @ Adrian First UMC
- Feed the Need Advocacy Day 2026 Wednesday, March 18 at state capitol in Lansing

The Winter training event held at Adrian First UMC on March 7th is open to all who are interested in building community connections, exploring additional financial resources, and developing discipleship opportunities. Pastor David will be attending. Reach out to him if you are interested in joining him.

Shout Out!

I want to thank everyone involved on our missions team. As a church \$850 was donated to Heifer International, helping families around the world build sustainable futures. The missions team, led by Cindy Frederick and Vicky Oliver put together the nice display. We can't forget the fact that they put together the meal for Share the Warmth each month. This meal serves the homeless in Adrian.

Ways you can support our missions team:

- Give money towards Share the Warmth meal
- Help prepare and cook meal
- Signup to deliver Meals-On Wheels
- Share you ideas for future mission projects



WRAPPING OUR ARMS AROUND OUR COMMUNITY SO EVERYONE CAN BE TRANSFORMED THROUGH GOD'S LOVE



Looking Ahead: A Conversation About Governance

Council members received information about a Simplified Accountable Structure (Single Board Governance) model. An informational meeting with Pastor Matt from Milan—who has experience guiding churches through this process—is being held on **February 12 @7pm**. This is a great opportunity to learn and ask questions, not to make decisions.

Call to Action: Come to the meeting Stay open, curious, and prayerful as we explore how our structure can best support God’s mission through this church.

The UMC has been exploring a new governance structure (how we administer and make decisions as a church). The committee structure that has been in place— forever it seems—has become a barrier to ministry in many churches. Many churches throughout the denomination have been exploring the Simple Accountable Structure (SAS). Below are six answers to the why of SAS. To find out more information come to the special presentation on **February 12 @7pm**.

Six Whys of SAS by REV. MELANIE CAREY

- **Efficiency:** Our current church governance structure was created in 1968. All the meetings and permissions required to accomplish things often leave leaders exhausted and frustrated. With fewer meetings and steps for approval, there is more time and energy spent in direct ministry. Not to mention that it is simply more efficient.
- **Alignment:** The SAS model aligns the resources of people, funds, facilities, and programs to accomplish the mission. With annual smart goals based on the identified vision and mission of the church, ministry leaders have what is needed to accomplish the goals, and transformative ministries are accomplished.
- **Missional Focus:** The SAS model invites us to move from self-focus and institutional survival mode toward incarnational ministry in our lives, neighborhoods, communities, and the larger world. It is life-changing for congregations and leaders to ask ourselves, “What is God’s vision for our church this coming year?” and then live into accomplishing that vision.
- **Accountability:** When “everyone is in charge,” no one is actually held responsible. The SAS model includes leaders holding themselves and one another accountable for missional fruitfulness. Good accountability is life-giving, more efficient, and helps keep us focused on the true task at hand.
- **Flexibility:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, we learned the importance of adaptability and flexibility. This is a critical ongoing need, and the SAS model invites trying new things to meet the needs of changing landscapes.
- **Leadership Development:** This is the why I am most excited about! When properly implemented, the SAS model intentionally focuses on leadership development, ongoing equipping, and launching leaders. It is exciting to see people discover their God-given gifts, learn about best leadership practices, and then launch into ministries they are passionate about serving. This is what it means to make disciples of Jesus Christ.



Mission Moment:

“Blessed are the Peacemakers.” (Matthew 5:9) “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20). Here are two quotes from Jesus that should stir us all up. We all want more peace but we struggle in making peace. We all want people to follow Jesus but we struggle to make disciples of Jesus. I encourage you that Jesus is always with us. Jesus is making peace in you. He is making you a disciple. As you follow Christ, you will make peace and you will make disciples. May we follow Christ together as one body to do ministry together.

Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. Isaiah 58:12 NIV

Trustees

The trustees had a very productive meeting. We welcomed 3 new committee members (Lisa Barrus, Brock Sinclair, and David Kerekgyato). They each bring something unique to the team. The pastor is encouraging us to focus on working as a team. Teamwork is especially important since we have so many projects ahead of us.

Before we addressed future projects we celebrated what was accomplished last year. Several projects and tasks were accomplished at the parsonage in the short window of pastoral transition. There have been other repairs completed after pastor David and his family moved in. Of note, the chimney was repaired and electrical updates were made. There are other small projects still to be done. We did a walkthrough of the parsonage and projects have been delegated out. Star is excited to have a working garbage disposal again and ceiling fans in the bedrooms. The pastor's family is grateful for the home we have made for them.

Our building is beautiful and yet it is an aged building (built in 1923). We have made some repairs and improvements recently. You may have noticed that the sanctuary is a bit brighter. That is because we changed out all the bulbs for LEDs. Our dishwasher is now working after a long arduous repair. In collaboration with the Memorial Committee we installed a new stainless steel countertop in part of the kitchen. It looks really nice and people have commented about replacing all the countertops in the kitchen.

Looking to the future, some of the projects we are working on:

- Our beautiful bell tower needs some repair.

This is currently being assessed and should begin when the weather warms up.

- Our parking lot needs some repairs and new lines drawn.
- Our Wesley hall bathrooms are in need of renovation.



