



BLISSFIELD BEACON



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

Love Boldly
Serve Joyfully
Lead Courageously



Vision Worship Series

On April 12th we will start a new 6 week long worship series. This series is in connection with our UMC denomination as we focus together on our denomination's new vision. This connection and vision is really important to me. Both are vital to the life of the church. Disconnected we are just dry bones in a valley of death. By God's grace and the prophet's voice God assembles those bones.

We must stay connected within the body of Christ. We must stay connected as local churches. It is also true that, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29:18. My hope for us is that we embody this new vision. I sense a powerful moving of the Spirit coming our way.

Shaped by a profound Wesleyan heritage, the people of The United Methodist Church are stepping in faith into a new season of ministry. Since 2021, the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table have journeyed together in prayerful collaboration, seeking God's wisdom and discerning a hope-filled vision for this unfolding era in The United Methodist Church.

THE VISION

The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, **love boldly**, **serve joyfully**, and **lead courageously** in local communities and worldwide connections.

LOVE BOLDLY:

We passionately love God and, like Jesus, embrace and include people of every age, nation, race, gender, and walk of life. [Matthew 22:37-39 | John 13:34-35]

SERVE JOYFULLY:

With the heart of Christ, we journey alongside the most vulnerable among us, offering care and compassion with joy. [Psalm 100:1 | Nehemiah 8:10 | John 13:14-15 | 1 Peter 4:10]

LEAD COURAGEOUSLY:

Following Jesus' example, we seek to resist and dismantle all systems of evil, injustice, and oppression, striving for peace, justice, and reconciliation. [Joshua 1:9 | Ephesians 6:10]

In this new season, God is calling United Methodists to embody this vision as we

- Grow and form disciples
- Develop Christ-like leaders
- Stand in solidarity with the poor and the most vulnerable
- Seek health and wholeness for all people and creation

A collaborative effort of the Connectional Table and the Council of Bishops, this new vision statement is the result of a multi-year process of discernment to capture these kernels of truth rooted in scripture and lead the United Methodist Church forward into a hope-filled future.



Lenten Breakfast recap

by Linda Polter

Janet Flores and Linda Polter presented a program on "Prayer" at the Lenten Breakfast Thursday, March 26th held here at First UMC. This series represented the 93rd consecutive year (beginning in 1933) that the Blissfield Area churches sponsored this event. Janet Flores and Linda Polter also presented a program on "Prayer" to the United Women in Faith of Ida UMC's Easter Tea on March 22nd.



Google Review

Our church has 5 stars on Google reviews! This is good news but I have some bad news to go with it. We only have 6 total reviews. The newest one is 2 months old, but the one before that was 6 years ago. It may not be as common to review a church as it is a restaurant or store but the same principle applies. People may want to know what people are saying about a church before they check it out. I would love for you to write a review. Share honestly what this church means to you. There's no need to overhype our church, just give your authentic review.

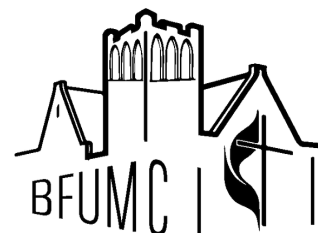
Shout Out

I want to give a loud shout out to Pat Grau who makes this newsletter possible. She has been a great proofreader turning my grammatical errors into gold. She has also written the Snow Bird Corner each month. She has helped us all stay better connected with our snow birds and has helped shape the Blissfield beacon into an important communication connection for us all.

Community Potluck & Games

Last month we started hosting a potluck and game night. The goal is to make this a monthly event on every third Saturday of the month. This gathering serves multiple intentions. We seek to grow as disciples together through food and fun. We also seek to invite people from the community to share in the food and fun. Both of these intentions are inline with our mission and vision as a church. Healthy churches break bread together through the communion sacrament and daily bread. It has been said, "Churches grow in circles not rows". May we circle around the table together and always extend the table by inviting others. May we continue to be a warm hospitable church that everyone belongs at the table. The next Potluck will be on **April 17th 5-8pm**. Invite a friend and bring a dish. This is we embody our statement below:

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



APRIL BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



WEDDINGS:

There are no known wedding anniversaries in our congregation but we all can celebrate the sacredness of marriage. We can celebrate our newlyweds Alexa & Jacob Alston who were married on March 20th. We pray blessings upon their marriage.