The bathrooms are a big project that is a renewal of an old project that we want to re-explore. The last time this was assessed the cost was overwhelming; so, we chose to table it. With our 175th anniversary coming in 2027, we think it was worth exploring again—and making an attempt to raise the funds. There are no bids made or fundraising plans, but we ask you to keep this in your prayers. We welcome any ideas you may have. We ask that you have childlike faith to imagine new ADA compliant bathrooms that are hospitable to everyone. We ask that you have the same faith with an abundance mindset that God can provide. This project is so big that it will require the entire church and the community to make it happen.

Testimony Drive

We all have a story to tell. I am starting a testimony drive in order to collect and share testimonies. I often hear people that grew up in the church say they don't have much of a testimony. Too often I think this stems from comparing our story to other people's stories. We praise the rock bottom, life turned to Jesus stories but we equally need the stories of God showing up in others ways. Your testimony may be simple but it can still be powerful and edifying for others. There are many ways to tell a story. You can write down your testimony, record a video, or even share it in a worship setting. If you are interested in sharing your story let pastor David know.

Growing in Faith: Education & Formation

Children's and youth education continues to flourish. Lesson plans are prepared through March, and the ministry is seeking substitute teachers for some Sundays in February and March. Additional table space is also being explored to better accommodate our growing group of students.

Call to Action: If you are willing to serve as a substitute or help support our education ministry, please reach out—your presence matters.

Faithful Giving and Our Shared Ministry

As we reflect on our 2025 giving at Blissfield First United Methodist Church, we pause first to say thank you. Last year's giving chart is more than a financial snapshot—it is a testimony to a congregation that continues to show up with faith, trust, and generosity.

Through the year, our church received \$97,224 in total giving, with a monthly average of \$8,102. Some months were

stronger than others, yet in every season, the people of Blissfield First UMC remained committed to supporting worship, caring for one another, and serving our wider community. When giving increased, ministry expanded. When it slowed, God's faithfulness—and yours—did not.

Every gift helped keep our doors open and our mission moving. Giving made it possible to gather for worship, care for neighbors, support outreach, and remain a steady, loving presence in Blissfield and beyond. This is what shared ministry looks like: many hands, one mission, guided by God's grace.

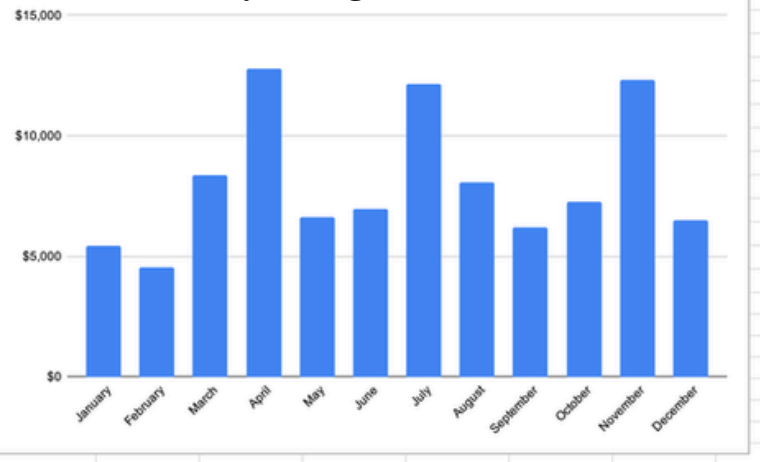
An Invitation to Faithful Stewardship

As we look ahead, we invite each person and family to prayerfully consider their role in sustaining the ministry of Blissfield First UMC. Faithful, consistent giving—whether large or small—allows us to plan wisely, respond faithfully, and dream boldly about what God may yet do through this congregation.

If this church has been a place of welcome, healing, or hope for you, consider how your generosity can help ensure it remains so for others. Together, we continue the work God has placed before us.

Month	Total
January	\$5,442
February	\$4,524.94
March	\$8,362.99
April	\$12,803.94
May	\$6,624.94
June	\$6,973.94
July	\$12,156.94
August	\$8,065.64
September	\$6,208.15
October	\$7,240.94
November	\$12,333.24
December	\$6,485.94
total	\$97,224
monthly average	\$8,102
weekly average	\$1,870
high	\$12,804
low	\$4,525

2025 Monthly Giving



Our Giving January 2026

	Envelopes	Other	Received	For
Jan. 4	1237.75	314.00	4110.75	Envelopes
Jan. 11	1233.00	547.94	10.00	Loose
Jan. 18	1640.00	30.00	531.94	EUM Shared Exp.
Jan. 25	Canceled service due to weather		300.00	Ministry Shares
			30.00	Initial Offering
			25.00	Human Relations Day

Need Prayer?

You can fill out a prayer request form [here](#):



Budget income this 4 weeks was \$5,007.69. Weekly average was \$1,251.92.

SuperNow Deposits:

Jan. 4: \$50.00-Building Fund
Jan 18: \$95.00-Building Fund

Missions Deposits:

Jan. 4: \$20.00-Share the Warmth
Jan. 11: \$20.00-Share the Warmth; \$140.00-Heifer Project

UPDATE YOUR INFO



We still do not have everyone's contact information. Please [fill this form](#) out even if you think we have your info. We may not.