BIRTHDAYS:

HEATHER MARKS (04/03/1979)
CHRISTOPHER SMITH (04/04/1984)
JOSEPHINE GUST (04/04/2015)
BRADYN GILMORE (04/07/2001)
DON HOFFMAN (04/17/1936)
DARLENE SPOTTS (04/22/1935)
NOAH MARKS (04/22/2007)
LISA BARRUS (04/23/1965)
TIFFANIE TERRY (04/28/1986)
LINDA SHIRLEY (04/29/1943)



On Palm Sunday Winter Jam had the last concert of the tour in Ypsilanti. We only had a small group of people go, Pastor David, Star and Abby. Thanks to Janet Flores for taking in Veronica for the day at the last minute. We left shortly after 2pm and didn't come back until almost 11pm. The concert is advertised as 3½ hours long but it was more like 5½ hours long. When we got there and made our way towards the end of the line we ran into pastor Anita Hahn from Holt UMC. She was there with some youth and young adults from her church. I had the privilege of working with her there a few years ago. She has remained a good mentor of mine. The arena seats over 9,000 people and it was packed. There were several Christian artists and bands from a variety of genres. I was thankful that I brought ear protection because it was loud but there is nothing like thousands of people worshiping God through music. I look forward to future opportunities to send a group to some Christian concerts that are not so long or so loud.

Church Events

- April 3 Good Friday at Trinity Lutheran in Riga @1pm
- April 5 Easter worship @9:30am
- April 9 Worship committee @9:30am
- April 9 Finance committee @6:30pm
- April 14 Trustees meeting @6pm
- April 15 Prayer Gathering @7pm
- April 18 Community Potluck & Games 5-8pm
- April 23 SPRC meeting @10am



UMC Event

- April 13 Bishop Bard's Listening Session @ 5:30 pm - 7 pm
- Annual Conference | May 29-31| Traverse City
- Lay Servant Minsitry courses

FIRE

by Judy Brown

What makes a fire burn
is space between the logs,
a breathing space.

Too much of a good thing
too many logs
packed in too tight
can douse the flames
almost as surely
as a pail of water would.

So building fires
requires attention
to the spaces in between
as much as to the wood.

When we are able to build
open spaces
in the same way
we have learned
to pile on the logs
then we can come to see how
it is fuel, and the absence of the fuel
together, that make fire possible.

We only need to lay a log
lightly from time to time.

A fire
grows
simply because the space is there,
with openings,
in which the flame
that knows just how it wants to burn
can find its way.

Digital Ministry [part 1]

When did the world go digital? I was wondering when exactly this switch from analog to digital occurred. Like many things it doesn't happen instantaneously but rather over time. I did find some important dates that marked milestones in this process.

- April 30, 1993: The World Wide Web was opened to the public.
- January 9, 2007: The unveiling of the iPhone, which moved the digital world from our desks into our pockets 24/7.
- June 12, 2009 On this day, the federal government mandated that all full-power U.S. television stations stop broadcasting analog signals and switch exclusively to digital.
- For many, the U.S. truly "went digital" during the COVID-19 pandemic. While we had the technology before, March 2020 was when digital became the primary way of life.

The world has gone digital and yet the church is still operating largely in an analog world. Jesus calls the church to operate in both. We all operate in both worlds to varying degrees. I still listen to vinyl records but I also listen to music on streaming platforms.

“They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.”

- John 17:16-18 NRSVUE

Our church does exist in the digital world. We have a website. I am continually shocked at the number of churches that do not have one.

Our church is active on social media. We utilize ZOOM for Bible study and Sunday worship. We use Vanco for online giving. These are great ways of engaging in the digital world. However, there are ways we can enhance and expand our current digital ministry. We are working on creating a Youtube channel to reach a new audience with video content.

The goal is to equip you, disciples, to utilize these digital tools for ministry.

This is part one of a series of conversations around digital ministry. There are ways that I want to lead us into more digital ministry. The purpose of doing so is to reach people that are exploring faith in digital spaces. Below, I have listed some apps that can be utilized for ministry. They are not all designed with ministry in mind but the church can utilize them as discipleship and evangelistic tools. In future newsletters I will explore these apps individually. In the meantime, imagine with me a more digital church.

Digital Ministry Apps:

- YouVersion Bible app
- Youtube
- Bless App
- Pray as You go
- Lectio360
- Discord
- Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok)
- Planning Center
- Slack
- Vanco



Confession

Confession is a discipline that humbles us and also heals us. I love how the psalmist puts it:

While I kept silent, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up[a] as by the heat of summer. Selah
Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah - Psalm 32:3-5 NRSVUE



When we are silent on our sin it affects our physical body. Something happens in the Selah, the pause of reflection. The psalmist realizes that he cannot stay silent any longer. First we acknowledge, then we speak our confession, and finally we receive forgiveness. Confession is not easy. Our flesh resists confronting sin. We instinctually hide in our shame but the psalmist realizes the painful groaning that comes from this hiding.

James has something to say about the healing power of confession:

"Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up, and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." - James 5:14-16 NRSVUE

It is hard enough to confess our sins to God. For many of us it's even harder to confess our sins to others. Some Christians even claim they do not need to confess their sin to anyone except God. James challenges that. He reminds us of the healing power in confessing to others. This type of confession is beneficial for accountability as well as reconciliation. It is a sign of good character to admit when you have done wrong. We should note the power of prayer that James repeats. Our prayers for one another bring healing.

I have personally experienced the groaning the psalmist writes about. Years ago in an intimate worship setting a brother in Christ prophesied that someone needed to confess something. Great silence overcame the room. I immediately felt a burning tightness in my chest. I quickly knew it was I who needed to confess but I was not quick to speak. I sat with the pain. I wrestled with the Holy Spirit but I did not win. I confessed a habitual sin that I was enslaved to. It was a hard thing to do but I did experience accountability and healing as my brothers in Christ prayed for me. It took years for me to find freedom from that sin but that confession was a vital step and turning point in my life.

Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. - Ephesians 4:11-13

REPORTS

Financial Secretary Report for March 2026

Date	Envelopes	Other	Received	For
March 1	1570.00	0.00	8296.00	Envelopes
March 8	967.00	15.00	22.00	Loose
March 15	1920.00	40.00	40.00	UMCOR
March 22	1628.00	5.00		
March 29	2211.00	2.00		

Other SN deposits: 3/1: \$50.00-Building Fund
 3/8: \$300.00- Building Fund
 3/15: \$75.00- Building Fund
 3/22: \$50.00- Building Fund
 3/29: \$65.00- Building Fund

Mission's deposits: 3/1: \$20.00- Share the Warmth



This 5 Weeks our budget income was \$8,358.00. Weekly average is \$1,671.60

Trustees

The Trustees have been working hard as a team to get ahead on some projects both at the church building and parsonage. We have had some recent incidents that have interrupted that work. We had some heavy wind knock down some shingles on the roof. There was some significant water damage to the classroom off of Wesley Hall. That room is off limits at the moment until we get that fixed. Our boiler that heats the Education Wing (offices, Wesley Hall, kitchen, and Sunday School classrooms) needed repairing and we discovered that the replacement parts are unavailable due to the manufacturer going out of business.

The Trustees had a meeting after worship on Sunday to address the urgent need of the boiler replacement. Here is a brief update from Chris Gorski on what happened at the Trustees meeting:

We had some good discussions. We decided it wasn't an emergency repair. We decided to take 2 weeks and gather bids and ideas to review and have a trustee meeting on April 14th at 6pm. The discussion centered around making the best long term solution not just the cheapest option.



Worship

Worship committee met as they do each month to pick out songs for the next month. We seek to choose songs that fit with the theme of the message while also being easy to sing and engaging. The committee is always open to feedback on your worship experience.

In April we will be going through the 6 week Vision worship series. This series will cover in depth the new UMC vision [see cover page article]. We also discussed how to make worship more engaging for kids during the summer when Sunday school is not held. There is a plan to create a more kid friendly area within the sanctuary as well as revitalizing the worship bags, adding quiet fidgets, coloring pages, and possibly a puzzle table. We are proposing this as a collaboration with the education committee. We seek to make worship engaging for all.